



Italy

Tackling child poverty and promoting the social inclusion of children

A Study of National Policies

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Summary

The present report addresses the specific issue of “Tackling child poverty and promoting social inclusion of children” in Italy. Italian poverty trends constitutes an intergenerational transmission of disadvantages within similar social groups. In general, Italy presents a situation in which a child is most likely poor if she / he

- Is born in the South of Italy
- Lives in single-parent households or in large households (three or more minors), particularly if the reference person (breadwinner) is a women and when the employment status and the educational level of the parents are low
- Is disabled
- Is an immigrant, including unaccompanied minors or members of ethnic minorities

Economic difficulties, unsafe environment and housing, reduced opportunities for education, social and health services, as well as cultural, sport and recreation facilities, create living conditions that hamper the child’s capacity to move up the social ladder. A child in these conditions may be lucky if he/she is not involved in labour exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and micro-criminality. Several differences exist between Italy and the other countries, especially in employment (e.g. women), education, child services (e.g. nurseries) and so on. Child abuse, violence and victims, as well as juvenile drug abuse and consumption, accompany the risk of poverty while participation in the society is decreasing, along with socialisation and trust in institutions and associations.

A legal framework was initiated in 1997 to face these problems. It has been further strengthened in an inconsistent and sometimes contrasting process. New developments are expected in policies and measures supported by the 2007 financial law and other recent key acts.

However, key challenges remain, in particular regarding the co-ordination and collaboration between different government levels, regional imbalances, the development of a more holistic approach on child rights promotion, the definition of basic levels of quality in services throughout the national territory, adequate financial resources to regional and local authorities, stakeholders involvement in decision making, a more reliable assessment systems.

While new opportunities are present in recent policies that indirectly concern the fight against poverty, a coherent commitment is needed. It is particularly necessary to identify measures that deal with the multi-dimensional problems and issues of childhood and adolescence in each policy field; to identify clear targets for each main action; to combine the identified actions and targets in order to have a coherent and consistent framework to fight against child poverty.

Vice versa, it is necessary that policies more directly address child issues (e.g. the two national plans on childhood and households expected in the next months), taking into consideration the relevant contributions from other policies.

The relationships between policies, summarised in this report, can not be considered sufficient to reduce the risk of poverty and migration unless future scenarios, including climate change are considered, making it increasing necessary to consider policies to fight child poverty within a wider strategy for sustainable development.

1. Extent and nature of child poverty and well being

Elaborating a series of relevant statistics, the national Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre (CNDAIA, 2005) confirms the following main trends:

- A reduction in birth-rate, supported by an increase in the average marriage age both for women and men, as well as in the age (between 30 and 35 years) when a women decides to have a child
- A reduction in the average household size, accompanied by an increase in couples without children and in single-parent households
- An increase in age of the average household population, characterised by more elderly people than children and the presence of ageing singles
- An increase in social isolation of the family and a reduction of relations within the household
- An increase in rate of divorce and separation, along with a slight increase in number of children born outside regular marriage
- An increase in permanence of young people within the household, beyond the average marriage age (the so-called young-adults)

Considering these trends and general background, the following aspects of child poverty should be considered.

1.1 Monetary poverty

An estimate on child poverty in Italy can be extracted from the general statistics on relative poverty, i.e. the monetary value of consumption expenditures determined in a yearly household budget survey performed by the national institute of statistics (ISTAT). The survey uses a random sample of nearly 28,000 households representative of the Italian population (ISTAT 2006).

A two-member household is, for instance, assessed as relatively poor when its monthly consumption expenditure is equal or below a standard poverty threshold constituted by 50% of per capita average national consumption expenditure: a threshold moved from € 814.55 in 2001 to € 936.58 in 2005.

ISTAT cautions when considering trends as minor differences between yearly percentages are not statistically significant since they can be affected by sampling error and sample size at the regional dimension. Taking into account the ISTAT recommendations, the relative poverty rate between 2001 and 2005 ([Table 1](#)) remained stable at a national level (around 11% households and 13% inhabitants). It most often represented couples with 3 or more children (around 24.5%) than other social groups, for instance lone parents (around 13%).

Absolute poverty, still based on consumption, concerns the expenditure capacity to meet basic needs (e.g. for food, housing and other indispensable goods and services), a capacity influenced by the household economic condition. A two-member household is, for instance, assessed as absolutely poor when its monthly expenditure is equal or below a poverty threshold constituted by the monetary value of an average quantity of basic goods and services (e.g. € 559.63 in 2001 and € 573.63 in 2002). Adopting a restricted monetary value of monthly expenditure ([Table 2](#)), it is clear that absolute poverty (e.g. 4.2% households and 5.1% inhabitants in 2002) is lower than relative poverty (around 7 percentage points less in 2002). However the calculation of the absolute poverty threshold was interrupted by ISTAT in 2003 while a new methodology was being defined in terms of composition of goods, services and the associated prices.

Moreover, ISTAT distinguishes between surely poor, scarcely poor and nearly poor households, identified respectively as those below 80%, from 80% to 100% and up to 120% the standard relative poverty threshold. Taking into account all the three typologies, the poverty risk rate increases in percentage values to 19% households in 2005 ([Table 3](#)).

The above indicators depend on extended or restricted monetary value of monthly expenditure being biased towards a consumption-oriented statistical methodology. Consumption propensity and expenditure are influenced by several factors, including social and cultural behaviours within economic and demographic changes. Moreover, when average economic conditions are worsening, the general consumption propensity can decrease, resulting in a lower value of the expenditure-based poverty line and consequently in relative poverty rates. Thus the paradox of having less poor households because more households are poor. Vice versa, when average economic conditions improve, the opposite phenomenon may occur: the relative poverty threshold increases, more poor households and inhabitants can be discovered because a number of them are less poor while revealing an increase in social inequality.

According to the Italian statistical model (CIES 2006), price-related mechanisms are sufficiently developed to take into account the impact on the relative poverty indicators (e.g. threshold) produced by increasing and decreasing in social differences due to positive and negative economic trends.

At the EU level, the use of this type of indicators was discussed and rejected both from a theoretical and practical point of view. "Expenditure reflects choices, not opportunities, and thus fails to reflect resources accruing to the household", as stated in the EU Joint Report 2004 (COM(2003)773). The EU indicators on poverty are based on income. Specifically, risk-of-poverty rate is defined as the share of persons with an equivalent disposable income below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income. This share can be calculated before social transfers (original income including pensions but excluding all other social transfers) and after social transfers (total income).

In comparison with the income-based EU indicator, the Italian national indicator, based on consumption, tends to reduce the at-risk-of-poverty rate by nearly 6 % ([Table 4](#)): 19% instead of 13%. The Italian rate is 3% higher than the European Union (EU 25) average (16%), higher than Germany, France, Hungary and Slovakia (13%), Denmark and Finland (12%), the Netherlands (11%), the Czech Republic (10%) and Sweden (9%) (EUROSTAT, *online statistics*).

The Banca d'Italia, the Italian national bank, adopts an income-based poverty rate in a biennial national survey on Italian household budgets, which utilises a sample of nearly 8,000 households. An equivalent income is calculated adapting the OECD scale of equivalence. The poverty rate (or index) is defined as the share of persons living in low-income households, that is below 50% of the national median equivalent income. Along with differences in methodology, there are 10 percentage points of equivalent income less with respect to the EU indicator. This is maybe the reason why the results from the Banca d'Italia surveys are not different from those of the ISTAT surveys ([Table 5](#)).

Taking account of the above-mentioned statistical limits, child poverty can be estimated by looking at the ISTAT consumption-based indicators ([Table 6](#)) concerning the relative poverty of households with minors (those aged under 18): the poverty-risk remained near 11 – 12% in such households between 2001 and 2005, at a national level.

EUROSTAT (*online statistics*) reports a children (less than 16 years) at-risk-of-poverty for Italy to be 24% in 2005: 6% higher than in new EU countries (e.g. 19% in Hungary and 18% in Slovakia and the Czech Republic) and between 8 – 16 percentage points higher than in older EU countries (e.g. 16% in the Netherlands, 14% in France, 13% in Germany, 10% in Denmark and Finland, 8% in Sweden).

According to the ISTAT elaborations (Table 6), a higher percentage of large households (e.g. with 3 or more children) were below the poverty rate than households with a smaller number of children (16.7% difference in 2005). This difference is higher (17.7% in 2005) if large households are more specifically compared with the smallest ones (with only 1 child).

There are differences between the Italian situation regarding lone parent with dependent children and large households (e.g. two adults with 3 or more dependent children) and that in other EU countries. In Italy, the two social groups share the same at-risk-of-poverty rate (35%). In other countries, the risk is significantly higher for lone parent families with respect to large households, e.g.: 41% and 25% in the Czech Republic, 32% and 24% in Slovakia, 30% and 13% in Germany, 26% and 20% in France and the Netherlands, 21% and 14% in Denmark, 20% and 12% in Finland, 18% and 9% in Sweden.

However, in Italy, it is not easy to quantify the exact rate of children at-risk-of-poverty, as well as the gender difference among them. Estimates varies in size according to surveys and criteria (Table 7), e.g. from 16% to 24%. Such a range, from 1,5 to 2,4 million children, is not distant from other estimates that evaluate nearly 3 million children at risk of poverty, of which nearly 1,7 million surely poor (Eurispes 2006).

1.2 Regional differences

All surveys recognise that regional unbalances are consistent in Italy. ISTAT data, for instance, underline that between 2001 and 2005 the relative poverty rate (Table 8):

- in the Southern regions, is nearly 13 percentage points above the national average (around 24% households and 26% inhabitants)
- in the Central regions, is nearly 5-6 percentage points below the national average (around 6% households and 7% inhabitants) having registered a small statistical reduction (around 2-3%)
- in the Northern regions, is nearly 6-8 percentage points below the national average (around 5% both households and inhabitants)

The same statistics reveal the elevated relative poverty in the Southern households: nearly +19 and +17 percentage points compared respectively with the Northern and Central regions.

These regional unbalances increase along with the number of children living in a household (minors aged under 18). Data (Tables 9, 10 and 11) underline differentiated trends, taking into account that nearly 70% of the Italian poor families lives in the Southern regions where large households are more numerous than in the other regions.

