

Report 2024



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**Workshop on Home, Family
and Domestic Work**

familynetwork

Workshop on Home, Family and Domestic Work

REPORT 2024

This Report was produced on behalf of Assindatcolf by: Censis - Centro studi investimenti sociali, European Federation for Family Employment & Home Care (Effe), Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos.

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Section I

Rethinking domestic work: policies, proposals and solutions for the future

by Assindatcolf

Introduction

In recent years, the issue of domestic work, with all its many implications, has gained increasing prominence in public debate and has emerged as one of the most difficult challenges for policymakers. The report “Family (Net) Work - Workshop on Home, Family and Domestic Work” was born precisely with the intention of shedding light on this complex reality, bringing together the expertise of authoritative research centres such as Censis, Effe, Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro and Idos Study and Research Centre. A new publishing project, conceived as a “collective” work, capable of analysing not only the specific sphere of domestic work, but also family dynamics, welfare policies, migration policies and, last but not least, related economic trends. The aim has always been to provide a complete and exhaustive view of the phenomenon.

But what is the most pressing problem today? Undoubtedly that we have structured a model that shifts most of the difficulties, especially the economic ones, onto families, without providing them with the necessary support to cope with costs and bureaucracy.

It is now clear to everyone that there is an urgent need for a general overhaul of the system, both regulatory and fiscal, aimed above all at redistributing responsibilities fairly and making domestic work sustainable, with the active involvement of the State, which has been the great absentee.

The consequences of this leeway are more than tangible, just look at the figures compiled by the Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro in its report “Family (Net) Work 2024”. In the last two years, between 2021 and 2023, the number of domestic workers has fallen sharply, according to both Inps statistics – which monitor the regular component – and Istat statistics on employment in households with domestic workers, which include irregular workers in their counts. The Inps calculates a reduction of 139,755 workers between 2021 and 2023, a decrease of 14.3%. In fact, the number of registered workers will fall from 973,629 in 2021 to 833,874 in 2023. According to Istat estimates, the reduction would have been even greater, with 145,700 fewer employees in the same years (-9.5%), and the total number of employees, including irregular workers, would have fallen from 1,530,000 to 1,384,800.

Although there is no clear answer to this phenomenon, for us the starting point remains the “economic issue”, i.e. the increasing difficulties families have in meeting the costs of care. Domestic work is not a luxury, but a transversal need that cannot be postponed and on which work choices, personal and family balance depend. In this regard, we recall that the Censis study included in this report highlighted how domestic work has become the country’s main instrument of social protection. This state of affairs has contributed to increasing the insecurity of families, who are more and more inclined to ask for measures to alleviate their economic burden. The same considerations are set down in black and white in the chapter by the Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, which, thanks to the results of a survey carried out on a representative sample of As-sindatcolf and Webcolf households employing domestic workers, has tackled the issue of the sustainability of expenditure.

In July 2024, 42.3% of households using the services of a regular domestic helper reported that the cost had become difficult to afford. The percentage varies widely, from 11.2% of households where the cost has a small impact on monthly income, to 73.6% of households where the impact is between 30 and 50%, to 93.6% of households where the cost is more than 50 per cent of income.

What is also worrying, according to the Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, is the trend over the last two years, which shows a steady increase in family difficulties. Compared to the surveys carried out in January 2023 and July 2023, the proportion of households that noted the increasing unaffordability of costs rose from 25.6% (January 2023) to 36.9% (July 2023) and 42.3% (July 2024).

Households with an average level of economic wellbeing are the ones where the increase in difficulties is most pronounced: the share of those who consider spending on domestic help to be difficult to afford doubles from 27.9% in January 2023 to 55.2% in July 2024.

For those on lower and lower-middle incomes, the critical points identified in previous surveys are confirmed: almost eight out of ten consider spending on domestic help and carers to be unsustainable.

In order to curb this trend, we have studied European best practices. In particular, thanks to the work carried out by the Effe association, it has been possible to analyse and compare the home care systems of the main Eu countries, starting with France, which 30 years ago introduced virtuous reforms in the domestic sphere that

have made it possible to reduce irregular work by 30%, while providing significant support to families and workers. In this context, in May 2024, Assindatcolf organised a meeting between the Parliamentary Intergroup on Domestic Work¹ and a French delegation made up of technicians from Urssaf² and Fepem³, thanks to which it was possible to study the “French model”. This is a complex system of benefits which, in brief, provides for a refund of 2 euro per hour worked by the domestic worker and a 50% tax credit for the employer. The combination of these elements results in a reduction of more than half of the costs borne by the family, from 20.27 euro (hourly cost including wage – equal to 11 euro – and social security contributions) to 9.13 euro. A mechanism that is accessible to all because it is universal, can be used immediately (even before the tax filing period) and is completely dematerialised because it is online.

On the basis of this model, we want to show how a system based on tax credits can be progressively implemented in Italy, with tangible benefits both in terms of economic support for families and as an effective tool in the fight against undeclared work.

1 The Parliamentary Intergroup on domestic work was born in 2023 on the initiative of Assindatcolf with the aim of creating a fruitful debate on the issues of domestic work. The objectives include the promotion and support of legislative, social security, welfare and social initiatives in line with the spirit of the Intergroup, which focus attention on aspects of primary importance in the family, for the achievement of important objectives such as: emergence of irregular work in the home, female empowerment and increase in women's employment, better home management of non-self-sufficiency.

2 Urssaf is the French agency responsible for collecting insurance contributions and family allowances.

3 Fepem is the Federation of French Domestic Employers.

1. - The current tax system

There is no doubt that the current tax and contribution system does not adequately favour households that employ domestic workers. When calculating their costs, companies can take into account the wages and contributions of their employees by deducting them from their taxable income. The situation is different for households.

So far, a domestic employer is entitled to limited and insufficient tax benefits, such as the deductibility of contributions paid for his or her domestic helper, carer or babysitter, up to a maximum of € 1,549.37 per year. Only in the case of a carer hired to look after a dependent person with an income below 40,000 euro is there a minimum deduction of the amount spent on the salary, up to a maximum of 399 euro per year, or 19% of 2,100 euro (**tab. 1**).

Tab. 1 – The current state of tax benefits for domestic employers

Subject tax	Category workers	Base	Measure	Income
The taxpayer coincides with the employer	Domestic helpers, carers and baby-sitters	Contributions (employer's share only)	Up to 1,549.37 euro	For all incomes
The taxpayer coincides with the employer but may also be different (1) (e.g. the son who hires a carer for his father)	Carers	Deduction (2)	19% of max 2,100 euro (or € 399)	Only for incomes up to 40,000 euro per year

(1) For expenses that are incurred in the interest of the persons indicated in Article 433 of the Civil Code (spouse, legitimate, legitimised, natural or adopted children, parents or in their absence their ascendants, adoptive parents, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, brothers and sisters whether germane or unilateral).

(2) Cumulative with previous tax relief.

Source: Assindatcolf

Assindatcolf has been fighting for many years for families to be able to deduct the full cost of domestic help, not just part of the contributions (as is already the case), but also holidays, thirteenth month, severance pay and wages, the most expensive item in a family budget.

In recent years, however, the economic situation in the country has worsened and this has made recourse to home care increasingly unaffordable, especially for those who are not self-sufficient. The problem of cost has begun to affect the choices of families already involved in caring for elderly relatives who are no longer able to look after themselves, and for disabled people of all ages.

This situation calls for a rethink of the tax system, capable of resolving both the problem of costs, which today mainly affects poorer households, and that of the emergence of undeclared work. If the regularisation of 2020 has favoured the emergence of a significant number of workers, bringing the irregularity rate to 51.8% (latest Istat data available), according to the estimates of the Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, also included in this report, it is to be expected that the decline in employment in the last two years will be accompanied by an increase in the same estimated at around 54% for 2023. According to these projections, of the 1,384,000 domestic workers in 2023, 632,000 will be regular and 753,000 irregular.

The figures for undeclared work in this sector are a matter of general interest that can no longer be reduced to the private dynamics of the family-work relationship. The domestic help sector accounts for 38.3% of total undeclared work: a striking figure given that the sector represents only 4.2% of regular employment.

The annual cost of irregularity is quantifiable at 2.4 billion euro, consisting of lost contributions (1.5 billion euro) and Irpef evasion, estimated by the Ministry of Finance at 904 million euro per year.

Faced with this situation, which is increasingly plunging the domestic sector into crisis, Assindatcolf has drawn up a new proposal that is better suited to the changed economic and social context, based on a tax credit. It is an instrument that can reach a wider audience than deductibility and, above all, in a fairer way.

In fact, the deduction reduces taxable income by reducing the amount on which the tax to be paid is calculated. In short, if an expense is deductible, its amount is subtracted from total income

before taxes are calculated, but the amount of the saving depends on the individual taxpayer's tax bracket: the higher it is, the greater the benefit obtained from the deduction. A more universal instrument is the tax credit, a fixed amount not linked to income, which is deducted directly from the amount of tax payable once it has been calculated and, if there is a surplus, returned to the taxpayer in the form of the difference.

On the basis of this substantial difference, the Assindatcolf study office has calculated the costs and benefits of a possible application of the tax credit mechanism to the costs that families incur for domestic help (home help, carers and babysitters). All of this was compared with a doubling of the current contributions paid on behalf of the worker, which would allow a better social security and welfare treatment of the family helpers, in order to spread the benefits of the measure to them as well as to the families.

In order to assess the impact, three different hypotheses were formulated with the same number of tax credit rates, namely 30% (hypothesis 1), 40% (hypothesis 2) and 50% (hypothesis 3). According to the simulations carried out, the new measure (accompanied by both the increase in contributions and the abolition of the current deduction) would cost 2.7 billion euro in hypothesis 1, 4.8 billion euro in hypothesis 2 and 7.8 billion euro in hypothesis 3.

However, in terms of direct effects, it is estimated that this measure could not only create new demand for employment in the sector, but also generate a significant increase in informal employment: 20% in hypothesis 1, 35% in hypothesis 2 and 60% in hypothesis 3. Combining these two elements would reduce the costs to 1.2 billion in hypothesis 1, around 2 billion in hypothesis 2 and 3.3 billion in hypothesis 3.

Finally, there are the indirect effects: the increased consumption that households would be able to sustain as a result of the impact of the measure on the household budget, and the contributions and tax revenues resulting from the potential new employment of family carers in other jobs (it is estimated that for every 100 family carers, there are 30 employers of carers). Without these conditions, the net cost of the tax credit would be 710 million in hypothesis 1, 1.5 billion in hypothesis 2 and 2.6 billion in hypothesis 3 (**Table 2**).

The estimates made do not take into account the effect of reducing the costs of the black economy in terms of lost tax revenues

and Irpef evasion, which would be another significant benefit for public accounts, increasing the current 2.4 billion to 1.9 billion in hypothesis 1, 1.5 billion in hypothesis 2 and 959 million in hypothesis 3 (**Table 3**).

Tab. 2 – Simulation of the economic impact of the measure, by proposed hypothesis
(a.v. in millions of euro)

		Hypothesis 1 30%	Hypothesis 2 40%	Hypothesis 3 50%
A	New measure cost	-2,742	-4,810	-7,870
	New tax credit	-3,833	-5,902	-8,961
	Contribution deduction	183	183	183
	Contribution adjustment	909	909	909
B	Direct effects from emersion and new demand	1,226	2,032	3,337
	Social contributions	693	1,128	1,825
	Irpef	239	390	630
	Reducing the cost of Naspj, Rdc, other subsidies	294	514	882
C	Indirect effects	805	1,226	1,844
	VAT recovered from consumption	759	1,169	1,774
	Indirect effects from new employment	46	58	69
	Social contributions	35	44	53
	Irpef	11	13	16
	Net cost (A-B)	-1,515	-2,778	-4,533
	Net cost (A-B-C)	-710	-1,552	-2,689

Source: Assindatcolf estimates

Tab. 3 – Simulation to reduce undeclared costs, by proposed hypothesis (a.v. in millions of euro)

	Current (2023)	Hypothesis 1 30%	Hypothesis 2 40%	Hypothesis 3 50%
Sunk cost	2,398.6	1,918.9	1,559.1	959.4
Irpef evasion	904.0	723.2	587.6	361.6
Tax evasion	1494.6	1195.7	971.5	597.8

Source: Assindatcolf estimates

In addition to the undoubted benefits for the state, there would also be benefits for families. In order to understand the scope of the measure, we have chosen the most emblematic and common example, that of hiring a full-time carer for a dependent person (classified at CS level and paid according to the Union's minimum rates, updated to 2024). To be able to afford this type of care – which of course does not mean 24-hour care – a family must budget an annual cost of around 16,300 euro, including all the remuneration provided for in the contract (salary, holidays, thirteenth month's salary and severance pay). To this must be added the cost of contributions, which is around 2,550 euro a year.

If the tax credit were applied as in the 30% hypothesis, there would be a “discount” on the total cost of around 5,655 euro per year; around 7,540 euro in the 40% hypothesis and around 9,425 euro in the 50% hypothesis. In the case of undeclared work, the state would receive an additional total contribution (including the worker's share) of 3,300 euro and a tax credit on the worker's income of about 1,500 euro. This would result in an even greater advantage for the state, with the cost falling to 850 euro in the first hypothesis, to 2,740 euro in the second and to 4,625 euro in the third.

To sum up, for an initial investment, the State would undoubtedly reap benefits both in terms of the elimination of undeclared work and the creation of new jobs. It would also finally be able to play the role assigned to it by the Constitution in protecting citizens' social and welfare rights.

2. - The domestic work sector between benefits and lack of recognition

The year 2024 has finally seen the introduction of new legislative measures aimed at the domestic work sector. The recently introduced measures undoubtedly represent a step forward compared to the *status quo*, mainly because they send a positive signal of recognition of the sector and its problems. Among the most important innovations are the 100% exemption from contributions for a limited category of domestic employers and the decree implementing the Enabling Act on Non-Self-Sufficiency, which provides for the introduction of a benefit of 850 euro per month, albeit granted to a very limited group of employers. However positive these measures may be, they are not sufficient to adequately address the complex needs of families.

There are also many “missed opportunities”, such as provisions to facilitate the employment of women or young people, which could have had a positive impact on domestic work if only they had not excluded it!

While much remains to be done at the national level, there are many regions that have made progress by implementing measures that have become good practice, showing how a local approach can sometimes provide more effective solutions. However, these initiatives often remain isolated and are not replicated at national level.

2.1. - Main legislative changes in 2024

As of 2024, new legislative measures have been introduced in the domestic work sector, including the implementing decree of the Non-Self-Employment Act – which provides for a bonus of 850 euro for a certain category of employers – and a limited contribution exemption for the same group of beneficiaries of the 850 euro bonus.

Implementation decree for non-self-sufficiency and the 850 Euro bonus

On 10 October 2022 - in its last Council of Ministers - the Draghi government approved the draft substitute law on the reform of care for the non-self-sufficient elderly, as envisaged in the Nrp. With the change of government, the ball was passed to the Meloni Government, which in January 2023 approved the text of the draft proxy law on policies in favour of the elderly. A text in continuity with the one prepared in the previous legislature, except for the part on carers, which was removed by the Meloni government because of the intention to devote specific legislation to this issue. The draft law on policies in favour of the elderly thus began its parliamentary process, which ended with its final approval in March 2023 (Law 33 of 23 March 2023).

This is an important law that lays the foundations for a concrete reform and provides for important innovations, such as the introduction of a universal non-self-sufficiency benefit. According to the text, this would be a benefit graduated according to the specific need for assistance and payable at the individual's choice in the form of a cash transfer and personal services, including those provided by family assistants. Delegated Law 33/2023 also provided for the recognition and reorganisation of contributory and tax benefits as a means of supporting the regularisation of care work carried out in the home, an important regulatory intervention to address the major problem of the countless irregular employment relationships that exist in this sector.

In March 2024, the government adopted the decree implementing articles 3, 4 and 5 of the enabling act. This established the universal benefit, an experimental measure from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2026, based on specific care needs, in order to promote the gradual improvement of services to support the home care and personal autonomy of non-self-sufficient elderly people. The requirements for potential beneficiaries of the measure include: being at least 80 years old; having a very high level of need for assistance; having a social-sanitary Isee value of no more than 6,000 euro; being in possession of the accompanying allowance or, in any case, being in possession of the requirements for its recognition. The decree also stipulates that the amount of the benefit will be made up of a fixed monetary amount equivalent to the allowance, plus an

additional amount defined as an “assistance allowance – equal to 850 euro per month – intended to remunerate care work carried out by employed domestic workers or the purchase of care services provided by companies”.

The introduction of a universal benefit to pay the regular carer is certainly a step in the right direction, but we believe that more needs to be done. Firstly, it is an experimental measure for two years, in addition to the carer’s allowance – which remains unchanged – and this does not allow the objective of a complete, structural and universal reform to be achieved. Secondly, the pool of potential beneficiaries is really too narrow: a high level of dependency, an age of at least 80 years and reduced financial resources. As the Pact for a New Welfare for Non-Self-Sufficiency⁴ – a network created by civil society and made up of more than 60 associations, including *Assindatcolf*, which has been a member since 2021 – also argues, this introduces the principle that assistance for non-self-sufficiency can only be used if one has limited economic resources, whereas welfare should support all people in need. Another critical aspect is the budget available: the decree provides for a budget of 250 million euro for 2025 and the same amount for 2026, which would mean a maximum grant of 850 euro per month for each beneficiary. Unfortunately, despite the good intentions, this amount would not even cover half of what a family spends on hiring a full-time carer: we are talking about 1,671 euro per month and 18,927 euro per year for a cohabitation regime, and 1,854 euro per month and 20,896 euro per year for an hourly carer. Although the path of incentivising regular work is the right one, we believe that this measure will not bring great benefits even on the front of the emergence of irregular work, which, as we know, has a very high percentage in this sector: around 753 thousand workers without a contract in 2023. According to our estimates, at best about 2% of today’s undeclared relationships could emerge for a limited period.

With regard to the delegation of powers concerning the recognition and reorganisation of tax and contribution benefits to support the regularisation of care work carried out in the home of the dependent person (provided for in the aforementioned Article 5), this provision is implemented only with regard to the recognition of the regulations in force. In fact, a literal list of the regulations

4 <https://www.pattononautosufficienza.it/>

currently in force is drawn up, while there is unfortunately nothing new on the front of the reorganisation and remodulation of tariffs. According to Assindatcolf, the reorganisation of family support regulations can be divided into two specific areas: work and welfare. Here we are talking about welfare and, as already mentioned, more needs to be done. On the labour front, structural measures need to be taken in the sector to combat the scourge of undeclared work. More than half of the households (1.2-1.4 million) with undeclared workers, like all employers, need to be incentivised to regularise their labour costs through tax breaks. It should be noted that while the social measures are non-refundable, the labour measures would generate revenue in the form of contributions and taxes and, most importantly, reduce the social costs that are unduly paid to many undeclared workers. The sum of these two measures would also make it possible to make the home care system, which covers over 90% of situations in Italy, self-sufficient. The number of institutionalised elderly people who are not self-sufficient, i.e. who live in assisted living facilities (Rsa), will be 362,249 in 2022⁵, out of a total of over 2.8 million in Italy.

Contribution exemption for domestic employers

One of the most important innovations in 2024 is the contribution exemption for domestic employers, introduced by Decree-Law No. 19 of 2 March 2024 on “further urgent provisions for the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Nrp)”. This measure allows employers to benefit from a 100% exemption of their contributions, up to a maximum of 3,000 euro per year for a period of two years, for new hires or the conversion of open-ended contracts of workers caring for dependent persons. The rule stipulates that the employer receiving the benefit must meet the same conditions as those laid down for the universal benefit for non-self-sufficient persons: non-self-sufficient person, over eighty years of age, already in receipt of the accompanying allowance and with reduced economic resources (see for subsidised benefits of a social-sanitary nature not exceeding 6,000 euro).

Although this measure concerns a very small group compared to the total number of people in the sector, it represents an important

5 Source: Italia Longeva.

step forward for the innovations introduced in the area of contribution exemptions. Given that the provision is part of the article dedicated to the provisions on the prevention and combating of undeclared work, we believe that it is in line with the stated objective and we give a positive assessment of the path taken. We are talking about the introduction – at last – of an exemption from contributions for domestic employers, which represents the breaking of a taboo that has always existed: families can also benefit from contributions. As we will see in the next section, all the exemptions or reductions in contributions to the Inps have always excluded the domestic work sector.

Despite the good premises, the new provision covers an infinitesimal number of relationships, so the intervention is not very effective in this respect. As with the universal non-self-sufficiency benefit, the pool of potential beneficiaries is really too small. In order to have an impact on undeclared work, incentives should be extended to all types of relationships, including the hiring of domestic help and babysitters, and, more generally, fiscal measures such as tax credits should be considered.

2.2. - Missed opportunities

Despite the legislative innovations mentioned above, the domestic work sector continues to suffer from some 'missed opportunities'. We are talking about the exclusion from any measures to facilitate recruitment, a major issue that penalises both employers and workers. While a number of incentives have been put in place to encourage the hiring of workers in other sectors, through contribution rebates or bonuses, the domestic sector is still excluded. As a result, this sector – which employs a significant number of workers and meets essential needs such as care for the elderly and dependent persons – is relegated to a low status. The lack of incentives makes it difficult for families to regularise employment relationships, contributes to the expansion of undeclared work and deprives domestic workers of basic protection. Exclusion also deprives the sector of the possibility of attracting new workers, hindering its development and the creation of more decent and stable working conditions.

Among the measures that exclude the sector, the first is the reduction of the tax wedge, which was extended until the end of

2024 with the last budget law and has already been announced for the next financial manoeuvre. Three other measures were recently introduced with the Cohesion Decree (Decree-Law 60/2024): the bonus for young people under 35, the bonus for women and the bonus for Zes (Special Economic Zones). For working mothers, on the other hand, the 2024 Budget Law provides for an exemption from the part of the social security contributions paid by working mothers with three or more children, extended in 2024 to workers with two children; a measure that applies to all working women, with the exception of domestic workers.

In terms of hiring young people, there is also the incentive for young people under 36 (Budget Law 2023) and the incentive for young people under 30 (Law no. 205 of 27 December 2017), which does not include domestic work. And again, the incentive for people over 50 who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (Law No. 92 of 28 June 2012) and the incentives for people living in the South, the so-called “Decontribuzione Sud” (Law 178/2020). With regard to disadvantaged women, *ad hoc* incentives have already been created since 2012 (Law No. 92 of 28 June 2012), of course always excluding domestic work. And finally, the very recent measure on social inclusion (Article 10 of Decree-Law 48/2023), which, like its predecessor, the citizenship income, does not allow the domestic employer who hires a beneficiary of the social inclusion allowance to benefit from the exemptions provided for.

It is clear from these examples that the domestic sector has always suffered from a kind of discrimination compared to other sectors, as if it were considered a second-class job. However, when we decide to hire a carer, a domestic worker or a babysitter, we are entrusting these workers with the people and things that are most dear to us: our children, our elderly parents or our home. It is enough to bear this in mind to realise that this type of work should not be underestimated but, on the contrary, increasingly professionalised and incentivised.

2.3. - Analysis of regional best practices

In a complex national context, some Italian regions have distinguished themselves by implementing virtuous models in the field of domestic work. In order to better understand these good practices, the Fidaldo Atlas has been created – an interactive national and regional map to record all the policies and economic support available to families that hire domestic workers – home help, carers and babysitters. This tool is promoted by the Italian Federation of Domestic Workers, of which Assindatcolf is a member.

In its 3rd Research Report, The Fidaldo Atlas has updated the information on care allowances in the different Italian regions. Some relevant examples are:

Emilia-Romagna: offers a care allowance with an additional contribution to promote the qualification and regularisation of the work of family carers for dependent persons, integrating these services into the public service network.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia: provides, among other forms of care allowance, the Contributo per l'aiuto familiare (Caf), which supports families that hire family assistants with a regular contract to care for persons with severe dependency.

Lombardy: in addition to care allowances for non-self-sufficiency, it offers so-called Bonus family carers, specifically dedicated to domestic work and integrated with other support measures.

These examples demonstrate the importance of regional policies aimed at providing economic support to families. However, even in this case, the resources available are not always sufficient to guarantee the continuity of the programmes or to meet the needs of families, which highlights the need for a more structured commitment at national level.

The legislative changes introduced in 2024 undoubtedly represent a step forward for the domestic work sector, but several gaps and missed opportunities remain. While some regions have stood out for their ability to innovate and experiment with virtuous models, other initiatives have been discontinued or insufficiently supported. The future of domestic work requires constant commitment from institutions – national and local – with integrated policies that strengthen the sector and make it more attractive.

3. - Supply-demand management policies: the Flows Decree “case”

Historically characterised by a strong presence of foreign workers (around 70% of the total), the domestic sector continues to rely heavily on the contribution of non-Eu nationals. It is precisely for this reason that we have insisted in recent years that, after more than a decade of exclusion, the domestic sector should also be included in the three-year planning of the Flows Decrees. An appeal that was accepted at the end of 2023, when, also thanks to our estimates of the need for family care, the programming was reactivated with the inclusion of the domestic sector and the provision of 9,500 quotas to be allocated to family and social health care each year for the three-year period 2023-2025. A half victory, because we have always been convinced that the procedures linked to the Flows Decree, including the much-criticised “Click Day” modality, were totally inadequate, not only from a structural point of view, but also in terms of numbers.

In the summer of 2024, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni hypothesised a revision of the rules governing immigration flows. Assindacolf seized the opportunity to present a package of proposals for improving the domestic sector through the Technical Table set up at Palazzo Chigi. The main request was to overcome the quota system provided for in the Flows Decrees, which allows applications to be submitted at any time of the year, since household needs cannot be planned. There was also a request to simplify entry procedures and to introduce an annual residence permit with a restriction on domestic work, which could only be renewed if the worker could prove that he or she was continuously employed.

To confirm the urgency of reforming the entry system for non-Eu nationals, we also cite data from a survey conducted by Censis on a sample of 2,400 households employing domestic workers and included in the 2024 Family (Net) Work report. The survey showed that 82.5% of households employing domestic workers would prefer to adopt alternative procedures to the Flows Decree. In particular, 28.4% of respondents would opt for an annual residence permit for job-seeking that could be converted into a work permit, while 27.8% would opt for regularisation through a work contract, acces-

sible at any time and on an individual basis, for workers without a residence permit who are already on Italian territory and whose income is higher than the annual social allowance. A slightly lower proportion, 26.4% of the sample, would opt for direct recruitment on call, “additional quotas” for the employer, at any time and without limitation in terms of the total number intended for the sector or the country of origin, i.e. without the restrictions provided for by the Flows Decree. Only 17.5% think that the Flows Decree is adequate as it stands.

As an alternative to overcoming quotas, we called for a system similar to that already in place in agriculture, with direct management by the most representative employers’ associations, but adapted to the real needs of the market. According to estimates in the report “Family (Net) Work 2024”, Italian households will need about 18,626 non-Eu domestic workers in 2025. On 2nd October, the government approved the decree on changes to entry procedures, which provides for an additional quota of 10,000 workers to be assigned to care for the elderly and disabled in 2025 on an experimental basis, in addition to the 9,500 already planned for the same year. For the first time, this will bring the quota into line with the need for family care. Other important innovations are also planned, such as the pre-filling of applications, the telematic signing of contracts to rationalise time and procedures, more “Click Days” to prevent the system from going haywire and to strengthen controls.

4. - Summary considerations

In two years, some progress has been made, particularly in the area of the regulation of entry flows, where the Government has been able to listen to the demands of those affected and has taken the first steps towards a structural reform of the system of entry for work purposes. Our goal is still to overcome the quota mechanism and the “Click Days” system, as Alfredo Mantovano, Undersecretary of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, admitted after the decree was approved. But even if the direction is the right one, the time and resources are totally inadequate compared to what would be needed to structurally reform the entire welfare system in our country. To reverse the march, one could start with the “missed opportunities”, which could easily be implemented without major manoeuvres, and extend them to the domestic sector. Among the most urgent are those aimed at eliminating undeclared work, which is undoubtedly a social and economic scourge. With regard to labour market support schemes, measures must be taken to make labour costs tax-deductible (in full or in part) or to recognise a tax credit based on the labour costs incurred. There is also an urgent need for a reorganisation of all the regulations under the heading of “active employment policies”, abandoning any reference to the Isee. This condition, where it exists, only encourages the misuse of public resources, also with regard to the behaviour of the workers, who very often try to appear poor in order to continue to benefit from State benefits (from the Naspi to the Inclusion Allowance, from the exemption from the health card to the scholarship or the reduction of the nursery school fees, etc.). If we add to this the continued exclusion of households employing domestic workers from benefits and bonus mechanisms, we can understand why the sector has an irregularity rate at the levels described.

Finally, action must be taken swiftly on social welfare. The urgency, as we have seen, is mainly dictated by the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the sector, both formal and informal. If we want to be optimistic, the fall in the number of jobs – 150,000 in two years – could be partly explained by the assumption that some domestic workers have left a sector that is not wrongly considered to be poor in order to seek employment in more attractive sectors with higher wages. However, looking at the phenomenon from a realistic

perspective, we are inclined to justify this reduction in employment as a consequence of increased costs. A burden that causes a family member to give up his or her career. A fact that worries us because more and more women are doing this: it is more “convenient” for them to give up their job than to continue to pay for a family carer. In other words, a loss of workers in the sector and a loss of workers in other sectors who become full-time carers.

For real change, it is crucial that institutions act with greater determination and provide concrete resources to support the 'normalisation' of domestic work. This means investing in tax incentives and benefits that make working in the clear more convenient than working in the informal economy. Only through a determined commitment will it be possible to make regularisation not only an ethical choice, but also an economically advantageous solution for workers and families, thereby promoting fairer and more sustainable growth for the country.

Section I

Where is welfare going? Health, care and welfare in the families' expectations

by Censis,
Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali

Introduction

The chosen analytical approach by the Family (Net)Work for 2024 is grounded in the observation that, post-Covid and following the heightened expectations set by the Nrrp, the state of public services dedicated to health, care, and overall social protection is paradoxically more critical today than pre-pandemic.

Simultaneously, the commitment to constructing a comprehensive framework for welfare reform appears to be diminishing, as evidenced by the underestimation of non-self-sufficiency in the recent government decree implementing Delegated Law 33/2023.

The primary focus is on the concerns of Italian families, particularly those supported by Assindatcolf and Webcolf, regarding the practical ability to navigate a phase in their family members' lives that is highly susceptible to unforeseen events and age-related issues.

Consequently, this paper aims to present the current state of the social protection system in Italy, highlighting demographic, social, and economic trends that are placing strain on social protection mechanisms.

Households' responses to this situation remain uncertain, vacillating between a clear awareness of future risks and a lack of direction regarding potential solutions and the resilience of their resources.

The second part of the paper delves into the representation of households' expectations and concerns. A thorough analysis of key issues in managing domestic labour relationships, such as conditions of insecurity and discomfort that could lead to significant transitions like resignation or dismissal, is followed by an examination of households' perceptions of the risks and inadequacies within the social protection system.

1. - Health, between demographic constraints and the public service backwardness

Public expenditure on social protection benefits in the health sector amounts to euro 123,464 million in 2022 (**Table 1**). The data show that 21.4% of total expenditure on social protection benefits is allocated to the health sector.

Tab. 1 – Social protection benefits in the health sector, 2022 (in millions of euro and % val.)

Function and type of service	Public Administration Institutions	% val. of total of social protection benefits	% val. by segment
<i>HEALTHCARE</i>			
Social benefits in kind corresponding to market goods and services	41,777	7.2	33.8
Drugs	7,469	1.3	6.0
General medical care	7,004	1.2	5.7
Specialist medical care	5,341	0.9	4.3
Hospital care in private nursing homes	9,904	1.7	8.0
Rehabilitation, integrative and prosthetic care	3,477	0.6	2.8
Other assistance	8,582	1.5	7.0
Social benefits in kind corresponding to non-market goods and services	81,687	14.2	66.2
Hospital care	43,747	7.6	35.4
Other health services	37,940	6.6	30.7
Total health	123,464	21.4	100.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

A significant portion of health expenditure, precisely 66.2% amounting to euro 81,687 million, is allocated to social benefits in kind. These encompass non-market goods and services, with hospital care accounting for 35.4%, and other health services making up 30.7%.

Conversely, 33.8% (euro 41,777 million) of health spending is directed towards social benefits in kind for market goods and services. This includes hospital care in private nursing homes (8.0%), pharmaceuticals (6.0%), general medical care (5.7%), specialist medical care (4.3%), rehabilitation, supplementary and prosthetic care (2.8%), and other forms of care (7.0%).

The National Health Service, a cornerstone of public welfare, grapples with unprecedented challenges. One such challenge is demographic decline, posing a threat to its resilience.

