

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON LEAVE POLICIES AND RESEARCH

# **10<sup>th</sup> International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2014**

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# Contents

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Defining leave Policies

## 3. Overview: cross-country comparisons

- Sources used
- Background data on countries
- Statutory Maternity Leave: April 2014
- Statutory Paternity Leave: April 2014
- Statutory Parental Leave (not including additional childcare leaves): April 2014
- Statutory other measures: April 2014
- Total statutory leave (including additional childcare leaves): April 2014
- Relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements: April 2014
- Changes and developments since April 2013
- Take-up of leave
- Research and publications since April 2013

## 4. Country notes

- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland

- Israel
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Russian Federation
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia.
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States

# 1. Introduction

The international network on leave policies and research has been producing an annual review of leave policies and related research since 2005 (for earlier reviews, go to the network's website: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/archive\\_2005\\_2009/annual\\_reviews/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/archive_2005_2009/annual_reviews/)). The review covers Maternity, Paternity and Parental leaves; leave to care for sick children and other employment-related measures to support working parents; and early childhood education and care policy. As well as policies, it provides information on publications and research.

The review is based on **country notes from each participating country**, prepared by members of the network and edited by one of the network's coordinators. Each country note follows a standard format: details of different types of leave; the relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy; recent policy developments; information on take-up of leave; recent publications and current research projects.

The review also includes **definitions of the main types of leave policies**; and **cross-country comparisons**. These comparative overviews cover: each main type of leave; total leave available; the relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements; policy changes and developments since the previous review; publications since the previous review; and ongoing research in participating countries

The 2014 review includes one new country: Israel. Altogether, it covers 35 countries. In addition to the new country, these are: Austria, Brazil, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America.

The review is available online either as one complete document; or, for ease of downloading, divided into its constituent parts.

If citing the complete review, please do so as:

Moss, P. (2014) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2014*. Available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

If citing an individual country note, please use the citation given as a footnote on the first page of that country note.

# Italy

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April 2014

For comparisons with other countries in this review – on demographic, economic, employment and gender equality indicators and on leave provision and early childhood education and care services - go to [cross-country comparisons](#) page on website. To contact authors of country notes, go to [membership-list of members](#) page on website.

## 1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

### a. Maternity leave (*Congedo di Maternità*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and (for public employees) Ministry of Economy and Finance)

#### *Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Twenty weeks (five months): at least four weeks before the birth. It is obligatory to take this leave.

#### *Payment and funding*

- Eighty per cent of earnings with no ceiling for salaried workers. For home helps, self-employed workers and agricultural temporary labourers, earnings are 80 per cent of conventional earnings determined each year by the law; for non-fixed term workers, Maternity leave depends on accredited contributions, though each professional sector has the possibility to determine, with approval by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, a higher ceiling, after considering income and contribution potential of the professional sector and compatibility with its financial.
- Funded by INPS (National Department for Social Welfare), financed by contributions from employers and employees at a rate that is related to the sector and to the type of contract (for example, in manufacturing it is 0.46 per cent of earnings for employers and 0.28 per cent for employees). Workers on Maternity leave may be paid direct by INPS or else by their employer, who is recompensed by INPS.

#### *Flexibility*

- For employees and workers enrolled in '*Gestione separata*'<sup>163</sup>, the 20 week period is compulsory, but there are two options for taking this leave: four weeks before the birth

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<sup>162</sup> Please cite as: Addabbo, T., Giovannini, D. and Mazzucchelli, S. (2014) 'Italy country note', in: P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2014*. Available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

and 16 weeks after (upon presentation of a medical certificate); and eight weeks before the birth and 12 weeks after. The allowance is accorded to autonomous female workers from eight weeks before the birth to 12 weeks after; maternity leave, however, is not compulsory for this category.

- The mother can transfer two days to the father.

*Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All employees and self-employed women with social security membership, including workers enrolled in *Gestione separata*.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent) or delegation of leave to person other than the mother*

- In the case of multiple or premature births, the length of leave increases by 12 weeks.

*Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)*

- Public sector employees receive 100 per cent of earnings.
- In general national collective agreements guarantee 100 per cent of earnings, with employers paying the additional 20 per cent.

## **b. Paternity leave (*congedo di paternità*) (Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies)**

*Length of leave*

- One day of compulsory leave. Fathers can take two additional days if the mother agrees to transfer these days from her Maternity leave allocation.

*Payment and funding*

- One hundred per cent of earnings.

*Flexibility*

- Leave can be used until five months after childbirth.

*Eligibility*

- All employees.

*Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)*

- Employed fathers, including those who are self-employed and enrolled in *Gestione separata*, may take three months paid leave following childbirth in the following circumstances: the mother's death or severe illness; the child being left by the mother;

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<sup>163</sup> The INPS enrolls in *Gestione separata* ('separate administration') workers who do not contribute to other forms of welfare and who do not have any type of pension, e.g. workers on a fixed-term research project.

or the child being in the sole care of the father. An important verdict by the Tribunal of Florence extends the possibility of obtaining Paternity leave, paid at 80 per cent of earnings, to two months before childbirth. This means that the father can take the whole period of Maternity leave in certain circumstances, i.e. if the mother is a housewife or ill or, alternatively, if she is a self-employed worker who cannot take advantage, for various reasons, of the leave. The Tribunal is a civil court and its decision acts as an important precedent for other Tribunals, but is not automatically binding on them. Conditions are the same as for Maternity leave.

**c. Parental leave (*Congedo Parentale*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies and (for public employees) Ministry of Economy and Finance)**

*Length of leave (before and after child's birth)*

- Each parent can take six months maximum with a maximum total length of ten months unless the father takes at least three months of leave. In the latter case the total length of leave for the couple is 11 months and the father can extend his leave to seven months.

*Payment (during the length of Parental leave) and funding*

- Thirty per cent of earnings when leave is taken for a child under three years; unpaid if taken when a child is three to eight years, unless annual earnings are under approximately 2.5 times the amount of minimum earnings (€16,294.85 = 6,517.94 x 2.5 in 2014)<sup>164</sup>, in which case parents are entitled to 30 per cent of earnings.
- Funded as Maternity leave.

*Flexibility in use*

- Leave can be taken at any time until a child is eight years old.
- Leave can be taken as a single leave period up to a maximum of six months; or as shorter periods amounting to a maximum of six months.
- Parents can take leave at the same time.
- From the end of Maternity leave until 11 months after the birth, mothers (but not fathers) can exchange their Parental leave for vouchers of €300 per month for use in reducing childcare costs.

*Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All employed parents, except domestic workers and home helps. Self-employed workers are generally entitled to three months, which can be taken only during the first year after child's birth.
- The father is entitled to leave even if the mother is not, for example if she is a housewife. Circular letter B/12-5-2009 from the Department of Labour, Health, and Social Policies extends the right to fathers to make use of the leave indicated in the art. 40c, Act of Law n. 151/2001 (right to work reduced hours with full earnings compensation for the first 12 months after childbirth) if the mother is a housewife; previously this right was limited to fathers where the mother was self-employed. This

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164

<http://www.inps.it/bussola/VisualizzaDoc.aspx?sVirtualURL=%2FCircolari%2FCircolare%20numero%2044%20del%2026-03-2014.htm>

change gives equal value to the domestic work of non-employed mothers as to paid work.

- Parental leave of three months, to be taken within the first year of the child, is available to workers enrolled with *Gestione separata* by the INPS.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents*

- As the leave is per child, each parent is entitled to additional leave in the case of a multiple birth (e.g. the length is doubled for twins, tripled for triplets).
- A lone parent may take ten months of leave.

*Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)*

- Public sector employees receive 100 per cent of earnings during the first 30 days of leave.
- Law 228-24/12/2012 has established the possibility to use Parental leave on an hourly basis, leaving to collective agreements the task of establishing how this will be calculated and implemented.

#### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

- None.

#### **e. Other employment-related measures**

*Adoption leave and pay*

- For adoptive and foster parents the same regulations for Maternity and Parental leave apply as for other parents. The period of Maternity leave does not depend on the age of the child adopted and must start within five months of entering the family; in case of international adoption, the leave can be taken also for overseas visits in connection with adoption. The Parental leave for adoptive and foster parents can be taken within eight years of the child entering the family and not after his/her eighteenth birthday; payment, generally, is 100 per cent of earnings for the first 30 days and 30 per cent for the following five months, if taken within three years of the entrance of the child into the family.

*Time off for the care of dependants*

- Without limit for a child under three years; five days a year per parent for a child aged three to eight years. Unpaid.
- Public or private employees are entitled to two years leave over the course of their entire working life in case of a serious need in their family, for example the disability of a child or other relative, even if not co-resident. This leave is fully paid by INPS (National Department for Social Welfare). Fathers and mothers cannot take this leave at the same time. Law 4 November 183/2010 (*Collegato Lavoro*) changes the conditions of eligibility for this leave - three paid days a month - for relatives of a disabled person. Apart from parents, this leave cannot be taken by more than one relative.



## *Flexible working*

- Until a child is 12 months old, women who are employees are entitled to work reduced hours (one hour less per day if working six hours a day or less; two hours less per day if working longer) for breast feeding, with full earnings compensation. Fathers are entitled to use this benefit in certain conditions, for example: if the mother is self-employed or freelancer; if the mother opts not to use it; if the mother is not employed; or if the father has sole custody of the child. Home helps, domestic workers and autonomous workers are not entitled to reduced hours, but in this case too the father can work reduced hours.
- Employees (mothers and fathers) who have parental responsibility for a child under six years or a disabled child under 18 years have a legal right to apply to their employers to work flexibly (e.g. to reduce their working hours). Employers have a legal duty to consider these requests and may refuse them only 'where there is a clear business ground for doing so...[and must give] a written explanation explaining why'.