Between 2001 and 2005 there was in fact an increase in relative poverty rates

- in the Southern regions, from nearly 14 to nearly 23 percentage points for households with 3 or more children with respect to those with only 1 child
- in the Central regions, from nearly 1 to nearly 3 percentage points for households with 2 children with respect to those with only 1 child
- in the Northern regions, from nearly 1 to nearly 2 percentage points for households with 2 children with respect to those with only 1 child

The risk of child poverty is significantly higher in the Southern regions, as furthermore confirmed by the average differences of

- nearly 17 and 14 points between the Southern and, respectively, the Northern and Central households with 1 child
- nearly 23 and 22 points between the Southern and, respectively, the Northern and Central households with 2 children

1.3 Material deprivation, economic strains, unsafe environment and housing

Households with many children face hardships in their daily life especially in the Southern regions. This is demonstrated by a survey ([Table 12](#)) carried out by ISTAT in 2005 according to the EU-SILC (European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) methodology and concerning a sample of 22,032 households (equivalent to nearly 56,105 individuals) representative of the overall population.

Households have difficulty in covering basic requirements, e.g. usual monthly expenses, unexpected expenses, delay in payment, heating, food, health care and clothing.

Taking into account the usual monthly expenses, difficulties concern 14.7% households as a national average. Risk increases in households with three or more children (20.4%) with a higher degree in the South (22.8%) than in the Centre (13.1%) and the North (9.9%).

Other deprivation aspects can be found in a previous survey carried out by ISTAT in 2004 on a sample of 24,204 households (equivalent to 61,429 individuals) according to the EU-SILC methodology.

The survey confirms that the condition of children living in large households is generally affected by a series of problems with a higher intensity compared with the average population, e.g. economic strain, lack of key tools, poor housing, environment and social contexts ([Table 13](#)).

Differences between households with three or more children and an average households can arrive at nearly 6% as poor housing conditions, at nearly 2% as worse social contexts (e.g. more criminality), at nearly 8% as a lack in useful tools (e.g. personal computers) and at nearly 12% as far as resources for relaxing and enjoying oneself (e.g. holiday).

Poor housing conditions and poverty are closely connected. Enquires and press (newspapers and the TV channels) underline a very difficult situation for immigrant persons, ethnic minorities but also for the poorest endogenous population. This condition affects children by limiting their opportunities to improve their quality of life.

The situation of homeless persons is more desperate. It is impossible to quantify them and their children. This is further complicated by the lack of specific national laws and general strategies to address this problem. Local authorities and volunteer organisations, e.g. "Maestri di Strada" (on-the-street-teachers), have created nearly 550 centres that care for homeless persons in nearly 100 towns. Some NGOs (Feansta, FIO.psd and Scarp de' Tennis) estimate that homelessness affects nearly 200,000 persons, nearly half of them without any housing facility. Three main typologies were identified: women, persons with family and working poor persons (those who work regularly but cannot afford a monthly rent).

1.4 Employment status of families

Taking into account the ISTAT surveys, relative poverty rates remained relatively stable between 2001 and 2005 also as far as the households' employment conditions are concerned ([Table 14](#)): more than 9% of households with a reference person (breadwinner) employed, nearly 8% if she/he is self-employed, more than 31% if she/he is looking for a job, more than 43% if job seekers live in the Southern regions.

Poverty risk increases when more persons in a household are looking for job, e.g. from 23.1% (1 individual) to 39.8% (2 or more individuals) in 2005 as a national average.

Poverty risk for Italian minors (aged 0-17) increases when they live in jobless households constituted by couples with one or more children arriving in 2005 at 24 percentage points more than the European Union average: 59.2% in Italy and 34.9% in EU 25 according to EUROSTAT (EC 2007).

1.5 Gender

There is not a significant difference as the breadwinner is a woman or a man, e.g. the both registered the same relative poverty rate (11.1%) in 2005 and in 2001 (12.1% women and 12% men), according to the ISTAT surveys based on consumption expenditures (ISTAT 2006a and 2002). Also the Banca d'Italia surveys do not reveal a consistent gender gap since poverty index based on equivalent income, e.g. from 1 to 0.5 point of percentage: 12.8% men and 13.8% women in 2002; 13.1% men and 13.6% women in 2004 (Banca d'Italia 2006 and 2004).

However, the income-based EU-SILC statistics underline a gender difference of 4 percentage points between women (20%) and men (16%): 2% above the European Union (EU 25) average that attributes a risk of 16% to women and of 14% to men (EC 2007). In other EU countries, gender differences are less significant, e.g. the poverty risk is the same in the Netherlands (11%), in Denmark (12%) and in Slovakia (13%) or with a limited to 1 – 2 % in Germany and France (women 14% and men 12%), Finland (women 13% and men 11%), Sweden (women 10% and men 9%), the Czech Republic (women 11% and men 10%) and in Hungary (women 13% and men 14%).

In Italy gender difference affects inter alia wage, employment and work conditions hindering the capacity of women to afford basic needs especially when she has one or more children, or when she is a single parent.

Earnings gap was estimated around 27% as a national average in 2005 (Sda Bocconi-Laboratorio Armonia e Hay Group; OD&M, 2006).

On a national basis, (Table 15) there are less women than men entering the labour market (nearly 24 percentage points of difference in activity rate) and finding a job (more than 24 percentage points of difference in employment rate), but more with unstable perspectives than men (e.g. nearly 5 percentage points of difference in fixed-term contracts).

In the South, conditions worsen as women's activity rate (32% lower than men), employment rate (31.2% lower than men) and unemployment rate (6.6 % higher than men) show significant differences.

Additionally, women register a negative performance with respect to the European Union (EU 25) average notwithstanding recent improvement in the Italian overall employment trends: -12 percentage points in activity rate, -11 in employment rates, nearly -7 in the utilisation of part-time work arrangements.

Higher differences can be noticed (EC 2006) between Italy and some EU countries, e.g.: from 14 to 26 percentage points in activity rate (50.4%) compared to France (64.1%), Germany (66.9%), the Netherlands (70%), Finland (72.8%), Denmark (75.9%) and Sweden (76.3%); from 12 to 27 percentage points in employment rate (45.3%) compared to France (57.6%), Germany (59.6%), the Netherlands (66.4%), Finland (66.5%) Sweden (70.4%) and Denmark (71.9%); from 14 to 50 percentage points in part-time work (25.6%) compared to Sweden (39.6%), Germany (43.8%) and the Netherlands (75.1%). Unfortunately detailed data on gender issues associated with child poverty are not available. The above highlighted gender differences constitute an incubator of poverty risk, which affects more women than men throughout their childhood and adolescence. It is likely that some improvement in next years will

occur regarding women employment, but the role of women in the society will continue to face challenges in a male dominated situation.

1.6 Child labour

Child labour flourishes in the hidden or black economy, with monetary value has been estimated to be around 14.8 - 16.7% of the GDP, limiting the analysis only to tax and social security contribution frauds (ISTAT 2005a)

The national Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre (CNDAIA 2005) estimates that in 2000 nearly 147,300 children were involved in labour activities (respectively 0.5% of the age group 7-10, 3.7% of the age group 11-13 and 11.6% of the age group 14) and nearly 21% (31,500) "exploited" (e.g. in dangerous, night and tiring jobs). In parallel, officially declared accidents at work concerned 24,776 children (2,4% of the total injured persons).

However data change according to different methodologies of enquiry arriving at estimating between 380,000 – 400,000 children involved in labour activities, immigrant and Roma children included (data extracted from surveys carried out by Fondazione Banco di Napoli and Ires-Cgil)

1.7 Unaccompanied migrant minors

In 2003 they were nearly 7,000 unaccompanied immigrant minors (CNDAIA 2005), 83% without legal documents, mainly from Albania (28%), Morocco (26%) and Rumania (21%).

They are predominantly aged 15-17 (between 75-80%) and male (80%), the main hypothesis is that they are looking for gaining some economic (monetary) resources to support their households living in the countries of origin.

In 2005 (Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro 2006) nearly 6,500 were estimated, mainly from Rumania (37%), Morocco (20%) Albania (17%).

However this number is underestimated and according to some research institutes (e.g. Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro 2005) a correct estimate would be around 15,000.

It is difficult to make accurate estimates, as prostitution should be taken into account and is not in official statistics.

1.8 Trafficking, prostitution, micro-criminality, child abuse, violence and victims

It is very difficult to know how many children are victims of prostitution and trafficking. Some estimates can be made by looking at information from initiatives of social protection, interviews to practitioners and limited data (CNDAIA 2005).

The number of immigrant children involved in prostitution was estimated to be around 1,800 – 2,500 (80% women mainly from Albania and Nigeria) in 1998. Small girls were estimated to be between the 16-30% of all the immigrant prostitutes estimated to be between 20,000 – 30,000 in 2001 (CNDAIA 2005).

However very little verifiable data on this phenomenon exists, in particular for children. Generally, main reasons for prostitution are of an economic (monetary) nature in order to support households.

Data from 296 projects, financed by the national Department for Equal Opportunities (a ministry body) between 2000 and 2004, indicates that nearly 6,800 persons were concerned by trafficking, 5% of them being children.

Exploitation, physical and moral constraints must be added resulting also in Italian and migrant (especially Rumanian Roma) children involved in other illegal activities.

Criminality involving Italian children is considered lower than in other European countries. However, children constitute a stable 2,5% of all persons reported to the court during 1995 – 2004 (CNDAIA 2005). Additionally, bullying is increasing in schools and in most recent years, e.g. 12% and 42% children aged 7-11 declared to have been victims to mistreatment and bad jokes by a pair schoolmates (Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro 2005).

Juvenile Institutes (Istituti per i minori) receive children who do not have other opportunities to face serious problems. In 2003 more than 2,600 children were hosted in these institutions: 82.4% Italians, 17.6% immigrant, 7% disabled, nearly 49% aged 6-11, 33% due to low economic conditions in their households, 12% because parental negative behaviour, 5.1% because of mistreatment, 2.5% because of sexual abuse and 1.8% because of abandonment (CNDAIA 2005). Other institutions with an educational and social care nature hosted nearly 24,000 children in 2000, 70% of them because of housing and household economic problems (CNDAIA 2005).

In 2002 (CNDAIA 2005), trials initiated on reported crimes against children totalled 20,292, of which: 7,462 transgressions of family-care-duty, 4,669 family-mistreatments, 4,519 sexual abuses, 1,972 for prostitution, pornography and sex tourism, 784 sex acts with minors, 498 abandonment, 210 child corruptions, 173 corporal punishments and 5 infanticides. In all they constituted nearly the 7% of crimes against individuals (304,539) and 0,7% of crime typologies (2,842,224).

According to most recent surveys (e.g. Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro 2006), between 2000 and 2005 victims of sex crimes were 2,891: 83% of them were sexual abuses, 10% sex acts with minors, 4% child corruptions and 3% sexual violence of group. The highest crime levels are in the North and committed by Italians (80%).