The interplay between health demand and the provision of care and health services hinges significantly on the demographic evolution of a population. This dynamic is particularly noteworthy in Italian society, given the country's susceptibility to aging, dependency, and disability.

The demographic decline, known as the “demographic winter”, commenced in 2014 when the total population began to decline, dropping by just over 50,000 units. This decline persisted in subsequent years, with the total resident population projected to be just under 59 million by January 1, 2023, a 2.2% decrease from the 60.3 million recorded in early 2014.

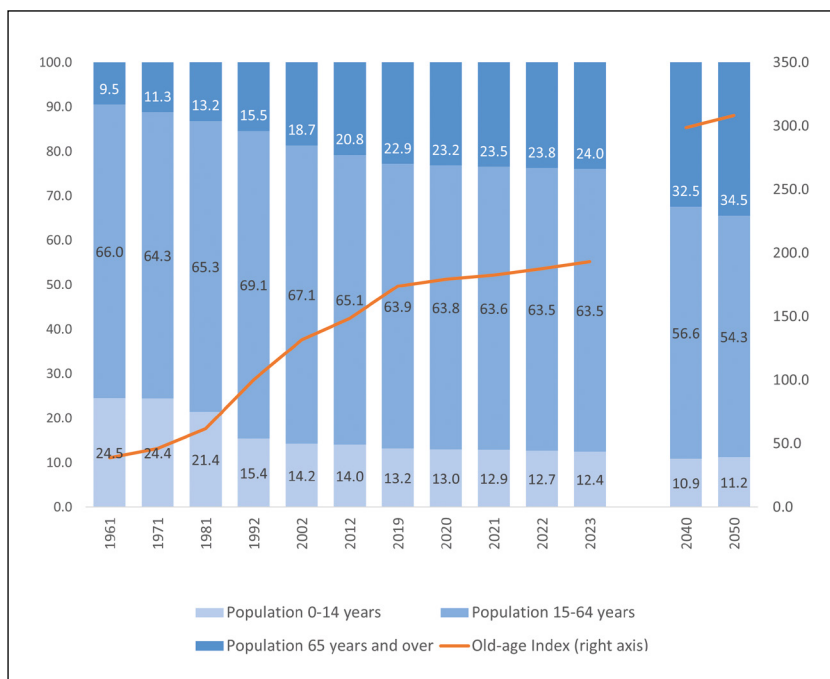
This phenomenon is closely tied to Italy's diminishing birth rate, a trend set to continue in the coming years. Notably, there's a reduction in the number of women of childbearing age and a decline in the fertility rate, which was set on 1.25 in 2021. The pandemic and subsequent crises have further aggravated the economic situation of families, intensifying uncertainty about the future and exacerbating the fertility crisis.

As the birth rate declines and living conditions improve, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over is steadily increasing, projected to account for just under a quarter (24%) of the total population in 2023 (**Figure 1**). Simultaneously, the old-age index is on the rise, reaching 193.1 in 2023 and is forecast to approach 300 in 2050, with three people aged 65 and over for every person aged under 14.

The demographic transition implies a surge in demand for long-term care, driven by an increase in chronic diseases and age-related conditions. This places a greater strain on health care resources, challenging the sustainability of public services. Compounding this, the shrinking working-age population means fewer resources available, while the number of beneficiaries in old age (over 65) continues to grow.

Following a prolonged period of vulnerability in the health service leading up to 2020 and the disruptive impact of the pandemic, data indicates a return to the pre-pandemic trajectory, despite the assurances made during that period. The degradation of the public health service has become an additional hurdle.

Fig. 1 – Age structure of the population in Italy, from 1961 to 2023 (*) and projections for 2040 and 2050 () (% val.)**



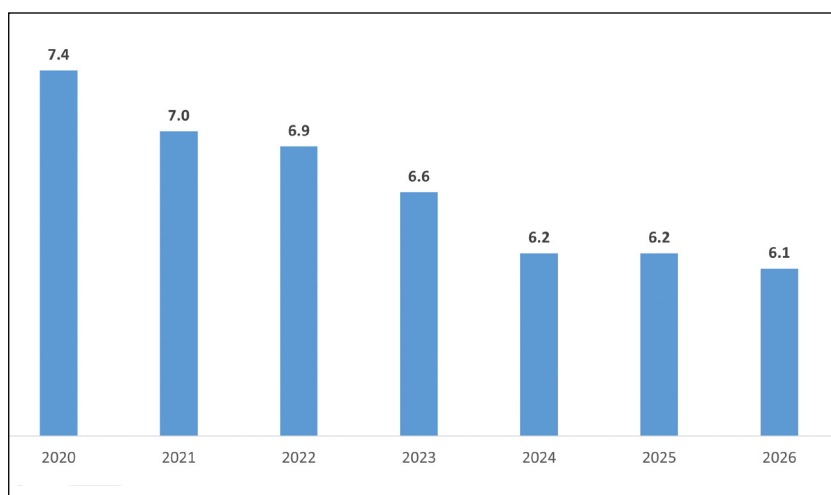
(*) From 1961 to 1981 the data refer to the Census, from 1992 they refer to 1 January of the year

(**) Median scenario

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

NaDef 2023 highlights a concerning trend wherein public health expenditure as a percentage of Gdp is set to decrease in the upcoming years, notwithstanding the well-documented vulnerabilities of the national health system over the years. Despite allocating 7.4% of GDP to public health expenditure in 2020, this figure is expected to decline to 6.1% of Gdp by 2026 (**Figure 2**).

Fig. 2 – Public health expenditure on GDP, 2020-2023 and forecast 2024-2026 (% val.)



Source: Censis processing of Istat and Ministry of Economy and Finance data

Furthermore, the immediate future is anticipated to bring heightened challenges in terms of human resources, given the escalating shortage of doctors and nurses. This foretells that regional facets of the health service will increasingly grapple with diminished resources against a backdrop of growing health needs. This raises the peril of compromising the quality of care, accessibility, and equity of the service, thereby fostering health inequalities across different segments of society.

The variation in the effectiveness of regional health services remains a significant concern, evident in the disparities in public health expenditure per capita across different regions. Nationally, the current public health expenditure per inhabitant, excluding mobility costs, stands at 2,241 euro. This range fluctuates from 2,041 euro in Calabria to 2,773 euro in Trentino-Alto Adige (**Table 2**). Furthermore, there is a distinction in per capita health expenditure between regions with and without a deficit reduction plan, with figures standing at 2,155 euro and 2,298 euro, respectively.

The data reaffirm the persisting disparities in public health expenditure per capita, revealing a substantial gap of over euro 700 between the region with the highest and lowest expenditures. This mirrors the ongoing divergence in healthcare provision across different territories, particularly disadvantaging the southern regions and those grappling with the challenges posed by recovery plans, considered as comprehensive restructuring of local health structures.

The evolution of healthcare in Italy, marked by fragility and insufficient efforts to counteract demographic and birth rate trends, is heightening concerns among a substantial portion of the Italian population.

A recent Censis survey conducted in 2023 demonstrated that 79.1% of respondents expressed significant apprehension about the future functionality of the health service. This prevailing concern is consistent across all age groups, with a peak among individuals aged 35-64 (80.1%), encompassing those who will approach old age in a future perceived as more challenging than the current situation (**Figure 3**).

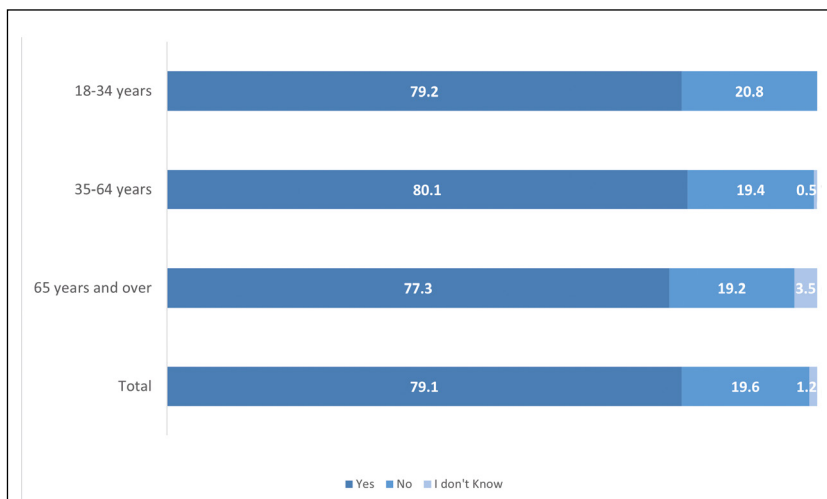
Tab. 2 – Public health expenditure per capita, net of mobility, 2022

	Per capita (euro)
Trentino-Alto Adige	2,773
Aosta Valley	2,705
Liguria	2,462
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	2,414
Sardinia	2,413
Molise	2,345
Emilia-Romagna	2,334
Umbria	2,333
Veneto	2,290
Basilicata	2,286
Tuscany	2,281
Piedmont	2,224
Lombardy	2,223
Marche	2,190
Abruzzo	2,185
Sicily	2,183
Lazio	2,181
Apulia	2,169
Campania	2,115
Calabria	2,041
Regions in recovery plan (1)	2,155
Regions not in recovery plan	2,298
Total	2,241

(1) Regions under recovery plan: Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Calabria, Sicily

Source: Censis elaboration on Corte dei conti data

Fig. 3 – Italians very concerned about the functioning of the health system in the near future, by age (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2023

2. - Assistance in Italy, the eternal “Cinderella” of the social protection system

In the year 2022, general government institutions allocated a total of euro 65,991 million to social assistance, comprising euro 54,606 million in cash social benefits and euro 12,637 million in social benefits in kind, with an additional contribution of euro 1,252 million from other institutions (**Table 3**).

Despite the pivotal role played by national social assistance in the country's social fabric, the expenditure on assistance represents merely 11.7% of the overall spending on social protection benefits. This percentage stands as the lowest share of investment when compared to other sectors such as health and social security.

Table 3 – Social protection benefits in the welfare field, 2022 (in millions of euro and % val.)

Function and type of service	Public Administration Institutions	Other institutions	Total	% val. of total social protection benefits	Comp. % val. by segment
<i>ASSISTANCE</i>					
Social benefits in cash	54,606	-	54,606	9.5	81.2
Pension and social allowance	5,159	-	5,159	0.9	7.7
War Pensions	293	-	293	0.1	0.4
Benefits for civil invalids	18,824	-	18,824	3.3	28.0
Benefits for the blind	1,102	-	1,102	0.2	1.6
Services to the deaf	239	-	239	0.0	0.4
Other allowances and grants	28,989	-	28,989	5.0	43.1
Social benefits in kind	11,385	1,252	12,637	2.2	18.8
Total assistance	65,991	1,252	67,243	11.7	100.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Social cash transfers play a crucial role in welfare systems by offering financial assistance to individuals and households facing various vulnerabilities. In Italy, among the primary categories of social cash benefits, 28.0% of social expenditure is directed towards benefits for the civilian disabled, 7.7% for social pensions and allowances, 1.6% for benefits for the blind, 0.4% for benefits for the deaf, 0.4% for war pensions, and 43.1% for other targeted allowances and subsidies. In contrast, social benefits in kind make up 18.8% of social investment in 2022.

However, when compared to the total spending on all social protection benefits, the investment made in social cash transfers is relatively minimal. Cash social benefits account for 9.5% of total spending in 2022, while social benefits in kind make up only 2.2%. This indicates that while social cash transfers are essential for supporting vulnerable populations, their share in the overall social protection budget is comparatively small.

As of 1st January 2022, our country hosts 12,576 socio-medical residential institutions, providing approximately 414,000 beds, equivalent to seven beds per 1,000 inhabitants. The distribution of beds reveals a significant regional variation, highlighting a crucial aspect of the healthcare landscape. Examining the territorial breakdown (**Table 4**):

- The North-East boasts the highest bed availability, surpassing 1,000 beds per 100,000 inhabitants, closely followed by the North-West with 972 beds per 100,000 inhabitants.
- In the central and island regions, bed figures are comparable, standing at 565 beds per 100,000 inhabitants in the former and 513 beds per 100,000 inhabitants in the latter.
- Conversely, the southern regions exhibit the lowest number of social and health care beds, recording just over 330 beds per 100,000 inhabitants.

This disparity in bed availability reflects an uneven distribution of infrastructure. Notably, among the 356,556 residents in these areas, over three-quarters are elderly.

Despite being the eternal “Cinderella” of social protection in Italy, the care sector is poised to gain increasing importance, especially considering the projected age structure of the population, demanding more extensive care in the future.

Tab. 4 – Social and health care residential facilities, beds and guests by type of user present in Italy on 31 December 2021, by geographical area (values per 100,000 inhabitants)

Region	Residential facilities	Beds	Guests			
			Minors	Adults	Seniors	Total
North-West	21.6	972.1	189.6	223.9	2,809.2	853.3
North-East	31.6	1.002.8	237.7	225.9	2,824.1	854.4
Centre	21.1	565.3	230.1	191.4	1,361.5	483.8
South	12.3	333.9	113.9	131.8	822.7	282.9
Islands	21.4	513.3	416.8	217.4	1,012.8	434.5
Italy	21.3	701.3	213.8	195.8	1,899.1	604.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

3. - Factors that may make the welfare system unsustainable

A significant portion of the national budget is allocated to social protection benefits in 2022, amounting to euro 352,295 million, which constitutes 66.9% of the total expenditure on social protection benefits (**Table 5**).

Notably, pensions emerge as the predominant category within this expenditure, commanding the largest share. The general government allocates euro 296,796 million for pensions, supplemented by an additional euro 921 million from other institutions, resulting in a combined total of euro 297,717 million. This item alone comprises a substantial 77.2% of the expenditure on the social protection system and represents 51.7% of the total expenditure on social protection benefits, surpassing the halfway mark.

As of January 1, 2023, the National Institute of Social Security (Inps) disbursed a total of 12,078,415 pensions to both employees and the self-employed, excluding separate account schemes. This figure indicates a decrease compared to the corresponding number recorded on 1st January 2022, which stood at 12,225,801 pensions (**Table 6**).

Breaking down the data further, the pensions attributed to the “Fondo pensioni lavoratori dipendenti” (Fpld) amounted to 7,620,471, representing a reduction of 124,082 pensions compared to the previous year. Conversely, the pensions allocated to the self-employed totalled 4,457,944, marking a decrease of 23,304 pensions in comparison to the previous period.

As mentioned earlier, the percentage of Italians aged 65 and over is both significant and increasing. In 1961, the population aged 65 and over accounted for 9.5% of the total. Today, that figure has risen to 24%, and according to the latest Istat forecasts, by 2050, the elderly will constitute 34.5% of the population.

Simultaneously, the working-age population, defined as individuals between 15 and 64 years old, constituted 66% of the total population in 1961. In contrast, it currently stands at 63.5%, and Istat forecasts predict it will dip below 55% by 2050. This trend presents substantial challenges to Italy's current pension system, reliant on

funding from contributions made by active workers. The disparity between individuals of working age and senior citizens could potentially result in financial challenges, posing a risk of deficits in pension funds and necessitating additional financial intervention by the government.

The rise in the elderly population corresponds to a growth in overall pension expenditure. In a scenario where pensions constitute a substantial portion of public spending, the escalating number of retirees may pose an additional financial burden. The extension of average life expectancy, though beneficial from a societal perspective, further compounds the issue, as individuals may receive pensions for more extended durations. This phenomenon intensifies the strain on pension systems.

Tab. 5 – Social protection benefits in the social security field, 2022 (*in millions of euro and % val.*)

Type of service	Public Administration Institutions	Other institutions	Total	% val. of total of social protection benefits	Comp. % val. by segment
<i>SOCIAL BENEFITS IN CASH</i>					
Pensions and annuities	296,796	921	297,717	51.7	77.2
Severance payments	17,001	14,910	31,911	5.5	8.3
Sickness, accident and maternity benefits	8,523	4,596	13,119	2.3	3.4
Unemployment benefits	11,567	-	11,567	2.0	3.0
Wage Supplementation Allowance	1,190	-	1,190	0.2	0.3
Family allowances	15,914	-	15,914	2.8	4.1
Other subsidies and allowances	1,304	12,959	14,263	2.5	3.7
Total pension plan	352,295	33,386	385,681	66.9	100.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Tab. 6 – Distribution of current Inps pensions by monthly amount classes, 1/1/2023
(in value and % val.)

	Monthly amount class	N. pensions	% val. of total	Annual amount (million euro)	% val. of total
Fpld (*)	Up to 249	563,020	7.4	771	0.6
	250 to 499	582,218	7.6	2,884	2.4
	500 to 999	2,813,653	36.9	25,329	21.1
	from 1,000 to 1,499	1,296,991	17.0	20,772	17.3
	from 1,500 to 1,999	1,071,979	14.1	24,070	20.0
	2,000 to 2,499	674,640	8.9	19,386	16.1
	2,500 and more	617,970	8.1	26,967	22.4
	Total	7,620,471	100.0	120,179	100.0
Autonomous	Up to 249	200,309	4.5	353	0.6
	250 to 499	478,454	10.7	2,342	4.3
	500 to 999	2,174,448	48.8	19,116	34.7
	from 1,000 to 1,499	898,039	20.1	14,238	25.9
	from 1,500 to 1,999	415,362	9.3	9,234	16.8
	2,000 to 2,499	176,754	4.0	5,051	9.2
	2,500 and more	114,578	2.6	4,704	8.5
	Total	4,457,944	100.0	55,036	100.0
Total Fpld and self-employed	Up to 249	763,329	6.3	1,124	0.6
	250 to 499	1,060,672	8.8	5,226	3.0
	500 to 999	4,988,101	41.3	44,444	25.4
	from 1,000 to 1,499	2,195,030	18.2	35,010	20.0
	from 1,500 to 1,999	1,487,341	12.3	33,303	19.0
	2,000 to 2,499	851,394	7.0	24,438	13.9
	2,500 and more	732,548	6.1	31,671	18.1
	Total	12,078,415	100.0	175,215	100.0

(1) Employees' Pension Fund (excluding separate account management); does not include pensions of the public employees' management

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

4. - Household resources and social security

The domestic work sector serves as a significant segment of employment, attracting foreign workers and playing a pivotal role in organizing support and care services for families.

This year, Family (Net)Work, with the support of Assindatcolf and Webcolf, has conducted a survey among employers of domestic workers. The aim is to analyse the changing behaviours of both workers and employers and to identify the persistent challenges that define the sector.

The recently concluded survey, completed in January 2024 with the participation of over 2,400 families, delved into crucial aspects of the employment relationship. This included topics such as holiday and severance pay, dismissal and resignation, and the “Click day” initiative. Additionally, the survey addressed families’ perceptions of security in light of an evolving welfare system. In its entirety, encompassing health, assistance, and social security, the welfare system appears vulnerable to factors that pose a risk to its foundational purposes.

It is noteworthy how, in the face of a trend whose consequences will increasingly burden families, particularly in the realms of healthcare and care for the elderly and non-self-sufficient individuals, there exists a certain operational timidity, almost a reluctance to address the issues. This aphasia only partially conceals the difficulty in finding solutions to immediate challenges and those that will exert a more pronounced impact in the years to come.

The families involved in the survey are acutely aware of this predicament. They recognize the scale of the problems, understanding that they are beyond their reach and resources, both physical and economic.

4.1. - The domestic employment relationship: some important steps

Households handle three aspects of domestic work – holiday pay, 13th-month pay, and the provision and payment of severance pay – differently. Each of these represents an expenditure that frequently constitutes a critical step for the economic resources of households.

However, in all three instances, the majority of households choose to incur the expenditure when these wage components are due.

According to **Table 7**, only 25% of the surveyed households indicate that they pay their 13th month pay in monthly instalments, spreading the amount over the year.

Concerning the severance pay owed to the employee, 58.3% of households report settling it at the conclusion of the employment relationship. In contrast, 35.9% utilize the year-end deadline to provide 100% of the accumulated severance pay during the period, while 5.8% liquidate 80% of the annual amount (**Table 8**).

Regarding severance pay, there is also some confusion about the possibility of setting aside severance pay on a monthly basis, with an institution then responsible for disbursing the accrued amount to the employee at the conclusion of the employment relationship.

44.9% of respondents express uncertainty or an inability to answer this question. This contrasts with 30.4% who oppose this option and 24.7% who support it (**Figure 4**).

Tab. 7 – Method of paying 13th month and holidays by domestic employer (% val.)

	Monthly	Due date	Total
Thirteenth month	25.0	75.0	100.0
Holidays	18.7	81.3	100.0

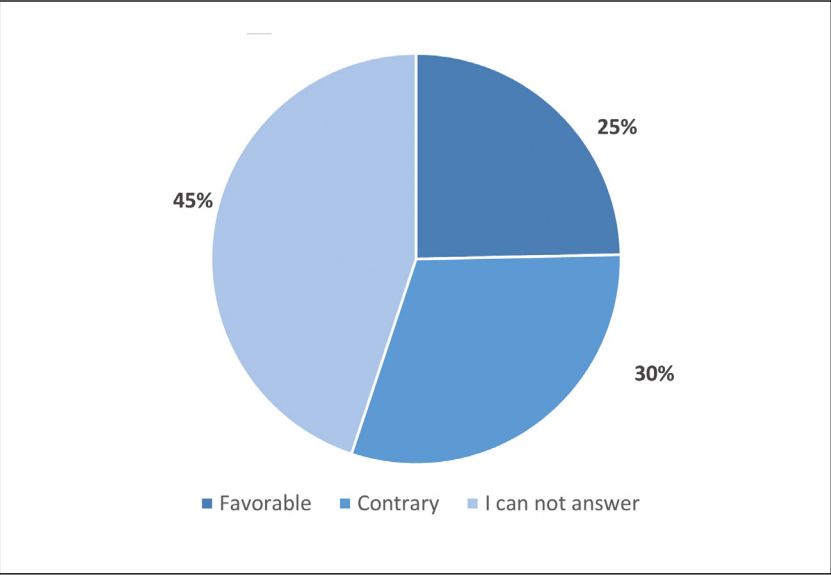
Source: Censis survey, 2024

Tab. 8 – Method of payment of severance pay (Tfr) by the domestic employer (% val.)

Decisions	% val.
Liquidates the full amount of the severance pay upon termination of employment	58.3
Advance 100% of the severance pay annually	35.9
Advance 80% of severance pay annually	5.8
Total	100.0

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 4 – Opinions on setting aside all accruals of severance pay at an institution on a monthly basis (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

Termination of employment, on the other hand, was an event that impacted nine out of 100 households in the 12 months preceding the survey, both in the case of dismissal and the worker's resignation (**Table 9**).

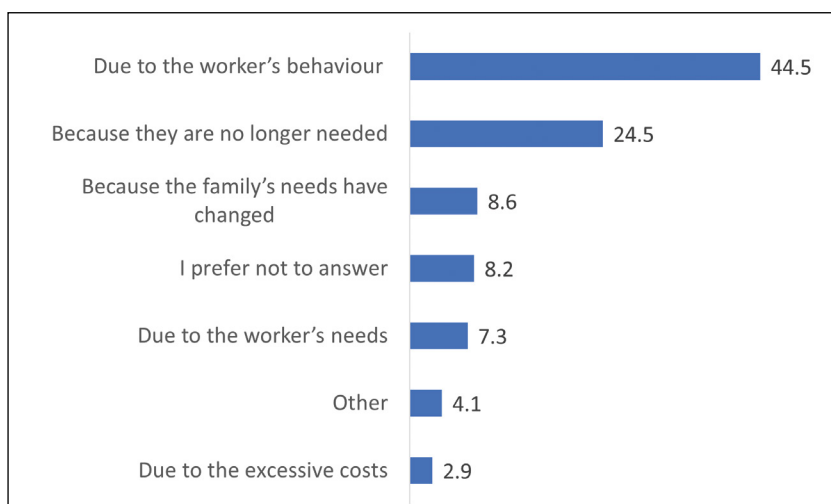
Among the reasons provided by employer households for dismissal, the worker's behaviour was the most significant factor (44.5%), followed by the lack of a need to employ the worker within the family (24.5%, see **Figure 5**).

Tab. 9 – Termination of the domestic employment relationship in the last 12 months due to dismissal or resignation of the worker (% val.)

Termination of employment for:	Yes	No	Total
Dismissal	10.3	89.7	100.0
Resignation	9.6	90.4	100.0

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 5 – Reasons for dismissal (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

In the case of resignations, the primary reason cited was the employee's personal needs (40.7%, see **Figure 6**). Similar proportions of respondents mentioned securing a new job in a sector other than the domestic sector (16.9%) and returning home (16.5%).

Ten out of one hundred households also note a change of employer within the household, while 6.1% report an event that is beginning to become more prevalent in the sector—reaching the retirement age. This aspect underscores the gradual aging of the workforce in the domestic work sector.

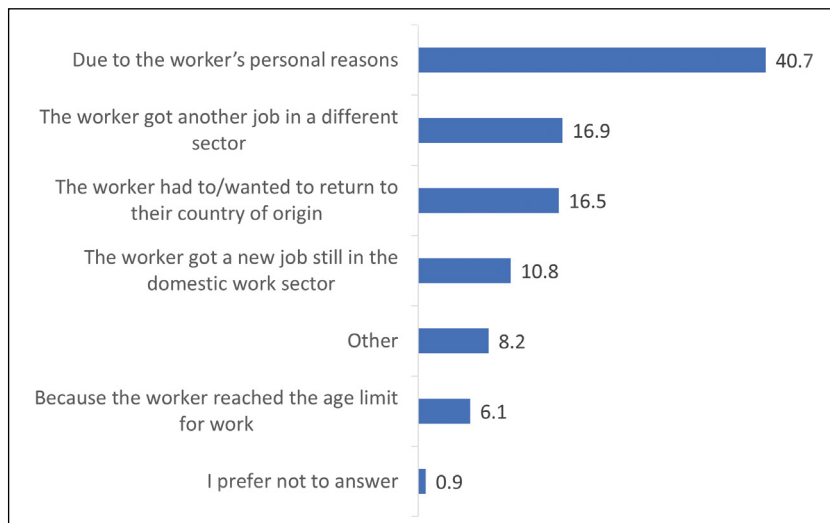
An influencing factor in the ability to hire a non-EU domestic worker, despite substantial demand, is the availability of suitable opportunities for employers in the sector when planning the entry of foreign workers.

Last September, the government reinstated the quotas of the Flows Decree to the domestic sector, which had been excluded for 11 years. This procedure allows non-Eu citizens to enter Italy regularly for work purposes upon the employer's request, utilizing the "Click day" initiative, i.e., the day on which the application is electronically submitted. For the domestic sector, the "Click day" was on December 4.

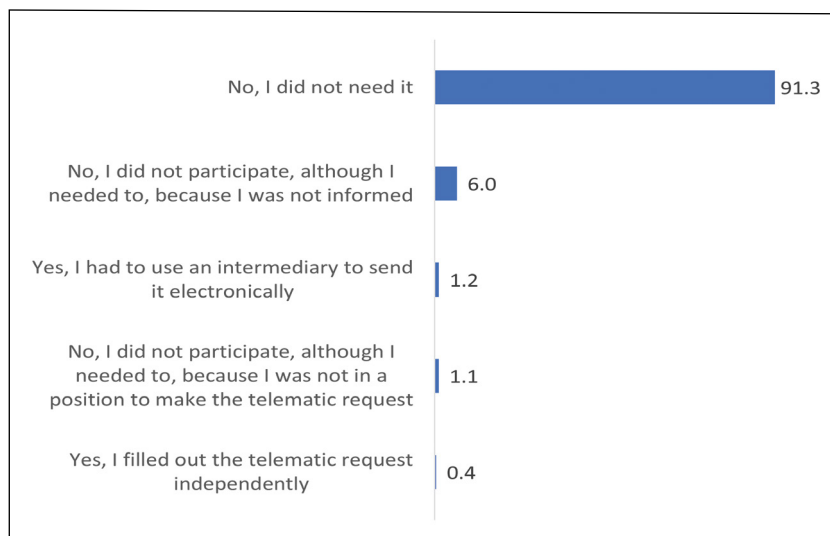
Within the sample of households surveyed, almost all respondents stated that they did not participate because they did not have the need to do so (91.3%). Additionally, a further 6.0% mentioned they needed to participate but did not because they were not informed about it (**Figure 7**). On the other hand, the proportion of those interested in participating but unable to do so due to the telematic procedure (1.1%) is minimal.

Only a small proportion (0.6%) managed to complete and submit the telematic application on their own.

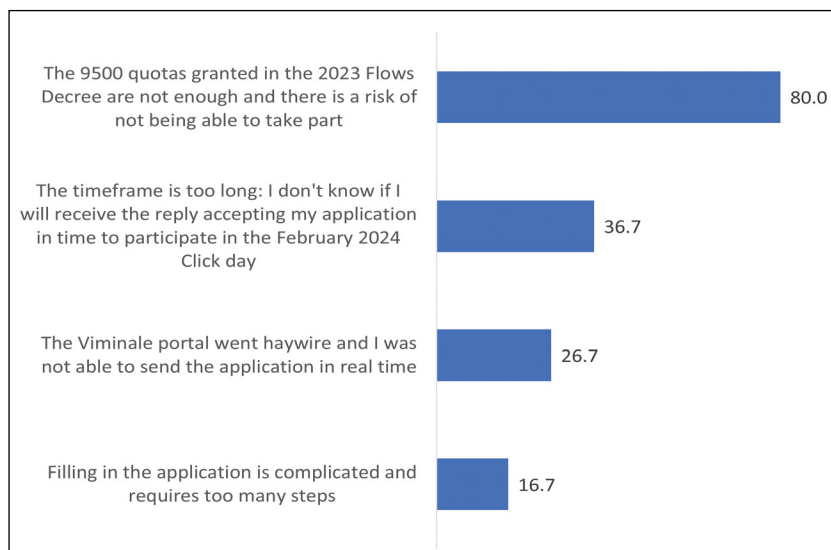
It is, however, valuable to discuss the difficulties and critical aspects reported by those who participated in the "Click day", even though only a few were able to take advantage of this opportunity. Primarily, the most critical aspect was the inadequacy of the quotas allocated for domestic work, amounting to only 9,500 (80.0%, see **Figure 8**).

Fig. 6 – Reasons for resignation (% val.)

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 7 – Participation in the “Click day”, dedicated to the telematic submission of domestic employer applications (% val.)

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 8 – Main difficulties encountered in filling in and sending the request (% val.)

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Following this, 36.7% expressed dissatisfaction with delays in receiving communication about the application's outcome, while 26.7% faced computer problems with the Home Office portal. Finally, 16.7% found the procedure to be complicated, involving too many steps.

The entire sample of households was then asked to provide a general assessment of the process. After excluding the 71.7% of respondents who were not aware of the procedure, 4.8% acknowledged its effectiveness, and 5.8% acknowledged its effectiveness but found it complicated (**Table 10**).

Beyond operational difficulties, a significant proportion (17.7%) felt that the procedure was inappropriate for such a crucial request.

In reality, only 17.5% of the sample would maintain the current situation, adhering to the provisions of the Flows decree. A substantial majority would opt for an alternative. Specifically, 28.4%

would prefer a one-year residence permit for job searching, convertible into a work permit if necessary. Additionally, 27.8% would choose regularization with a work contract for individuals without a residence permit but with an income surpassing the annual social allowance (**Table 11**).

The proportion of those favouring direct recruitment on call, without quotas and restrictions, is slightly lower than before.

Tab. 10 – Opinion on the “Click day” procedure for domestic work (% val.)

Opinions	% val.
Effective	4.8
Effective, but complex	5.8
Difficult and inadequate for such an important request	17.7
I do not know this procedure	71.7
Total	100.0

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Tab. 11 – Preferences on options other than the Flows Decree (% val.)

Options	% val.
One-year residence permit for job-seeking purposes, which can be converted into a work permit.	28.4
Regularisation through an employment contract, accessible at any time and on an individual basis, for workers without a residence permit who are already on Italian territory and whose income exceeds the annual social allowance.	27.8
Direct "on-call" recruitment for the employer, at any time and without restriction as to the sector of production or the country of origin.	26.4
The Flows Decree is already good as it is.	17.5
Total	100.0

Source: Censis survey, 2024

4.2. - Incomplete welfare worries families

The social protection framework in Italy is structured around three main areas: health, assistance, and welfare.

Over the past two decades, measures have been implemented, in all three main areas, to rationalize, modernize, and enhance the organizational machinery overseeing the delivery of services to the community, responding to evolving social needs, demographic changes, and the necessity to intervene in expenditure to achieve public debt reduction targets.

However, the gradual shifts in social needs and the challenges posed by demographic developments have left many issues unresolved, turning them into urgent problems.

