

Italy

Women in decision-making: **1/5**
Socio-economic position of women: **1.64/5**
Violence against women: **1.25/5**

UNDERSTANDING ITALY

Only 46.8% of women in Italy are employed and 48.2% are classified as “inactive”. Among the employed, a significant number work part-time, with the gender gap in full-time employment at 25.7%, one of the largest in the EU. The gender pay gap, on the other hand, is small at 5.5%.

Care responsibilities inhibit women’s full participation in the labour market. Only 21% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. In addition, childcare facilities in Italy are insufficient. Only 11% of infants under 3 have places in public nursery/kindergarten facilities, while only 22% are in formal childcare at all. 58% of mothers with one child under the age of 15 work. This drops to 54% for those with 2 young children and 33% for those with 3.

Violence against women is endemic in Italy, with the UN Special Rapporteur warning of alarming increases in femicides. 80% of violence in Italy is within the home, with 82% of perpetrators being intimate partners. In 2010, 13,696 women sought refuge in shelters. Only 26% registered a formal complaint.

While in principle abortion is legal and free of charge in Italy, more than 70% of doctors refuse to perform interventions, severely limiting access in practice. Similar restrictions hamper access to the morning-after pill.

TRENDS:



Italy recently passed groundbreaking legislation for the increased representation of women in decision-making. A first bill in 2011 introduced a quota of 1/3 for the under-represented sex on the boards of publicly-listed companies, to be reached by 2015. Sanctions are progressive: warning; fine; dismissal of the board. A second bill in 2012 provided for a legal parity measure within municipal and regional councils, local authorities and public commissions.

A new network (“Rete delle Donne”), has emerged to lobby for the introduction of a “zipper” system for national electoral lists to ensure gender balance among candidates.

In September 2012, the Italian government signed but has yet to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women.



Increasing unemployment and cuts in social and health expenditures are strongly impacting upon women’s lives. Recent reforms to the pension system are leaving increasing numbers of elderly women at risk of poverty. In 2010, 19.5% of women over 65 in Italy experienced poverty. While the median pension for a man is EUR 1,311 per month, the average for women is just EUR 893 per month.

In 2012, the budget for the National Action Plan to combat violence against women was cut from EUR 20,000 to EUR 18,000, putting pressure on already limited services to victims.

Highlights

21%

women in parliament

6%

women on boards and no women presidents of the largest companies

5.5%

gender pay gap

25.7%

gender gap in full-time employment

22

weeks maternity leave at 80% pay

0.09

places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

Abortion is legal but restricted by widespread conscientious objection and religious influence