Statistics seem to reveal a decrease in sex-related crimes. However, even though improved in the recent years, they are not able to account for the actual situation because of a scarce co-ordination between several institutional bodies, a kind of refusal to give evidence to the police about criminal activities (*omertà*) and shame and fear from the victims themselves.

1.9 Education

In 2002, persons with low educational attainment constituted the 55.7% of the Italian population aged 25 to 64 whilst the European Union (EU 15) average was 34.9%: nearly 21 percentage points of difference (EUROSTAT, *online statistics*). Differences between Italy and the other EU member states range from 23 – 39%, e.g. Netherlands (32.4%), Finland (25.3%), Denmark (20%), Sweden (18.6%), the UK (18.3%) and Germany (17%).

Poverty risk increases in households with a low educational profile, namely that of the reference person (breadwinner). There are more than 13 percentage points of difference between those (17.6%) with the

lowest profile (e.g. none or primary education) and those (4.5%) with the highest profile (e.g. upper secondary education and over). This difference arrives at nearly 23 percentage points in the Southern regions and has remained stable between 2001 and 2005 according to the ISTAT surveys ([Table 16](#)).

Increased early school leaving (+ 5.4% in total, +6.8% men and + 4.1% women) represents a key issue leading to a lower educational profile in comparison with the European Union (EU 27) average ([Table 17](#)). However Italy has recorded an improvement of around 4.5% between 2006 and 2000, when the total was 25.3%, women 21.9% and men 28.8%, even though the difference between men and women remains significant demonstrating a better performance of the latter.

Referring more specifically to students 15 years of age, the 2003 PISA survey (Programme for International Student Assessment, developed by OECD since 2000) reveals ([Table 18](#)) that Italian students have very low scores in main assessment areas (e.g. mathematics, science, reading and problem solving) being placed at the bottom of a scale constituted by 30 countries (around the 26th position).

In general, the Italian average results worsened between the 2000 and 2003 OECD surveys even though regional differences revealed a better performance of students in Northern schools than those in the Southern schools.

Problems in education regard also immigrant students as their achievement in qualification levels worsens from primary (10%) to secondary (75.5%) education, according to the Italian Ministry of Education (ME, 2006). Their numbers increased from 6,104 (1983/84) to 83,064 (2000/01) but a sharper growth in the number occurred in the last 6 years arriving at 424,683 units in 2005/06 (4.8% of the total school population) and probably at 500,000 in 2006/07. These students come from 191 different countries, Albania (16%), Morocco (14%) and Romania (12%). Technical and vocational institutes (upper secondary school) were the main choices of 78.5% of young immigrants.

1.10 Access to child educational services

Nurseries and crèches play a relevant role both for the children educational career and for women to facilitate their employability while improving a reconciliation of work and family life. Unfortunately availability of such facilities is still not sufficient to meet the expected demand.

According to recent assessment (Il Sole 24 ore 6 February 2007) based on data from the European Community Household Panel (EUROSTAT 2005), the Italian access ratio (between available places in nurseries and potential users aged 0-3) is less than 10% whilst it is at 50% in Denmark and around 35-40% in Sweden and France. Also the "in-firm nurseries" is very low concerning only 2.6% of Italian workers compared with 15% in the Netherlands and 6% in France and Belgium.

Another systematic research provides details ([Table 19](#)) on the low degree of accessibility to these basic services (as an average nearly 10 available places every 100 children) while confirming relevant differences between some regions in the North (with the highest rate of 24%) and the South (with the lowest rate of 1%).

1.11 Access to health and care services

Compared with other OECD countries, Italy is a top-ranking country as far as children's health and safety are concerned, just after Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands, Finland and Denmark (UNICEF –

Innocenti Research Centre 2007). The index combined indicators on infant mortality, birth weight, immunisation and deaths from accidents and injuries.

According to available data (ISTAT 2005b and 2006d), in 2003 the infant mortality rate arrived at 3.7 as the number of deaths per thousand live births before the age of one, confirming a decreasing trend recorded between 1991 (8.9 male and 7.2 female) and 2001 (5 male and 4.3 female). However, there is a significant difference of around 1 point between the Southern (4.5), the Central (3.4) and the Northern (3.2) regions.

The so-called "hospital mobility or migration" (ISTAT 2006d) characterises the regional differences given that between 1999 and 2003 the percentage of persons who go outside their own region to access health services increased from 6.7% to 7.1%. This kind of migration has a flow from many Southern regions to Northern and Central Regions.

More recent data (ISTAT 2007a) confirm that "hospital mobility" is motivated by a limited confidence in the health services of the "emigrant regions" (20.7% in the South compared with 8.4% in the Centre and 9.3% in the North), followed by logistics reasons e.g. proximity and accessibility (18.2% in the South compared with 25.3% in the Centre and 23.2% in the North). Therefore Southern inhabitants prefer hospitals in other regions notwithstanding displacement difficulties. More in general, people satisfaction with public health services is higher in the North (e.g. between 69 - 60% respectively in Bolzano, Valle d'Aosta and Trento) and in the Centre (e.g. nearly 47% in Emilia Romagna) than in the South (e.g. between 36 - 26% respectively in Calabria, Puglia and Sicilia). The South reports lower general health conditions (e.g. 14% with at least a seriously chronic disease compared with 12 - 13% in the North and the Centre) as well as more diffused disabilities (e.g. nearly 6%, compared with 5% and 4% respectively in the Centre and the North) especially as far as women are concerned (around 30% compared with less than 20% in the North). Moreover the availability of beds in health services devoted to the disabled decreases from 87.2 per thousand inhabitants in the North to only 3.1 in the South.

Disability rate ([Table 20](#)) is higher in elderly people (e.g. 9.7% of persons aged 70-74) than children (e.g. 1.6% of those aged 6-14).

The increase in disability concerns more women (6.1% as a total) than men (3.3% as a total), especially from the 65-69 (women 6.5% and men 4.3%) to the 80+ (women 48.9% and men 35.8%) age groups.

Disabled children aged 0-5 are estimated to be 42,460, while nearly 2.8 million are disabled persons aged 6+ including those living in households (nearly 2.6 million) and those living in socio-health structures. Therefore the total amount of disabled people can be around 5% of the Italian population (based on ISTAT estimates). It is likely that this result underestimates the real situation, but the current statistics methodologies do not permit more in-depth enquires, as explicitly declared by ISTAT.

As an average result, between 10.3% (ISTAT estimates) and 12% (our estimates) is the share of households with at least a disabled person. 80% of these households take care for disabled by themselves, that means without assistance from public services (ISTAT 2007a). Moreover disability rate is correlated with social inequality estimated through the educational level proxy: nearly 13.7% of persons having none or primary education are disabled compared with 1.4% with high school or university degrees. However a similar divide can be observed more in general: 32.5% persons with a low educational profile live in worse health conditions (e.g. with at least a seriously chronic disease) compared with 8.2% with high school or university degrees.

1.12 Drug abuse and alcohol consumption

It is very difficult to know how many children consume drugs and alcohol, as both are illegal activities. However the phenomenon seems to be increasing, as affirmed by surveys carried out by Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro in 2004 and 2005. The analysis becomes more complicated depending on the types of drugs and alcohol. One indication for drug use is constituted by children and young people who declare that their peers consume drugs and alcohol: for soft drugs, 22.5% (ages 12-14) and 72.4% (ages 15-19); for hard drugs, 4.1% (ages 12-14) and 23.9% (ages 15-19)

Alcohol consumption is relevant especially among those aged 15-19: 45.1% drink occasionally and 20.9% often, while the largest percentage (75.8%) of children aged 12-14 affirms to not drink spirits. Young persons aged 12-19 consume alcohol: 45.3% occasionally and 26.1% often, men more than twice that women.

1.13 Access to culture, sports and recreation facilities

It is likely that the poorest children are very limited access to culture, sports and other recreation activities but very limited specific data exist. Specific samples of children at-risk-of-poverty need to be investigated to better understand if and to what degree access to culture, sport and recreation facilities exists.

Regarding the average Italian child population, what emerges from several surveys (e.g. CNDAIA 2006, CRCRC 2006, Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro 2005 and 2006) is a hyper-organisation of the children free time made by the adults.

Free time is well organised and supervised for culture, sports and other recreation activities with an intensive and diversified agenda and generally no space is left for inactivity, unexpected events and self-organisation.

Periodic surveys reveal how children spend their free time and what technological devices they utilise (e.g. Doxa-Junior 2004 on a sample nearly 2,500 children aged 5-13 representative of same age population). Time devoted to watching television is high and it is more or less equivalent to time spent to play outside or inside home. Study and sport follow while there is an increase in time spent playing video games and utilising personal computers. Reading (books and newspapers) is decreasing.

Portable telephone is owned by 29% of children as an average (but 72% if aged 12-13). Personal computers are available at home (63% children) together with the Internet (39% children) and mostly utilised to play (56% children).

Even though data are not easily comparable, the above-mentioned trends are confirmed also by other sources of information concerning previous years, e.g. 2000-2002 (e.g. CNDAIA 2005).

In 2002, children watched television mostly (94.3%), listened to the radio (62.8%), read at least one book (41.4%) a year.

In 2000/01, only 19.2% children played sports continuously whilst 40.3% did not play any sport.

In 2001 computers were daily used by 37% children (42.2% men and 32.1% women) and the Internet by 27.1% children (9.6% men and 4.9% women).

In 2002, entertainment constituted mostly of cinema (50% children), museum visits and artistic events (28.1%), sport events (27.3%), disco (25.2%), theatre (18.7%) and classic music concerts (9%).

In 2000, 20.8% children frequented bars and clubs at least once a week.

However, as underlined in a recent report elaborated by 45 NGOs (CRCRC 2006), children (especially those aged 6-10) play generally divided per gender, at home with brothers and sisters, while family (e.g. parents, grandparents and other members) plays a greater role than socialisation mechanisms (e.g. friends, schoolfellows).

1.14 Participation society

A decrease in participation is indicated by several sources of information and surveys, accompanied a low level of trust in institutions and associations (CNDAIA 2005, Eurispes-Telefono Azzurro 2006, IARD 2002 and 2006).

For instance, in 2001 among children aged 14-17: only 3% participated in meetings organised by ecologist associations, only 8.9% in meetings of cultural associations, 7.4% were involved in voluntary associations, 51% were totally disinterested in politics, only 2.7% talked about politics every day while at least once a year only 16% listened to a political debate, 18% participated in a political march and 4% in a political meeting. More participation is revealed in religious practice with 36.7% involved in religious practice at least once a week (64.9% if aged 6-13).