In the realm of health protection, the national health system not only faced a pandemic with profound consequences but is currently grappling with the difficult task of finding organizational solutions to address the departure of numerous medical and nursing professionals.

The conditional nature of health service provision is affirmed by the perspectives of families on the most challenging aspects of the National Health Service.

Two-thirds of the sample, totalling 66.0%, identified dealing with long waiting lists when urgent treatment is required due to unforeseen events or emergencies as the most critical element (**Table 12**).

The percentage of those concerned about receiving treatment in inadequate facilities or from unqualified medical staff is much lower, standing at 18.5%. Ranking third is the proportion of individuals highlighting the lack of availability of general practitioners and the difficulty in reaching them.

A smaller proportion, 5%, cited the risk of receiving inappropriate care and the inconvenience of having to leave home to receive treatment.

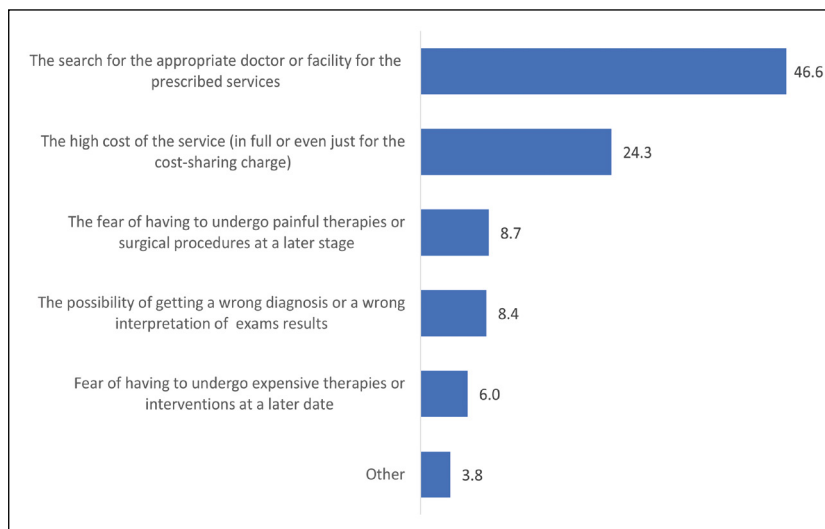
When attempting to schedule a specialist visit or diagnostic check-up, whether in public or private facilities, the predominant concern was the search for a competent doctor or a facility suitable for the required services, as reported by 46.6% of the respondents (**Figure 9**).

Tab. 12 – The most critical aspects of the National Health Service for the care of one's own health or in the event of unforeseen events that create an emergency for one's own health (% val.)

Critical aspects	% val.
Having to deal with long waiting lists	66.0
Being treated in unsuitable facilities or by unskilled medical personnel	18.5
The lack of availability of my general practitioner and the difficulties of contacting him for his opinion	8.4
Moving too far away from home or even travelling to another city for treatment	2.9
Finding inappropriate and unnecessary treatment	2.1
Other	1.3
Cannot define a priority among those listed	0.8
Total	100.0

Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 9 – Aspects that caused most concern at the last specialist visit or diagnostic check-up, public or private (% val.)



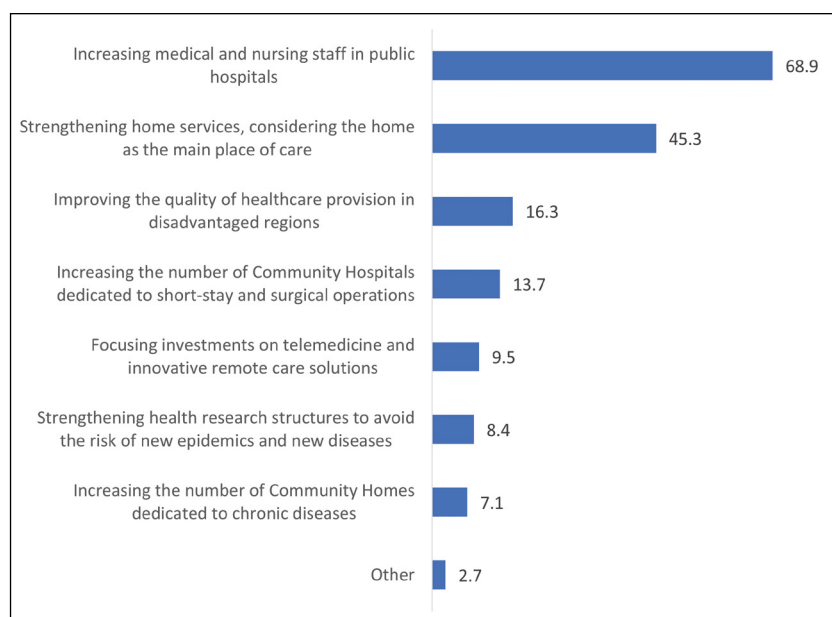
Source: Censis survey, 2024

Apart from the need for a professional and competent service, the sample also appears to be sensitive to the cost of the service (24.3%) and, to a lesser extent, the fear of having to undergo painful therapies or interventions based on the outcome of the visit (8.7%). Medical errors, however, are the primary concern for 8.4% of households.

Concerning the future of the national health system, the sample generally concurs that investments should be directed towards reinforcing the medical and nursing workforce in public institutions, as indicated by 68.9% of respondents (**Figure 10**).

Likewise, 45.3% of respondents identified the reinforcement of home services as the primary area for investment, grounded in the belief that the home is the optimal setting for providing care.

Fig. 10 – Interventions considered a priority in an investment perspective to strengthen the National Health Service (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

Another 16.3% emphasize the necessity to address the territorial gap in service quality, advocating for increased attention to the most disadvantaged regions. Additional priority areas for investment include community hospitals (13.7%), telemedicine and remote care (9.5%), research to prevent the emergence of new pandemics and the spread of new diseases (8.4%), and community homes for the chronically ill (7.1%).

Somehow, the situation of caregiving in Italy presents additional challenges. Despite the significant efforts made through the Pact for Non-Self-Sufficiency, resulting in the parliamentary approval of the “Elderly” enabling law in March 2023, the reform has not gained momentum. It appears that only a limited reform is underway, falling short of the goals to restructure the care system and being more strongly influenced by objectives aimed at controlling expenses.

In this context, the social protection framework seems frail, incomplete, and ill-equipped to handle the repercussions of a burgeoning elderly population and the gradual enlargement of the non-self-sufficiency sector in the forthcoming years.

The economic aspect of a sustained, long-term commitment is what prompts the majority of households in the sample to advocate for the complete deductibility of domestic work costs: 58.7% of respondents hold this perspective, while over 46.3% believe it is essential to prioritize the implementation of home care services to assist dependent individuals and the elderly (**Table 13**).

The simplification of procedures, especially those associated with the assessment of non-self-sufficiency, was considered particularly crucial by 18% of families, while 17.2% advocated for the expansion of childcare facilities.

An additional 15.4% emphasized the importance of supporting the role of caregivers within families.

Notably, the survey underscores that almost half of the respondents serve as caregivers (**Figure 11**).

Tab. 13 – Interventions considered a priority when looking at care needs in perspective (% val.)

Interventions	% val.
Introduce full deductibility of domestic labour costs to meet household expenses	58.7
Activate home care services for dependent persons and in particular for dependent elderly persons.	46.3
Simplify procedures for families to access care services (e.g. assessment of dependency)	18.0
Increasing the availability of nursery places	17.2
Supporting the role of the family carer with specific economic support and certification of acquired skills	15.4
Improving the quality of services in residential care facilities (Rsa)	11.9
Increasing legal immigration quotas in the domestic labour sector	7.2
Improving the quality of domestic work through increased investment in specialised training	4.1
Other	0.7

Source: Censis survey, 2024

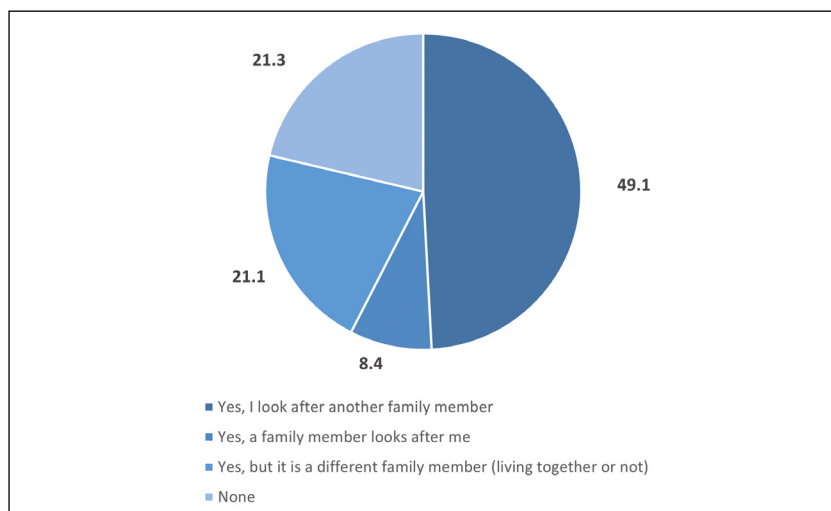
From the standpoint of direct experience, the sample indicates that the most challenging aspect of caring for a family member is the physical fatigue and stress arising from addressing the numerous needs of the person being cared for, as noted by 42.4% of respondents (**Figure 12**).

Equally significant are the constraints on daily life, often nearly entirely absorbed by the care responsibilities, and the loss of relational and autonomous life, which 24.7% highlight.

In a more pragmatic sense, 16.4% underscore the lack of genuine recognition of the caregiver's role by institutions, leading to a lack of financial compensation for the work performed.

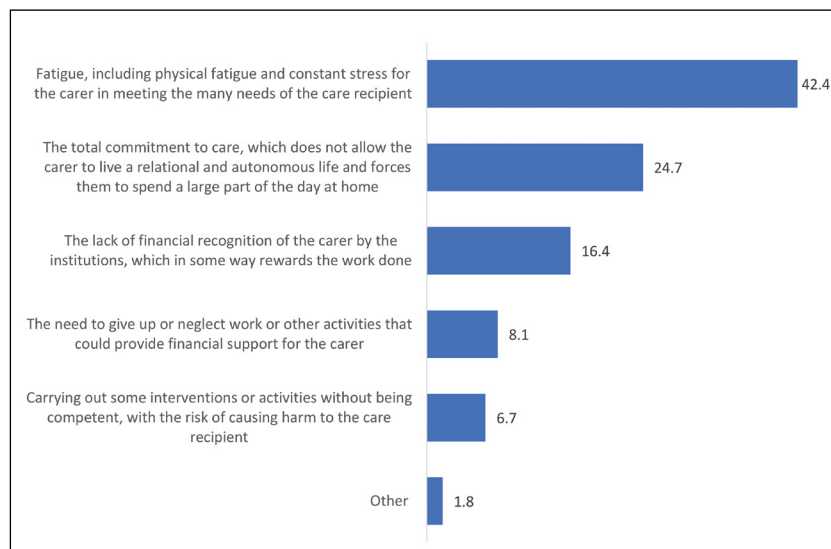
Slightly over 8% of respondents have had to forgo or neglect their job or the activity that serves as the caregiver's source of income. On the other hand, 6.7% express concern that they might inadvertently harm the person they are caring for due to a lack of necessary skills for the various interventions they are required to undertake.

Fig. 11 – Who plays the role of *caregiver* in the family to care for a person who is not fully self-sufficient (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

Fig. 12 – Most critical aspects in the *caregiver's* activity (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

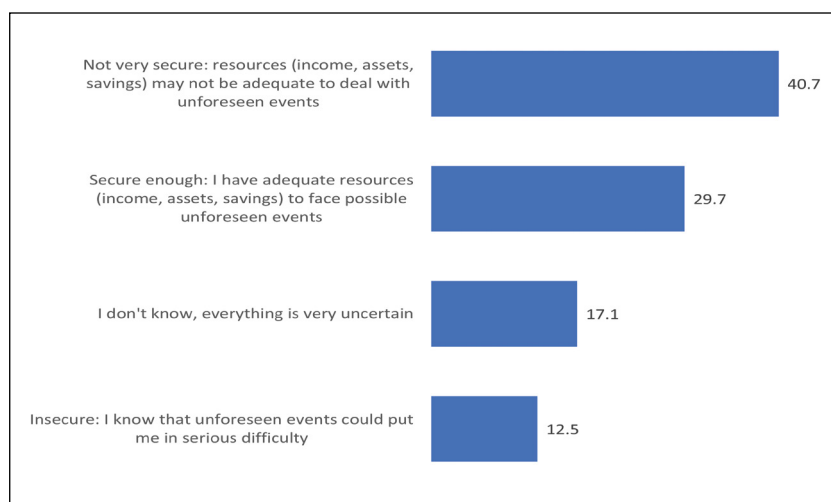
The third realm of social protection, along with health and long-term care, is intricately connected to the mechanisms designed to address the challenges faced by individuals who are no longer of working age.

Pension provision, serving as an individual's safeguard against unforeseen contingencies in retirement, prompts contemplation on future resources and the extent of coverage these resources can afford.

In the household survey, 40.7% of respondents assessed their level of resources as partially secure but expressed concerns that the availability of income, assets, and savings might not be adequate in the face of unexpected events (**Figure 13**).

The proportion of the most confident individuals is 29.7%, while the proportion of those feeling most exposed is 12.5%. The remaining 17.1% of the sample appears to be insecure and unable to express an opinion on their ability to cope with unforeseen events using their available economic resources.

Fig. 13 – Perception of one's own level of security and insecurity and of one's family, in the years marked by pandemics, wars and inflation and thinking about the future in general (% val.)



Source: Censis survey, 2024

In the balance between protective factors – including public welfare, insurance coverage, and other forms of personal self-protection – and future risk factors, incapacity and lack of self-sufficiency emerge as the most significant concerns, with 64.6% of respondents highlighting this aspect (**Table 14**).

Sickness and the need for health care rank second on the risk scale (51.2% of responses), while declining income and a lower standard of living in old age are primary concerns for 35.0% of respondents.

The fourth most feared risk factor is the death of the main breadwinner in the family, followed by job loss, unemployment, and the resulting reduction in income.

Tab. 14 - Factors of greater future risk for oneself and one's family, considering public welfare, insurance and mutual insurance coverage and other possible forms of self-protection at one's disposal (% val.)

Risk factors	% val.
Non-self-sufficiency, incapacity	64.6
Illnesses, need for health services	51.2
Declining incomes and living standards in old age/pension	35.0
Premature death of the main breadwinner in the family	25.3
Job loss, unemployment and income difficulties	14.5
Being a victim of crime	11.9
Risks related to the home and/or other property (risks of fire, vandalism, theft, etc.).	11.1
Costs related to the education and training of children	6.6
Accidents at work and outside	3.5
Mortgage insolvency in the event of death or incapacity for work	1.6
Other	0.5

Source: Censis survey, 2024

5. - Summary considerations

Three figures – one for health, one for assistance and one for welfare – effectively represent the state of welfare in Italy and anticipate future drifts and risks of social collapse:

- Public health expenditure as a percentage of Gdp is projected to decrease in the coming years, despite the various vulnerabilities of the national health system. In 2020, 7.4% of Gdp is earmarked for public health spending, while in 2026 it will be only 6.1% of Gdp (Nadef 2023). This is despite the fact that we are witnessing a real exodus of doctors and nurses from the public sector;
- There are 12,576 socio-medical institutions in our country. The supply is about 414,000 beds, or seven per 1,000 inhabitants. The highest provision is in the North-East, with just over 1,000 beds per 100,000 inhabitants; in the South the figure is 330 beds per 100,000 inhabitants;
- In 1961, the population over 65 years of age represented 9.5% of the total population, today it is 24% and in 2050 the elderly will represent 34.5% of the population. In 1961 the population of working age, i.e. 15 to 64 years old, was 66%, today it is 63.5%, in 2050 it will be less than 55% of the total population. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that today some 6.8 million pensions paid by the Inps are less than euro 1,000 per month.

The figures provided for health, assistance, and welfare in Italy underscore potential challenges and indicate possible risks of social collapse:

Public Health Expenditure as a Percentage of Gdp: Despite vulnerabilities in the national health system and a notable exodus of doctors and nurses from the public sector, public health expenditure as a percentage of Gdp is projected to decrease. In 2020, it stands at 7.4% of Gdp, while it is expected to drop to 6.1% by 2026 (Nadef 2023).

Socio-Medical Institutions: Italy has a total of 12,576 socio-medical institutions providing approximately 414,000 beds, equivalent to seven beds per 1,000 inhabitants. Regional disparities are evident,

with the north-east having over 1,000 beds per 100,000 inhabitants, while the south has only 330 beds per 100,000 inhabitants.

Demographic Shifts: The aging population in Italy is a significant concern. In 1961, individuals over 65 represented 9.5% of the total population. Presently, it stands at 24%, and projections indicate that by 2050, the elderly will constitute 34.5% of the population. Concurrently, the working-age population (15 to 64 years old) has decreased from 66% in 1961 to 63.5% today, with a forecasted decline to less than 55% by 2050. Additionally, the fact that approximately 6.8 million pensions paid by Inps are less than euro 1,000 per month highlights potential economic challenges for retirees.

Until now, there hasn't been a comprehensive reform program proposed to address the challenges highlighted by the data. Even the significant resources of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Nrrp) do not seem to offer a definitive solution.

Italian households, across all three welfare areas, seem to be disoriented. While they recognize the necessity of relying on their own resources, there is a prevailing sense of resignation to a state of insecurity that intensifies with age.

This sentiment is affirmed by the survey conducted among 2,400 households affiliated with Assindatcolf and Webcolf.

- 66.0% (two-thirds of the sample) identified dealing with long waiting lists for treatment in unforeseen events or emergencies as the most critical element of the Nhs.
- Looking to the future of the Nhs, 68.9% of respondents believe that investment should be directed towards strengthening the medical and nursing workforce in public structures. 45.3% said that strengthening home services was the area where the most investment should be made, on the assumption that the home is the best place to be treated.
- For care services, the majority of households (58.7%) advocate for the full deductibility of domestic work costs, emphasizing the economic dimension of a long-term commitment. Over 46.3% of respondents consider it necessary to prioritize home care services to support dependent individuals and the elderly.
- Concerning future prospects, 40.7% of respondents view their economic resources as partially secure, expressing fear that their income, assets, and savings may not be sufficient

in the face of unforeseen events. The most secure segment constitutes 29.7%, while the most exposed make up 12.5% of the sample. Additionally, 17.1% appear uncertain and are unable to express an opinion on their ability to cope with unforeseen events.

The most concerning factors for families are the risks of incapacity and illness, standing at 64.6% and 51.2%, respectively. These are precisely the areas where public provision appears to be lagging behind, indicating a certain disengagement.

This encapsulates the growing gap between the demand for social protection among Italian families and the evolving landscape of welfare in Italy, which appears to have lost its mission, leaving a significant portion of the population without adequate support.

Even the management of the domestic work relationship, originally conceived as a solution to support family and personal care activities, has transformed into the most widespread form of social protection. However, this occurs at the total expense of families, contributing to a sense of unease and insecurity, particularly when conditions arise leading to the termination of the work relationship and interrupting its continuity. And indeed:

- Termination of employment was an event that affected nine out of 100 households in the 12 months before the survey, either through dismissal or the worker's resignation. In the case of dismissals, the primary reason cited by employer households was the worker's behaviour (44.5%), followed by the lack of necessity to employ the worker in the family (24.5%).
- For resignations, the predominant reason given was the worker's personal needs (40.7%). Similar proportions of respondents mentioned obtaining a new job in a sector other than the domestic sector (16.9%) and returning home (16.5%) as reasons for leaving.

On the other hand, the procedure for recruiting non-EU workers, initiated by the "Decreto Flussi" (Flows Decree) to address the high demand for domestic workers by families, does not seem to be decisive. This procedure allows non-EU citizens to enter Italy regularly for work purposes at the request of the employer and utilizes the so-called "Click day", which is the designated day for submitting applications electronically.

Among the critical aspects reported by those who participated in the “Click day”, although few were actually able to take advantage of this opportunity, the foremost concern was the inadequacy of the quotas reserved for domestic work, totalling only 9,500 (80.0%). Additionally, 36.7% expressed dissatisfaction with delays in receiving the outcome of their application, while 26.7% encountered computer problems with the Home Office portal. Finally, 16.7% acknowledged that the procedure was complicated and involved too many steps.

Alternatively, 28.4% of respondents would prefer a one-year residence permit to search for work, convertible into a work permit if necessary, while 27.8% would opt for regularization with a work contract for those lacking a residence permit but earning more than the annual social allowance.

However, the challenges for families extend beyond the complexities of the employment relationship and the cost of domestic work. Those with a family member requiring constant care at home bear significant responsibilities and undertake a demanding task. Regarding the caregiver’s condition, the sample highlights that the most critical aspect of caring for a family member is the physical fatigue and stress of addressing the numerous needs of the person being cared for (42.4%). Equally important are the constraints on daily life, often fully absorbed by caregiving responsibilities, and the loss of relational and autonomous life (24.7%).

Given the deficiencies in the public welfare system and the growing challenges that render families more vulnerable in caring for the elderly or those who are not self-sufficient, even with the support of domestic workers, it is perplexing how the appeal for an initiative commensurate with the complexity of the problem remains completely unaddressed.

Section II

The need for italian and foreign labour in the domestic work sector in Italy. Estimate 2023-2025 by regions

by Idos
Centro Studi e Ricerche

Introduction

The absence of an official, systematic survey of the need for additional manpower from abroad in the domestic work sector is noteworthy. Such a survey would complement the annual Excelsior survey of companies and serve as a potential reference for determining entry quotas aligned with the sector's actual needs. This absence is particularly striking given the long-standing prevalence of foreign workers, including many non-Eu, in Italian households.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that historically, the flows decrees (and, on the few occasions in which they have been drafted, the corresponding three-year programming of entry quotas for foreign workers from abroad) have only in a few cases provided for quotas expressly dedicated to the sector. This is before the 2023-2025 programming. These were only contemplated in the 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010 flows decrees. Moreover, these were established “on the drawing board” and without any connection to a real need previously identified. In addition, the latest 2023-2025 planning sets out annual quotas for the sector, which are considerably lower than those previously established. The annual quotas for the sector set out in the latest 2023-2025 planning (9,500 for each year of the three-year period) are considerably smaller than those of the years mentioned above (which fluctuated between a minimum of 15,000 in 2005 and a maximum of 105,400 in 2008). This is despite the growing needs of families (who in ever greater numbers find themselves having to care for elderly people who are not self-sufficient, partly because of the rapid ageing of the native population due to the continuing demographic crisis).

In the initial two years of the programme (2023 and 2024), the limited quotas have not been significantly augmented through supplementary decrees, despite the possibility of such an extension being foreshadowed in the launching document.

In addition to the aforementioned governance failures, there are also structural and cyclical policy failures concerning the mechanisms for the legal entry and stay of non-Eu workers in Italy:

- the unrealistic provision for employers to call in the names of their employees from abroad without prior knowledge of the individual's identity is particularly problematic in the context of families. It is implausible that any household would willingly place their dependent loved ones, including the elderly, children, or individuals with disabilities, in the hands of a stranger whose details they have to provide, with whom they have never met directly, and whom the law presumes to be abroad;
- the repeal of the residence permit for seeking work in Italy, established by the so-called "Bossi-Fini Law" of 2002, has rendered it impossible to ascertain in advance and in person the worker who might be suitable for the case. This is despite the fact that the aforementioned law has been in force for 22 years without any reform;
- the aforementioned "Bossi-Fini law" established a rigid link between the work contract and the work permit, which cannot be issued or renewed unless the worker presents a regular work contract. This eventuality, although mitigated by the issuance of a pending employment permit when renewal is impracticable, has resulted in numerous immigrants falling into irregularity and has also contributed to giving employers greater bargaining power. This, in turn, has the potential to exert significant influence in bargaining, particularly when the employment in question is domestic work, which is often conducted privately;
- the recent and controversial "Cutro Decree" requires employers seeking to recruit non-Eu personnel from abroad to produce an affidavit of economic viability of the recruitment and employment relationship. This *affidavit* must be obtained from an employment consultant, potentially also from the respective trade association, and the employer is obliged to verify in advance at the local Employment Centre, the unavailability of Italian workers to perform the duties of the position for which the foreign worker is to be hired. This verification is conducted with the tacit approval of the Employment Centre if no response is received within 20 days of the submission of the application. This procedure results in delays in the hiring process, particularly in instances where there is an urgent need for the worker's contribution.

In order to circumvent such unrealistic rules, it is well known that, for over two decades, employers have resorted to hiring non-Eu workers already present on Italian territory. Such practices are sometimes conducted clandestinely, as required if the aforementioned individuals are irregular, lacking a valid residence permit. Therefore, should they wish to regularise the employment relationship (either due to a sense of legal obligation or due to pressure from the workers themselves to pay the “favour”, as they were motivated by the desire to regain a *status* of legal regularity), they would, at the launch of the annual flow decrees, submit the call by name for those who, in reality, they already had at home, in their own employ, in the black economy. Consequently, for decades, the flow decrees were employed as a means of circumventing the regulations in question.

Conversely, some employers without scruples have been known to engage in the practice of paying individuals to process applications from abroad for short-term and fictitious employment in order to obtain visas for would-be immigrants to enter Italy. Similarly, they have been known to charge for processing regularisation applications, after which they terminate or do not renew the employment relationship. This is because the law usually reserves the right to submit applications for regularisation to employers alone.

Furthermore, a multitude of additional bureaucratic mechanisms, which are equally damaging and infuriating, have been grafted onto these regulatory loopholes and illegal abuses.

One might consider, for instance, the protracted delays (sometimes spanning several months) between the issuance of entry clearance for work, following the designated call, and the issuance of the requisite entry visa (and thus the actual arrival of the worker in Italy). These delays are further compounded by the interval between the latter and the summons requiring that the employer and the worker attend the Single Desk of the Prefecture of reference within eight days of entering Italy; however this may also take place months later. The purpose of this meeting is to stipulate the terms of the work contract and to obtain the necessary authorisation from the Questura for the residence permit to be issued.

A recent study by the “Ero straniero” network revealed that on a national level less than a quarter of workers who entered Italy on a named call were granted a residence permit for work.

In fact, as a consequence of such delays (which, in certain instances, particularly in the case of families, also conflict with the employers' need for urgency), it is not uncommon for them to seek and find alternative solutions and therefore to desert the summons. This eventuality also extends to the worker in cases where the summons relates to fictitious work and was made against payment only to allow entry into Italy.

In both cases, the worker is destined to become irregular.

The aforementioned scenario would occur even if, having previously agreed with the employer on the basis of a pretextual employment contract, the individual in question were to obtain an entry visa by name in exchange for remuneration. The two parties would then proceed to formalise a “contract of stay” at the Prefecture, which would subsequently be dissolved after a brief period, as agreed.

Furthermore, the recent introduction of the so-called “Cutro Decree” (l. 50/2023) has permitted workers to commence employment even in the absence of a work contract and residence permit. However, in case that the employment relationship is terminated before the issuance of a summons to the Prefecture, the worker would remain unable to obtain a work permit, rendering them irregular.

This brief review of legislative contortions, sedimented over years of systematically restrictive interventions on the rules that regulate the mechanisms for the employment of foreign workers in Italy, not only affects the domestic work sector, to the extent that it employs a conspicuous quota of immigrants, but also has implications for the wider economy. Consequently, this study provides the legislator with a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on the necessity of establishing a realistic estimate of the need for additional labour from abroad, which is a fundamental aspect of any immigration policy.

Such a scenario would represent a significant positive step, enabling the legal planning of recruitment and contributing to the overall coherence and legitimacy of the entire process.

1. - The ageing of the Italian population

The Italian population is currently the oldest on the European continent and one of the oldest in the world. Several demographic indicators, including the proportion of the population aged 80 and over, the median age, and the old-age index, serve to reinforce this primacy (The Demography of Europe, Istat 2021).

Italy is also a country that continues to experience an ageing population. For instance, the evolution of the old-age index, a demographic indicator that relates the population aged 65 or over to children under 15, over the past two decades is evident. In 2004, the value of the old-age index was 135.6, while it is estimated that the same indicator on 1 January 2024 will measure 199.8. This implies that in Italy, for every 100 children under 15, there will be 200 people over 64. As would be anticipated, the indicator exhibits considerable variability across the territory (**Fig. 1**). It ranges from values slightly above 150 for the youngest regions (Campania and Trentino-Alto Adige, among others), to regions with an old age index above 250 (Liguria, Sardinia and Molise).

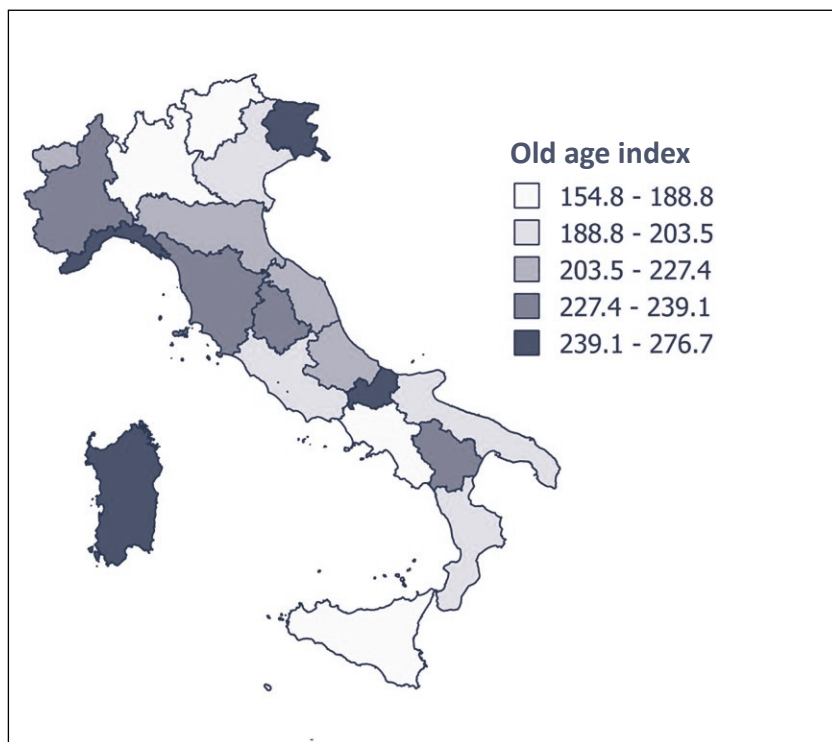
With the exception of the recent pandemic year 2020, the demographic indicator of life expectancy at age 65 has also been observed to gradually increase. On 1st January 2003, the aforementioned indicator demonstrated that, on average, an individual aged 65 could anticipate a remaining lifespan of 18.7 years. In 2023, life expectancy at 65 was 20.9 years, representing a 2,2-year increase compared to the preceding two decades. Among the population aged 65 and over, it was precisely the most advanced age groups that exhibited the greatest increase. Compared to 2003, the population aged 65 and over demonstrated a percentage change of +30.7%. However, the class of the “very old” (85 years and over) exhibited a significantly higher increase of 90.7%. This resulted in a rise from approximately one million 177 thousand individuals in 2003 to almost 2 million 250 thousand in 2023.

It is important to note that the gain in years to live at 65 does not necessarily translate into years lived in good health. Furthermore, the increase in the number of older individuals inevitably leads to an increase in the demand for care by families. The figure from the recent Bes 2022 report illustrates that the unrestricted life expect-

tancy at age 65 is 10 years, in comparison to a life expectancy at age 65 on the same date of 20.4 years.

It thus becomes pertinent to attempt to ascertain an estimate of the personnel requirements of households for the care of the elderly and for domestic assistance. Moreover, in consideration of the heterogeneity across the territory, both in terms of population structure – as previously observed – and in terms of the availability of care services, it may be beneficial to provide estimates at regional level.

Fig. 1 – Old-age index - 1st January 2024



Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat data

2. - The estimation methodology

A variety of sources were employed in the estimation process, including data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) on population and population forecasts, the European Health Survey on Health Status and Use of Health Services in Italy and the European Union (EHIS 2019), data from the Italian National Institute of Social Security (Inps) on carers and domestic helpers, and data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) on the Health Status Survey 2022 (AVQ 2022). Additionally, data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) on the National Accounts sector were utilised.

In order to arrive at a regional estimate, the values of the individual region were used wherever possible. Otherwise, the values of the geographical breakdown were employed. As in the previous work realized by Rottino (2022), we proceeded by first estimating the need for carers. This procedure begins with the estimation of individuals aged 65 and over who are not in good health. It then continues with the estimation of those aged 65 and over with moderate or serious difficulties in caring for themselves. Finally, it determines how many of these individuals require help, in particular paid help.

This value, derived from the information of the EHIS 2019 survey, was appropriately corrected by taking advantage of the data on the irregularity rate of labour units in the specific sector of interest (*Other personal services*), provided by the National Accounts sector of Istat. It is likely that the respondent who has a carer employed irregularly in the household may not have declared this at the interview stage.

Having obtained an estimate of workers in the personal care sector (carers) and utilising Inps data on carers and domestic helpers, updated to 2022, it is possible to estimate the need for family helpers (domestic helpers) by citizenship and individual region. As in the previous study, the final estimates of carers and domestic helpers by region and citizenship are the result of an average between a *minimum* and a *maximum* estimate. This will be explained in more detail below.

3. - Population aged 65+ who are in poor health

As previously outlined, the initial stage of the procedure entails the estimation of individuals who are not in optimal health. The estimation of the number of individuals in Italy who are not in good health is based on the responses to the specific question of the survey “Aspects of Daily Life” (AVQ 2022). This data is available for each geographic region and has been re-proportionated for the two oldest age groups (65-74 years, 75 years and over) of the population on 1 January 2023. The resulting estimation is that there are just under 9 million people aged 65 years and over in Italy who feel they are not in good health, which represents an incidence of 62.9% of the total number of people aged 65 years and over.

The situation is quite differentiated on a territorial level, despite the close proximity of the percentage values (**Fig. 2**). The regions with the largest share of elderly people are also those where the over-65s feel most unhealthy (Calabria, Liguria, Sardinia and Basilicata). Conversely, the “youngest” regions also have the lowest percentages of people who are unhealthy (Trentino-Alto Adige, Campania, Abruzzo and Lazio).

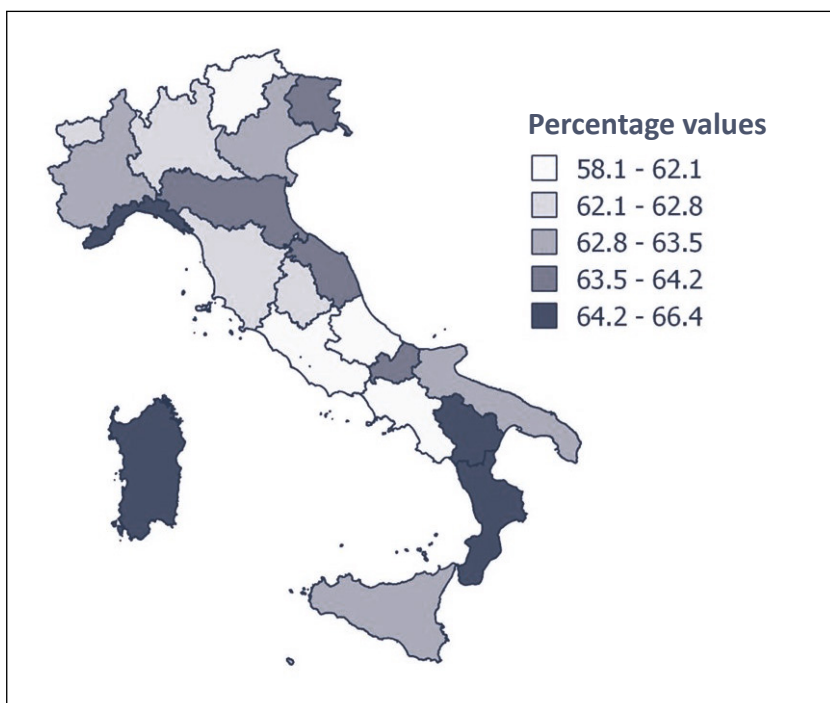
4. - Population aged 65+ receiving assistance and the nature of the assistance they receive

The results of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS 2019), in particular the values provided for the three geographical breakdowns (North, Centre, South and Islands), were used to estimate the number of people requiring assistance and the proportion of these individuals receiving paid assistance. In 2023, there were more than two million people over the age of 65 with moderate or severe difficulties in personal care activities who required assistance, representing approximately 23% of the total number of individuals experiencing poor health.

As with the preceding data set, the situation is rather heterogeneous across the territory, with shares below 12% in the northern regions (in particular Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige and Veneto) and percentages above 18% in those of the South and Islands (Molise, Abruzzo and Basilicata, which have the highest values, above 19%) (**Fig. 3**).

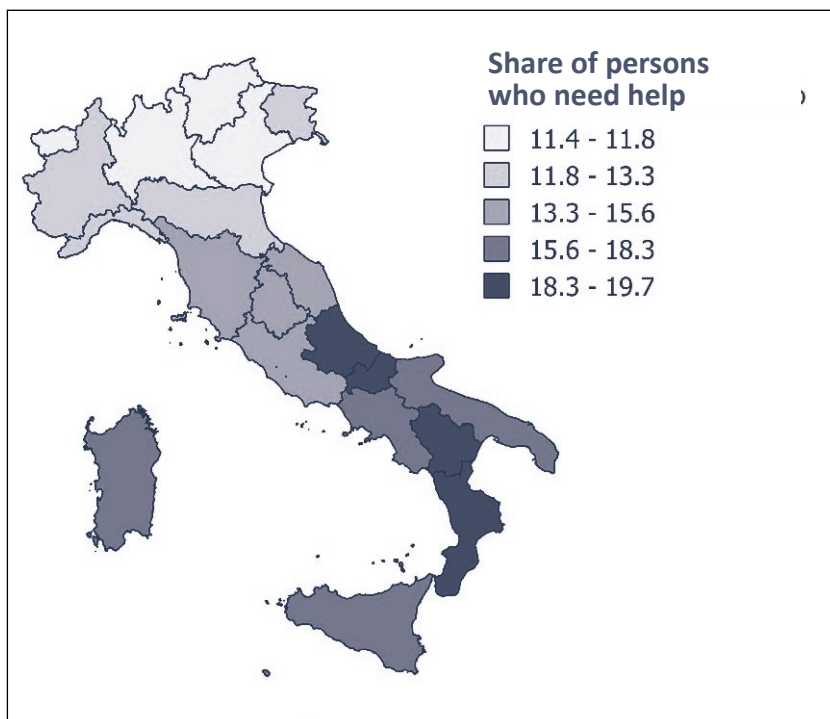
The estimated population of individuals aged 65 and above who receive paid assistance from a carer, once again utilising the values by geographical breakdown from EHIS 2019, is approximately 800,000 individuals, equating to just under 40% of individuals with severe or moderate difficulties in personal care activities who require assistance.

Fig. 2 – The proportion of individuals aged 65 or above who perceive their health to be poor in comparison to the total number of individuals in this age group is projected to be (% val.)



Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat data

Fig. 3 – Share of persons aged 65 or over with moderate or severe difficulties in caring for themselves who need help, in relation to the total number of persons aged 65 or over, estimated year 2023 (% val.)

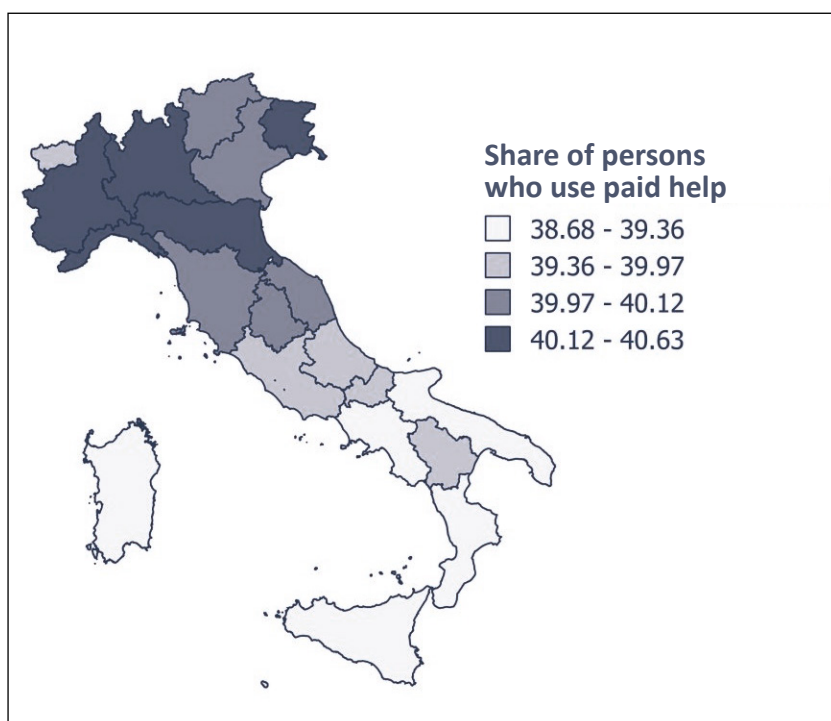


Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat data

The territorial situation in this case is rather homogeneous across the Italian territory. However, an opposite situation to the previous one emerges: in the regions of the South and Islands, we find the lowest shares for recourse to paid assistance, with Campania and Sicily below 39% of the total number of persons in need of assistance (**Fig. 4**). Conversely, those in the North – with Liguria leading the ranking – have the highest percentages, at just under 41%. This contrasting trend may be attributed to several factors. These include the greater economic availability of families in the North compared to those in the South, a more extensive and widespread family network in the South, a lower rate of employment, particu-

larly among women, which increases the availability of personnel for personal assistance, and a greater recourse to undeclared work in the South and Islands compared to the North of the peninsula.

Fig. 4 – Share of persons aged 65 or over with moderate or severe difficulties in caring for themselves who use paid help out of the total number of persons aged 65 or over in need of help, estimated year 2023 (val. %)



Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat data

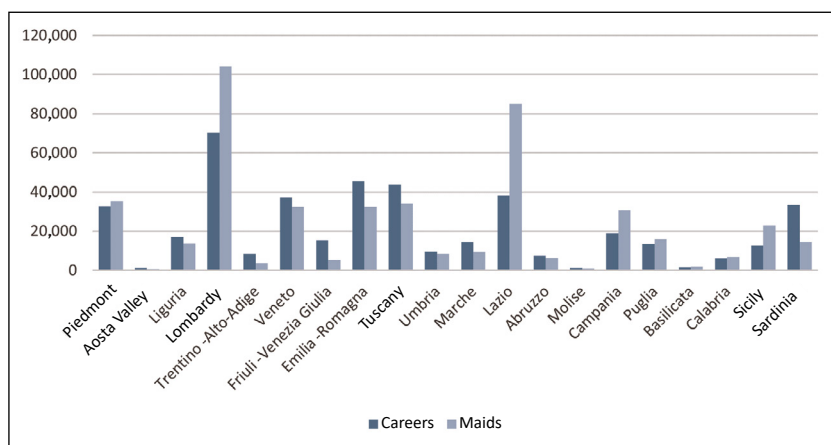
5. - Inps data on domestic helpers and carers

At this point, as previously outlined, the estimation process leverages the data provided by Inps with the annual data of the Observatory on Domestic Workers (Inps, 2022) accessible at the regional level. This data is disaggregated by both type of work (personal care sector, or carers; domestic work, or domestic helpers) and nationality (Italian/foreigner). It is important to note that the data presented here refer only to regularly registered employment relationships. In contrast, the data provided by Istat's National Accounts sector in 2020 (the most recent year for which data are available) estimate that a share of undeclared work in the personal services sector is 46.5%.

Once more, the data demonstrate markedly disparate circumstances at the regional level. In certain regions, such as Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia and Trentino-Alto Adige, the demand for personal care work is particularly prevalent, with carers accounting for almost 70% of the total workforce. Conversely, in other regions, the majority of workers are family workers, with Lazio, Sicily and Campania exhibiting the highest proportions (**Fig. 5**).

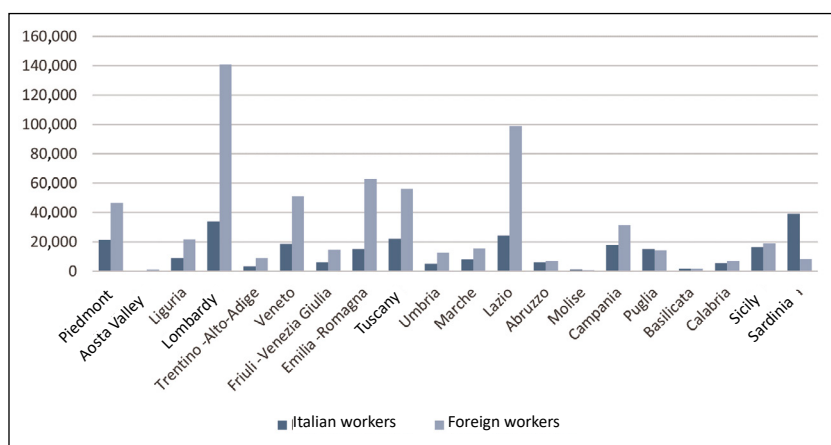
The proportion of workers by citizenship is also highly diverse across the territory (**Fig. 6**). Sardinia and Molise exhibit a pronounced prevalence of Italian labour, with Italian nationals accounting for 82.2% and 61.1% of the total, respectively. The majority of households in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna and Lazio employ foreign workers, who account for over 80% of the total number of workers in the sector.

Fig. 5 – Employees in the domestic work sector by type of work and region, year 2022 (a.v.)



Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Inps data

Fig. 6 – Employees in domestic work by citizenship and region, 2022 (a.v.)



Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Inps data

6. - Estimated labour force in the personal care sector (carers)

The *ratios* derived from the Inps data can be applied to the estimates of the population that uses paid help, with the irregularity rate of work units in the personal services sector being considered. This allows for the estimation of the actual demand (regular and irregular) from households in 2023, which is estimated to be approximately 989,000 carers (**Table 1**). It is estimated that 69.5% of carers are foreigners, with approximately 687,000 individuals, while the remaining 300,000 are Italian citizens. The values obtained for 2023 were applied to the population over 65 years of age projected for 2024 and 2025. It was assumed that in 2025 the need would rise to approximately 1,25 million carers, of whom approximately 713,000 would be foreign citizens.

At the regional level, the absolute values are contingent upon the size of the regional population and the proportion of the elderly population within the total population, as well as the availability of services in the area and other socio-economic factors that differentiate Italian regions. In Lombardy in 2025, there will be a need for almost 141,000 carers, while in Valle d'Aosta, the figure is less than 2,000. The proportion of Italians and foreigners varies considerably according to the greater or lesser regional incidence of foreigners on the total population. The region with the lowest proportion of foreign carers (less than 19% of the total number of carers) is Sardinia, followed by Molise (45.6%), Calabria (48.3%) and Sicily (48.4%). Conversely, in Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy the proportion of foreign carers on the total is around 85%.

From a technical standpoint, as previously stated, it is crucial to note that the estimates provided by both carers and domestic helpers represent an average between a *minimum* value, which assumes that there is no undeclared work and that all individuals with carers or domestic helpers, interviewed by the EHIS survey, have actually declared it, and a *maximum* value, which assumes, on the other hand, reticence in answering the survey question on the type of help received equal to the irregularity rate calculated by Istat (Economy not observed in the national accounts, Istat 2022).

Tab. 1 – Estimated labour needs in the personal services sector (carers) by Italian or foreign citizenship and region, 2023-2025 (a.v. in thousands)

Regione	Italian labour				Foreign labour				Total	
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2025
Piemonte	15	15	16	51	52	52	66	67	68	68
Aosta Valley	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Liguria	6	6	6	21	21	21	27	28	28	28
Lombardy	20	21	22	113	116	119	134	138	141	141
Trentino-Alto Adige	3	3	3	11	11	11	13	14	14	14
Veneto	12	13	13	54	55	57	66	68	70	70
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	5	5	5	14	14	15	19	19	20	20
Emilia-Romagna	9	9	9	56	57	57	65	66	66	66
Tuscany	14	14	14	55	56	56	68	69	70	70
Umbria	3	3	3	13	13	14	16	17	17	17
Marche	7	7	8	20	21	21	28	28	28	28
Lazio	16	17	17	72	74	76	89	91	93	93
Abruzzo	12	12	12	18	18	18	30	30	31	31
Molise	4	4	4	3	3	3	7	7	7	7
Campania	39	40	40	56	57	58	94	96	98	98
Puglia	32	33	33	50	51	52	82	84	86	86
Basilicata	5	5	5	8	8	8	12	13	13	13
Calabria	20	20	20	19	19	19	38	39	39	39
Sicily	49	50	50	46	46	47	95	96	97	97
Sardinia	30	30	31	7	7	7	36	37	38	38
Italy	302	307	312	687	701	713	989	1,008	1,025	1,025

Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat and Inps data

7. - Estimated labour force in the domestic work sector (domestic helpers)

By utilising the data provided by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Inps) regarding the domestic helper/carer *ratio* in 2022, it is possible to derive an estimate of the number of workers in the domestic work sector, specifically those employed as domestic helpers. In 2023, approximately 1,215,000 domestic workers were requested by Italian households, with a slightly lower proportion of foreign workers in the total (64.1%) than in the care sector (**Table 2**).

Once again, Sardinia is at the vanguard of regions with the highest proportion of Italian domestic workers (nearly 85% of the total), while Lazio is at the opposite end of the range, with Italian domestic workers accounting for only 20.2% of the total.

By utilising the population forecast data by age group and region, it is once again possible to project the estimate of domestic workers in the short term. This estimation suggests that in Italy in 2025, households will require the assistance of almost 1,262,000 family workers. Lombardy and Latium are expected to lead the way with just under 210,000 workers each. It was assumed that the needs would remain unchanged from a territorial perspective. However, it is also possible to say that there would be a higher increase in the South, assuming that over time, Italian women would become more involved and retained in the labour market following retirement age.

In total, therefore, it can be estimated that there will be almost 2,288 million family workers and personal service assistants that families will require in Italy in 2025, of whom 1,524,000 will be foreign nationals and 764,000 Italian citizens.

Tab. 2 – Estimated labour needs in the domestic work sector (domestic helpers) by nationality and region, 2023-2025 (a.v. in thousands)

Region	Italian labour				Foreign labour				Total	
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2024
Piedmont	28	29	29	43	43	44	71	72	73	73
Aosta Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Liguria	8	8	8	14	14	14	22	22	22	23
Lombardy	44	45	46	154	159	162	199	204	204	209
Trentino-Alto Adige	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	6	6	6
Veneto	21	22	22	37	38	39	58	59	59	61
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	3	3	3	4	4	4	6	7	7	7
Emilia-Romagna	12	13	13	34	34	35	46	47	47	47
Tuscany	21	21	21	33	33	34	53	54	54	55
Umbria	6	6	6	9	9	9	15	15	15	15
Marche	8	8	8	10	10	10	18	18	18	18
Lazio	40	41	42	158	162	166	198	203	203	208
Abruzzo	14	14	14	11	11	12	25	25	25	26
Molise	4	4	4	2	2	2	6	6	6	6
Campania	51	51	53	101	103	105	152	155	155	158
Puglia	60	61	62	36	37	38	96	98	98	100
Basilicata	9	9	9	5	5	6	14	14	14	14
Calabria	16	16	16	27	27	27	42	43	43	43
Sicily	76	77	78	96	98	99	172	174	174	177
Sardinia	13	14	14	2	2	3	16	16	16	16
Italy	436	444	452	780	795	811	1,215	1,239	1,239	1,262

Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat and Inps data

8. - The increase over the three-year period 2023-2025

In consideration of these values and the estimated total need in 2022, which is projected to be 2,171,000 units (1,445,000 foreigners and 726,000 Italians), it is possible to ascertain the relative increase in the three-year period 2023-2025, which is estimated to be approximately 116,400 units. This equates to an average annual increase of almost 39,000 workers. It can be estimated that the demand for caregivers and domestic workers with Italian citizenship over the period will grow by a total of more than 37,500 (+12,509 workers per year), while the demand for foreign workers will increase by almost 79,000 (+26,283 each year). In the most optimistic scenario, assuming a corrective factor equal to the irregularity rate of labour units estimated for 2022 by the Istat's National Accounts sector, an overall maximum increase of over 138,000 domestic workers and carers (+46,111 per year) is anticipated in the three-year period 2023-2025. Of these, approximately 93,700 are foreign (+31,241) and 44,600 are Italian (+14,870).

The data from the Inps Observatory on Domestic Workers for 2022 allows us to estimate that the composition of Eu and non-Eu foreign workers in the sector is 29.1% and 70.9% respectively. Therefore, it can be assumed that workers with non-Eu citizenship will increase over the three-year period 2023-2025 in the median hypothesis by a total of almost 56,000 (+18,626 per year) (**Table 3**).

A quantitative analysis of the average annual relative increases across the territory reveals the regions where these increases will be numerically more significant. Lombardy is at the vanguard of the ranking, with an average annual increase of almost 7,400 workers in the sector. This is followed by Lazio (+6,040) and Campania (+4,510). The same ranking is obtained when considering the workforce with foreign citizenship. In contrast, the situation is different for the demand for Italian domestic helpers and caregivers. In this case, Campania and Sicily lead the ranking, with an average increase between 2023 and 2025 of approximately 1,800 workers per year. It is noteworthy that a different ranking emerges when the percentage of non-Eu workers is considered. The regions of Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna and Lazio have the highest proportion of

non-Eu domestic workers and caregivers in total, with values of approximately 57%. In contrast, Sardinia and Molise have the lowest percentages, at 12.6% and 27.5% respectively.

Tab. 3 – Average annual relative increase by citizenship and region, 2023-2025 (a.v.)

Regione	Foreign workers			Total
	Italians	Eu foreign workers	Non-Eu foreign workers	
Piedmont	686	431	1,048	2,165
Aosta Valley	17	10	24	51
Liguria	151	106	259	516
Lombardy	1,435	1,732	4,214	7,381
Trentino-Alto Adige	110	83	203	396
Veneto	679	541	1,315	2,535
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	145	99	241	485
Emilia-Romagna	268	322	782	1,371
Tuscany	547	404	983	1,933
Umbria	133	97	235	465
Marche	224	128	312	664
Lazio	1,189	1,413	3,438	6,040
Abruzzo	320	106	259	685
Molise	52	10	24	86
Campania	1,637	837	2,036	4,510
Puglia	1,793	489	1,190	3,473
Basilicata	156	44	108	308
Calabria	438	163	397	999
Sicily	1,788	594	1,445	3,828
Sardinia	741	47	114	901
Italy	12,509	7,657	18,626	38,792

Source: elaboration Centro Studi e Ricerche Idos on Istat and Inps data

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Section III

Migrant integration, professionalisation and attractiveness in the domestic and home care sector. What perspective regarding to the next Eu legislative mandate?

by Effe,
European Federation
for Family Employment & Home Care

Introduction

We can observe in every Eu Member state a growing need for Phs services, mainly linked to demographic evolution and societal changes. The global aging of the population is causing an increase in the dependency rate of elderly people and therefore of the need for long-term cares services. In parallel it's a reality that a majority of people living in the Eu, prefer to age as actively as possible at home.

The increase in the number of single-parent families and the greater participation of women in the labour market encourage the outsourcing of family and domestic responsibilities, for which women are still mainly responsible, to external professionals.

These factors are at the origin of a future labour shortage in the Phs sector (Personal and Household Services)¹. They are also showing the need to foster national and European solutions for professionalisation to strengthen attractiveness of domestic & home care services.

Indeed, professionalization can be a powerful tool to tackle Phs workers' invisibility, and whose skills are still struggling to be identified, valued and recognized on the labour market. This is particularly true for migrants who do not benefit from the same employment and training opportunities as European workers, despite a major contribution to Phs professions and a huge potential for job creation that is therefore not fully exploited in the Eu.

Since 2019, in line with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Commission is trying to emphasize sectors under pressure. As 2023 was declared the European Year of Skills, it seems particularly relevant to put into perspective the role played by skills within the process of professionalization of the sector to meet the needs for a qualified workforce.

This analysis will commence by examining the current landscape of the Personal and Household Services (Phs) sector, focusing on the challenges stemming from labor shortages, migration trends,

1 The Commission's Employment and Social Developments in Europe (Esde) report 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3704

and the need for professionalization. Subsequently, it will delve into the measures implemented by European institutions during this legislative term aimed at addressing these challenges. Finally, it will explore the proposed initiatives put forth by Effe for consideration in the upcoming Eu legislative term.

1. - Economic & social dimension of the Phs sector

1.1. - Diverse landscape: understanding the components of the Phs sector in Europe

The Personal and Household Services (Phs) sector is a vital component of the European economy, encompassing a diverse array of activities. With over 10 million workers, including 6.6 million who are formally declared, it constitutes approximately 3.4% of total employment within the Eu-27. To provide context, this sector's contribution parallels that of other significant industries; for instance, construction and the hotel industry occupy 6.8% and 4.7% of total European employment, respectively. The prevalence of the Phs sector varies significantly from one country to another, influenced by factors such as state investment and legal frameworks. For instance, in Italy, the Phs sector represents 3.7% of total employment, excluding undeclared jobs. Higher rates are observed in countries like France (5.2%), Belgium (4.4%), Denmark (7.2%), Sweden (6%), Finland (5.0%), and Cyprus (5.9%). Conversely, lower rates are evident in countries such as Romania (1.2%), Bulgaria (1.8%), Estonia (2.3%), Latvia (2.6%), Germany (2.6%), United Kingdom (2.2%) and Czech Republic (2.2%).

These workers do not form a homogeneous group. They operate under various work regimes, different employment models and do not carry out the same activities.

Among the identified declared workers, approximately 40% or 2.6 million are employed through direct employment model, where they contract directly with one or more households. They can stay with their employer ("live-in" workers) or have their own accommodation. This model is particularly prevalent in southern Eu Member States, notably Cyprus (82.8%), Spain (67.7%), Greece (40%), Malta (44.3%). and Portugal (60%). But it is especially developed and structured in France (66.4%) and Italy (70.5%), where it is regulated by national collective agreements. In contrast, the remaining 60%, or approximately 3.9 million declared workers, are employed through service provider model, primarily by private companies, but also certain public bodies

or cooperatives. Emerging trends include collaborative economy platforms potentially assuming the role of employers, depending on the worker's *status*. Additionally, some workers opt for self-employment, a preferred approach among public actors in Austria. However, this model often entails limited social protection for workers (Effe Lab, 2023).

Within the direct employment model, the “mandate” system² serves as a mechanism to assist households or individuals employing domestic & care workers, enhancing the overall employment relationship by providing legal security, administrative management and ensuring service quality.

Under this system, mandate personnel accurately assess the social and financial needs of the household employer, offering support throughout the pre-selection and recruitment of employees. Furthermore, mandates play a pivotal role in securing the employment relationship, offering comprehensive administrative assistance such as managing payroll and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations. Ultimately, the mandate system aims to alleviate the administrative burden on employers while ensuring the welfare of both employees and employers within the domestic and care sector.

1.2. - A strong persistence of undeclared work

Despite the existence of various model of employment within the Phs sector, a significant part of employment in the sector remains undeclared. In 2016, the European Commission estimated that the Phs sector ranked third among the sectors most affected by undeclared work following the hotel and the catering sectors. 34% of undeclared work carried out in the Eu in 2019 concerned the Phs sector according to a recent Eurobarometer survey (2020). Although it's difficult to quantify, the number of workers impacted would probably be much higher than the 3.4 million identified. The European Commission also indicated in 2018 that 70 to 80% of jobs within the sector were not declared. In certain cases, employment may also be under-declared or partially declared, which reinforces the precariousness of workers as well as reduces state tax

2 Source: Fédérations mandataires de France (Fmf).

revenue³. Eu countries where the share of undeclared work is more than 50% of the total employment in the Phs sector, often coincide with those exhibiting the lowest share of declared Phs sector on the total employment. Among them, we can identify Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Malta, Greece, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy. Several Eu Member States have also a demonstrate a degree of tolerance towards undeclared work in the Phs sector. Workers, operating under a certain threshold of hours per week, per employer, do not have to be declared and instead fall under family insurance coverage. However, existing policies fail to account for the reality that Phs workers may have multiple employers or engage in several kinds of care or domestic activities depending on the level of dependency of the person they are working for. As a result, the sector is rife with exemptions, further perpetuating the prevalence of undeclared work and underscoring the need for comprehensive regulatory reform.

1.3. - The female dominated and diverse nature of Phs work

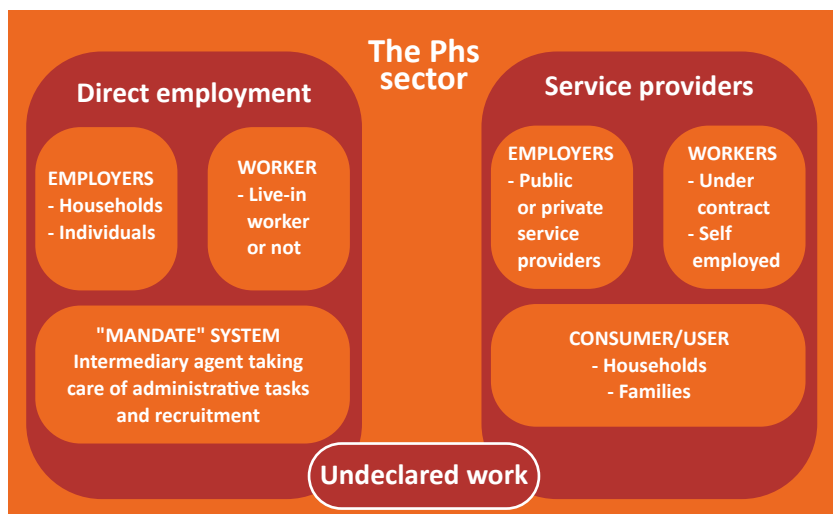
Although there is no typical Phs worker profile, certain sectoral characteristics must nevertheless be highlighted. Thus, women account for more than 90% of workers, often working part-time with multiple employers. A significant proportion of them, approximately 39%, are aged 50 or older and are therefore expected to retire over the next decade (L'Observatoire de l'emploi à domicile, 2023). Finally, migrant workers are an integral part of the Phs sector. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (as cited by the European alliance C189, 2021) estimated that 54.6% of Phs workers in Northern, Southern and Western Europe were extra-community migrant workers in 2013. A statistic which could increase in the coming years considering the growing labour needs.

Phs workers engage in a diverse array of activities, with direct care activities accounting for 56% of their roles. These activities encompass support services for individuals dealing with dependency, disability, childcare, and more. The remaining 44% involve indirect care activities, such as maintaining living environments through cleaning, ironing, gardening, and providing additional

3 Sources: Eurostat 2020. Eurobarometer 2014-2019 for estimations linked to undeclared jobs.

services such as educational support and computer assistance. This multifaceted nature of Phs work underscores its critical importance in supporting individuals' well-being and maintaining their quality of life (**fig. 1**).

Fig. 1 – The Phs sector



1.4. - Structuring Phs, an objective in line with the Ec ambitions for the coming decades

The structuration of Phs is fully in line with the ambition of the European Commission, which wishes to approach care in a strategic and integrated approach. This initiative aims to facilitate the transition from institutional care to home care and local services in order to reach to growing care needs in Europe. For Member States, the developments of Phs offers a means to reduce the financial impact of long-term care on national health systems, optimizing cost-effectiveness, and limits the burden on health facilities. By optimizing cost-effectiveness, Phs helps alleviate the burden on healthcare facilities and mitigates the impact of reduced budgets allocated to social care, reflecting a gradual retraction of welfare states within the Eu. The strengthening of Phs notably delays the placement of dependent elderly people in specialized care establishments while fostering their active aging and reducing social isolation. For informal caregivers, Phs also contribute to promote better work-life balance and greater participation in the labour market, through the outsourcing of family and domestic responsibilities to a qualified, registered and paid third party. They provide a solution adapted to the aspirations of service recipients and their families, ensuring freedom of choice in selecting support methods that best suit their needs.

2. - Labour shortages in the Phs sector and lack of attractiveness

In its report on the evolution of employment and the social situation in Europe, the European Commission places the Phs sector among those that will suffer from a significant labour shortage over the next few years. In practice, this will result in an overall demand for qualified workers exceeding the number of potential candidates (European Commission, 2023, p. 41).

This report aims to tackle the European issue of attractiveness across three dimensions: labour shortages, professionalization and migration (**tab. 1**).

2.1. - Labour shortage

In addition to gender gap, combined with a growing demand, other factors are at the root of the impending labour shortage in the Phs sector. They include the perception and the image, our European society holds on the Phs sector, which directly impacts its attractiveness, as a skilled labour market.