It is clear that, especially in comparison with other periods of time (e.g. the late 1960's, the middle 1970's and also the late 1990's), the range of socialisation has been progressively reduced to relationships strictly close to an individual sphere while lessening a collective commitment.

1.15 Groups at particular risk

Although it is difficult to quantify the actual number of the concerned persons, the social groups at particular poverty-risk emerge from the above paragraphs and are confirmed by pertinent reports of 45 NGOs elaboration (CRCRC 2005).

As a general consideration, they are children:

- living in Southern regions and in large households (three or more minors), even more if the reference person (breadwinner) is a woman, the employment status and the educational level are low
- living in single-parent households, even more if the parent is a woman
- being disabled
- being immigrant, even if unaccompanied minors or members of ethnic minorities

The last point deserves more information.

Immigration flow has impacted (Table 21) the total number of children present in Italy. They were 585,496 in 2006 (ISTAT 2007b), amounting to 21.2% of all immigrant population (2,767,964). Children born in Italy from legal immigrants are increasing as well. They were for instance 48,838 in 2005 (ISTAT, 2006e) contributing to lessen the negative population growth trend in Italy. Without immigration, the balance between live births and deaths would have been negative (Table 22) as the deaths have outnumbered births since 1993, except in 2004 characterised by the combined consequences of an extraordinary mortality recorded in 2003 and administrative delays in registering foreigners born in Italy (and thus accounted in 2004).

More than their Italian peers, migrant children have to face difficulties in education and training, as well as their households experience problems in employment (e.g. precarious, dirty, dangerous and low-skilled jobs), inconvenient housing, social and care services, cultural issues and so on.

Even worse is the condition of unaccompanied migrant children since they, as already explained, do not have any family assistance and care.

Ethnic minorities (Roma, Sinti and Travellers), which are estimated between 120,000 - 150,000 persons, generally have consistent problems, for instance: isolation due partly to the inability to communicate with other social communities and partly to narrow-mindedness of some host communities; social marginalisation both in the urban and country sides; work of a precarious nature, with a low income and dignity profile including windscreen washers, on-the-street-sellers; begging; moral decline and crime permeability including trafficking and prostitution.

1.16 Intergenerational transmission of disadvantages

During the last decade, between 2005 and 1997 (ISTAT 1998) poverty risk has maintained a steady dynamic state, with small changes within unchanged trends. These trends concerned nearly a generation (15 year-time span). There has been a transmission of poverty risk within similar social groups. However the following changes can be noticed in a more general context and looking at the future.

There is an increase in unbalanced relationships among generations and among social groups.

Italian children have less relationships both inside and outside the family with an increase in social isolation poorly substituted for virtual relationships and communication (e.g. the Internet, TV, portable telephone, advertisement, electronic purchase and so on). A "Nintendo or e-generation" and a "ad-spot generation" have taken its first steps.

The age-distance between parents and children is increasing along with a progressive divide that can have an impact in lessening mutual understanding and socialisation. The traditional social networks (once fully based on the household network) are decreasing while alternative forms of social capital concern less children than adult persons. Voluntary based associations are created and managed by adults and, even though some of them concern the children issues, they are mainly filtered by a family-oriented approach. Therefore a new "individualist" family-ism compensate for the lessening of the old but socially-wider family-ism.

Immigrant children are increasing in number and have less opportunities than their host peers, while narrow-mindedness (mainly based on religion backgrounds, stereotypes and prejudices) hampers more open and free relationships based on plural identities that could favour integration and cross-cultural evolution.

The Italian population is expected (ISTAT 2006g) to decrease (from the present 58,6 million to 55,8 million people in 2050) and to get older notwithstanding a positive contribution from immigration (+6,7 million people).

The risk of isolation is iterative both outside and inside different social communities especially when a member would like to abandon them and to change values, ways of live and relationships.

The "e-generation" will likely reduce differences within a cultural globalisation but not in the individual position of the most vulnerable children: technological, cultural, social and economic divides will be always present.

Moreover a consistent increase in environmental migration (due to climate change) is envisaged by the UN organisations (e.g. UNESCO, UNCCD): 135 million people (like France and Germany population putting together) are at risk of desertification; some 60 million are estimated to eventually move from the desertified areas of sub-Saharan Africa towards Northern Africa and Europe by the year 2020. Poverty and desertification are closely linked, being both cause and effect of themselves (e.g. two-thirds of the world's hungry people live in rural areas of developing countries).

As a consequence, old and new patterns of poverty risk will concern internal and outside dynamics in Italy, probably affecting the present regional unbalances.

1.17 Gaps in data and research

The reconstruction of child poverty risk made so far has highlighted the need for more research. Many dimensions and problems of child poverty are still underestimated or ignored. Many NGOs (e.g. CRCRC 2006) research and official statistics institutes affirm there is a lack of in depth analysis on key aspects (e.g. immigrants, unaccompanied migrant children, disabled, trafficking, prostitution, violence against children, child abuse, ethnic minorities and so on): in a word, exactly the groups at particular risk.

Moreover, there is a lack of awareness on the correlation between poverty and sustainable development as demonstrated by a low knowledge of the environmental implications (e.g. dirty neighbourhoods, limited access to a wise utilisation of the available natural resources for the quality of life especially as far as the most vulnerable social categories are concerned).

Sustainable development is universally recognised as a "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (WCED 1987).

Therefore sustainable development is aimed at searching for an inter-generational equity based on a wise management of the available services necessary for life, that is natural resources like clean water, air, soil and so on. This has become the first priority on the UN agenda aimed at fighting against poverty and social exclusion (e.g. UNDP / UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative to link poverty reduction and environmental management in view of the Millennium Development Goals).

In Italy, most analyses are still focused on traditional consumption-orientated parameters to quantify relative and absolute poverty while no data or statistics are elaborated to prevent and manage a correlated risk according to which "Resources move from the poor to the rich, and pollution moves from the rich to the poor" (Vandana Shiva 2000).

2 Policy framework and analysis of main policies

Five main priorities are revealed in the recent Italian National Strategy Report on Social Inclusion and Social Protection (NSR 2006): to reduce poverty with a particular attention focused on child poverty; to improve access to rights and services; to improve life conditions of immigrant and disabled people; to increase labour market participation; to reduce regional disparities (EC 2007).

The topic of children as “child priority” was initially systematically addressed in 1997 by a law on the promotion of childhood and adolescence opportunities and rights (Law No 285/1997). By the enforcement of this law, the following objectives have been pursued:

- to fight against children poverty and to combat violence against children through the creation of adequate services aimed at improving relationships between families and children while substituting for juvenile institutes (Istituti per i minori) with alternative forms of residential services
- to innovate and experiment with socio-educational services for the early childhood
- to implement innovative education and recreation facilities
- to develop positive actions for civil rights, gender, cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as to improve children well-being and quality of life through safe environment (both urban and natural)
- to provide economic support to natural or fiduciary (custody) families with one or more disabled children, alternative measures to support assistance / education with attention to the issues / problems of non-Italian minors (immigrants).

The law pursues a preventative approach (promotion of the well-being of all children, while guaranteeing their full access to civil and social rights) on which targeted policies are elaborated to meet specific needs according to conditions of life with close attention to the most vulnerable.

The law created a specific National Fund on Childhood and Adolescence to finance national, regional and local projects that meet the above-mentioned objectives. A close collaboration between regional and local authorities has been stimulated to manage both the Fund and the projects looking at an integration with the regional social and health plans, as well as at monitoring and evaluation of expenditures' efficacy.

At the same time another act (Law No 451/1997) introduced: a Parliamentary Commission on childhood, a National Observatory on Childhood and a National Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre (the already quoted CNDAIA). These institutional bodies have inter alia the task of elaborating a National Action Plan for policies in favour of childhood and a National Report on the childhood condition every two years while applying the UN Conventions on children rights, protection and well-being development.

The last National Action Plan was that concerning 2002- 2004 focused on: family foster care (Law No 149/2001) through mutual family aid networks and associations; adoption of minor (including disabled and most vulnerable) involving groups and associations; professional qualification and certification of staff working in communities that host children victims of family traumas; communities with families acting as educators and other innovative forms of hospitality (e.g. associations and groups of families, integrated service networks); innovative forms of residential services and closure of institutes for minors by the end of 2006 (as established by Law No 149/2001); measures to combat the exploitation of juvenile labour.

A new national Action Plan 2006 – 2008 is expected to consider a series of integrated actions to empower both households and children in a close relationships with a national Family Plan (see below).

A wide and coherent reform on social policies was initiated in 2000 (Law No 328/2000): establishing a more coherent planning framework (between national, regional and local plans) for social and health services based on the concept of subsidiarity and welfare community; promoting the principles of universalism (all citizens have the access to civil and social rights) and selectivity (different needs according to different conditions of life) in social policies and services (lifelong support) with attention to the most vulnerable (categorisation); supporting the planning framework with a National Fund for Social Policies (NFSP, created by No 449/1997) that incorporated the National Fund on Childhood and Adolescence (Law No 285/1997) along with other previously existing sectoral funds (e.g. those concerning disabled people, anti-drug, migration, volunteer associations) while allocating additional financial resources to those usually provided by regions and local authorities for their social policies.

This law included the issues of child poverty and the childhood and adolescence rights within the core priorities of integrated policies and services while highlighting the aims of previous laws (namely Law No 285/1997).

In 2001 a major Constitutional reform (Law No 3/2001) strengthened the principles of unity, subsidiarity and differentiation on which the social services reform (Law N° 328/2000) was based while attributing to the local and regional authorities full responsibility and autonomy also on social policies (other policies concern for instance employment and health domains).

As an overall result, according to a recent evaluation report (Ciampa A. and Ciccotti E. 2006), there was a harmonised development of laws specifically devoted to childhood and adolescence (Law No 285/1997) and the general law that reformed the institutional framework devoted to integrated social policies and services (Law N° 328/2000). A balance between universal and targeted approaches to fight against child poverty and to improve the well-being of all children was strengthened by integrating these issues into a more coherent system of social policies at a regional and local level. These issues have been mainstreamed in a wider policy arena and confirmed by the allocation of resources from the National Fund for Social Policies (NFSP) to regional and local plans devoted to children (e.g. from 10% to 50% of the overall available resources depending on the characteristics of the concerned territorial contexts). Policy and administrative capacity of regional and local authorities has improved throughout the national territory while creating a series of supportive mechanisms like co-ordination structures, documentation centres and observatories (to analyse the child conditions, to monitor and evaluate performance and results of plans and projects). Governance of social policies has increased in terms of empowerment of local communities to deal with integrated social policies while overcoming sectoral views on specific categories of citizens. A large number of stakeholders (including parents) have been involved in decision making processes while affirming the key role of the so-called “third sector” (social associations and NGOs). A wide number of children have been positively impacted by the law (e.g. in Emilia Romagna 20% of the regional child population). Exchange and dissemination of local and regional best practices has been initiated to acquire a common understanding on problems and solutions, while providing useful references for basic levels of services’ quality and performances.