This labour shortage highlights the need to improve the attractiveness of Phs jobs to meet the need for qualified workers that will be growing in the coming years. This entails not only improving the sector's overall recognition but also ensuring quality standards and social protection for both employees and those in need of care. However, various obstacles hinder such progress. For instance, Eu statistical nomenclatures often fail to acknowledge the plurality of Phs work, while legal frameworks may not adequately recognize the diverse forms of employment within the sector. The home as a workplace is not always well identified, leading to challenges in providing appropriate of social protection and working condition. Individuals or household directly employing Phs workers, termed as “non-professional” employers, are also excluded from legislative frameworks impeding their recognition. Enhancing attractiveness must coincide with efforts to professionalize the sector. In this

**Tab. 1 – Future labour shortages are greatest in non-manual and elementary high-skilled occupations
Future labour shortages by 2035, ranging from 1 (low or non-existent shortage) to 4 (high shortage) (*)**

	Isco	Occupation	Expansion	Replacement	Imbalance	Future shortage indicator
High-skilled non-manual occupations	11	Chief executives, senior officials and legislators	2	4	2	2.7
	13	Production and specialized services managers	3	3	2	2.7
	21	Science and engineering professionals	4	2	1	2.3
	22	Health professionals	3	4	1	2.7
	25	ICT professionals	4	1	1	2.0
Skilled non-manual occupations	26	Legal, social and culture professionals	3	3	2	2.7
	33	Business and administration associate professionals	3	3	2	2.7
	34	Legal, social, culture and related associate professionals	4	3	2	3.0
	42	Customer services clerks	3	3	2	2.7
	51	Personal services workers	3	2	3	2.7
Skilled manual occupations	52	Sales workers	2	2	3	2.3
	53	Personal care workers	3	3	2	2.7
	71	Building and related trades workers (excluding electricians)	2	2	3	2.3
	72	Metal, machinery and related trades workers	2	2	3	2.3
	74	Electrical and electronic trades worker	2	2	2	2.0
Elementary occupations	82	Assemblers	3	2	3	2.7
	83	Drive and mobile plant operators	2	3	3	2.7
	91	Cleaners and helpers	2	4	4	3.3
	93	Labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport	3	2	4	3.0
	94	Food preparation assistants	3	2	4	3.0
	95	Street and related sales and services workers	2	2	4	2.7
	96	Refuse workers and other elementary workers	3	2	4	3.0

(*) Selection of occupations at Isco 2-digit level, including those with the highest projected future shortages (indicator of 2.7 or higher) and those characterised by persistent labour shortages (in gray) (see table 2.3); for the full list, see table A.2. Yellow to red colouring represents low to high indicator levels
Source : EC (2023, p. 50)

respect, national and European measures to promote the professionalisation of the sector could provide a response to the various challenges outlined above. Without the necessary political will to strengthen the legal framework and increase funding for the sector, the potential for job creation within the Eu cannot be fully realised. Thus, comprehensive measures are needed to overcome these barriers and ensure the sustainability and growth of the Phs sector.

2.2 - Professionalisation

In the context of Phs work, one of the main challenges facing the sector concerns in the lack of social, societal and institutional recognition of professions that are often overlooked. Phs professions frequently fall outside employment regulations, whether partial or entirely, leading to high rates of informality within the sector. The quantitative and, above all, qualitative development of the labour supply is another decisive challenge in the light of the growing demand for Phs. Despite the low level of qualifications among workers in the sector, training for domestic & homecare workers remains particularly important.

Greater consistency in national sectoral training and certification policies would have a positive impact on the attractiveness of the sector and help tackle undeclared work. It would promote a better image of the Phs professions by fostering their professional nature and facilitating their social and institutional recognition. It would also enhance the employability and mobility of workers through the award of professional certificates based on criteria that are commonly accepted and recognised in all Member States. Above all, it would enable workers to incorporate skills into their professional rhetoric and use them to obtain better pay or identify career development prospects.

Skills validation, for instance, is an effective tool for enhancing the attractiveness of the sector only if it takes into account the average level of qualification of the trainee. Since most of the training is aimed at low-skilled people, it is vital to encourage the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in line with Ilo recommendation 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. In other words, it is a tool for formalising knowledge and can be used

to enter employment labour market or allow trainees to develop professionally. Some Member States have already integrated the validation of non-formal and informal learning into the Phs sector and have gone further by developing innovative schemes such as micro-certifications. These refer to the validation of the learning outcomes of a small unit of learning (volume or duration) assessed in accordance with transparent standards guaranteeing their quality and portability. They enable the progressive validation of skills in a flexible and inclusive approach.

The development and validation of skills can even act as a lever for empowerment, particularly for vulnerable people, i.e. those who, because of their age, sex, physical or mental condition, or because of social, economic, ethnic and/or cultural circumstances, experience particular difficulties in fully exercising their legal rights. Often isolated and ill-informed, they do not always enjoy the same conditions of access to the labour market.

Vulnerable people have more limited access to vocational training than other workers. For the Ilo, it is therefore crucial to step up the dissemination of training opportunities, the funding of these opportunities and the diversification of learning methods (online or face-to-face). It is also vital to improve the quality of training and its relevance to the labour market, to guarantee trainees decent and declared job opportunities.

2.3. - Migration in Phs

A. A sector characterised by a high proportion of migrant workers

In its report on trends in employment and the social situation in Europe (Esde), the European Commission (2023) states that migrants, defined as people born outside the Eu but residing there, are often employed in sectors under pressure. The likelihood of a migrant working in a job where there is a labour shortage is higher (8.7 percentage points) than for native workers. This is especially true for occupations requiring a low level of qualification. In fact, 9 out of 10 people born outside the Eu who work in a sector in short supply hold low-skilled jobs. The Commission nevertheless stresses that the participation of migrants, and more particularly migrant

women, in the labour market is low. It points out that they are 3.1 times more likely to experience difficulties in finding permanent or full-time employment, particularly in sectors where there is a persistent shortage of labour. This is due to the many barriers that reduce their access to the formal market, such as language (24%), recognition of skills acquired in the country of origin (16%), discrimination or the mismatch between their profile and job opportunities (15%).

The share of migrant workers was 13.8% in occupations facing a shortage, compared with 8.2% in those not facing a persistent labour shortage in 2021. The majority of migrant workers were concentrated in low-skilled jobs. In addition, approximately 34% of migrant workers were in part-time jobs in sectors facing labour shortages in 2021, compared with 18.2% of native workers. Finally, this report shows that migrant workers are more affected by atypical working arrangements (hours, form, contract, etc.). While there are many reasons for these figures, the notion of intersectionality seems particularly well suited to explaining the reality (Marchetti et al., 2021, p. 7). Migrant workers are regularly victims of discrimination and segregation based on criteria such as gender, religious or ethnic affiliation and/or nationality.

The Phs sector is no exception to this trend. In 2013, the Ilo estimated that 54.6% of domestic workers in Northern, Southern and Western Europe were intra- and extra-Eu migrant workers, the majority of whom were women (European Alliance C189, 2021). For its part, the European Union estimated that 30% of domestic workers were born inside the Eu and 15% were intra-Eu migrants in 2017 (Cammarota, A. 2018).

The importance of migration within the Phs sector cannot be summed up by the contribution of non-Eu workers alone. In another report on intra-European mobility, the Commission (2023b) highlighted the contribution of mobile workers to the sector, a term used to describe intra-Eu and cross-border migration. According to the Commission, in 2021, 10% of intra-Eu (Eu and Efta) migrants were employed in occupations included in category 91 of the Isco classification “cleaners and helpers”. Some host Member States are particularly affected by this trend, notably Italy and Spain, but also Germany, with growth observed over the period 2016-2021.

B. Member States responses to the labour shortages in short supply's occupations

Only few Eu Member States offer work permits for occupations in short supply, such as Phs. The others prefer to set up schemes to attract highly qualified workers. When they are distributed, these permits are often temporary, associated with a given profession and therefore linked to a single employer.

In most Member States, there is a lack of adequate regular pathways for migration or very restrictive ones. The focus is made on activities with high income or very specific occupations.

In one third of the Eu Member States, domestic work is not eligible for permit or not excluded but rarely possible in practice, most of the time because of the existence of labour market tests or income thresholds. In Austria, the minimum income threshold is too high. Similarly, in Belgium, labor market tests present hurdles, with exceptions for live-in care workers in the Brussels region limited to specific nationalities. These exceptions apply primarily to workers from countries such as: Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, (Fyr) Macedonia, Morocco, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey. In Ireland the minimum income threshold is too high, except for health care professionals in home-based care or long-standing carer. The Netherlands, also employs labour market tests, impeding access to work permits for domestic workers. Additionally, in Spain, domestic workers are not included in the shortage occupation list, further complicating the permit process, alongside labour market tests.

In five countries, domestic work is eligible to work permit but with the existence of major practical barriers. In Czech, it's accessible only for nationals of 9 countries with quota per country⁴, and it's 6 countries for Germany, with a very arbitrary labour market test⁵. In Greece, Italy, quotas remain very low and in Sweden, it's

4 Possible for nationals of Belarus, India, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Philippines, Serbia, and Ukraine, to get permits as 'housekeepers' though there is a quota per country.

5 The West Balkan Immigration regulation allows citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to enter Germany under a combined work/residence permit, irrespective of his or her qualifications. It is sometimes possible to pass the labour market test to hire domestic workers from the Western Balkan countries but in practice the way the employment agency decides whether the test is passed or not is very arbitrary.

complicated for employers to meet requirements. In Cyprus, Malta, Poland, and Portugal, it's possible.

The highly complex labour migration system for workers and employers to navigate, particularly when the employer is an individual or private household is a major driver of labour shortage in the sector as well as of the raise of undeclared work.

Some initiatives help to tackle barriers to migrant workers' access to the Phs professions. In France, the social partners of the household employment sector (direct employment model) have launched an experiment in 2022 to meet the need for skilled labour and promote the integration of migrant workers into legal and decent employment. Labelled "Lab Migration" (2023), this project is aimed at adults who are entitled to work and have at least a basic level of French (A1). It offers a pathway to economic inclusion based on three pillars: the French language, professional skills and citizenship. Targeting four occupations (childminder, carer, cleaner and childcare worker), it is based on compulsory training leading to certification, with options tailored to the profiles of trainees and support in employment with private employers.

While the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily crystallised tensions in the sector, socio-economic changes combined with demographic trends point to a future shortage of Phs workers. A trend that could call into question the resilience of our healthcare systems in the future, marked by a strong return to home care at the expense of institutional care.

trary. For domestic workers, the employer would also have to prove and argue that there is a position of trust with the person she/he wants to employ.

3. - European initiatives implemented during the mandate 2019-2024

3.1. - Grassroots policy initiatives: the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Epsr)

A. The Action Plan: context and follow up

The European Commission, through its “right of initiative,” holds the exclusive authority to initiate Eu legal acts, thereby playing a pivotal role in shaping the functioning of the European Union.

One of the significant initiatives spearheaded by the European Commission is the European Pillar of Social Rights (Epsr), which outlines 20 key principles and rights aimed at fostering a fairer Europe, particularly in the realms of labour markets and welfare systems.

Adopted in 2017, the Epsr serves as a framework for setting social objectives within the European Union. Beyond its symbolic significance, this document has already served as a catalyst for numerous initiatives, including efforts to achieve a better balance between private and professional life. These initiatives have further expanded with the introduction of an action plan presented by the European Commission in early March 2021.

Initiated by the European Commission and solemnly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council in November 2017 in Gothenburg, the Epsr is built around three main sections:

- equal opportunities and access to the labour market;
- fair working conditions;
- social protection and inclusion.

These sections are composed of 20 principles and several of these principles are directly linked to the Personal and Household services sector:

- childcare and support to children (Principle n. 12);
- old-age and income pension (Principle n. 15);
- healthcare (Principle n. 16);

- inclusion of people with disability (Principle n. 17);
- long-term care (Principle n. 18);
- access to essential services (Principle n. 20).

The Action Plan for the implementation of these principles has been launched on the 4th of March 2021 in order to turn them into concrete actions to benefit to all citizens.

It also establishes three ambitious headlines targets for the Eu by 2030:

- 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 years old should be in employment by 2030;
- 60% of the adult population should participate in training every year by 2030;
- reduce by 15 million the number of people which suffer from poverty or social exclusion by 2030.

The evaluation of the Action Plan is planned for 2025.

B. The Porto Social Summit in May 2021

The Porto Social Summit was organized within the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union on May the 7th 2021. Its main objective was to gather Eu leaders, European institutions, social partners, and civil society representatives, in order to set the European social policy agenda for the next decade, and to strengthen the commitment to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights⁶.

This Summit was concluded by the “Porto Declaration” where Eu leaders stressed the importance of closely following, including at the highest level, the progress achieved towards the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Eu headline targets for 2030.

The Eu leaders signed the Porto Declaration and committed themselves to take measures at the European and national levels to tackle issues such as the creation of new quality job, the reinforcement of national social security systems, the reinforcement of national and territorial cohesion, etc.

6 *Porto Social Commitment*, Porto Social Summit, 7th of May 2021.

Invited by the Portuguese presidency, Effe brought the voice of the domestic & home care sector at the occasion of the Porto summit⁷.

To renew the spirit of Porto and the fact that “Social rights are the backbone of the Eu’s construction”, the Portuguese Government relaunched a second summit in collaboration with the European Commission in May 2023 called the “Porto Social Forum”.

During the Forum, Spain and Belgium, which were going hold the next two Council Presidencies, announced that they would unite and set the ambitions of the next Eu Council Presidencies around key priorities: access to social protection, a framework of social convergence and the processing of social investments in the economic governance of the Eu. They explained that they had agreed on a non-paper, in order to push for new social initiatives from the next European Commission and the European Parliament, after the elections of June 2024.

At the end of the conference, an Open-Letter was signed by 37 European leaders, renewing the commitments of the Porto Social Summit for 2030, foreseeing the acceleration of the target for the European Child Guarantee, as well as in the dimensions of skills and qualifications in the world of the dual transition (digital and environmental).

The Portuguese Government announced that Porto Social Forum will become a biennial initiative promoted by the Portuguese Government with the support of the European Commission, in close cooperation with the European Parliament, and with the participation of social partners and civil society.

⁷ Effe emphasized the fact that effective social protection must be guaranteed for Phs workers, such as every other European worker. The development of policy measures, regulatory and legislative frameworks that encourage the use of formal work must be a priority for Eu Member States to tackle undeclared work still widespread in Phs and to promote the emergence of social rights for domestic workers across the Eu.

3.2. - The European Care Strategy: a chance to ensure inclusive care for all?

A. Background of the text

In March 2021, the European Commission announced, in the framework of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, an initiative on long-term care and the revision of the Barcelona targets for early childhood education and care⁸.

In September 2021, the Commission's President Ursula von der Leyen announced in her State of the Union, a European Care Strategy to support women and men in finding the best care, and better work life balance for carers, which was confirmed in the Commission Work Program 2022.

B. The process

Published after one year of work, the new European Care Strategy sets out for the first time an Eu vision on long-term care.

To reach this text, a consultation was launched by the European Commission from the 1st to the 29th of March 2022 in order to collect all the demands from the civil society stakeholders, social partners care-related stakeholders all over Europe.

123 organizations responded to this consultation. Effe was part of it and outlined in its contribution the necessity of guaranteeing, for all the European population, the affordability and accessibility to all forms of care, including homecare.

Alongside the written contribution, Effe published, with the other Phs European social partners (Efsi, Effat, Uni-Europa) a joint statement calling on the European Commission to better recognize the Phs sector and take the necessary measures to guarantee fair and decent working conditions for all Phs worker.

The European Parliament also launched its own initiative resolution entitled "Towards a common European action on care", the rapporteurs of this resolution being Mep Sirpa Pietikäinen (Epp,

⁸ *Strategic Dialogue online meeting, European Care Strategy*, Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, 11th of March 2022.

Finland) and Mep Milan Brglez (S&D, Slovenia). In this resolution, the Parliament mentioned for the first time the freedom of choice for every person in the need of care. It also called on the Commission and the Member States, to put care at the centre of post-pandemic recovery, and to relaunch the discussions for a Care Deal for Europe after the Care Strategy. The latest should include a set of policies, programs, recommendations, and investment at Eu level and support the transition towards a gender-transformative care economy that recognizes care as a right and values it as the backbone of our society.

This resolution was adopted on the 5th of July 2022, two months before the publication of the text by the European Commission.

C. The final outcomes

On the 7th of September 2022, the European Commission put forward three documents:

- *A communication on the European Care Strategy*

The communication sets out a vision for the provision of long term-care in Europe, outlines supportive actions at the Eu level and calls for action at national level.

These include direct technical support under a new flagship project ‘Towards person-centred integrated care’, the upcoming Horizon Europe partnership ‘Transforming health and care systems’ and a strategic partnership with the World Health Organisation (Who).

- *A proposal for a Council recommendation on the access to affordable high-quality long-term care (Ltc)*

The Commission, seeks to improve the situation of formal and informal carers and bring in more care staff, including through legal migration programs.

The text focused on the adequacy, availability, and quality of Ltc. The Commission encourages the Member States to establish high-quality criteria and standards for all Ltc settings. It also aims to guarantee fair working conditions for carers by including the development of attractive wages in the sector through the promotion of national social dialogue and collective bargaining.

The proposition deepens the angle of professionalisation by seeking to address skills needs and worker's shortages in Ltc. Therefore, the European Commission encourages Member States to design and improve initial and continuous education and training and build career pathways through reskilling and upskilling.

Regarding to migrant worker, prevalent in the Ltc sector, the European Commission encourages Member States to Establish pathways to a regular employment status for undeclared Ltc workers, as well as to explore legal migration pathways for Ltc workers and make the Ltc profession attractive to both men and women.

Effe welcomed the European Care Strategy for its recognition of the care workforce facing difficult working conditions and underlining that domestic workers are the ones facing the most precarious and exploitative conditions. However, Effe considers that Phs' contribution to long-term care was not adequately reflected in the Commission's proposal. Therefore, Effe actively working to ensure that the National Care Strategy reports will allow the sector to be deployed in line with the needs of Europeans.

To guarantee affordable, accessible, and high-quality long-term care, structural funds and technical support are paramount. Effe highly values the fact that the European Commission outline of the support available at the Eu level for the care sector including Esf+, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Just Transition Fund, Horizon Europe, and the Digital Europe Programme. Indeed, to ensure that domestic and care actors can properly endorse their roles structural funds are needed. However, information & diffusion campaigns at both the European and National level would promote the available funds and highlight the necessary modalities to access them. These mechanisms must apply equally to the whole care sector including the entirety of domestic and community-based services. Moreover, the mention of the Technical Support Instruments in the proposal for Council recommendation is also supported by Effe as it would allow the Member States to monitor and assess the effectiveness of their own policies, allow to conduct earn-back effects analysis and support strategic reforms.

- *A proposal for a Council recommendation on the Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care*

The Commission proposes to Member States to revise the 2002 targets on early childhood education and care (Ecec) to enhance women's labour market participation (also called 'the Barcelona Targets').

While the targets set at the time called on Member States to provide childcare to 33% of children under 3 and to 90% of children from age 3 until mandatory school age, the proposed revised targets are more ambitious: 50% of children under 3 and 96% of children from age 3 until mandatory school age.

Effe also welcomed the proposals for Council Recommendations, one on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care (Ecec). However, Effe considers that Phs' contribution to childcare was not adequately reflected in the Commission's proposal. The Recommendation needs to better recognize the Phs Sectors to ensure their objectives of availability and affordability of childcare services, as well as decent working conditions for all childcare workers at home.

Individual childcare arrangements represent a third option between collective childcare and women at home taking care of their children. Most parents have expressed a need to see a diversification of childcare arrangements: both collective or individual childcare should be structured, developed, affordable and implemented to respond to parent's needs. If they do not have access to diversified childcare arrangements, parents are forced to find solutions fitting with their work-life balance and care needs and fall back into undeclared work. In Member States where multiple childcare arrangements are supported, a clear decrease of undeclared work was identified, as well as the structuration and professionalisation of this sector.

Effe does not wish to replace collective childcare but allowing a complement of childcare accessible for parents. The access to consistent and diversified childcare solutions enables parents to pursue their professional activity whilst having children. It would also help tackle territorial inequalities in terms of access to childcare solutions, since collective childcare remains mostly available in urban areas.

In this context, allowing parents to directly hire the childminders or childcare worker of their choice through direct employment is

a factor fostering women's participation in the labour market. It would also help the creation of declared jobs with social rights. In this case investment in the development and adaptation of the essential skills required to ensure quality, especially to meet the challenges of educating very young children at home.

Therefore, Effe welcomed the fact that “Member States should encourage a time intensity of children's participation in Ecec that is compatible with meaningful labour-market participation of parents, especially mothers”⁹. We recalled that 25 hours per week for children do not allow women to fully get back to the labour market or only for part-time jobs. We urged Member States to consider that parents working in care professions have specific needs in terms of childcare (night or long shift, staggered working time).

D. The follow-up of the European Care Strategy

On December the 8th, Eu ministers in the Council adopted the proposed recommendations on early childhood education and care and on affordable high-quality Ltc.¹⁰

The Eu Care Strategy is currently being implemented by the Member States. Long-term care national coordinators, in charge of the development of the national action plans and their execution, have been nominated in August 2023. The European Commission organised so far two meetings to discuss the follow-up. National reports should be presented in June 2024. The evaluation report of the European care Strategy is announced for 2025.

⁹ Council Recommendations, one on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care (Ecec).

¹⁰ Effe organized on the 29th of September 2022, alongside the other European Phs Social Partners, an event held at the European Parliament, on the publication of the European Care Strategy and its opportunities for the Phs sector.

3.3. - Initiatives led during the 2019-2024 mandate on professionalization, migration and labour shortages.

This mandate has been characterized by important breakthroughs on social issues, as it was one of the priorities set on the strategic agenda of the European Union for the period 2019-2024 ¹¹ :

- protecting citizens and freedoms;
- developing a strong and vibrant economic base;
- building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe;
- promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

These progresses are notably visible on topics such as professionalization, migration and labour shortages.

A. The relevant texts on professionalisation

The necessity of supporting the professionalization of Phs workers is essential, as training plays an important role on preventing the departure of care workers, and also plays a role on the workforce sustainability: this is a key challenge, as a large part of the current workforce will soon be retiring.

The European Skills Agenda has been launched in July 2020 as a five-year plan, in order to help individuals (and business) develop more and better skills, so they can put them use.

The objectives pursued by the European Skills Agenda were to strengthen sustainable competitiveness, as set out in the European Green Deal but also to build resilience to react to crises, based on the lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic. It also aimed at ensuring social fairness, putting into practice the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights (access to education, training and lifelong learning for everybody, everywhere in the Eu). The European Skills Agenda includes 12 actions organised around four building blocks:

1. A call to join forces in a collective action:
 - Action 1: A Pact for Skills.
2. Actions to ensure that people have the right skills for jobs:
 - Action 2: Strengthening skills intelligence;

11 *A new strategic agenda 2019-2024*, European Commission.

- Action 3: Eu support for strategic national upskilling action;
 - Action 4: Proposal for a Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (Vet);
 - Action 5: Rolling out the European Universities Initiative and upskilling scientists;
 - Action 6: Skills to support the twin transitions;
 - Action 7: Increasing Stem graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills;
 - Action 8: Skills for life.
3. Tools and initiatives to support people in their lifelong learning pathways:
 - Action 9: Initiative on individual learning accounts;
 - Action 10: A European approach to micro-credentials;
 - Action 11: New Europass platform.
 4. A framework to unlock investments in skills:
 - Action 12: Improving the enabling framework to unlock Member States' and private investments in skills.

The European Year of Skills, which was launched on the 9th of May 2023, aimed at creating a dynamic between all stakeholders, in order to address the issue of skills shortages in the European Union and boost the Eu skills strategy.

• **Eu Pact for Skills**

The Eu Pact for Skills is an initiative aiming at supporting public and private organizations with upskilling and reskilling, so they can thrive through the green and digital transitions.

Launched in 2020, it obtained the following results:

- over 1500 members, with 20 large-scale partnerships;
- the commitment to provide over 10 million upskilling and reskilling opportunities;
- 160 million euros investments;
- 2 million benefiting since 2022 of these measures;
- 15 thousand training programmes developed or updated.

One of these large-scale partnerships is the “Eu Pact Skills Partnership for Long-Term Care”. It aims to train at least 60% of Ltc professionals every year in areas related to digitalisation and person-centred care by 2030 – in line with the targets set by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. The Care4Skills project proposal in view of supporting the implementation of the Partnership for Skills will be launched during the Summer 2024. Effe will be associated partner.

B. The relevant texts on migration

One of the other main priorities of this European mandate was to achieve a harmonization of the asylum and migration policies between Eu Member States.

This motivation has translated into the “Asylum and Migration Pact”, which is a set of regulations and policies to create a fairer, efficient, and more sustainable migration and asylum process for the European Union.

The Pact was proposed in September 2020, and reached a first political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council in December 2023.

This Asylum and Migration Pact still needs to be formally adopted by the European Parliament and Council, so it can start being implemented via specific European legislative acts at the national levels.

On 12th March 2024, the European Commission adopted a communication¹² assessing the progress made in the field of migration and asylum. The Ec is underlining that over the last four years, it has put in place a number of measures to meet its commitment to create a sustainable European framework for the effective and human management of migration.

• Single Permit Directive

One of the evolutions carried by the Asylum and Migration Pact is the reform of the Single Permit Directive:

12 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/migration-and-asylum/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en#documents

- The limitation of the processing time for a decision on single permit applications to 90 days.
- Single permit holders now have the right to change employer.
- If a single permit holder finds themselves unemployed, the permit will not be withdrawn for at least three months, or at least six months if they have been working for more than two years.
- Where a permit holder has been victim to exploitative working conditions, Member States will have the obligation to extend the rights of the permit holder for an additional three months.

Even though this reform is more advanced and brings up more rights to migrant workers, Member States are to decide of the implementation. Everything can be interpreted because the wording is unclear.

But for the first time, it introduces the right to change employers, even though no explanation is made on the procedure that will be up to governments that can still impose restrictions on what kind of jobs migrant workers can do. There is no clarity about whether it will be an application procedure or a notification procedure. In any case it should be simple, free, fast and predictable.

there is also nothing specific concerning domestic & home care workers their specific case will need to be explicated into the national transposition of this new version of the Single Permit Directive.

The European Parliament adopted on the 13th March the new revised rules of this Directive¹³.

C. The relevant texts on labour shortages

• Eu Talent Pool

The Eu Talent Pool is an initiative from the European Commission. It aims at being the first Eu-wide tool on facilitating international recruitment and providing job opportunities for jobseekers from third countries residing outside the Eu, which may have the skills required to work in shortage occupations existing at the European Union and at all skills levels.

¹³ *Legal migration, like the Single Permit Directive, is essential for a comprehensive Eu migration policy*, Socialists & Democrats, 13th March 2024.

It is still to be voted for adoption. This initiative was launched into a rich political context in order to articulate between several Eu measures such as the New Eu Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Eu Skills and Talent Package or even the Eu Year of Skills. This text might only concern enterprises and therefore won't tackle the issues of labour shortages in the Phs sector for "non-professional" employers. Moreover, creating specific pathways for each work sector is a risk to create a fragmented and restrictive labour market.

In March 2024, the European Commission has adopted a Communication entitled "Labour and skills shortages in the Eu: an action plan¹⁴" to address these shortages.

First, three reasons explaining these shortages are identified:

- the decline in the working-age population. At the same time, the care needs for the elderly population are increasing, creating major pressures on healthcare and long-term care services;
- the significant growth in employment linked to the green and digital transitions, which is causing shortages of jobs and skills at all levels of qualification, particularly in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- poor working conditions in certain occupations and sectors, which make it difficult to fill vacancies and/or retain workers. Inadequate and arduous working conditions, the Commission points out, such as above-average job stress and low wages, are a key factor in persistent labour shortages in certain occupations and sectors.

The Ec underlines the key role played by social dialogue in tackling labour and skills shortages and provide funding to reinforce the work of the social partners in this fight and invites them to submit operational projects likely to remedy existing and anticipated shortages. The Ec also proposed to make sure that social partners focus their social dialogue efforts on the specific sectors most in need.

The action plan covers five key areas of action at European, national, regional and social partner levels that are in line with the challenges faced by the Phs sector: supporting the activation of people under-represented in the labour market; supporting skills, training and education and improving working conditions.

14 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=27473&langId=en>

3.4. - Other initiatives led during the current mandate and most important legislative breakthroughs

A. The most important legislative breakthroughs on social dialogue and working conditions

The concept of European social dialogue has been initiated in 1985 during the Val Duchesse Summit by the former President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors.

Social partners' role has been established, since 1985, in the European Law, within the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Tfeu), a title « Social Policy », which covers several articles giving precisions on the rights of social partners for all different European legislative initiatives.

There are two existing types of European social dialogue:

- the sectoral social dialogue, which allows the realization of collective agreements that may apply to one sector at the European level;
- the interprofessional social dialogue, which allows the realization of collective agreements that may apply to all sectors at the European level.

The European Commission's President, Ursula Von der Leyen, announced in her State of the Union of September 2023, that a European Social Summit will take place on the first semester of 2024, within the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union to discuss the future of the European social dialogue.

Celebrating the two decades following the establishment of the European Social Dialogue, this Social Summit took place on the 30th of January 2024 in Val Duchesse. Eu leaders and social partners signed a "Tripartite Declaration for a thriving European Social Dialogue", which affirmed the following points:

- the necessity to tackle labour and skills shortages;
- the objective of putting European social dialogue at the heart of future;
- the establishment of a "European Social Dialogue Envoy";
- the launch of a Pact for European social dialogue.

Effe highlighted its concerns regarding the representation of certain professions, particularly in the care sector. Indeed, Effe un-

derlines an inadequate representation of certain professions within the current social dialogue structures, both at the European and national levels. Without proper representation, there's a risk at neglecting the voices of household employers and workers, making it difficult to negotiate collective agreements that address the sector's unique needs.

Effe welcomes the establishment of a special envoy for European social dialogue but underlined that only one part of the care sector is mentioned, with early childhood care notably absent. This compartmentalization overlooks the interconnected nature of the care sector and fails to address the holistic needs of care providers and recipients.

Failure to adapt to these evolving formats perpetuates the exclusion of certain sectors, such as homecare, from vital initiatives and frameworks related to training, skills development, health, and safety at work. This not only hinders the professional development and career prospects of care workers but also undermines the overall quality, accessibility, and affordability of care services.

In conclusion, Effe urged the Commission to take proactive steps to address these concerns and ensure that the care sector, in all its diversity, is adequately represented and supported within the European social dialogue framework. By doing so, we can work towards a more inclusive and sustainable care sector that meets the needs of both workers and care recipients.

B. On gender equality

The European Union's Gender Equality Strategy has set the agenda towards gender-equal Europe, with the key objectives being:

- ending gender-based violence;
- challenging gender stereotypes;
- closing gender gaps in the labour market;
- achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy;
- addressing the gender pay and pension gaps;
- closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

The Pay Transparency Directive has also been a major advance for women, as it solidifies the principle of equal pay for equal work through enhanced transparency and enforcement.

C. On childcare and children rights

The new comprehensive Eu Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee are major policy initiatives put forward by the European Commission to better protect all children, to help them fulfil their rights and to place them right at the centre of Eu policy making.

The Eu Strategy on the Rights of the Child aims at establishing to constitute an Eu policy framework to ensure the protection of rights of all children, and secure access to basic services for vulnerable children.

Adopted in 2021, the Eu Child Guarantee aims to ensure that the most vulnerable children in the European Union have access to healthcare, education, childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, ultimately aiming to ensure progressive realization of child's rights in Europe.

D. On persons with disability

The European Union has established for the period 2021-2030 a Strategy for the rights of persons with disability. This multiannual strategy aims to guide the action of Member States as well as those of the European institutions, with the objective that people with disabilities can enjoy their fundamental rights, have the same opportunities as others, can participate equally in society and to the economy, or no longer be victims of discrimination linked to their disability.

3.5. - Relevant Directives and Resolutions

A. Transparent And Predictable Working Conditions Directive

This Directive¹⁵ aims to establish more extensive and modernised rights for all workers in the Eu, particularly by addressing insufficient protection for workers in more precarious jobs, while limiting the burden on employers and maintaining flexibility to adapt to a changing labour market.

B. Work-Life Balance Directive

The Work-Life Balance Directive introduces a set of legislative actions designed to modernise the existing Eu legal and policy frameworks, with the aims of:

- better supporting a work-life balance for parents and carers;
- encouraging a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women;
- addressing women's underrepresentation in the labour market.

Published in 2019 and then transposed in Member States, the Directive include measures:

- the introduction of paternity leave: under the directive, fathers must be able to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of their child, compensated at least at the level of sick pay;
- ensuring that two out of the four months of parental leave are non-transferable between parents and compensated at a level that is determined by the Member State;
- the introduction of carers' leave: workers providing personal care or support to a relative will be entitled to five days of leave per year;
- extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to carers and working parents of children up to eight years old.

The directive is also accompanied by a set of policy measures that are designed to support Member States in achieving the aims of bet-

15 2019.

ter work-life balance and more equally distributed caring responsibilities. These include:

- encouraging the use of European funds to improve the provision of formal care services;
- ensuring protection for parents and carers against discrimination or dismissal;
- removing economic disincentives for second earners within families.

As a result of these measures, the directive aims to improve not only work-life balance but also contribute to an increase in women's employment and families' economic stability.

3.6. - Relevant working groups and reports implemented during the period 2019-2024

A number of initiatives have been led over the last few years, in order to foster the reflexion and exchanges on themes related to the Phs sector, such as:

A. An Eu High-Level Expert Group on the future of the welfare state

This Expert Group has produced a report published in 2023, which sets out 21 recommendations to improve social protection systems and welfare states in six areas:

- support to children;
- young people and families;
- ensuring inclusive social protection;
- lifelong learning;
- supporting adequate income;
- high-quality long-term care in old age.

B. Report of the European Parliament on “The Covid-19 pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations for the future”

This resolution, which has been adopted on the 12th of July 2023, issues a number of recommendations following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The important role of homecare during this period has been well included into this report, as Effe could count on the support of several MEPs in that regard.

C. A report of the European Commission on the “Access to essential services in the Eu”

This report’s findings¹⁶ show that people at poverty or social exclusion face significant challenges in the access to essential services, including care services.

D. A report of Eurofound on “Handling change with care - Skills for the Eu care sector”

This report¹⁷ issues 8 recommendations to address worker shortages and strengthen the attractiveness of care professions through skills development, which are as follows:

- increasing training provision;
- broadening the scope of training;
- vocational education and training (Vet) for the care sector needs to focus more on adults;
- adapting to new care giver profiles;
- adapting to new client profiles;
- leveraging skills intelligence and partnerships to update curricula;
- improving job quality and image;
- permaskilling for care: investing in Vet and work-place training and in job quality.

16 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:-52023SC0570>

17 <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/9185>

4. - Proposals for the next mandate

With the European elections in sight, almost each European political party has positioned itself through joint work programs or manifesto on key themes that cut across Phs issues.

The two far right Eu parties, Id and Ecr, have no manifesto or document setting out their priorities for the European elections, but made specific announcements during meetings or Congresses over the last year in sight of the Eu elections.

With the next legislative mandate in sight, Effe's manifesto sets out its key recommendations for the upcoming decisions makers.

4.1. - Key proposals linked to migration, professionalization, and labour shortages

A. On migration

Migration is a cross-sectoral issues that every different European party is trying to tackle, with surely various approaches.

On one hand, several parties such as Pes¹⁸, Renew, Greens, The Left, are pushing for a stronger coordinated European action on integration. The Pes is calling for the implementation of inclusive labour market policies and stronger inclusion policies for migrant people. Alde is advocating for putting migrant integration as a priority. They propose to use Eu funds, to support policies such as the provision of basic skills, a zero-tolerance application for discrimination, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and language learning, as well as buddy schemes to facilitate integration at a micro-level. The Greens are proposing a “new and comprehensive Migration Code, which will provide for visa opportunities for family reunification and work at different skills levels”. The Left is pushing for an equality of treatment of migrant workers regarding other workers in terms of working conditions and social protection.

On the other hand, the far-right European parties (Ecr and Id) are against all incentives which will, in any way, support any sort of migration, including labour migration.

¹⁸ The Party of European Socialists.

Both parties advocate for a more restrictive European migration policies, by adopting an “anti-immigrationist” position.

The European People’s Party, which is, at the moment, the biggest party at the European level, has a unique position on that subject. The party has made as one of its priorities for the next mandate, the control of illegal immigration, mainly through the transformation of Frontex, the Eu body in charge of Eu Member States’ borders control. Regarding labour migration, the Epp is not opposed to any measures to support it, but considers that “it is up to the Member States to deal with legal migration on how it best fits their national interests and to facilitate legal migrants’ inclusion and integration into society”.

In its manifesto, Effe encourages Eu Member States and the European institutions to implement policies that recognize the vital role of the domestic sector in the integration of people with migrant background into the formal workforce.

This includes the support for migrant workers in having their professional skills assessed and certified (whether acquired informally or formally) and the guarantee of the existence of opportunities for migrant workers to access fast-track skill building programs that ensure a high-quality care workforce for the future and fulfil unmet care needs.

B. On skills, professionalization and training

The Pes is advocating for strong measures that would enable all workers to acquire new skills, but also a real right to access to paid training and the creation of new long-term jobs. Both Alde and European Democrat Party (Edp) are calling on Eu Member States to implement measures in favour of skills development.

The Greens underline that investing in skills is crucial to face the different transitions occurring in Europe. They are also pushing for a “Lifelong Learning Directive”, which would protect the “right to paid training leave”.

Effe is calling for an empowerment of domestic & home care workers via the European Skills Agenda, bringing high-quality services and their accompanying benefits to citizens all over Europe. Effe wishes to guarantee all care workers, including homecare workers, the right of access to education, training and lifelong learning,

recognising formal and informal skills, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups such as migrant workers and people who are far from employment. The development of tailored training pathways that take account of the specific needs of homecare workers is crucial. It can be achieved by diversifying learning and certification methods (blended learning, micro-certification, Vae, etc.). The attractiveness of the Phs sector can be fostered by drawing up job profiles that consider all the changes in the labour market and guarantee decent jobs for Phs workers. For workers from migrant backgrounds, Effe suggests to focus on the following three angles: *status*, housing and language; but also to identify, recognise and promote the skills developed at home as well as those acquired in the country of origin in order to promote social integration and mobility.

Last but not least the exchange of best practices should be better supported through the creation of a European platform listing the various European projects carried out to date on the recognition of domestic & care worker's skills.

C. On gender equality

All parties which have published a manifesto for these European elections support measures in favour of women's employment and reduction of gender gaps in the labour market.

Effe is calling on Eu Member States and all European institutions to tackle the gender gap in the sector, as women make up 89% of European domestic workers, according to the Ilo, and these women face daily precarity and discrimination, as well as navigation of gender stereotypes.

4.2. - Other key proposals linked to Phs topics

A. On the strengthening of long-term care services in Europe

Several political parties have rightfully underlined the importance of long-term care and of its accessibility in their manifestos or priority documents for the upcoming European elections.

The European People's Party (Epp) has made a strong commitment to support the place of care in Europe, with measures aiming at strengthening of the European Care Strategy and implementing solutions for an affordable long-term care for the elderly and other vulnerable individuals in all communities.

The Party of European Socialists (Pes) did not mention directly in its manifesto the case of the long-term care sector but is advocating to guarantee the right of elderly people to access health care.

One component of the Renew's coalition, the European Democratic Party has established, in its manifesto, several priorities related to care, especially on the support of long-term care systems to strengthen the independence, integration, and societal role of older people.

The Party of European Greens support the project of a "Green Social Deal", which will also be a "Care Deal", as they aim to push to improve working conditions for care workers, while protecting everyone's right to proper care.

The concrete measures pursued by the European Greens:

- investing in comprehensive, life-long approaches, such as universal access to early childhood education and care and deinstitutionalized care for disabled people and the elderly;
- guaranteeing that early childhood education and care are counted as social investment in the Eu fiscal framework.

The Party of the European Left is advocating for several measures related to care, such as:

- the guarantee of universal and free access to care and public health systems;
- the creation of quality care structures for children, the elderly and the disabled in order to enhance the sustainability of reproduction in an equitable manner;

- the creation of a “Guaranteed Employment Plan in the European Union”, which would focus on several programmes, including the promotion of care.

The European Conservatives and Reformists (Ecr) and the Identity and Democracy (Id) groups have not made any specific document presenting their priorities for the upcoming European elections, nor clarified their possible measures regarding care.

In its manifesto, Effe advocates for the “full recognition of domestic and home care work in all its diversity, with a special focus on households that directly employ these workers, and the necessity to fight undeclared work to ensure these unsung contributors to social Europe and the silver economy benefit from the same social rights as any other worker in the Eu.”

Effe also calls on the Eu and its Member States to give the domestic & home care sector the funding it needs to provide affordable Phs services to every citizen who chooses it.

In this regard, the Effe Lab, Effe’s Phs Eu Observatory, launched in January 2023, will release at the end of 2024, a new tool: a simulation country per country. Focused on domestic work, or household related services, it will demonstrate the real cost for Member States if they decided to invest in the Phs sector, as well as the return on investment and all the positive externalities (creation of declared jobs and women access to the labour market) it would create.

B. On social dialogue and workers’ protection

The Phs sector suffer from a deep lack of political and institutional recognition, as well as an absence of social dialogue and collective bargaining in many Eu Member States. In the direct employment model, collective agreements, currently exist only in France and Italy. According to the European Commission’s 2016 assessment, the Phs sector ranked third among industries most affected by undeclared work, following the hotel and catering sectors. Recent Eurobarometer data from 2020 indicates that 34% of undeclared work in the Eu in 2019 was attributed to the Phs sector. However, this figure likely underestimates the true extent of undeclared employment, with the actual number of affected workers likely exceeding the identified 3.4 million.

The subject of social dialogue takes a noticeable part in several parties' programmes, following the dynamic launched by the Val Duchesse Summit but most of the time do not take into consideration vulnerable workers or more precarious ones, such as domestic & care workers.

The Epp pushes for the creation of a "European Workers' Guarantee" for the Digital Market, which will "ensure the rights of workers and the self-employed in the digital age, for instance in the gig economy, while respecting the competences of Member States and empowering social partners."

The Pes is encouraging collective bargaining and social dialogue and is calling on the Eu and the Member States to respect the autonomy of social partners.

The Edp advocates for the protection of workers with non-standard *status* and for their access to social protection, regardless of their employment status.

The Greens is also pushing for collective bargaining and social dialogue and have made in their manifesto a proposal for a "Just Transition Law". This legislation would aim to protect the rights of workers which may be affected by both the green and digital transitions, as well as to guarantee the right to unionize in new or non-standards forms of work.

Effe is pushing for an improvement of social dialogue and collective bargaining at Eu level to guarantee decent working conditions and training opportunities in the care sector. The objective is to give workers a fair salary worthy of such an essential role and allowing to attract committed professionals to tackle the challenges of an aging society.

One of Effe's main objectives is to call on Eu Member States to initiate a sectoral social dialogue at the national level, so that Phs workers can benefit from a range of basic social rights (access to protection, proper pensions, paid holidays, etc...).

Effe also calls on Eu Member States to ratify Ilo's Convention n°189 on decent domestic work.

Ultimately, the constitution of a Phs sectoral social dialogue committee at the European level may allow the achievement of collective agreements that may apply to the sector at the European level.

4.3. - What key topics for the next legislative term?

The 2019-2024 European mandate has been particularly rich in terms of social progresses.

The social priorities for the next mandate have not been yet announced, but several topics are emerging as key for the next legislative term while the Eu-27 will adopt in the summer the strategic agenda for the next mandate. During the last Epsco council, they called for efforts to be stepped up to help those furthest from the labour market into employment, and to boost the employment of young people and older people. They also discussed the central role of the European Social Rights Base (linked to the Porto Objectives) in the future strategic agenda. Countries such as the Netherlands have also called for monitoring of abuses of worker mobility in the Eu.

The Belgian presidency has also initiated a reflection on future policy priorities, focusing on the concrete implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights to navigate through economic and social megatrends such as rapid digitalisation, climate change and demographic change.

The Employment & Social rights' Commissioner, and S&D Eu *spitzenkandidat*, Nicolas Schmit has expressed his belief that the next Commission will tackle the issue of decent housing and will manage to reach to an agreement on social protection.

Although it was initially mainly an economic exercise, the European Semester¹⁹ has evolved, integrating other relevant policy fields into the process, because for a long time, social affairs were not really monitored within the European Semester cycle. In the 2023 cycle, the European Semester's Country Specific Recommendations²⁰ put focus

¹⁹ The European Semester is part of the European Union's economic governance framework: during the European Semester, Member States align their budgetary and economic policies with the rules agreed at Eu level.

²⁰ Examples of Country Specific Recommendations made during the 2023 Cycle of the European Semester:

- recommendations made to Estonia on the affordability of healthcare by ensuring sustainable funding;
- recommendations made to Latvia on the strengthening of the adequacy of healthcare and social protection;
- recommendations made to Lithuania on the adequacy of healthcare and social protection, and on stronger primary care.

on new accessibility challenges on top of those highlighted already in previous years. In this framework, the Belgian and Spanish Presidencies of the Council of the European Union, jointly launched in November 2023, the “Social Convergence Framework” which aims to improve the reporting on the monitoring and progress of the various social indicators related to the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Its implementation will be crucial to follow, particularly in the framework of the national reports on the Care strategy.

Following to the Commission’s proposal on labour shortages, we can expect an upcoming Directive to tackle the issue of psychosocial risks at work as well as multi-sectoral guidelines to combat violence and harassment in the healthcare sector, improve fair intra-Eu mobility for workers and learners, and attract talent from outside the European Union.

A reform project of the “Workplace directive” that provides minimum requirements for workplaces covering issues such as traffic routes, workroom dimensions and indoor air quality, is also expected and can be an opportunity to place the homes of European households as a specific workplace.

Finally, on April the 9th 2024, the Council released its priorities for the next mandate. As expected, social, care and health issues do not feature prominently in this document, where the focus is more on security, immigration, competitiveness and democracy.

Among the priorities that could have an impact on the Phs, we can underline the following:

- “Cooperate with countries of origin and transit on migration, including on returns and on legal pathways”: this priority should certainly include points relating to the “Eu Talent Pool” and “Talent Partnerships”, which shall provide a framework for the integration of migrant workers into the European labour market”. Increase economic and social cohesion through upward convergence”: this priority echoes the “Social Convergence Framework”, introduced last November, which now monitors the various social indicators at European level;
- “Increase participation in the labour market”: although the title is vague, it refers in particular to certain population groups, such as the 7.7 million women who, as informal carers are outside the labour market to look after a relative;

- “Invest in people’s skills and education throughout life to provide opportunities for all”: this priority is in line with the European Year of Skills programme and the European Skills Agenda;
- “Reduce disparities at all levels through adequate social protection”: it is more likely that this priority will only be implemented at Member State level and that the draft directive on Europe-wide coordination of national social security systems will not be relaunched any time soon.

Section IV

Domestic work and family welfare: the resilience of the system is at risk

by Fondazione Studi
Consulenti del Lavoro

Introduction

The field of domestic work has experienced a notable decline in recent years. The figures, though boosted by the regularisation of 2020, attest to a gradual and sustained decline over the past decade.

In the two-year period between 2021 and 2023, the decline has been particularly notable. According to data from Istat, there has been a reduction of 145,000 in the number of people employed, representing a contraction of 9.5%, despite the labour market reaching new records in terms of participation.

Furthermore, the demand from households for collaborative services also appears to exhibit a similar trend.

Following an upward trajectory in the early 2000s, the number of households utilising these services increased from 1.9 million in 2001 (representing 8.8% of total households) to 2.6 million (or 10.4%) by 2006. In 2011, the number of households utilising the services of domestic workers, caregivers and baby-sitters returned to its starting level, with 1,900,000 households employing such individuals in 2022, representing 7.4% of resident households.

The decline in birth rates and the spread of smart working are likely to have an impact on the demand for collaborative services for families related to early childhood and home care. It is in this area that the greatest decline is observed, both in the number of collaborators and in demand from families.

Nevertheless, even in the services dedicated to the assistance and care of the elderly, the demand from families does not align with the projected increase in potential needs. Furthermore, the same dynamics of labour supply, although demonstrating quantitative and qualitative growth, exhibit a less vibrant trajectory than observed in the past.

The family welfare system represents Italy's response to new and old emergencies and to the difficulties of the public system in coping with them. It is based on the multifunctionality of the family and on the supply of new workers available to carry out activities that are no longer considered to be within the scope of Italian society. However, this system is beginning to show signs of weakening. This has implications for the resilience of the entire welfare

re system. Despite the considerable challenges associated with an ageing population and a rise in non-self-sufficiency, the system has not made the anticipated quantum leap:

- in the public dimension, the structuring of an accessible residential offer and structured home care, according to an ageing at home model, aims to favour the maintenance of the person in their own family context while guaranteeing high-quality health care;
- in the private dimension, the network of carers and caregivers should have complemented the former, while at the same time fostering the professional growth and upskilling of the employed profiles and increasing the attractiveness of care work.

The resilience of the family welfare system, and the network of collaborators that keeps it alive, is currently burdened by at least three critical factors that, if not addressed and resolved, risk causing it to collapse.

The initial issue is the ongoing prevalence of irregularity within the sector, which is projected to increase further (to an estimated 54% in 2023) following the temporary decline due to regularisation in 2020. Domestic work accounts for 38.3% of irregular salaried employment in Italy and is estimated to generate a quantifiable cost to the community of approximately euro 2.5 billion per year. This is derived from two principal factors: the absence of contributory revenue, estimated at euro 1.5 billion, and the Irpef evasion of employees, estimated by the Ministry of Finance at euro 904 million per annum.

This situation gives rise not only to a growing sense of disaffection towards these types of work, but also to an employment fragility that has an adverse impact on the labour supply itself and the evolution towards a more structured and professional model. This is a matter of general interest that cannot be left to the exclusive jurisdiction of the private dynamics of the family-worker relationship. The second issue is the rising cost of collaborative services and their impact on family budgets, particularly in cases of non-self-sufficiency. The Family (Net) Work survey, conducted in June 2024 on a sample of 2,015 families affiliated with Assindatcolf and Webcolf, revealed that households utilizing the services of a carer bear a monthly expense exceeding 50% of their monthly income. This is particularly

evident in cases where the care recipients are elderly individuals with only pension income and no other sources of income. Nevertheless, even in households with no specific care needs, the impact on income is significant, with 42.8% of cases exceeding 15%.

In any case, these costs are rising and becoming increasingly difficult to bear. This is not only the case for low-income households (80% of whom rate the costs as unaffordable), but also for the middle class, which has seen the number of households struggling to meet these costs rise from 27.9% in January 2023 to 55.2% in July 2024.

It is also important to consider the impact of the shrinking supply of labour, which has been a significant factor in the recent economic landscape. This is evidenced by the difficulty that households report in recruiting the right person for the type of work to be done (68.7% of households indicate this as the most problematic aspect in domestic work) and in finding available figures (21.5%).

The evolving labour market, which is now able to offer more attractive positions for those from third countries seeking their first job, the evolution of the professional integration processes of foreigners, and the reduction in the flow of people entering the country are causing difficulties in generational turnover, which jeopardises the very sustainability of the model. In 2014, 24 of the 100 carers were under 40 and 12 were over 60. By 2023, the proportion of under-40s will be almost halved (14.2%), while that of over-60s will more than double (29.1%).

In this context, the lack of resources – economic on the one hand and professional on the other – also appears to be influencing the redefinition of family strategies.

The utilisation of residential solutions for the elderly is on the rise. The number of individuals aged 65 and above residing in Italian RSAs increased from 296,183 in 2017 to 362,249 in 2022, representing a 22.3% growth. Conversely, the number of individuals opting to leave the workforce to care for a family member is on the rise.

If there is one data point that more than any other encapsulates the challenges currently facing the welfare and family systems, it is the decision of many women to leave the workforce, even in the context of new opportunities for employment.

It is noteworthy that between 2018 and 2023, while the number of women in employment increased, the proportion of women who

opted not to work for family reasons increased from 2,525,000 to 2,659,000, representing a 5.3% rise.

The most notable increase is among individuals aged 55-64 (+219,000, representing a 34.7% increase compared to 2018), a demographic that often bears the brunt of caregiving responsibilities, including for elderly parents, grandchildren, and spouses.

1. - Is domestic work at a turning point?

1.1. - The declining numbers of care work

The number of domestic workers has declined significantly over the past two years, as evidenced by data from both Inps and Istat. Inps data, which monitors regular employment, and Istat data on employment in households with domestic workers, which also includes irregular workers, both indicate a notable reduction in the number of domestic workers between 2021 and 2023.

Inps calculates a reduction of 139,755 workers between 2021 and 2023, representing a 14.3% decrease. Indeed, the number of registered workers declined from 973,629 in 2021 to 833,874 in 2023 (**Table 1**).

According to estimates provided by Istat, the reduction was even more pronounced, amounting to a decline of 145,700 employed individuals over the same period (-9.5%). Furthermore, the total number of workers, including those engaged in undeclared employment, decreased from 1,530,000 to 1,384,800.

Such a significant decline, in years when employment has instead recorded significant leaps forward, casts doubt on the resilience of a family care system that in recent decades has been a veritable pillar of collective welfare, enabling thousands of families to compensate for the growing inefficiency of institutional health care and to meet the care needs of an increasingly elderly population.

Tab. 1 – Statistics on domestic work trends, 2021-2023 (*a.v. in thousands and % var.*)

	Inps	Istat
2021	973.6	1.530.5
2023	833.9	1.384.8
Diff. 2021-2023	-139.7	-145.7
% Var. 2021-2023	-9.5	-9.5

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts and Inps data

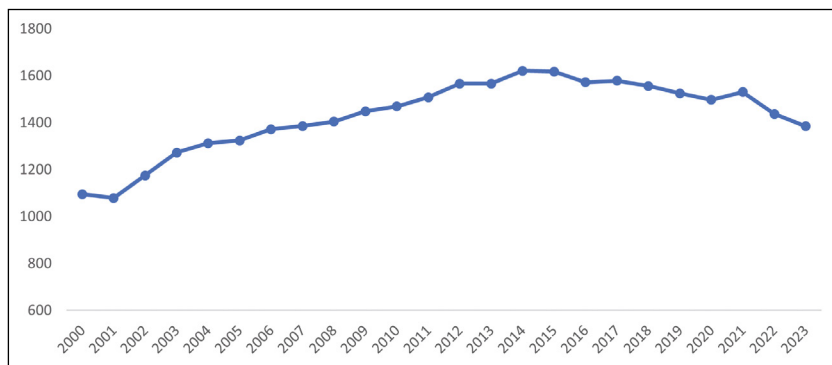
The figures can be partly explained as a “physiological” decrease following the regularisation that took place during the Covid-19 emergency, with Decree-Law No. 52/2020, which resulted in the emergence of a quota of employees ranging from 112,000 from Inps to 82,000 from Istat, which can be identified as the employment balance between 2019 and 2021.¹

But for almost ten years now, employment in the sector has been slowly and progressively declining, a symptom of a system that may be beginning to show its fragility.

The whole of the 2000s was characterised by strong growth in care, assistance and cooperation work in Italian households. This growth has been all the more surprising given that employment levels have tended to stagnate.

Since the beginning of 2000, the number of people employed in the domestic help sector has increased by 290,000, from 1,095,000 to 1,285,000. The growth rate (+26.5%) was much higher than that of employment as a whole (+13.3%), and the contribution of domestic work to the overall balance was almost 10% (**Figure 1** and **Table 2**).

Fig. 1 - Employed in household and cohabitation activities as domestic employers, 2000-2023 (a.v.)



Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts data

¹ In the case of Istat, the figure refers only to the regular component.

Tab. 2 – Employment balances in the activities of households and cohabitations as domestic employers, over the decades, 2000-2023 (% val.)

	Difference	% var.	Contribution to the employment balance
2000-2010	374.4	34.2	21.3
2010-2020	27.9	1.4	16.1
2020-2023	-112.6	-7.5	-9.9
2000-2023	289.7	26.4	9.4

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts data

Demographic ageing, longer life expectancy, new health emergencies and the deconstruction of traditional families were the main vectors of growth until at least the mid-2000s, when the number of employees peaked at 1,261,000 and then began a slow decline.

If we want to reconstruct the evolution of domestic work over the last 23 years, we can identify three phases:

- Years 2000-2010: domestic work experienced an unprecedented season of growth, also favoured by its progressive regularisation (the irregularity rate fell from 74.5% to 56.6% over the decade). The number of employees rose from 1,095,000 to 1,469,000, an increase of 374,000 (34.2%). The contribution to employment growth for the period was 21.3%.
- Years 2010-2020: Growth consolidates, the number of employees remains more or less stable (from 1,469,000 in 2010 to 1,497,000 in 2020, i.e. a slight increase of 1.4%) and the irregularity rate remains broadly stable. As a result of the low overall employment dynamics, domestic work accounts for 16.1% of the decade's employment balance.
- Years 2020-2023: Employment in Italian households begins to decline. In just three years, there is a fall of 112,000 workers (-7.5%), bringing the number back to the level of 2007-2008. Even the emergence effect in 2020, which brings the irregularity rate to an all-time low (51.7%), does not interrupt the downward trend that began in the mid-2010s but has accelerated particularly in the last two years.

1.2. - Irregularity, a structural phenomenon difficult to unravel

The failure to reduce irregular work in the domestic help sector is one of the most critical elements that has had the most structural impact on the quantitative and qualitative development of this type of work.

The high prevalence of irregular situations, which is due to a number of factors, itself fuels a downward competition between labour supply and demand, which has severely penalised the evolution towards a more professional and qualified employment model, as was desirable and expected at the beginning of the 2000s, when the growth in employment seemed to go hand in hand with a reduction in the irregularity rate (**Figure 2**).

For years, this rate has fluctuated between 55% and 60%, by far the highest of any sector. And if the regularisation of 2020 has favoured the emergence of a significant number of workers, bringing the irregularity rate to 51.8% (latest Istat data available), it is to be expected that the decline in employment over the last two years will be accompanied by an increase in the same estimated at around 54% for 2023². According to these estimates, of the 1.384.000 domestic workers in 2023, 632.000 will be regular and 753.000 irregular (**Figure 3**).

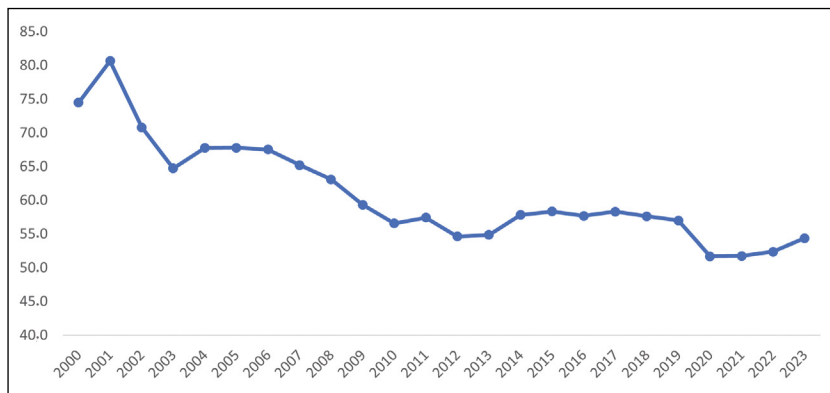
The figures for undeclared work in this sector are a matter of general interest that can no longer be reduced to the private dynamics of the family-work relationship. The domestic help sector accounts for 38.3% of total undeclared work: a striking figure given that the sector accounts for only 4.2% of regular employment (**Figure 4**).

The annual cost of irregularity is quantifiable at almost 2.5 billion euro, resulting from lost contributions (1.5 billion euro) and Irpef evasion, estimated by the Ministry of Finance at 904 billion euro per year.

1.3. - Carers and helpers: the story of a reversed destiny

² The estimate of the irregularity rate for the years 2022 and 2023 was made on the basis of Inps and Istat data. Specifically, the rates of change of domestic workers provided by Inps for 2022 and 2023 were applied to the Istat data on regular work for 2021 (the latest available). Irregular work was estimated by the difference between total workers (the Istat figure goes up to 2023) and the estimate of regular workers.

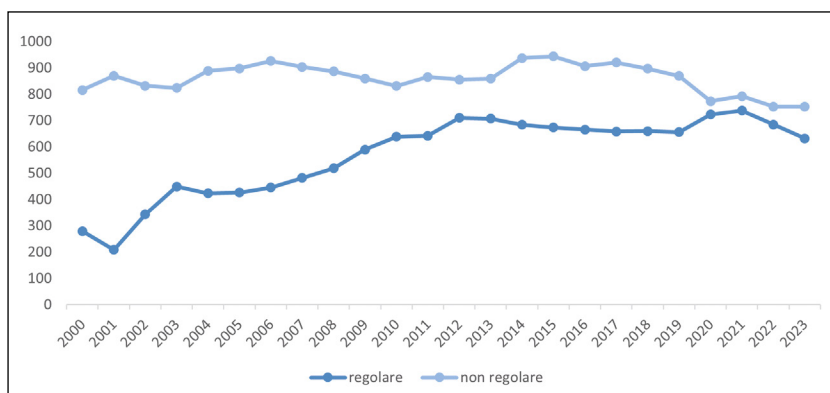
Fig. 2 – Irregularity rate in the activities of households and cohabitations as domestic employers, 2000-2023 (*) (% val.)



(*) Figures for 2022 and 2023 are estimated on the basis of Istat and Inps

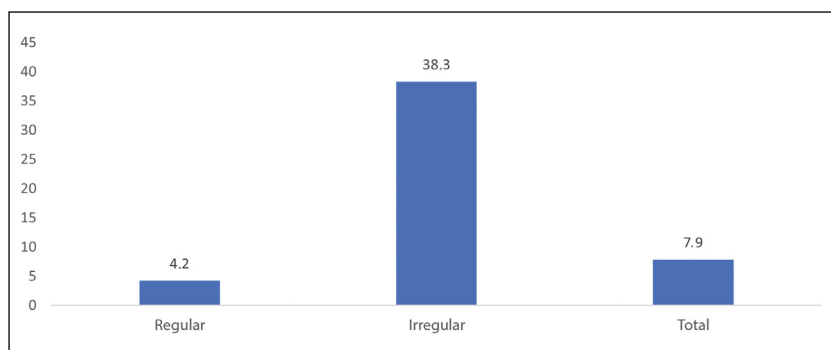
Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts data

Fig. 3 – Persons employed in households and cohabiting households as employers of domestic work, by type, 2000-2023 (*) (a.v.)



(*) Figures for 2022 and 2023 are estimated on the basis of Istat and Inps

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts data

Fig. 4 – Incidence of domestic work in total employed labour by type, 2021 (% val.)

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat-National Accounts data

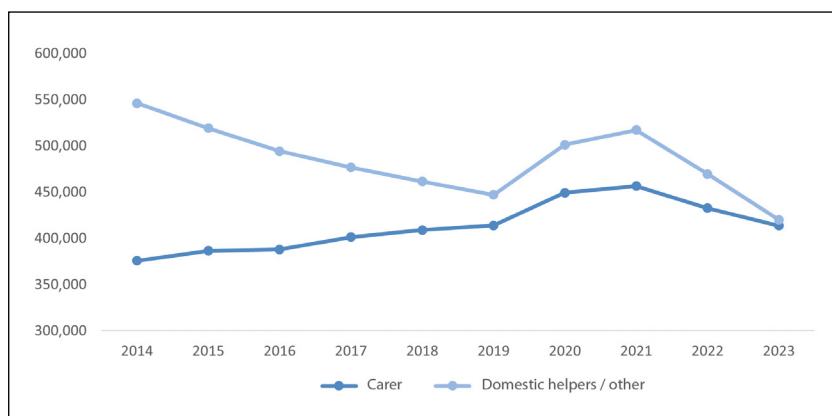
The declining dynamics that have characterised domestic work over the last decade have been accompanied by an increasing polarisation between workers providing care and assistance to non/partially self-sufficient people, on the one hand, and domestic helpers and babysitters, on the other.

In fact, care work has not only increased in number, but also in regularity, quality and contractual conditions.

The only available information provided by the Inps on the universe of regularly employed care workers shows a slow and gradual increase in the number of care workers over the last decade, from 375,749 in 2014 to 413,697 in 2023, an overall increase of 10%, or around 1% per year (**Figure 5**).

This growth has been accompanied by a decrease in the irregularity of working conditions for this component: according to the Family (Net) Work survey carried out in June on a sample of 2,015 Assindatcolf and Webcolf member households, the risk of a carer working irregularly is relatively low compared to other forms of cooperation: 30.0% of households rated it as such, 32.0% as medium. Only 13.7% of families consider it very high and 24.3% high (**Table 3**).

At the same time, working conditions will improve. Not only the number of hours and weeks worked is increasing, but also the

Fig. 5 – Trend in the number of carers and co-workers, 2014-2023 (a.v.)

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Inps data

share of those with a net annual income of more than 13,000 euro (from 9.4% in 2013 to 20.8% in 2022 to 24.3% in 2023), although the share of those with a low income of less than 6,000 euro remains very high (37.7% in 2023) (**Table 4**).

On the other hand, domestic helpers and baby-sitters have weakened considerably over the last decade, starting with their presence on the official labour market. Inps figures show a decrease of more than 120,000 (-23%), from 546,154 employees in 2014 to 420,177 in 2023.