The lack of definition of basic levels of civil and social rights and services throughout the national territory (requested by both Law No 285/1997 and Law N° 328/2000) constitutes one of the main weaknesses. Other limitations have been the different pace of awareness, implementation, capacity of monitoring and evaluating between local and regional contexts. Relationships have been not well developed between the Regions and 15 cities to which the State assigned a share of the National Fund for Social Policies, maintaining a “separation” between municipal projects and plans based on local zones (as pursued by regional programming).

According to the evaluation report, the law on childhood and adolescence favoured “a cultural revolution” and it was “a great opportunity” since it obliged different services to work together while acknowledging an extensive relevance of the child rights. In other words, the implementation of this law is currently nourished by the general reform of social services and is likely to be further strengthened in the near future.

Innovative strategic choices are evident in recent acts approved in Parliament. Some trajectories initiated in August (e.g. Law No 248/2006) have been strengthened in the 2007 financial law (Law No 296/2006). The latter constitutes the main public budget instrument for all policy fields at a national level for the near future. However, available information regard only the general amount of financial resources as the additional, future measures will be implemented by subsequent acts and projects that generally report purposes and aims but scarcely expected results in terms of amount of beneficiaries.

Ongoing agreements between the State, Regions and Local Authorities, relevant social partners and NGOs (e.g. those of the so-called “third sector”, namely social associations) will underpin the innovative trajectories through a co-decision making process (*concertazione*).

Collaboration and co-ordination between different levels and dimensions of action are expected through institutional mechanisms and procedures based on subsidiarity principles (e.g. the unified conference between national, regional and local authorities enforced by Law No 281/1997).

An overarching instrument was enforced to address combined issues and to meet needs of households and children: a National Fund for household policies. Initially the fund (created by Law No 248/2006) was given € 3,000,000 in 2006 and € 10,000,000 each year starting from 2007 but new resources were allocated by the 2007 financial law: € 210,000,000 in 2007 and € 180,000,000 in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The fund was created to:

- elaborate and implement a national Family Plan aimed at developing initiatives towards family rights, identifying the basic levels of performance that should be guaranteed in essential services throughout the national territory and to evaluate the impact of interrelated policies on household (family impact assessment)
- hold a biannual national conference on household policies while involving a wide range of stakeholders
- to create a National Observatory on Households that will involve relevant stakeholders
- finance initiatives aimed at reconciling family and work life
- reduce service costs for large households (4 children and more)
- enhance qualification of household assistant workers (for disabled, elderly, children and so on) through certification procedures and vocational courses
- disseminate local best practices also through specific reference to quality of family-friendly enterprises and public administrations
- elaborate and implement a national Plan aimed at reorganising and enhancing advice centres and clinics for households
- re-launch and support international adoption of minors through an apposite committee
- install the Ombudsman for Minors according to the 1993 UN Resolution No 48/134
- strengthen role and activities of the National Observatory on Childhood and the National Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre (created by Law No 451/1997)
- strengthen role and activities of the National Observatory against Paedophilia and Child Pornography (created by Law No 269/1998)

Strengths and weaknesses that emerge from the above-reconstructed policy framework can be summarised as follows.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>A clear priority given to child poverty with other associated issues in national, regional and local policies</p> <p>Clear objectives defined in this context</p> <p>A balance between universal and selective approaches, combining customised measures within integrated plans addressing multi-dimensional aspects of poverty</p> <p>Acknowledgement of child rights with a balanced focus on the role played by the family</p> <p>Good practises on mainstreaming issues associated with child poverty in national, regional and local policies</p> <p>Subsidiarity principles enforced to regulate relationships between the State, Regions and other local authorities</p> <p>Attribution of full responsibility on social policies to regional and local authorities to allow them to be closer to citizens</p> <p>Good practices (specially at regional and local levels) to co-ordinate policies and services aimed at improving child well-being and fighting child poverty</p> <p>Agreements between the State, Regions and Local Authorities</p> <p>Involvement of relevant stakeholders (e.g. NGOs) in decision making and service delivery</p>	<p>Poorly defined targets in terms of number of beneficiaries (only allocation of financial resources are sometime specified according to typologies of action / objective)</p> <p>A high-specialised knowledge on sectoral themes still impeding integrated (and more holistic) approaches</p> <p>Business-as-usual organisational behaviour in service delivery, supported by limited political will</p> <p>Links to previous policy orientation (e.g. pursued by the 2003 – 2006 National Action Plan inclusion) excessively focused on the role played by the conventional family</p> <p>Lack of a definition of basic levels of civil and social rights and services throughout the national territory (still missing)</p> <p>Reduction in resources attributed to regional and local authorities as an effect of national financial laws (especially during the last four years)</p> <p>Unbalanced performances between different territories</p> <p>Institutional conflicts between the State and the regional and local authorities especially in past years</p> <p>Consultation more than real participation of NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in decision making</p> <p>Relationships between regional and local authorities not always well developed</p>

Specific recommendations can be suggested to utilise the existing strengths in order to overcome the still deep-rooted weaknesses.

Recommendations to face the following challenges
<p>The co-ordination and collaboration between national and sub-national measures and between different levels of government need to be better defined</p> <p>Regional disparities continue and need to be reduced</p> <p>A clear orientation towards a holistic approach based on respecting and developing children's rights in order to hinder old and new family-isms should be strengthened</p> <p>The basic levels of child rights and services need to be defined taking into account regional and local good practices while promoting a more intensive exchange of knowledge</p> <p>Adequate financial resources to regional and local authorities should be provided in order to comply with their responsibilities in favour of their citizens</p> <p>The involvement of relevant stakeholders (e.g. NGOs) in decision making should be extended while developing alternative form to enhance child participation the society (e.g. children – councils, child-friendly cities, child visioning in town, school and service planning)</p> <p>The implementation of policies and the performances of plans and projects should be monitored to prevent any irresponsible or illegal behaviour</p>

The above-mentioned strengths, weaknesses and recommendations form the policy background that emerges from the analysis of the new legal framework strengthened by the 2007 financial law. These policies concern directly or indirectly the fight against child poverty (and social exclusion). To examine these policies in detail, a summarised assessment on some relevant aspects follows.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>A general policy framework more clearly orientated to social, interregional and intergenerational equity than before</p> <p>Income, employment, gender, social, health, education, immigration and youth policies aimed at increasing social security and protection while reducing precariousness and fragmentation in labour market, black labour market and hidden economy, child labour, abuse, trafficking and prostitution, early school leaving</p> <p>Housing policies aimed at improving living conditions while lessening costs and impacts due to environment depletion</p> <p>Positive impacts are expected from the combination of all the policies for those most at risk: large households and women with children, jobless households, young couples, children, elderly persons, not-self-sufficient persons, immigrants, disabled, ethnic minorities, adults in difficulty and the South</p>	<p>Limited definition of targets, only some attempt made to calculate the impact of income policy on the number of probable beneficiary households</p> <p>Lack of a combined assessment on the effectiveness of these policies to face the multiple aspects of poverty and social exclusion and more specifically, child poverty, labour, prostitution and trafficking, homelessness, unaccompanied minors</p> <p>Scarce strategic view regarding the changes in current production and consumption patterns, to improve the quality of life styles while acknowledging the fight against poverty as a pillar towards sustainable development</p> <p>Lack of assessment of education policies in terms of capacity building of present and future generation</p> <p>Lack of strategic impact assessment concerning the combined effects of economic, employment, social, health, immigration and other policies</p>

As a consequence, specific recommendations should be added to those already formulated.

Recommendations concerning the new legal framework strengthened by the 2007 financial law
<p>Measures that deal with the multi-dimensional problems and issues of childhood and adolescence should be identified in each policy field</p> <p>Clear targets should be defined for each main strand of action</p> <p>The identified strands and targets should be combined in order to have a coherent and consistent framework that nourishes the fight against child poverty</p> <p>The national Action Plan for policies in favour of childhood and the national Family Plan expected in next months should take in close consideration all the useful ingredients contained in all the other policies</p>

The following paragraphs provide more information on the new policies analysed according the key issues highlighted in Section 1.

2.1 Income policies to lessen monetary poverty

The 2007 financial law (No 296/2006) enforced a fiscal reform in favour of low income and large families by combining fiscal rates, deductions and family allowances. Fiscal rates were differentiated in: 23% for yearly incomes arriving at € 15,000, 27% from € 15,001 to € 28,000, 38% from € 28,001 to € 55,000, 41% from € 55,001 to € 75,000 and 43% from € 75,001 to higher incomes.

This differentiation is accompanied by taxation relief related to the family burden, e.g. from € 14,035 to € 14,755 for a worker's family of four persons (- 720 € more than before) while it is from € 7,500 to € 8,000 for a worker without dependent persons (-500 €).

Family allowances related to the number of children are increased eliminating the income brackets that previously determined sharp reduction in benefits due to marginal increase in wages.

As a combined effect of the new fiscal rates, taxation relief and family allowances, workers are expected to receive a net increase in annual wage, for instance around € 790 if they are in income bracket of € 21,500 and have two children and the partner dependent (CGIL 2006).

Maternity and illness allowances as well as parental leaves were improved and extended to persons employed with "atypical" labour contracts, namely fixed-term contracts.

These measures have been positively received by trade unions, even though some consumers-organisations fear initiatives to combine national and local taxation.

According to the ISTAT president (Il Sole 24 ore 13 October 2006), with the 2007 financial law the relative poverty could be reduced for nearly 140,000 households. This translates to 16 million of families that will receive some tax related advantage (-263 € as an average per year) compared to 4.8 million of families that will have to pay more taxes (nearly +400 € as an average per year). Nearly 1 million of households with the lowest income level (the poorest) will not receive any benefit since they do not pay any tax (the so-called "*incapienti*"). It is, however, established by the financial law that probable additional public revenues from the fight against tax evasion should be devoted to the "*incapienti*" in order to favour social equity.

Nearly 7.5 billion euros of additional state revenue was generated from fiscal revenue and currently a debate is focused on how to utilise these additional resources: a share will be attributed to reduce the huge state deficit following the indications of the European Commission; the remaining part (2.5 thousand millions) will be likely devoted to improve welfare measures (e.g. 66% for unemployment, social and security benefits, household income support against poverty) and to promote competitiveness (e.g. 33% for tax reduction for enterprises).