Although this decrease is also due to a better differentiation of job profiles (and the consequent shift of workers towards the role of carer in the statistics), it is also influenced by the higher level of irregularity of this type of employment: according to the households employing domestic workers, the probability that a worker is irregular is extremely high for baby-sitters (51.1% say it is very high and 29.1% say it is high) and quite high for domestic helpers (23.2% say it is very high and 39.4% say it is high).

It should also be noted that the employment status of those in regular employment has become weaker over the years. From 30.2% in 2014 to 39.7% in 2023, the share of those working less than 15 hours per week has increased, while the share of those with an ear-

ned income of less than 6,000 euro remains stable: it was 52.8% in 2014, it is 50.3% in 2023.

Tab. 3 – Risk of irregular employment of a family helper, by type (% val.)

	Baby-sitter	Cleaner	Carer
Very high	51.1	23.2	13.7
High	29.1	39.4	24.3
Media	13.7	28.2	32.0
Low	5.2	8.7	27.5
Nothing	0.9	0.5	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average score	8.1	7.0	5.8

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Tab. 4 – Average annual wages of domestic helpers, by type, 2014-2023 (% val.)

	Carer		Cleaner-other	
	2014	2023	2014	2023
Less than 3,000	22.6	20.5	30.2	28.7
3-6 thousand	18.8	17.2	22.6	21.6
6-10 thousand	29.6	22.3	32.1	27.3
10-13 thousand	18.2	15.6	9.8	12.0
More than 13,000	10.8	24.3	5.3	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Inps data

2. - Signs of subsidence in family welfare

2.1. - Declining household demand

The decline in the number of domestic helpers is also a consequence of the change in households' demand for collaborative services.

According to the elaborations of the Istat microdata “Aspects of daily life”, this increased significantly in the early 2000s: the number of households using the services of domestic helpers increased from 1,900,000 in 2001 to 2,600,000 in 2011, while the incidence in relation to the total number of resident households rose from 1.9% to 2.6%. In the following years, however, there was a gradual decline in the number of user households, which fell to 1,900,000 in 2022 (latest data available), or 7.4% of the total³ (**Tab. 5**).

Tab. 5 – Households using paid family services by type of service, 2001-2022 (% val. per 100 households and a.v. in millions)

	Domestic helper	Baby-sitter	Elderly or disabled assistance	Households using paid family services (*)	
	% val.	% val.	% val.	% val.	a.v. (in million)
2001	7.1	1.2	2.1	8.8	1.9
2011	8.6	0.8	2.2	10.4	2.6
2022	5.5	0.5	2.1	7.4	1.9

(*) Households using at least one of the following paid services: domestic helper, baby-sitter and person caring for an elderly or disabled person

Source: elaboration on Istat data “Aspects of daily life”.

In terms of utilisation, the item with the most significant reduction is that for domestic helpers. This trend is presumably also due to the effects of the pandemic and the spread of smart working,

3 The figure compiled from Istat micro-data is not comparable with the one reported by Inps (about one million households), since it also includes households using non-regular labour and is collected on the basis of different methodologies (household survey).

which may have led to a reduction in the services required.

Furthermore, the utilisation of baby-sitting services has also declined, as a consequence of the growing demographic decline. Conversely, the proportion of households utilising care services for an elderly or disabled person has remained substantially stable. It is important to note that this figure should also be interpreted in the context of a lack of adaptation in demand to the ageing process. Conversely, there has been an increase in the number of households with a specific requirement for care and assistance services for the elderly population.

2.2. - The rising prevalence of expenditure on services

The pandemic and the subsequent proliferation of remote working may have resulted in a decline, or in some instances, a deterrent to utilising domestic services, encompassing both care and collaborative roles. Furthermore, the rising costs of care services and the increasing impact on family budgets, particularly if sustained over time, may have compelled families to seek alternative solutions.

The Family (Net) Work survey indicates that households utilising domestic assistance are encountering mounting difficulties in meeting the financial obligations associated with these services. In many cases, these costs represent a significant proportion of the family income.

Indeed, while 42.4% of the households surveyed indicate an average expenditure on domestic help services of less than 15%, the majority (57.6%) exceed this threshold. A total of 26.3% of respondents indicated that they allocate between 15% and 30% of their net monthly income to this category of expenditure. 14.5% of respondents stated that they spend between 30% and 50% of their net monthly income on collaboration services, while 16.9% of respondents reported that they spend more than half of their income on this item (**Table 6**).

The incidence of expenditure is significantly affected by the type of service required. In the case of baby-sitting and domestic help services, this is typically contained within a range of 15% of the

available income, or at most, between 15% and 30%.

Tab. 6 – Average incidence on household income of expenditure on domestic help services, by type of helper employed by households (% val.)

Average impact on household income	Carers	Other figures	Total
Up to 15%	3.0	57.2	42.3
From 15% to 30%	12.2	30.6	26.3
From 30% to 50%	27.1	9.5	14.4
From 50% to 70%	25.3	1.6	8.0
More than 70%	32.4	1.2	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Nevertheless, the presence of a carer has been found to result in a notable increase in expenditure on family budgets. A total of 57.7 per cent of households indicate that the cost in question absorbs more than 50% of their disposable income, while 32.4% state that it exceeds 70%.

It is evident that the presence or absence of individuals with specific care and assistance needs is the most significant factor in determining the impact on family budgets. Among families with dependent or severely disabled persons, expenditure on domestic help services accounts for more than 50% of the monthly income in almost 4 out of 10 cases (39.5%), as illustrated in **Table 7**.

The impact is less pronounced, but nevertheless significant, in households with children under the age of six. Among these households, 44.7% report expenses for collaborative services to be between 15% and 30% of their total expenditure, while 36.2% report expenses below this threshold.

However, additional factors influence the prevalence of this phe-

nomenon.

A cross-tabulation of the data reveals that households reporting a high incidence of collaboration costs (i.e., more than 50%) are more frequently composed of single persons (30.9% of the total), the elderly (25.8% among those aged 75 and above), pensioners (21.6% who spend more than 50% of their monthly income on collaboration services), and, most notably, those with a low to medium economic level.

Indeed, it is the most deprived households that are most affected by expenditure, with more than 50% of their monthly resources absorbed in almost half of cases (46.5%).

Conversely, the incidence is lower among younger households, where the head of household is employed, and especially among those with a higher family standard of living: 57.8% of households reporting a medium-high economic *status* spend less than 15% of their income on domestic help services.

Furthermore, the purchasing power of families has been eroded in recent years, placing additional strain on household budgets. This is coupled with the rising costs of collaboration, which have arisen from the adjustment of *minimum* wages to the rate of inflation in accordance with the sector contract.

A significant proportion of the surveyed households (65.4%) indicated an increase in the incidence of costs. Among the households that already incurred a high expenditure (over 50%), the figure rises to 88.8%. A mere 32.1% of respondents indicated that their expenditure has remained unchanged (**Table 8**).

Tab. 7 – The average expenditure on domestic help services by household income, broken down by household characteristics (% val.)

	Up to 15%	From 15% to 30%	From 30% to 50%	From 50% upwards	Total
Age					
Up to 60 years	45.3	26.8	14.0	14.0	100.0
61-75 years	47.2	25.0	12.4	15.4	100.0
Over 75 years	27.9	27.3	19.0	25.8	100.0
Professional status					
Occupied	47.0	27.6	12.2	13.2	100.0
Retired/retired from work	37.4	24.8	16.2	21.6	100.0
More	32.9	26.0	23.3	17.8	100.0
Economic condition					
High/medium-high	57.8	26.9	11.0	4.4	100.0
Media	39.3	27.4	15.1	18.2	100.0
Low/medium-low	16.5	16.5	20.6	46.5	100.0
Family type					
Single person	30.4	22.0	16.8	30.9	100.0
Childless couple	48.2	25.8	12.4	13.7	100.0
Couple with children	47.2	28.2	12.9	11.8	100.0
A single parent with children	30.4	26.7	22.4	20.5	100.0
Presence of persons in need of assistance					
Children under 6 years of age	36.2	44.7	14.2	5.0	100.0
People over 65	37.5	25.0	16.3	21.3	100.0
Severely disabled/non self-sufficient persons	12.4	21.4	26.7	39.5	100.0
None of these	60.2	25.6	5.4	8.8	100.0
Total	42.3	26.3	14.4	17.0	100.0

Fonte: Family (Net) Work survey

Tab. 8 – Evolution of expenditure on domestic help services as a percentage of household income over the last two years (% val.)

	Up to 15%	From 15% to 30%	From 30% to 50%	From 50% upwards	Total
Increased	48.2	70.1	80.1	88.8	65.4
Unchanged	47.1	28.7	19.2	10.9	32.1
Decreased	4.6	1.2	0.7	0.3	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Should the elevated cost of living intensify the challenges faced by families already grappling with financial difficulties, the necessity for a reassessment of the long-term viability of this expenditure becomes increasingly apparent.

In July 2024, 42.3% of households utilising the services of a regular domestic worker reported that this expense was becoming increasingly unsustainable. The percentage varies significantly, with 11.2% of households incurring costs with a modest impact on monthly income, 73.6% of households declaring an impact between 30% and 50%, and 93.6% among those incurring an expenditure of more than 50% of income (**Table 9**).

Tab. 9 – Sustainability of expenditure on domestic help services, by incidence of expenditure on household income (% val.)

	Up to 15%	From 15% to 30%	From 30% to 50%	From 50% upwards	Total
Sustainable	88.8	57.0	26.4	6.4	57.7
Partially sustainable or unsustainable	11.2	43.1	73.6	93.6	42.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Furthermore, the trend observed over the past two years, which has seen a consistent rise in the number of households facing dif-

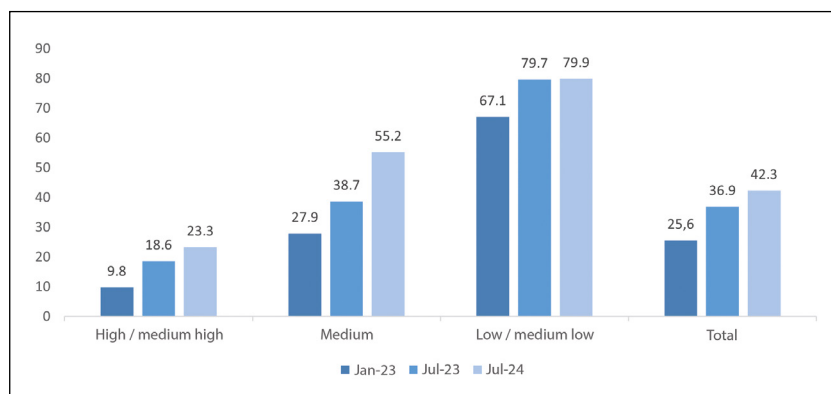
difficulties, is a cause for concern. In comparison to the results of the surveys conducted in January 2023 and July 2023, the proportion of households indicating that costs are becoming increasingly unaffordable has increased from 25.6% (January 2023) to 36.9% (July 2023) and subsequently to 42.3% (July 2024).

Households with an average level of economic well-being are the most significantly affected by the difficulties encountered. The proportion of those who perceive the cost of employing domestic workers as a significant financial burden has increased markedly, from 27.9% in January 2023 to 55.2% in July 2024.

Among households with a low and lower-middle economic level, the critical points previously identified in earlier surveys are corroborated. Specifically, nearly eight out of ten households perceive the expenditure on domestic helpers and carers as unsustainable (Figure 6).

2.3. - The redefinition of care strategies, between residency and giving up work

Fig. 6 – Households reporting difficulties in meeting expenses for domestic help services, by household economic level, comparison Jan-2023 and Jul-2024 (% val.)



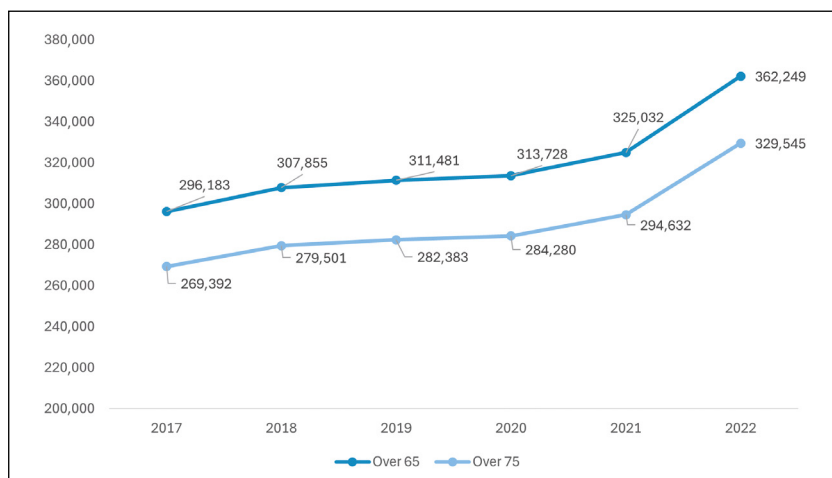
Source: Family (Net) Work survey

The rising costs of domestic help services also appear to be accompanied by a repositioning of family strategies. On the one hand, there is a growing consideration of residential care solutions for the elderly and dependent, in light of the increased supply on the market. On the other hand, there is a re-evaluation of the cost/opportunity of caregiving, with an increasing reliance on the use of figures within the household.

Over the past two years, there has been an increase in the number of elderly Italians being cared for in nursing homes (Rsa), as evidenced by recent data. As evidenced by the Ministry of Health's data, as presented in the Italia Longeva report of 2023, the number of individuals aged 65 and above receiving care in Italian Rsa facilities increased from 296,183 in 2017 to 362,249 in 2022, representing a 22.3% growth. This expansion was largely driven by the rising number of individuals aged 75 and above, whose number of residents in dedicated facilities increased from 269,392 in 2017 to 329,545 (Figure 7).

In 2017, the proportion of individuals aged 75 and above residing in residential care facilities was 3.9%. By 2022, this figure had risen

Fig. 7 – Number of elderly residents in Rsa, 2017-2022 (a.v.)



Source: Italia Longeva, 2023

to 4.6%.

It is also important to consider the impact of rising care service costs provided by collaborators on the competition between family members' earned income and the cost of care services. In many cases, this has led to the decision to relinquish work in order to devote oneself to care activities.

It is notable that over the past five years, while there has been a notable increase in female employment and, overall, in female labour participation (inactive women declined by 530,000, representing a 6.3% decrease), the proportion of women who opt not to work for familial reasons has risen (**Table 10**).

These figures demonstrate a notable increase from 2,525,000 in 2018 to 2,659,000 in 2023, with a particularly pronounced rise among individuals aged 55-64 years (+219,000, representing a 34.7% increase compared to 2018). This is a novel and highly indicative figure, given that a number of care responsibilities may be concentrated within this age group. These may include care for elderly parents who are still alive, grandchildren, or spouses.

In any case, the incompatibility of work with family commitments is becoming an increasingly important factor in the decision not to enter the labour market. This illustrates how the same potential for growth in women's participation in the labour market in a favourable phase, such as the current one, is today even more penalised by the burden of care and domestic assistance activities.

In 2018, 30 out of 100 women who had chosen not to work did so for family reasons. By 2023, this figure had risen to almost 34. The percentage rises significantly in a relatively short period of time, from 41.9% to 50.1% among 45-54 year-olds, from 42.2% to 45.8% among 25-34 year-olds, and from 28.2% to 36.9% among 55-64 year-olds. However, it is among those aged 35-44 that this becomes the primary reason for leaving the labour market. **Figure 8** illustrates that in 2018, 54.8% of women in this age group were not employed for family reasons. This figure has increased to 61.7% in the most recent data set.

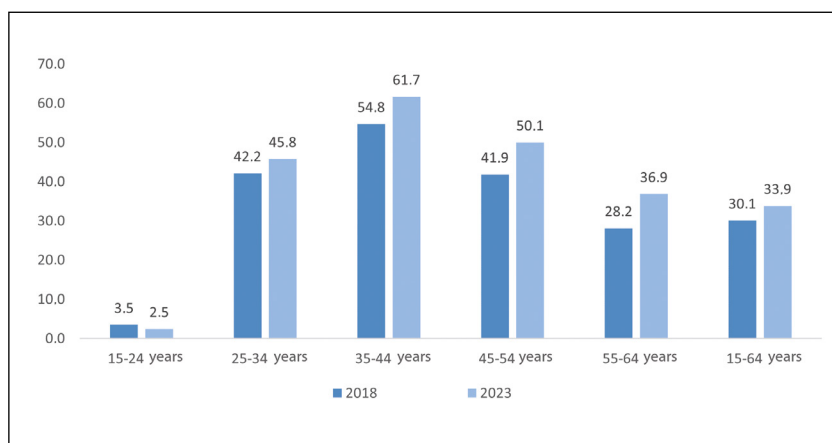
Tab. 10 – Inactive women aged 15-64, by age group and household motivation for choosing inactivity, 2018-2023 (a.v. in thousands and % var.)

	2018	2023	2018-2023	
	A.v.	A.v.	A.v.	Var. %
Total inactive				
15-24 years	2.183	2.190	8	0.4
25-34 years	1.123	985	-137	-12.2
35-44 years	1.203	990	-213	-17.7
45-54 years	1.637	1.383	-254	-15.5
55-64 years	2.239	2.305	66	2.9
15-64 years	8.384	7.854	-530	-6.3
Inactive for family reasons				
15-24 years	77	54	-23	-29.6
25-34 years	473	452	-22	-4.6
35-44 years	658	692	7	1.0
45-54 years	686	692	7	1.0
55-64 years	631	850	219	34.7
15-64 years	2.525	2.659	134	5.3

Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat data

2.4. - Labour supply shrinks

Fig. 8 – Percentage of inactive women citing family-related reasons as reason for inactivity, out of total inactive women, by age group, 2018-2023 (% val.)



Source: Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro elaboration on Istat data

Furthermore, the evolution of the domestic labour supply has contributed to the crisis in the family welfare model, given the significant internal changes that have occurred. Although there is no official data available, it is evident that, in comparison to the situation at the beginning of the year 2000, families are encountering significant challenges in their efforts to source the employees they require from the labour market. This observation is supported by a multitude of surveys and investigations.

The advent of domestic collaboration work, driven by both household demand and the influx of foreign workers seeking employment in Italy, has profoundly altered the reference scenario.

The reduction in the inflow of immigrants from traditionally “supplier” countries in Eastern Europe, the rise in the employment status of foreign nationals who are increasingly able to provide superior support and initial employment conditions than in previous years, the resulting increase in anticipated improvements in employment, and the growing workload associated with care and assistance activities (the demand for non-self-sufficiency is increasing) have collectively led to a reduction in the number of available

figures on the market (**Figure 9**).

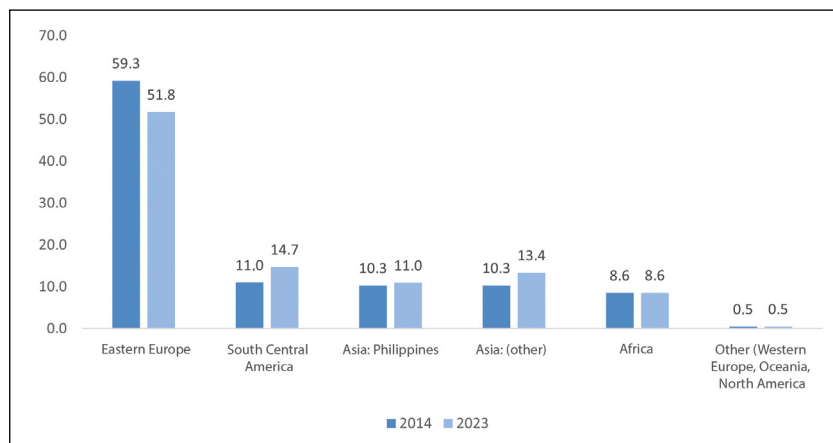
It is notable that, following the costs associated with hiring a domestic worker, the majority of households (68.7%) identify the challenge of recruiting an individual who meets the specific requirements of the role. Additionally, 21.5% of households cite the lack of available candidates with the necessary qualifications and skills as a significant obstacle.

The most evident indications of the ongoing transformation are the challenges associated with generational transitions among domestic workers.

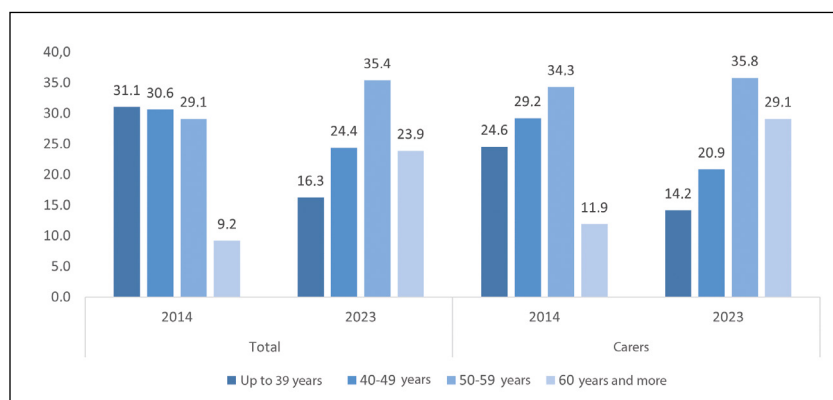
In 2014, the proportion of individuals aged below 40 years was 31.1%. By 2023, this figure had decreased by half, while the proportion of individuals aged 60 years and above increased significantly, from 9.2% to 23.9%.

This figure is particularly noteworthy in the context of care workers. In 2014, 24 out of 100 employed individuals were under 40 years of age and 12 were over 60. In 2023, the proportion of individuals under 40 years of age decreased to 14.2%, while the proportion of individuals over 60 years of age increased to 29.1%. This indicates that approximately one-third of the current cohort of carers will be expected to leave their roles within the next five to six years (**Figure 10**).

3. - Rethinking ageing at home policies

Fig. 9 – Countries of origin of domestic helpers, 2014-2023 (% val.)

Fonte: elaborazione Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro on Inps data

Fig. 10 – Age of domestic helpers, 2014-2023 (% val.)

Fonte: elaborazione Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro on Inps data

3.1. - Existing measures: partly useful, but insufficient

In order to provide support to families who utilise domestic assistance services, a number of measures have been implemented over a number of years. These measures have been designed with the specific intention of alleviating the financial burden, particularly in relation to care and assistance activities that are not self-sufficient. Additionally, the measures have been implemented with the objective of stimulating forms of regular employment.

The majority of these measures are contingent upon the fulfilment of specific criteria pertaining to income (as defined by a specified threshold) and the nature of the activity undertaken by the domestic worker. This severely limits the number of households that are eligible to benefit from them.

The majority of households (73.6%) utilise at least one of the available measures (**Table 11**).

The most prevalent form of deduction is that of employer contributions, which may be deducted up to a maximum of 1,549.37 euro, with no income threshold for all employers.

The measure is utilised by 66.2% of the surveyed households. It may be reasonably assumed that the remainder are either unaware of the measure or are not obliged to submit a tax declaration, which represents the sole constraint on their use. It is noteworthy that among households with a low or medium-low economic level, the percentage of those who deduct part of the contributions for domestic work is 55.4%.

Subsequently, 21.5% of households employing domestic workers receive an accompaniment allowance, which is a financial benefit paid on demand for disabled or totally invalid individuals who have been determined to be unable to walk without the assistance of a companion or to perform daily activities independently.

The proportion of beneficiary households varies considerably according to the socio-economic level of the households in question, with a higher proportion of low – and middle – income households receiving support for the employment of domestic helpers, which is more closely related to care and assistance activities.

Tab. 11 – Measures from which households benefit, by level of household economic well-being (% val.)

	High / medium-high	Medium	Low/medium-low	Total
At least one measure	70.8	73.8	80.8	73.6
Deduction of employer contributions up to 1,549.37 euro, with no income limit for all domestic employers	66.9	67.4	55.4	66.2
Accompaniment allowance of 531.7 euro per month	8.6	22.7	52.5	21.5
Deduction of caregiver costs for dependent persons with an income lower than 40,000 euro up to 19% for a maximum amount of 2,100 euro per year	2.4	11.3	28.2	10.4
Elderly bonus (the figure refers to households that declare to be eligible)	(2.4)	(3.3)	(3.5)	(3.1)
Contribution relief of 100% (up to 3,000 euro per year) for two years for new hires of carers for dependent persons, over 80, with Isee less than 6,000 euro per year	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.4

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

A more selective possibility is the deduction of the cost of a carer for non-self-sufficient persons with an income of less than 40,000 euro, up to a limit of 19% and a maximum amount of 2,100 euro per year. In this case, the proportion of families utilising this measure is 10.4%, a figure that is once again more prevalent (28.2%) among low – and medium – income families.

Furthermore, there are more recent measures that have yet to gain significant traction among households, either due to their nascent stage of implementation or the fact that they are not yet operational.

The first is the total contribution relief, up to a limit of 3,000 euro per year for two years, concerning the hiring of dependent persons aged over 80 with an Isee of less than 6,000 euro per year. The measure, which is applicable solely to new employment relationships,

affects 0.4% of households.

The second is the Elderly Bonus, which will become operational on 1 January 2025. This entails the provision of an assistance allowance amounting to 850 euro per month, in addition to the accompaniment allowance, exclusively for non-self-sufficient elderly individuals aged at least 80 years old with a significant assistance need and an Isee not exceeding 6,000 euro. As indicated in the responses provided by the families, approximately 3.1% would be eligible for this measure.

The aforementioned set of instruments, while undoubtedly beneficial, fails to address the fundamental challenges households encounter in managing their expenditures. Indeed, 53.3% of respondents indicated that the measures in question were of little or no use, while 5.7% expressed an even more negative assessment, stating that they were “no use at all”. A mere 14.5% of respondents indicated that they found the measures to be highly useful. Among those in the medium-low economic bracket, the percentage rises to 24.5% (**Table 12**).

Tab. 12 – The usefulness of the measures from which households benefit, by socio-economic level of the household (% val.)

	High / medium-high	Media	Low/ medium-low	Total
Very	11.2	14.4	24.5	14.5
Quite	24.7	27.6	23.1	26.5
Little	55.8	53.0	48.3	53.2
Not at all	8.3	5.0	4.2	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Fonte: Family (Net) Work survey

3.2. - The economic support families need

The cost of services is identified by households as the primary challenge when employing domestic help. In the responses obtained from the surveyed households, 78% indicated this aspect as the primary challenge, even before the significant difficulties encountered in recruiting the appropriate personnel to meet the specific service requirements (**Figure 11**).

In comparison, the management of the domestic work relationship (36%) and the professionalism of collaborators (25.7%), which is not always adequate to the needs of households, are of much less concern. A notable proportion of households (22.5%) identify the complexity of initiating the domestic work relationship and overseeing the associated administrative procedures as a significant challenge. Additionally, a considerable number of households (21.5%) perceive a lack of available personnel to perform this type of work as a major hurdle.

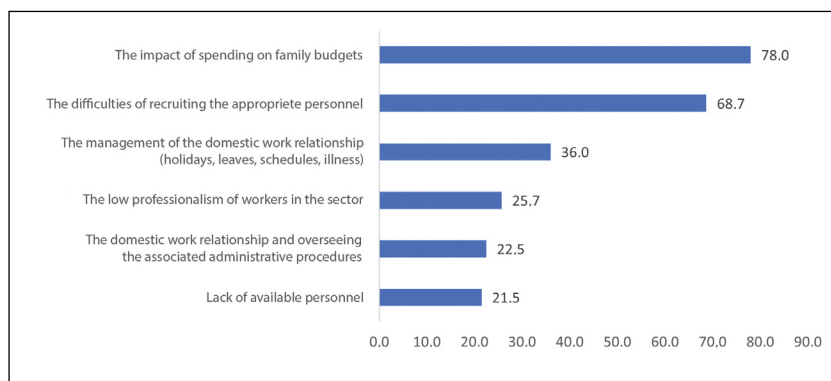
In light of these indications, the majority of households indicate that the introduction of economic support would be the most beneficial measure to be put in place in order to provide them with the necessary support. A total of 57.4% of respondents rated the usefulness of such a measure as very high, while 31.4% rated it as high (**Table 13**).

In second place, but with a different intensity, is the evaluation of the streamlining of administrative and bureaucratic procedures, which, for many families, clearly represent a factor of fatigue in the management of the domestic work relationship. This is evidenced by the fact that 27.1% consider such an intervention highly useful, while a slightly lower share (24.6%) expresses an extremely favourable opinion for the creation of lists and registers of accredited collaborators, allowing families quicker and more reliable access to the market, which is currently left to the informality of word of mouth between families and carers.

A more impartial assessment is provided with regard to the proposition of facilitating greater access for foreign workers in order to reinforce the supply of available personnel (18.5% of respondents indicate that this measure is highly beneficial). Conversely, the concept of further developing the sector through intermediary agencies is met with a relatively low level of approval, with only 4.8% of respondents deeming it highly beneficial.

Tab. 13 – Usefulness of new measures in favour of households using domestic help services (% val.)

Fig. 11 – Main criticalities encountered by households wishing to hire a domestic helper for care and assistance activities for dependent persons (*) (% val.)



(*) Several answers possible

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

	Very low / None	Low	Media	High	Very high	Total
Economic support measures for families	0.3	1.7	9.2	31.4	57.4	100.0
Streamlining administrative procedures and bureaucracy	5,3	12,3	21,5	33,7	27,1	100,0
Lists/registers of accredited collaborators	7.5	11.9	21.6	34.4	24.6	100.0
Facilitating the flow of foreign workers to help the sector	14.0	15.1	27.5	24.9	18.5	100.0
Major brokerage agencies	19.4	24.1	33.9	17.8	4.8	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

3.3. - The fight against irregularity, an absolute priority

The call for greater economic support, in addition to alleviating the already considerable economic burden on families, can also be an effective means of combating irregularity in the sector. This has been a structural dimension of domestic work for years, representing a significant challenge to overcome.

The high incidence is attributed by the surveyed families to a multiplicity of factors, the most significant of which are the absence of controls, including fiscal ones (42.5% indicate a very high weight) and the difficulty for families to cope with the costs associated with regular work (35.5%). However, when asked to identify the most significant factor, respondents indicated that the cost of services was the primary concern (**Table 14** and **Figure 12**).

Furthermore, additional factors contribute to the pervasive prevalence of informality within the sector. Among these factors, approximately a quarter of the surveyed households identified the general lack of attention to compliance with the law as a significant concern (27.6%), as well as the limited awareness of the economic support available to households utilising regular employment (24.8%) and the potential risks associated with engaging the services of non-compliant collaborators (24.7%).

A further 22.5% of respondents identified the preference of workers to engage in illegal employment as a significant contributing factor, while 20.9% highlighted the presence of numerous foreign workers lacking the requisite residence permits or adequate documentation to enable their regularisation.

From this perspective, the provision of economic support could prove an effective means of encouraging the emergence of the labour market. The majority of households (54.1%) consider an instrument that allows them to enjoy immediate, though lesser, support to be more effective than one that is greater but deferred in time (45.9%, **Figure 13**).

Of the potential measures under consideration, the one deemed most effective is total contribution relief. This is evidenced by the fact that 54.6% of households consider it to be highly effective. Furthermore, this measure would enable households to regularise their labour relations at the same cost (**Table 15**).

Subsequently, the 50% deductibility of expenses incurred by households for domestic helpers is discussed (44.9% consider it to be

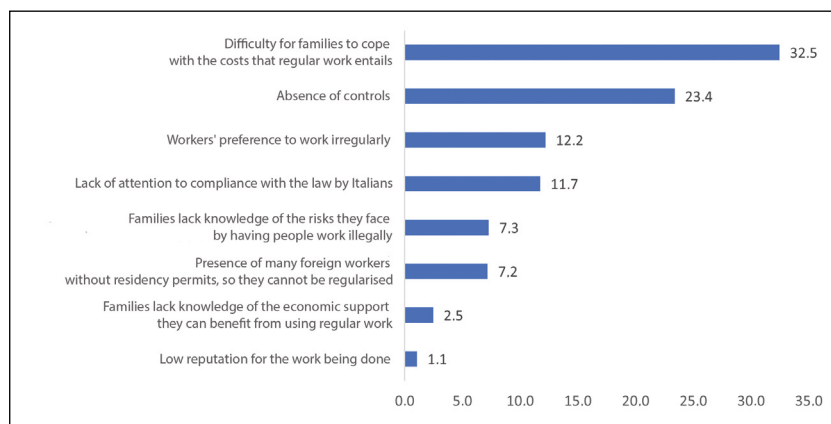
highly effective), as is the 50% tax credit for such expenses (39.9%). Conversely, the household allowance for domestic helpers is perceived as being less useful for this purpose (31%).