A specific fund was envisaged by the 2007 financial law to allow municipalities to reduce costs of energy supply contracts for the most vulnerable (including disabled and elderly people).

Other small benefits concern tax deductions concerning expenses to access basic services, e.g. sport activities, housing for university student away from home (non-resident), care of not-self-sufficient persons and nurseries.

The experimentation with a minimum income scheme for social insertion (RMI) has been prolonged to June 2007 in the concerned municipalities. It is worth remembering that this instrument was experimented between 1998 and 2002 (Laws No 449/1997, 237/1998 and 328/2000) in selected local areas. The experimentation with RMI concluded with the 2003 financial law (Law No 289/2002). This law preferred a new instrument (income of last resort, RUI) but without a clear definition and without implementation procedures. At present, the RMI reintroduction is expected accompanied by new criteria that will take into consideration also a more systemic reform of unemployment benefits and social allowances.

2.2 Policies to lessen regional differences

The following main policies were envisaged by the 2007 financial law (No 296/2006).

Tax relief concerning labour costs amounts to € 10,000 per year for each worker with permanent employment contract in the Southern regions (increased by € 1,800 – 2,000 in the case of women

worker). Investments (around € 120 billion between 2007 and 2013) will be made to support development of local areas lagging behind (mainly in the South) through the combination of regional, national and EU Community programming within the new National Strategic Reference Framework. Priority is given to infrastructures, information and communication technologies, research, competitiveness, education, knowledge society and safety. To this end the National Fund for Under-utilised Areas (created by Law No 289/2002) was increased up to € 64,379 million from 2007 to 2015. Other resources were given to environmental and soil protection and to develop an integrated transport system in the South, including resources previously devoted to the bridge on the Messina Straits and now allocated to two main Southern regions (Calabria and Sicily).

A National Fund for Urban Renovation was created to improve quality of life in Southern cities (especially Naples) through social and economic development with the involvement of the concerned regions. The fund amounts to € 50,000,000 per year in 2008 and 2009.

Apart from the financial law, a new Foundation was created (Ministerial decree, September 2006) to promote solidarity networks, subsidiarity and Corporate Social Responsibility in the South through a partnership between several volunteer associations, saving banks and bank foundations that allocated € 300,000,000 as a starting capital amount.

2.3 Policies to enhance safe environment and housing

Resources were dedicated by the 2007 financial law to develop a three-year National Public Housing Plan for disadvantaged households and persons. The resources amount to € 30,000,000 in 2008 and 2009 respectively plus other residual finances from previous laws.

The 2007 financial law includes measures of a transversal nature to stimulate the sustainable utilisation of the available resources as well as sustainable production and consumption patterns. It is worth noting the following.

Unauthorised construction which damages the landscape or the environment, is restricted through a triennial plan supported by the allocation of € 3,000,000 each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

A series of incentives in terms of fiscal deductions (for instance, up to € 60,000 depending on the type of individual initiative) to renovate existing buildings in order to reduce energy consumption (e.g. through solar panels). Permits for new buildings are granted and monetary incentives are given only if photovoltaic panels (that is energy saving and efficiency) will be installed. This measure is covered by a total amount € 15 million per each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

A mandatory plan obliges regions to increase recyclable-waste collection from 40% in 2007 to 60% in 2011.

A mandatory clause concerns public incentives only to finance electric power from renewable sources.

A solidarity fund was created to finance national and international projects that ensure the universal principle of free access to water resources, financed by a very small fiscal contribution charged on water plastic bottles.

A Fund for sustainable mobility and transportation was created to improve the air quality with a yearly amount of € 90,000,000 in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

A Fund for Sustainable Development was created to incorporate environmental dimensions in economic sectors, territorial areas, education and information policies (as well as in international co-operation projects) with € 25 million each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

A Fund was created to reduce greenhouse effects while applying the Kyoto Protocol with € 200,000,000 each year from 2007 to 2009.

Other incentives are given to reduce energy costs, to favour the utilisation of natural gas, cogeneration plants from renewable sources and to produce bio-fuels from biomasses at a local level.

2.4 Policies to improve employment, gender equality and combat child exploitation

Important innovations are expected in employment policies through a close consultation and involvement of the social partners (*concertazione*). These changes will be mainly aimed at limiting precariousness and fragmentation in labour market, limiting the impact of hidden economy, fighting against fiscal frauds (e.g. social security contribution), fighting against child labour, mainstreaming equal opportunity between men and women and reforming the (rather incoherent) system of security and unemployment benefits.

A series of measures were however anticipated by the 2007 financial law that tries to correct the increasing flexibility and jobs' typology (e.g. public and private services, training contracts and stages, part-time work, job-on-call, job-sharing, staff leasing and other temporary work) that were introduced (e.g. Law N° 30/2003). Among these measures it worth highlighting the following ones.

Labour-related taxation was reduced of 5 percentage points (2% in favour of employees and 3% in favour of enterprises) to enhance permanent employment while reducing fixed-term labour contracts and precariousness in labour market with a close attention to the South and Centre-North divide. The measure consists in a fiscal deduction of € 5,000 per year for each dependent worker with permanent employment contract in the Centre and Northern regions and € 10,000 in the Southern regions (increased by € 1,800 – 2,000 in the case of women employed). Fiscal deduction includes also social security contribution, industrial accident insurance, costs concerning apprentices, disabled workers and those with a training-labour contract.

Conversion of fixed-term labour contracts in open-ended contracts was facilitated in public services, for which a specific fund was created with the allocation of € 5,000,000 each year starting from 2007.

Similarly, benefits were provided to transform temporary jobs (concerning mainly young people) in labour contracts for permanent employment through collective bargaining agreements between companies and trade unions both at a business and local entrepreneurial fabric level (company and territorially agreements). € 300,000,000 per year in 2008 and 2009 are allocated to support this measure.

Moreover € 15,000,000 per year in 2007 and 2008 are allocated to promote vocational re-qualification and labour reinsertion of people with fixed-term labour contracts in restructuring processes.

Adjustments and extension of unemployment and socially associated benefits were introduced while waiting for a more systematic reform, including people involved in temporary jobs and "atypical" labour contracts (for instance illness, maternity and parental leave allowances, vocational re-qualification and labour re-insertion initiatives)

A National Fund for Rights and Equal Opportunities policies (created by Law No 248/2006 with the allocation of € 3,000,000 in 2006 and 10,000,000 per year starting from 2007) was increased by € 40,000,000 each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The fund is aimed at promoting positive actions against gender discriminations at workplace, home and in the society (including the policy arena) while updating the Equal Opportunity Code (enforced by Law No 198/2006), as well as to support women entrepreneurship and to increase women activity rate and employment rate.

Other measures are envisaged within the utilisation of the National Fund for household policies (see page 17) and they concern initiatives to reconcile family and work life and to determine new plans on the services' time, including volunteer "time banks" (as already envisaged by Law No 53/2000), with a close attention on women and small and medium sized enterprises.

The National Fund for employment of disabled persons (created by Law No 68/1999) were allocated additional resources, namely € 37,000,000 in 2007 and € 42,000,000 starting from 2008.

A national fund for the reduction of irregular employment was created with the allocation of € 10,000,000 in 2007 and 2008 while introducing new mechanisms to fight black labour market and to favour legally regular work. These mechanisms consist in indicators, social security contribution, sanctions, investments in research and initiatives on health and security policies and control, a national co-ordination body to develop local action plans (legally regular employment).

A national fund to support families of workers seriously injured by industrial accidents was created with the allocation of € 2,500,000 each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

2.5 Policies to fight against trafficking, prostitution, child abuse and violence

A share of the National Fund for Rights and Equal Opportunities policies (see point 2.4) is devoted to a Fund against gender and sexual violence as well as to creating a National Observatory against violence and gender discrimination.

Other measures are envisaged within the utilisation of the National Fund for household policies (see page 17), namely: international adoption of minors through an apposite committee; Ombudsman for Minors; National Observatory against Paedophilia and Child Pornography; National Observatory on Childhood and the National Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre.

2.6 Policies to improve education and training

There is a debate in relation to the modification of Law N° 53/2003 related to the school and training system (a dual system) that increased the tendency towards the privatisation of services and outsourcing. Some innovations anticipated by the 2007 financial law are as follows.

Compulsory education was extended to 16 years of age and access to labour market from 15 to 16 years of age. Pilot initiatives and the increase in quality and quantity of education services are supported for children aged 2-3 and to meet family needs (the so-called "springtime-classrooms").

Bonus to acquire school books was extended to upper secondary education. Adult and immigrant education was strengthened. The acquisition of new technology to support teaching methods was financed. As an overall amount, € 220,000,000 each year are allocated to the above-mentioned measures starting from 2007.

It worth remembering that financial resources are dedicated to the integration of foreigner minors in schools and a specific deputy minister was nominated by the Minister of Education.

A plan was established to employ nearly 150,000 teachers and nearly 20,000 technical – administrative staff with open-ended contracts between 2007 and 2009. At the same time, staff turnover and redundancy will be managed with a specific attention on increasing the number of remedial teachers for disabled pupils and students.

A national agency (in collaboration with Regions and local authorities) was created to ensure more autonomy, co-ordination and savings in school management.

Additional funds of € 100,000,000 were allocated to private schools starting from 2007 to increase education services delivery.

School building plans are supported with the allocation of € 50,000,000 in 2007 and € 100,000,000 each year in 2008 and 2009 (half the amount is devoted to making safe the existing buildings).

2.7 Policies to improve access to child educational services

Apart from the above-mentioned “springtime-classrooms” for children aged 2-3 (see point 2.6), a plan to improve socio-educational services for children is aimed at lessening regional unbalances both through the increase of these services in the concerned local contexts and through the definition of basic levels of performance throughout the national territory. A widespread distribution, accessibility (e.g. attendance time) and innovation (e.g. procedures and contents) are expected to improve the service delivery and proximity, which includes also nurseries at workplace and households’ aggregation (e.g. buildings). To this end € 100,000,000 are allocated each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

2.8 Policies to improve access to social and health services, as well as to promote civil rights

VAT (value added taxation) exemption was introduced in the 2007 financial law for social and health services devoted to immigrants, homeless people, asylum-required persons, convicts and victims of sexual and labour trade.

New resources were allocated to improve co-ordination, planning and delivery of social services basically managed by regional and local authorities according to the 2000 national reform (Law N° 328/2000), while previous financial laws did not effectively support this system.