Tab. 14 – The weight of the following factors in determining the high level of irregularity among domestic helpers (% val.)

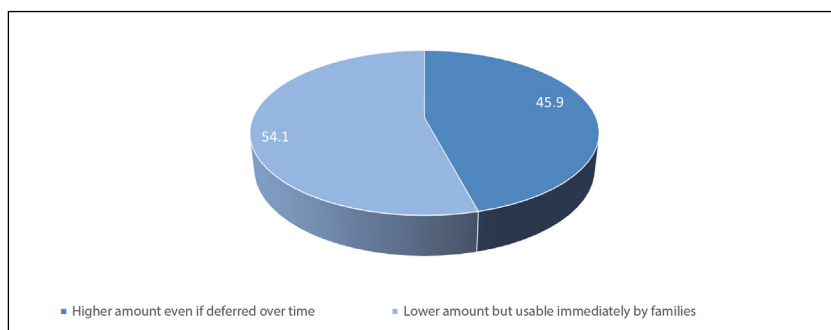
	Very high	High	Medium	Low and very low	Total
Absence of controls	42.5	27.8	16.8	13.0	100.0
Difficulties for families to cope with the costs that regular work entails	35,5	29,9	19,5	15,0	100,0
Lack of respect for the law by Italians	27.6	34.2	22.5	15.8	100.0
Families' lack of knowledge of the economic support they can receive through regular work	24.8	33.6	23.3	18.4	100.0
Lack of knowledge of families about the risks they face by working with undeclared persons	24.7	36.8	23.5	15.0	100.0
Preference of workers to work illegally	22.5	31.7	27.2	18.7	100.0
Presence of many foreign workers without residence permits, so they cannot be regularised	20.9	29.5	27.4	22.3	100.0
Low reputation for the type of work being done	6.2	18.4	27.3	48.1	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Tab. 15 – Effectiveness of some measures to counter the high incidence of undeclared work in the domestic help sector (% val.)

Fig. 12 – The weight of the following factors in determining the high level of irregularity among domestic helpers (% val.)

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Fig. 13 – Preferred type of economic support measure for households (% val.)

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

	Very low / low	Media	High	Very high	Total
Full contribution relief for those who hire employees (families do not pay contributions)	7,1	12,5	25,8	54,6	100,0
50% deductibility of expenses incurred by families or collaborators	5.3	16.9	32.9	44.9	100.0
Tax credit of 50% of expenses that families incur for employees	11.2	18.5	30.4	39.9	100.0
Household allowance to support the expenses for care and domestic help	16.9	22.5	29.5	31.0	100.0

Source: Family (Net) Work survey

Section VI

Statistical appendix



The numbers of domestic work

The context of domestic work in Italy is represented by a series of data presented in the annex and divided into three specific areas:

- A) Italian population and households;
- B) workers and domestic employers;
- C) domestic and household expenditure of Italian households.

The first area provides both a snapshot of the demographic change that characterises Italian society and a forecast that links the medium-term demographic trends of the population with the potential demand for services for individuals and families that will necessarily mature in the coming years.

In twenty years, from 2004 to 2024, the age index of the population, i.e. the percentage ratio between the population aged 65 and over and the population aged 0 to 14, will increase from 135.6% to 199.8%. In fact, the oldest population – those aged 65 and over – increased by 29.8%, while the youngest population – those aged up to 17 – decreased by 9.2% and those aged between 18 and 34 lost more than two and a half million. In ten years' time, the youngest population is expected to fall by more than one million in absolute terms (-15% compared with 2024), while the elderly population will reach 29.4% of the total population (+18.7% compared with 2024).

The decline and ageing of the population is also reflected in the composition of families. The share of couples with children will be 29.8% in 2023 and is expected to fall to 26.2% in ten years' time. Similarly, the number of single persons will increase from 9.3 million in 2023 to 10.1 million in 2033 and the share of couples without children will rise from 20.3% to 21.4% in ten years. In 2043, the number of single persons aged 65 and over is expected to exceed six million, 69.6% of whom will be women.

The progressive ageing of the population is accompanied by an improvement in life expectancy at birth, from 80.7 years in 2004 to 83.1 years in 2023. In addition, the number of elderly people with multiple disabilities and severe limitations will decrease: in

2022, among elderly people aged 74 and over the proportion of those suffering from multiple illnesses or impaired in their usual daily activities was 49.0%, four percentage points lower than in 2012.

The second area focuses on the composition of the domestic workforce and the interaction between supply and demand in the sector. Between 2020 and 2023, the total number of domestic workers will decrease significantly by 116,000, with a loss of 68,000 between 2022 and 2023 alone.

Of the 834,000 domestic workers certified by Inps, 31% are Italian and 69% foreign, with Romanian (14.7%) and Ukrainian (10.7%) nationalities dominating the latter. Another important aspect to note is the ageing of the domestic service workforce: in the three years after 2020, the share of the youngest (up to 29 years old) will fall by 41.0%, while the share of the oldest (55 years old and over) will rise by 6.7%.

Workers employed as domestic helpers will earn an average of €151 per week in 2023, compared to €145 in 2019, and carers will earn €224 in 2023, compared to €198 in 2019. Just under half of all domestic workers are employed as carers (414,000). 34.8 per cent work more than 45 hours per week (24.9 per cent in 2019) and 210,000 are employed year-round. In addition, 78.9% of domestic workers had only one employer in 2023, compared with 81.5% in 2020.

However, there is still a high rate of irregularity, a factor that particularly characterises the sector. In fact, it reached 47.1% in 2022, compared to 9.7% of total economic activity, and is increasing again after the reversal of the trend in 2020 and 2021.

The third area examines the expenditure incurred by households on their dwellings and housing-related services. This aspect paints a picture of the economic value of the world that revolves around the issue of housing and the effort that households have to make at a time of generalised loss of purchasing power.

Italy is characterised by a high proportion of owner-occupied households, with only 20.5 per cent living in rented accommodation in 2021, a proportion that falls to 11.5 per cent for single people over 65 in 2023.

Between 2022 and 2023, the total consumption of Italian households will increase by 1.1 per cent in real terms, while expenditure on housing will decrease by 1.4 per cent, but will still account for 28.9 per cent of total consumption. The value added of the activities of households and cohabitations as employers of domestic workers decreases by 2.4% in real terms between 2022 and 2023.

A. ITALIAN POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

Table A1 – Resident population trends in Italy, by age, 2004 and 2024 (1) (a.v., % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

Age groups	2004		2024		2004-2024	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	abs. diff.	% var.
Up to 17 years	9,837,708	17.1	8,928,524	15.1	-909,184	-9.2
18-34 years	13,008,187	22.6	10,388,946	17.6	-2,619,241	-20.1
35-64 years	23,708,155	41.2	25,314,351	42.9	1,606,196	6.8
65 years and over	11,057,940	19.2	14,357,928	24.3	3,299,988	29.8
Total	57,611,990	100.0	58,989,749	100.0	1,377,759	2.4
Individuals aged 80 and over	2,714,683	4.7	4,553,725	7.7	1,839,042	67.7
of which:						
90 and over	440,519	0.8	849,402	1.4	408,883	92.8
100 and over	7,200	0.0	22,552	0.0	15,352	213.2
Structural dependency index (2)	-	50.0	-	57.5	7.5	-
Old age dependency index (3)	-	28.8	-	38.3	9.5	-
Old age index (4)	-	135.6	-	199.8	64.2	-
Life expectancy at birth (5)	80.7	-	83.1	-	2.4	-

(1) Population on January 1st

(2) Ratio of non-working age population (0-14 years and 65 years and over) to working age population (15-64 years), multiplied by 100

(3) Ratio of the population aged 65 and over to the population of working age (15-64), multiplied by 100

(4) Ratio of population aged 65 and over to population aged 0-14, multiplied by 100

(5) The 2024 figure refers to 2023

Source: Census elaboration on Istat data

Table A2 – Population projections, by age group, 2024, 2034, 2054 (1) (a.v., % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	2024		2034		2054		2024-2034		2024-2054	
	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	a.v.	% val.	abs. diff.	var. %	abs. diff.	var. %
Up to 17 years	8,928,524	15.1	7,593,289	13.1	7,231,637	13.5	-1,335,235	-15.0	-1,696,887	-19.0
18-34 years	10,388,946	17.6	10,465,298	18.0	7,965,335	14.9	76,352	0.7	-2,423,611	-23.3
35-64 years	25,314,351	42.9	22,914,306	39.5	19,946,231	37.2	-2,400,045	-9.5	-5,368,120	-21.2
65 years and over	14,357,928	24.3	17,040,221	29.4	18,479,364	34.5	2,682,293	18.7	4,121,436	28.7
Total	58,989,749	100.0	58,013,114	100.0	53,622,567	100.0	-976,635	-1.7	-5,367,182	-9.1
Individuals aged 80 and over	4,553,725	7.7	5,282,764	9.1	7,897,733	14.7	729,039	16.0	3,344,008	73.4
of which:										
90 and over	849,402	1.4	1,080,679	1.9	1,728,369	3.2	231,277	27.2	878,967	103.5
100 and over	22,552	0.0	35,365	0.1	63,300	0.1	12,813	56.8	40,748	180.7
Structural dependency index (2)	-	57.5	-	66.5	-	83.6	9.0	-	26.1	-
Old age dependency index (3)	-	38.3	-	48.9	-	63.3	10.6	-	24.9	-
Old age index (4)	-	199.8	-	278.0	-	311.2	78.2	-	111.4	-

(1) Data on January 1st; forecasts with median scenario for the years 2034 and 2054

(2) Ratio of non-working age population (0-14 years and 65 years and over) to working age population (15-64 years), multiplied by 100

(3) Ratio of the population aged 65 and over to the population of working age (15-64), multiplied by 100

(4) Ratio of population aged 65 and over to population aged 0-14, multiplied by 100

Source: Census elaboration on Istat data

Table A3 – Forecasts of resident households, by type, 2023, 2033 and 2043 (1) (a.v. in millions, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	2023		2033		2043		2023-2033		2023-2043	
	a.v. (in millions)	% val.	a.v. (in millions)	% val.	a.v. (in millions)	% val.	abs. diff. (in millions)	% var.	abs. diff. (in millions)	% var.
Single persons	9.3	35.8	10.1	37.7	10.7	39.9	0.8	8.1	1.4	15.4
of which:										
Males	4.2	16.3	4.5	17.0	4.7	17.4	0.3	6.7	0.4	10.4
Females	5.1	19.4	5.5	20.7	6.0	22.5	0.5	9.3	1.0	19.6
Couples without children	5.3	20.3	5.7	21.4	5.9	21.8	0.4	8.4	0.6	11.5
Couples with children	7.8	29.8	7.0	26.2	6.2	23.0	-0.8	-9.9	-1.6	-20.0
of which:										
At least one child under 20	5.0	19.2	4.2	15.9	3.9	14.3	-0.8	-15.3	-1.1	-22.8
All children aged 20 or over	2.7	10.6	2.8	10.3	2.3	8.7	0.0	0.0	-0.4	-14.9
Single parents	2.7	10.4	2.9	10.9	3.0	11.1	0.2	7.0	0.3	10.5
of which:										
With at least one child under 20	1.1	4.4	1.2	4.4	1.3	4.6	0.0	2.9	0.1	9.7
With all children aged 20 or more	1.6	6.0	1.7	6.5	1.7	6.5	0.2	9.9	0.2	11.1
Other family type (2)	1.0	3.7	1.1	3.9	1.1	4.1	0.1	8.8	0.1	14.9
Total	26.0	100.0	26.7	100.0	26.9	100.0	0.7	2.7	0.9	3.5

(1) Forecast data as at 1 January of each year

(2) Comprises multi-person households (consisting of several persons who do not form a nucleus) and households with two or more nuclei

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table A4 – Persons living alone, 2013-2043 (1) (% val. and a.v. in thousands)

	Persons living alone		Persons living alone aged 65 and over			Persons living alone aged between 45-64		
	% on the total families	a.v. in thousands	% on persons living alone	a.v. in thousands	% women	% on persons living alone	a.v. in thousands	% women
2013	30.1	7,473	49.2	3,676	75.4	26.5	1,979	48.4
2023 (2)	35.8	9,306	47.5	4,423	70.7	32.0	2,979	42.7
2033 (2)	37.7	10,062	52.2	5,249	69.4	28.3	2,843	43.3
2043 (2)	39.9	10,737	57.7	6,196	69.6	23.5	2,528	42.3

(1) Data as of 2013 refer to the average of two years (2012-2013)

(2) Household forecasts as of 1 January, median scenario

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table A5 – Families with children, 2013 and 2023 (1) (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	2013			2023			2013-2023	
	a.v. (in thousands)	% val.	for 100 families with children	a.v. (in thousands)	% val.	for 100 families with children	abs. diff. (in thousands)	% var.
Single parents	2,623	100.0	22.2	2,946	100.0	26.7	323	12.3
of which:								
One child	1,813	69.1	15.3	2,008	68.2	18.2	195	10.8
Two children	681	26.0	5.8	776	26.3	7.0	95	14.0
Three or more children	129	4.9	1.1	162	5.5	1.5	33	25.6
Age group of youngest child								
Up to 5 years	320	12.2	2.7	282	9.6	2.6	-38	-11.9
6-13 years	417	15.9	3.5	512	17.4	4.6	95	22.8
14-17 years	241	9.2	2.0	313	10.6	2.8	72	29.9
18-24 years	473	18.0	4.0	605	20.5	5.5	132	27.9
25 and over	1,173	44.7	9.9	1,234	41.9	11.2	61	5.2
Couples with children	9,211	100.0	77.8	8,095	100.0	73.3	-1,116	-12.1
of which:								
One child	4,338	47.1	36.7	3,880	47.9	35.1	-458	-10.6
Two children	3,888	42.2	32.9	3,401	42.0	30.8	-487	-12.5
Three or more children	985	10.7	8.3	814	10.1	7.4	-171	-17.4

(cont'd)

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	2013			2023			2013-2023	
	a.v. (in thousands)	% val.	for 100 families with children	a.v. (in thousands)	% val.	for 100 families with children	abs. diff. (in thousands)	% var.
Age group of youngest child								
Up to 5 years	2,411	26.2	20.4	1,815	22.4	16.4	-596	-24.7
6-13 years	2,186	23.7	18.5	1,946	24.0	17.6	-240	-11.0
14-17 years	999	10.8	8.4	952	11.8	8.6	-47	-4.7
18-24 years	1,645	17.9	13.9	1,512	18.7	13.7	-133	-8.1
25 and over	1,970	21.4	16.6	1,870	23.1	16.9	-100	-5.1
Total households with children	11,834	-	100.0	11,041	-	100.0	-793	-6.7

(1) Data refer to the average of two years (e.g. 2013=average 2012-2013). Includes households with two or more single parents or couples with children
Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table A6 – Persons aged 75 years and over suffering from multicronicity and severe limitations (*), by gender and age group, 2012-2022 (% val.)

	Males				Females				Total			
	75-79	80-84	Over 85	Total	75-79	80-84	Over 85	Total	75-79	80-84	Over 85	Total
2012	38.7	43.8	52.7	43.5	51.7	59.8	67.1	58.8	46.2	53.6	62.6	53.0
2013	36.7	44.3	53.5	42.9	52.4	63.2	70.3	60.8	45.9	55.7	64.8	53.9
2014	34.8	45.5	54.0	42.4	49.1	59.2	67.9	58.0	42.7	53.9	63.4	51.9
2015	33.9	40.2	50.9	39.8	46.0	55.7	64.3	54.7	40.6	49.5	59.8	48.7
2016	36.8	43.9	48.6	41.8	46.7	60.9	66.8	57.0	42.4	54.2	60.6	51.0
2017	33.8	45.0	51.9	41.5	47.7	60.2	66.3	57.3	41.4	53.8	61.5	50.8
2018	33.3	42.0	49.3	39.9	47.3	60.5	69.8	58.2	41.0	53.1	62.2	50.7
2019	34.1	42.1	52.2	41.1	47.0	53.2	66.3	55.1	41.3	48.7	61.5	49.4
2020	31.5	43.0	48.7	39.8	45.6	52.6	66.5	55.0	39.4	48.4	60.6	48.9
2021	31.9	41.9	52.8	40.9	44.2	50.3	63.1	52.4	38.8	46.9	59.4	47.8
2022	32.6	44.4	51.4	40.9	45.0	54.1	65.8	54.7	39.2	50.1	60.9	49.0

(*) Persons aged 75 years and over who declare that they suffer of 3 or more chronic diseases and/or have severe limitations, for at least 6 months, due to health problems in performing the activities they usually carry out; from 2021, Parkinsonism and Alzheimer's/dementia are also included, until 2020 not included

Source: Istat

Table A7 – Life expectancy at birth, in good health and without activity limitations at age 65, by geographical breakdown, 2013-2023
(average number of years)

	Life expectancy at birth		Life expectancy in good health at birth		Life expectancy without activity limitation at age 65	
	2013	2023 (*)	2013	2023 (*)	2013	2023 (*)
North-West	82.6	83.6	59.9	60.2	10.2	11.5
North-East	82.9	83.8	60.2	61.2	10.4	11.5
Centre	82.6	83.5	58.6	60.3	9.6	10.7
South and islands	81.6	82.1	55.5	56.5	7.5	9.4
Italy	82.3	83.1	58.3	59.2	9.2	10.6

(*) Provisional data

Source: Istat

B. WORKERS AND DOMESTIC EMPLOYERS

Table B1 – Domestic workers, by country of origin, 2020-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., % var. and abs. diff. in thousands)

Country of origin	Av. (in thousands)			% Val.		Abs. diff. (in thousands)	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2020-2023	2022-2023
Italy	295.3	293.9	275.8	259.7	31.1	-35.6	-16.1
Romania	158.0	146.1	132.0	122.6	16.6	-35.4	-9.4
Ukraine	94.9	95.5	91.7	89.6	10.0	-5.3	-2.1
Philippines	67.8	68.0	66.1	62.9	7.1	-4.9	-3.2
Peru	35.6	38.7	37.5	36.1	3.7	0.5	-1.4
Moldova	39.3	38.3	35.0	32.6	4.1	-6.7	-2.4
Albania	29.1	30.1	29.4	28.5	3.1	-0.6	-0.9
Morocco	18.1	23.4	24.5	25.3	1.9	7.2	0.8
Georgia	25.6	29.2	26.3	22.5	2.7	-3.1	-3.8
Ecuador	25.9	28.8	24.9	21.2	2.7	-4.7	-3.7
Sri Lanka	17.9	18.1	17.8	17.2	1.9	-0.7	-0.6
Poland	14.5	13.1	11.8	10.7	1.5	-3.8	-1.1
India	10.7	12.8	11.1	9.0	1.1	-1.7	-2.1
Pakistan	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.1	0.7	0.2	-0.3
El Salvador	9.2	8.2	7.0	6.3	1.0	-2.9	-0.7
Bangladesh	5.7	5.9	5.6	5.2	0.6	-0.5	-0.4
Bulgaria	6.3	6.1	5.5	5.0	0.7	-1.3	-0.5
Senegal	5.3	6.2	5.5	4.3	0.6	-1.0	-1.2
Dominican Republic	4.7	5.1	4.8	4.3	0.5	-0.4	-0.5
Russia	7.6	11.1	7.7	4.2	0.8	-3.4	-3.5
Total top 20 countries	878.4	886.2	827.4	774.3	92.4	-104.1	-53.1
Total	950.6	973.6	902.2	833.9	100	-116.7	-68.3

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Table B2 – Lavoratori domestici, per nazionalità e classe di età, 2020-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

Nationality and age group	A.v. (in thousands)				% Val.		Abs. Diff. (in thousands)		% Var.	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2023	2020-2023	2022-2023	2020-2023	2022-2023
<i>Italians</i>										
Up to 29 years	21	21	18	16	7.1	6.0	-5.3	-2.3	-25.4	-12.8
30-54 years	160	154	139	126	54.3	48.6	-34.4	-13.2	-21.4	-9.5
55 and over	114	119	119	118	38.6	45.4	4.1	-0.7	3.6	-0.6
Total	295	294	276	260	100.0	100.0	-35.6	-16.1	-12.1	-5.8
<i>Foreigners</i>										
Up to 29 years	43	50	34	22	6.6	3.8	-21.1	-12.4	-49.0	-36.2
30-54 years	398	408	366	320	60.7	55.7	-77.8	-46.1	-19.6	-12.6
55 and over	215	222	226	232	32.8	40.5	17.8	6.3	8.3	2.8
Total	655	680	626	574	100.0	100.0	-81.1	-52.2	-12.4	-8.3
<i>Italians and foreigners</i>										
Up to 29 years	64	71	52	38	6.7	4.5	-26.4	-14.7	-41.3	-28.2
30-54 years	558	562	505	446	58.7	53.5	-112.2	-59.2	-20.1	-11.7
55 and over	329	341	345	350	34.6	42.0	21.9	5.6	6.7	1.6
Total	951	974	902	834	100.0	100.0	-116.7	-68.3	-12.3	-7.6

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Tab. B3 – Domestic workers, by type of service and nationality, 2020-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	A.v. (in thousands)				% Val.		Abs. diff. (in thousands)		% Var.	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2023	2020-2023	2022-2023	2020-2023	2022-2023
<i>Carer</i>										
Italians	122	124	119	113	27.3	27.3	-9.6	-5.9	-7.8	-5.0
Foreigners	327	332	314	301	72.7	72.7	-26.1	-13.1	-8.0	-4.2
Total	449	457	433	414	100.0	100.0	-35.7	-19.0	-7.9	-4.4
<i>Domestic helpers and other (*)</i>										
Italians	173	170	157	147	34.5	34.9	-26.1	-10.2	-15.1	-6.5
Foreigners	328	347	312	273	65.5	65.1	-55.0	-39.1	-16.7	-12.5
Total	501	517	470	420	100.0	100.0	-81.0	-49.3	-16.2	-10.5

(*) Includes workers for whom the type of relationship is not indicated

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Table B4 – Carers, by weeks worked and hours per week, 2019-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	A.v. (in thousands)		% Val.		2019-2023	
	2019	2023	2019	2023	diff. ass. (in migliaia)	var. %
<i>Weeks worked</i>						
Up to 24 weeks	105	107	25.4	25.8	2	1.9
25-49 weeks	92	97	22.2	23.4	5	5.4
Over 49 weeks (full year)	217	210	52.4	50.7	-7	-3.2
<i>Hours per week</i>						
Up to 24 hours	92	102	22.2	24.6	10	10.9
25 to 45 hours	218	168	52.7	40.6	-50	-22.9
Over 45 hours	103	144	24.9	34.8	41	39.8
Total	414	414	100.0	100.0	0	0.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps datas

Table B5 – Domestic helpers (*), by weeks worked and hours worked per week, 2019-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	A.v. (in thousands)		% Val.		2019-2023	
	2019	2023	2019	2023	abs. diff. (in thousands)	% var.
<i>Weeks worked</i>						
Up to 24 weeks	65	65	14.5	15.5	0	0.0
25-49 weeks	59	56	13.2	13.3	-3	-5.1
Over 49 weeks (full year)	323	299	72.3	71.2	-24	-7.4
<i>Hours per week</i>						
Up to 24 hours	239	244	53.5	58.1	5	2.1
25 to 45 hours	198	166	44.3	39.5	-32	-16.2
Over 45 hours	11	11	2.5	2.6	0	0.0
Total	447	420	100.0	100.0	-27	-6.0

(*) Includes workers for whom the type of relationship is not indicated

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Table B6 – Average weekly wage from domestic work, by weeks worked and hours per week, 2019-2023 (a.v. in euro and abs. diff.)

	Domestic helpers		Carers		Abs. diff. (euro) 2019-2023	
	2019	2023	2019	2023	Colf	Carers
<i>Up to 24 weeks</i>	159	170	227	253	11	26
Up to 24 hours per week	98	108	122	135	10	13
From 25 to 45 hours per week	212	231	244	266	19	22
More than 45 hours per week	336	385	297	331	49	34
<i>From 25 to 49 weeks</i>	139	147	201	224	8	23
Up to 24 hours per week	86	93	109	119	7	10
From 25 to 45 hours per week	185	197	211	230	12	19
Over 45 hours per week	270	298	250	276	28	26
<i>Over 49 weeks (full year)</i>	145	151	195	220	6	25
Up to 24 hours per week	102	110	108	125	8	17
From 25 to 45 hours per week	193	208	206	230	15	24
Over 45 hours per week	285	312	246	275	27	29
Total	145	151	198	224	6	26

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Table B7 – Domestic workers, by number of employers and importance of job position, 2019-2023 (a.v. in thousands, % val., abs. diff. and % var.)

	A.v. (in thousands)			% Val.		Abs. diff. (in thousands)	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2020-2023	2022-2023
<i>Number of employers</i>							
One employer	775	789	717	658	81.5	78.9	-117 -59
Several employers	175	185	185	176	18.4	21.1	1 -9
<i>Relevance of the employment position in the year</i>							
Exclusive	801	819	741	695	84.2	83.3	-106 -46
Principal	73	70	66	59	7.7	7.1	-14 -7
Secondary	77	84	95	81	8.1	9.7	4 -14
Totale	951	974	902	834	100,0	100,0	-117 -68

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

Table B8 – Irregularity rate of the employed, 2019-2022 (% vol.)

	Activities of households as employers of domestic staff, production of undifferentiated goods and services for own use by households	Total economic activities
2019	51.0	11.0
2020	45.7	10.5
2021	45.8	9.9
2022	47.1	9.7

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table B9 – Jobs irregularity rate (*), 2019-2022 (% val.)

	Activities of households as employers of domestic staff, production of undifferentiated goods and services for own use by households	Total economic activities
2019	55.7	13.7
2020	50.2	13.0
2021	50.5	12.4
2022	51.8	12.3

(*) Job positions are defined as the number of jobs, given by the sum of the first jobs and multiple jobs, regardless of the number of hours worked
Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table B10 – Number of domestic employers, 2019-2023 (a.v., % val. and % var.)

	Annual total number	of which: continuous employers (1)	% val. continuous employers of the annual total	% var. employers compared to previous year
2019	921,949	612,296	66.4	-
2020	1,024,274	592,738	57.9	11.1
2021	1,051,785	674,485	64.1	2.7
2022	988,529	619,967	62.7	-6.0
2023 (2)	919,576	577,784	62.8	-7.0

(1) Present in 12 months

(2) Provisional data

Source: Censis elaboration on Inps data

C. HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES INCURRED BY ITALIAN FAMILIES

Table C1 – Households and individuals, by dwelling title, 2021 (a.v. and % val.)

	Families		Individuals	
	a.v. mln	% val.	a.v. mln	% val.
For rent	5.2	20.5	4.4	7.6
Homeowners	18.2	70.8	42.7	72.5
With mortgage	3.3	12.8	-	-
Without mortgage	14.9	58.0	-	-
Homeowners in usufruct or free of charge	2.2	8.7	11.8	20.0
Total	25.6	100.0	58.9	100.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table C2 – Household characteristics by dwelling title, 2023 (% val.)

	Rental	Ownership (*)	Total
Italy	19.4	80.6	100.0
North	21.5	78.5	100.0
Centre	16.6	83.4	100.0
South and Islands	18.2	81.8	100.0
Single person, less than 65 years	32.1	67.9	100.0
Single person aged 65 and over	11.4	88.6	100.0
Childless couple with PR less than 65 years	19.8	80.2	100.0
Childless couple with PR more than 65 years	6.6	93.4	100.0
Couples with minor children	22.3	77.7	100.0
Couples with children (18 years over)	11.5	88.5	100.0
Single parents with minor children	31.8	68.2	100.0
Single parents with children (18 years over)	20.0	80.0	100.0

(*) Includes homeowners in usufruct or free of charge
Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table C3 – Household final consumption expenditure on housing, 2020-2023 (a.v., % val. and % var.)

	A.v. 2023	% Val. 2023	Real % var. 2020-2023	Real % var. 2022-2023
Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	286,664	22.9	-0.4	-0.2
Furniture, household appliances and home maintenance	75,248	6.0	12.1	-6.0
of which household services and hygiene	13,705	1.1	-5.3	-3.4
Total household expenditure	361,912	28.9	2.1	-1.4
Total household consumption	1,250,676	100.0	13.3	1.0

Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Table C4 – Added value in domestic work (*), 2019-2023 (a.v. in mln euro and % var.)

	A.v. (actual mln euro)	Real % var. compared to the previous year	As a reminder: real year-on-year % change in value added of all sectors
2019	16,332	-1.7	0.7
2020	16,081	-6.0	-8.3
2021	16,406	4.3	9.0
2022	16,180	-6.3	5.1
2023	15,808	-2.4	0.7

(*) Activities of households as employers for domestic staff, production undifferentiated goods and services for own use by households and families
Source: Censis elaboration on Istat data

Family (Net) Work - Workshop on Home, Family and Domestic Work

WHO WE ARE

ASSINDATCOLF is the National Association of Domestic Workers, founded in 1983 on the initiative of **Confedilizia** to represent and protect the category of families that employ domestic workers. It is a recognised association, registered since 2015 in the Register of Legal Persons at the Prefecture of Rome. To date, it is the only employers' association to be so recognised. Its aim is to bring the problems of domestic work to the attention of public opinion and institutions, in order to improve them and provide the sector's representatives with the right answers. Assindatcolf is joined by individual domestic employers through its territorial offices spread throughout the country.

Together with **Fidaldo**, of which it is a member, Assindatcolf draws up contracts and collective agreements for domestic work and, through the same association, is a member of the sector's **Enti Bilaterali: Fondocolf, Cas.Sa.Colf** and **Ebincolf**. Since 2015, it has also been a member of **EFFE**, the European Federation for Family Employment and Home Care, of which it is vice-president.

CENSIS, Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali, is a socio-economic research institute founded in 1964. It carries out a constant and articulated activity of research, consultancy and technical assistance, which has developed over the years through the realisation of studies on social, economic and territorial development, as well as intervention programmes and cultural initiatives in the vital sectors of social reality: education, work and representation, welfare and health, territory and networks, economic subjects, media and communication, public governance, security and citizenship. The annual report on the social situation of the country, produced by Censis since 1967, is considered the most qualified and complete tool for interpreting Italian reality.

CENTRO STUDI E RICERCHE IDOS Study and Research Centre was founded in 2004 as a cooperative and publishing house by the original group of researchers working at Caritas in Rome for the production of the Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, the first organic annual socio-statistical report on immigration in Italy (the first edition was published in 1991). In addition to this main publication, IDOS has over time produced other socio-statistical yearbooks (the Roman Observatory on Migration, the Report on Immigration and Entrepreneurship, and - from 2001 to 2013 - the Report on Immigrant Integration Indices in Italy, produced on behalf of the CNEL) and thematic publications.

FONDAZIONE STUDI CONSULENTI DEL LAVORO (Foundation for Studies on Employment Counsellors) is a private law body set up in 2001 on the initiative of the Consiglio Nazionale dei Consulenti del Lavoro (National Council of Employment Counsellors) to promote the profession of employment counsellor through research, training, updating and communication activities. In particular, the Study Foundation promotes studies and research on employment, with particular emphasis on legal and economic issues, labour market dynamics and public policy analysis and evaluation. In addition, given the role played by employment counsellors in the regulation and management of domestic work relations, the Foundation has for years carried out studies and analyses aimed at analysing the characteristics and evolution of employment in the domestic sphere.

EFFE - European Federation for Family and Home Care Employment, created in 2013, is one of the main actors in the personal and domestic services sector at EU level. It represents the interests of employers operating in the domestic and family work sector and, in particular, supports the recognition of the "direct" employment model, which aims to guarantee social rights for all stakeholders, taking into account the specific cultural approaches of each Member State.

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Family (Net) Work - Workshop on home, family and domestic work was set up on the initiative of Assindatcolf in collaboration with Censis, the Idos Research and Study Centre, the Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, the European Federation for Family and Domestic Work, Effe.

One of the main objectives of the collaboration is the production of the Annual Report, which collects the research, analysis and reflection developed by the network during the year. The report provides a comprehensive and exhaustive overview of the world of domestic work, exploring family dynamics, welfare and migration policies and related economic trends.

This year's Report focuses on five themes: the growing economic burden of domestic work on families and possible solutions (by Assindatcolf, section I); the state of welfare in Italy (by Censis, section II); the needs of Italian and foreign workers in society in the coming years (by Idos, section III); the prospects for the integration of migrants (by Idos, section IV); the prospects for the integration of migrants and the professionalisation of the domestic work world (by Effe, section IV); the risks for the resilience of the domestic work and family welfare system (by Fondazione Studi Consulenti del Lavoro, section V).

The Report concludes with a statistical annex containing the main data on demographic trends in the population and household composition in Italy; domestic workers and employers; housing and household expenditure by Italian households.