A fundamental instrument (requested by Law N° 328/2000) is still missing, namely the definition of basic levels of social services to ensure fair access to civil rights for all throughout the national territory.

The financial instrument that ensures the widespread of local welfare plans is constituted by the National Fund for Social Policies (NFSP, instituted by Law N° 328/2000), for which the Constitutional Court decreed in 2003 and 2004 that all resources attributed to regional authorities must be managed by the latter autonomously according to their decisions on social policy while converging into their own budgets.

The Fund (NSFP) was Integrated by € 300,000,000 per year between 2006 – 2008 (Law No 248/2006). Immediate effects were in 2006 with an allocation of € 1,624,922,940 (Minister decree 25 August 2006) corresponding to an increase of 24% over the overall 2005 budget and an increase of 50% in resources

directly and autonomously managed by regional and local authorities, which received the 50% of the overall fund. The other 50% supports initiatives of the national ministry (social solidarity) and of the national institute of social insurance (INPS).

The 2007 financial law allocated to the NSFP € 1,635,141,000 in 2007, € 1,645,841,000 in 2008 and € 1,378,914,000 in 2009.

A significant amount (€ 44,466,940) of the NSFP has always been directed to 15 relevant municipalities. This share is reserved for actions concerning child welfare according to the law on the promotion of childhood and adolescence opportunities and rights (Law No 285/1997), which created a specific fund for childhood and adolescence. As a matter of fact, the latter has converged into the wider National Fund for Social Policies (NFSP).

The 2007 financial law reattributed a specific status to the fund for childhood and adolescence (ex- Law No 285/1997) as a response to the negative assessments on the above-mentioned confluence from the part of leading NGOs (CROCRC 2006) while encountering a further negative assessment from the part of the Regions on the re-establishment of the fund as a separated entity from the NFSP.

However, the NFSP addresses several target groups, children included, according to the regional / local identities and needs while being managed through agreements and collaboration between regional and local authorities given that the main instrument for implementation is constituted by local welfare (or social) plans. Moreover some regions are experimenting with the integration of social and health policies through local plans to which several financial sources converge.

The 2007 financial law also created a National Fund for Social Inclusion of Immigrants, focused on social and housing difficulties, with an allocation of € 50,000,000 per year in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The fund serves also to favour a better integration of immigrant students through cultural mediators. Another Fund concerns immigration and asylum rights, to which € 3,000,000 are allocated starting from 2007.

A government bill was presented to the Parliament in August 2006 to modify the current legal framework (prevalently based on "ius sanguinis"), for instance: children born in Italy from foreigner parents will be automatically acknowledged as Italian citizens ("ius solii") if at least one of the parents has a stable residence of 5 years; foreigner parents who have acquired Italian citizenship can request that their children, born abroad, are recognised as Italians without waiting for legal age (18 years).

Another bill was presented by the government very recently (April 2007) to modify the current immigration laws towards a more coherent, open, multi-dimension approach aimed at solidarity, social inclusion and multi-cultural cohesion.

However, both bills need to be further enforced in Parliament to be effective.

Moreover a national plan dedicated to social inclusion of Roma minors is expected (e.g. education and health services) through a close collaboration between government, Roma associations and volunteer organisations, along with strengthening the action of cultural mediators in favour of Roma, Sinti and Travellers.

A National Fund was created (always by the 2007 financial law) to assist not-self-sufficient persons, with the allocation of € 100,000,000 in 2007 and € 200,000,000 per year in 2008 and 2009.

New resources were allocated by the 2007 financial law to develop and improve the National Health Service, managed by regional and local authorities, along with the updating of basic levels of rights

(essential services to be provided to all citizens), new parameters for financial stability and efficient planning and management of services' delivery. The resources are: € 2 billion in 2006 to compensate for budget reduction introduced by previous financial laws; € 96,040,000,000 in 2007 (5.8 billion more than those established by the previous financial law); € 99,082,000,000 in 2008; € 102, 285,000,000.

A national institute was created to fight against illness due to poverty and to promote health of immigrants, homeless people, nomad people and those at risk of social exclusion. The tasks are: prevention, care, vocational training and research. They will be supported by the allocation of € 5,000,000 in 2007 and € 10,000,000 each year in 2008 and 2009.

Specific resources, € 500,000, were destined to prevent the practice of genital mutilations against immigrant women.

Other measures concerning women are included within the utilisation of the National Fund for household policies (see page 17) and they consist in the provision of household advice centres and clinics, as well as of qualified workers (for disabled, elderly, children and so on).

Incentives are given by the 2007 financial law to public retail businesses in order to remove physical barriers that impede accessibility and mobility of disabled persons. These incentives are covered by a specific Fund to which € 5,000,000 are allocated in 2007.

Other measures address the needs of disabled people and are contained in nearly all the above-mentioned policy strands, while receiving a cautious appreciation from the part of leading NGOs.

Moreover a national plan will be elaborated in 2007 with the participation of relevant stakeholders in order to promote new equal opportunities actions for disabled people against discrimination, to favour access for all to rights and services, employment and social inclusion, as well to simplify and strengthen security and social protection, while elaborating new classification of disabilities.

2.9 Policies to prevent drug abuse and alcohol consumption

A National Fund for Juvenile Communities was created by the 2007 financial law especially to promote awareness on and prevention of drug abuse with the involvement of youth associations and networks. The fund is nourished by € 5,000,000 each year between 2006 – 2009. At the time the law created a National Observatory on hardships encountered by young people and drug addiction. It should be noted that centralisation and separation of competences enforced in 2004 (national department, fund and plan under the Presidency of the Ministers' Council), as well as a penal and repressive approach were modified in May 2006 in favour of a social inclusion approach. Institutional mechanisms based on the integration of anti-drug issues were reintroduced into the social and health policies and services with a relevant role assigned to regional and local authorities.

2.10 Policies to improve access to culture, sports and recreation facilities

A National Fund for Youth Policies (created by Law No 248/2006) was financed with € 3,000,000 in 2006 and € 10,000,000 starting from 2007. Additional resources were given to the fund by the 2007 financial law: € 120,000,000 each year in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

The fund aims at promoting the rights of young people to have adequate education, cultural backgrounds for a better insertion in social life and employment with benefits inter alia on housing and credits to buy goods and services.

The fund resources will be utilised to implement a National Youth Plan to empower young people, to reduce school drop-outs, to support networks and association among young people, to support creativity and access to the cultural domains, while providing credits to finance study periods, vocational training and enterprise creation. A monetary allowance is given to students who need to rent a house in order to attend University in other cities in the form of 19% fiscal relief of the actual cost to a maximum of € 2,633 per year. Similar tax relief is provided to those aged 5-18 to access sport facilities to a maximum of € 210 per year.

The creation of a favourable climate for a national "cultural hub" is envisaged through a reduction in costs (up to 40%) related to creativity, innovation and intellectual property rights in scientific, industrial and trade fields for people aged under 35, along with tax credits for SMEs in artistic sectors.

Other monetary and service support (on credit, house renting, ICT instruments, vocational guidance and training, sport activities) are provided in agreement with local authorities, as well as reduction in labour-related taxation and incentives to employ young people, to favour open-ended labour contracts (see point 2.4). University education is stimulated along with a national plan to employ in a stable manner young people as researchers.

3 Monitoring and Evaluation processes

The assessment of the policy framework requires information and a policy structure that is not presently available, but, in some respects, is being developed. A structured poverty impact assessment does not exist in Italy. Likewise, little coherent historical data exists to evaluate progress in several areas. Recently (July 2006) the national government affirmed its commitment to apply a coherent family impact assessment of sectoral policies (education, health, housing, transport and so on). If pursued, this commitment would allow national and regional authorities to better perform and co-ordinate sectoral policies and monitor their progress and impacts on child poverty.

These tools for evaluation and monitoring should be disseminated, in particular the child impact assessment, as recommended by UNICEF in 2006.

Several sources of evaluation and monitoring do exist but there remains a research gap in key aspects of poverty (e.g. children, ethnic minorities, homeless people), necessary to support strategic policies and feasible targets. For instance, this report was based on information from the following sources: the national institute of statistics (ISTAT), the national Observatory on Childhood and the Childhood-Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre (CNDAIA), the national Inquiry Commission on Social Exclusion (CIES), the UNICEF – Innocenti Research Centre, the national Observatory against Paedophilia and Child Poverty, the Working Group on the UN Child Rights Convention (CRCRC) and Eurispes & Telefono Azzurro. These constitute the most appropriate evaluation and monitoring structures on child issues and poverty in Italy. These sources adopt methodologies that combine nationally-based and internationally-defined indicators (e.g. OECD, UN and EC). Furthermore, ISTAT data follows criteria defined at a European level since it closely collaborated with EUROSTAT.

Administrative sources are those provided by the concerned ministries (e.g. Health, Education, Solidarity, Welfare, Employment) as well by national public agencies, e.g. those dealing with social insurance (INPS) and insurance against industrial injuries (INAIL).

All the above-mentioned organisms elaborate specific reports with different purposes and deadlines, according to their institutional tasks.

A series of documentation centres and Observatories have been created at regional and sub-regional level as a result of the law on childhood and adolescence (Law No 285/1977) and the law on social policies (Law No 328/2000).

Other Observatories will be created in the near future according to recent acts (mainly the 2007 financial law), e.g. on households, against violence and gender discrimination, on hardships encountered by and drug addition of young people.

Generally the observatories involve a large number of stakeholders, namely regional and local authorities, social partners, NGOs (e.g. social associations acting in the “third sector”), different public administrations, relevant universities and research institutes, as well as academics and experts.

45 NGOs constitutes the Working Group on the UN Child Rights Convention (CRCRC), while Telefono Azzurro is a volunteer organisation.

Therefore, following the considerations developed in this report, a key recommendation is to strengthen co-ordination and collaboration between institutional bodies in order to improve research, in depth analysis on key aspects of child poverty while experimenting with and sharing methods devoted to the impact assessment of policies on children and households.

Statistics

Table 1: Relative poverty	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Households (000)	2,585	2,674	2,401	2,456	2,663
Percentage on total number of households	11.1	11.7	10.8	11.0	12.0
Persons (000)	7,577	7,588	6,829	7,140	7,828
Percentage on total number of inhabitants	13.1	13.2	12.0	12.4	13.6
Lone parents (%)	13.4	12.8	11.8	11.5	13.0
Couples with 3 or more children (%)	24.5	22.7	21.0	24.4	24.5
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005; 2004, 2003 and 2002					

Table 2: Relative and absolute poverty	2002	2001
Relative poverty = percentage on total number of households	11.0	12.0
Absolute poverty = percentage on total number of households	4.2	4.2
Relative poverty = percentage on total number of inhabitants	12.4	13.6
Absolute poverty = percentage on total number of inhabitants	5.1	5.3
Source: ISTAT 2003 and 2002		

Table 3: Households at at-risk-of-poverty rate					
Percentage on total number of households	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Surely poor (-20% standard line)	5.1	5.5	5.0	5.1	5.4
Scarcely poor (between -20% to 0% standard line)	6.0	6.2	5.8	5.9	6.6
Total poor (standard relative poverty)	11.1	11.7	10.8	11.0	12.0
Nearly poor (+20% standard line)	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.0
Total at-risk-of poverty	19	19.6	18.7	19.0	20.0
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005; 2004, 2003 and 2002					

Table 4: Comparison between EU-based data and Italian data: Italy 2004				
(A) EU indicators		(B) Italian indicators		Difference (A-B)
Population at-risk-of-poverty rate	19.0%	Persons in condition of relative poverty	13.2%	5.8 percentage points
Source: (A) EUROSTAT 2007 and EC 2007; (B) ISTAT 2005				

Percentage on total number of inhabitants	2004	2002
Banca d'Italia income-based indicator (1)	13.4	13.3
ISTAT consumption-based indicator (2)	13.2	12.4

Source: (1) Banca d'Italia 2006 and 2004; (2) ISTAT 2005 and 2003

Percentage on number of household typologies	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Average households	11.1	11.7	10.8	11.0	12.0
Households with 1 child	10.1	10.6	9.4	9.2	12.0
Households with 2 children	17.2	16.9	15.5	15.2	16.2
Households with 3 or more children	27.8	26.1	21.7	25.9	28.0
Difference between larger and average households	+16.7	+14.4	+10.9	+14.9	+16.0
Increase from 1 child to 3 or more children	+17.7	+15.5	+12.3	+16.7	+16.0

Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002

Surveys	Percentage	Main criteria of poverty rate
European Commission (year 2004)	24	Below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income
Italian commission on social exclusion (CIES) on ISTAT data (year 2004)	16.8	Below 50% of per capita average national consumption expenditure
Banca d'Italia (year 2004)	21.4	Below 50% of the national median equivalent income
UNICEF - Innocenti (most recent data)	15.7	Below 50% of the national median equivalent income (most recent data)

Source: EC 2007; our elaboration on ISTAT data reported in CIES 2006; Banca d'Italia 2006; UNICEF – Innocenti Research Centre 2007

Table 8: Relative poverty (percentage)	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Households: National average	11.1	11.7	10.8	11.0	12.0
Households: South	24.0	25.0	21.6	22.4	24.3
Households: Centre	6.0	7.3	5.8	6.7	8.4
Households: North	4.5	4.7	5.5	5.0	5.0
Inhabitants: National average	13.1	13.2	12.0	12.4	13.6
Inhabitants: South	26.5	26.7	22.6	23.6	26.2
Inhabitants: Centre	6.7	7.3	6.6	7.9	9.6
Inhabitants: North	5.1	4.9	5.8	5.4	5.2
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002					

Table 9: Households with 1 child	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
South (% on number of households)	19.6	22.9	19.6	18.3	23.1
Centre (% on number of households)	5.4	6.3	4.4	6.0	9.4
North (% on number of households)	4.8	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.4
Italy (% on number of households)	10.1	10.6	9.4	9.2	12.0
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002					

Table 10: Households with 2 children	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
South (% on number of households)	29.9	30.3	25.0	23.2	27.5
Centre (% on number of households)	8.7	6.1	8.6	9.8	10.5
North (% on number of households)	7.2	6.7	7.9	7.6	5.1
Italy (% on number of households)	17.2	16.9	15.5	15.2	16.2
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002					

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	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
South (% on number of households)	42.7	41.0	31.9	32.9	37.0
Centre (% on number of households)	*	*		*	*
North (% on number of households)	*	*		16.7	15.5
Italy (% on number of households)	27.8	26.1	21.7	25.9	28.0
* not significant data because of scarce sample size					
Source: ISTAT 2006a, 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002					

Households	Usual monthly expenses	Unexpected expenses	Delay in payment	Heating	Food	Health care	Clothing
With 1 child	15.4	28.3	12.1	9.4	5.4	9.6	19.4
With 2 children	19.2	32.9	15.1	11.0	6.3	11.3	22.2
With 3 or more children	20.4	30.9	26.6	11.3	10.9	14.7	27.4
As a national average	14.7	28.9	9.0	10.9	5.8	12.0	17.8
As an average in the South	22.8	42.5	15.3	22.4	7.4	21.0	28.3
As an average in the Centre	13.1	24.8	7.8	7.9	4.9	9.6	14.6
As an average in the North	9.9	21.4	5.3	4.4	5.0	7.0	12.00
Source: ISTAT 2006b; results non comparable with those of a previous survey carried out in 2004 because of different methodological criteria (see following table).							

Table 13: Households (percentage) with problems concerning the following aspects (2004)

Aspects	A – Households with 3 or more children (A)	B - National average (B)	Difference B-A
Cannot afford an adequate meal every second day	11.7	7.5	- 4.2
Cannot have one week annual holiday away from home	51.0	38.8	- 12.2
Lack of telephone	9.7	4.3	- 5.4
Lack of personal computer	16.5	8.5	- 8.0
Lack of Internet	14.8	8.4	- 6.4
Lack of car	6.2	4.0	- 2.2
Lack of dishwasher	16.6	10.4	- 6.2
Damaged flats	13.1	11.1	- 2.0
Damp flat	25.5	19.3	- 6.2
Accommodation too dark	13.5	10.1	- 3.4
Overcrowding (persons / 100 square metres)	5.8	2.9	- 2.9
Pollution	22.5	22.5	0
Criminality	17.0	14.8	- 2.2

Source: ISTAT 2006c

Table 14: Relative poverty rate associated with employment status of families (percentage)

Reference person (breadwinner)	2005		2001	
	Italy	South	Italy	South
Employed	9.4	20.3	9.8	20.8
Self-employed	7.9	18.0	7.5	15.3
Job seeker (unemployed)	31.4	43.3	31.8	42.5
Retired	11.6	26.7	13.4	27.8

Source: ISTAT 2006a and 2002

Indicators (*)	Women situation	Differences between women and	Difference between Italy and the EU
	(A)	men (A)	25 average (B)
Activity rate (1)	50.8	- 23.8	- 12.1
Employment rate (1)	46.3	- 24.2	- 11.0
Unemployment rate (2)	8.8	+ 3.4	+ 0.3
Fixed-term contracts	15.8	+ 4.6	- 0.3
Part-time employment	26.4	+ 22.4	- 6.7

(*) Data concern national average, but women conditions worsen in the South where their activity rate is 37.3% (32 percentage points less than men), employment rate 31.1% (31.2 percentage points less than men) and unemployment rate 9.6% (6.6 percentage points more than men)

(1) % of population aged 15-64; (2) % of labour force aged 15+

Source: (A) Data regard **2006** and are taken from ISTAT 2007 ; (B) Data regard **2005** and are taken from EC 2006

Reference person (breadwinner)	2005		2001	
	Italy	South	Italy	South
None or primary education	17.6	33.8	18.7	33.6
Lower secondary education	12.3	26.3	12.5	26.3
Upper secondary education and over	4.5	10.5	4.8	11.0

Source: ISTAT 2006a and 2002

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Table 17: Early school-leavers (percentage) (*) - 2006	Italy	EU 27	Difference between Italy and EU 27
Total	20.8	15.4	+ 5.4
Women	17.3	13.2	+ 4.1
Men	24.3	17.5	+ 6.8

(*) Percentage of the total population aged 18-24 who have at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training. Source: EC 2007

Table 18: 2003 PISA assessment areas	30 OECD countries	
Average performances in Italy	Upper rank*	Lower rank*
Mathematics	25	26
Science	19	25
Reading	21	26
Problem solving	24	26

(*) Range of rank order positions within which the country mean lies with 95% likelihood because data are based on samples. Source: OECD 2004

Table 19: Italian nurseries between 2000 and 2005		
Indicators	2000	2005
Number	3.008	4.885
Private services (percentage)	20%	80%
Public services (percentage)	39%	61%
North (percentage)	58,8%	61,2%
Centre (percentage)	23,7%	19,3%
South (percentage)	17,5%	19,5%
Access ratio (*)	7,4%	9,9%
Region with the two highest access ratio	Emilia Romagna (North) = 18,3% Valle d'Aosta (North) = 12,3%	Emilia Romagna (North) = 23,9% Veneto (North) = 19,9%
Region with the two lowest access ratio	Calabria (South) = 1,9% Campania = 2,2%	Puglia (South) = 1% Calabria (South) = 2%

(*) Access ratio: available places in nurseries / potential users (children)

Source: elaboration on data provided by Istituto degli Innocenti 2006

Table 20: Disabled persons leaving in household by age group (percentage on same age groups)

0-5	6-14	15-24	25-24	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
1.3	1.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.3	2.5	5.5	9.7	17.8	44.5

Source: ISTAT, www.disabilitaincifre.it

Table 21: Immigration trends between 2001 and 2005

Indicators	1 January 2005	1 January 2004	1 January 2003	21 October 2001 (census)
Legally registered foreigners	2,402,157	1,990,159	1,549,373	1,334,889
Increase over previous year (%)	20.7	28.4	16.1	--
Minors (0-17 years)	20,9%	20,8%	22,8%	21,3%
Percentage of total population	4,1%	3,4%	2,7%	2,3%

Source: ISTAT 2006f and other demographic data

Indicators	31 / 12 / 2005	31 / 12/ 2004	31 / 12 / 2003	31 / 12 / 2002
Population	58,751,711	58.462.375	57.888.245	57.321.070
A. Immigration	325,673	444,566	470,491	222,801
B. Emigration	65,029	64,849	62,970	49,383
C. Net migration balance: A-B	260,644	379,717	407,521	173,418
D. Natural balance (1)	-13,282	15,941	-42,405	-19,195
E. Others (2)	41,974	178,472	202,059	173,105
F. Population yearly increase: C+D+E	289,336 (0.5%)	574,130 (1%)	567,175 (1%)	327,328 (0.6%)
Immigration over yearly increase: % (A / F)	113%	77%	83%	68%
(1) Natural balance is the difference between the numbers of live births and deaths				
(2) Corrections to statistics due to mistakes and mismatch in registration of domestic migration				
Elaboration on data provided by ISTAT 2006g, 2005d, 2005c, 2004a and www.demo.istat.it				

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