## **2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy**

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Italy is 14 to 17 months (depending on bonus months if the father takes Parental leave), and there is only around four months of well-paid leave entitlement. There is no entitlement to ECEC, though nearly all children over three years attend ECEC from three years of age. However, despite being recognized as a social right for children and working mothers by Law 1044/1971, provision of ECEC for children under three years is much lower and very variable between different regions. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries, but above average for children over three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

## **3. Changes in policy since April 2013 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

A reform proposed by the new government is currently under discussion with specific proposals to extend Maternity leave to parasubordinate mothers (with a contract of collaboration not employees), to foster flexibility by promoting collective bargaining that introduces flexible hours of work to allow a better work-life balance, and by establishing networks of public and private childcare services<sup>165</sup>.

## **4. Take-up of leave**

### **a. Maternity leave**

Maternity leave is obligatory for employees. In 2012, according to administrative data referred to by Istat (2013), about 360,000 employees used Maternity leave; 9 per cent were temporary workers and 91 per cent permanent workers.

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<sup>165</sup> <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Priorita/Documents/Interventi%20per%20il%20lavoro.pdf>

## **b. Paternity leave**

As this was only introduced in January 2013, there is no information as yet on take-up of leave.

## **c. Parental leave**

In 2012, Parental leave was used by 285,000 employees (6.7 per cent with temporary contracts and 93.3 per cent with permanent contracts); as with Maternity leave, the type of contracts varied regionally. According to the INPS data used for this analysis, also in 2012 89 per cent of employees using Parental leave are women and 11 per cent male (Istat, 2013).

Analysis of the measure that allows women to exchange paid Parental leave for vouchers to use in childcare services, introduced by Law 92/2012 and operating on a trial basis in 2013-14, shows that only a third of the €20 million allocated for this policy has been spent (Prioschi, 2013). It is still to be determined if this is due to the criteria for eligibility being too strict or to a low number of applications. The low number of vouchers can also in part be related to the application procedure to be followed by childcare institutions that has been considered as too complex and to be accomplished within a very limited time leading to take-up by only a few institutions amongst those that are eligible (Prioschi, 2013). Moreover, as stressed by Cardinali (2013a, b), the measure's focus on women could lead to the reproduction of the already very unequal division of care responsibilities within Italian families.

## **5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2013**

### **a. General overview**

The literature analysed deals with the gender allocation of time and work-life balance. The unbalanced distribution of time amongst Italian couples is confirmed. Work life balance is also considered as a relevant dimension within quality of work and explicitly measured. New data are provided on the take up of Parental leaves. Attention is also paid to the description of the normative changes introduced in Italy and to family policies in a comparative perspective providing a gender assessment of the policies.

### **b. Selected publications since April 2013<sup>166</sup>**

Gottardi, D. (2012) 'La tutela della maternità e della paternità, *Trattato di diritto di famiglia*' ['Maternity and paternity protection. Family Law Treatise'] directed by Zatti, in: L.Lenti (ed.) vol. VI, *Tutela civile del minore e diritto sociale della famiglia*, Vol.VI, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Milano: Giuffrè, 897-997.

The essay provides a complete analysis of the regulatory system set by the Act on maternity and paternity, as updated by the last legislative intervention of reform. It highlights the main theoretical and application issues of the regulatory system on the topic at both national and EU level. Particular attention is paid to the poor protection existing in certain areas of self-employment, professions, and other contracts.

Gottardi, D. (2012) 'La condivisione delle responsabilità genitoriali in salsa italiana' [*Sharing of parental responsibilities in Italian Sauce*], *Lavoro e diritto*, 2012, No.3-4: 609-620.

The article analyses the legislative changes introduced in 2012 regarding Paternity leave

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<sup>166</sup> This section includes two publications from 2012 not included in earlier reviews.

and the provision of vouchers for working mothers as an alternative option to taking Parental leave. It criticises these amendments because of either the inaccurate domestic coordination or the contrast with the regulations set by the EU institutions.

Addabbo, T., Badalassi, G., Cardinali, V. and Facchinetti, G. (2013) 'ISG Indice di Sensibilità di Genere su base Regionale. Struttura e metodologia', *Isfol Working Paper*, 2013. Available at: <http://isfoloa.isfol.it/handle/123456789/523>.

The paper proposes a methodology to classify Italian regions according to the gender sensitiveness of their public policies and law. The indicators constructed also include public child care provisions and gender budgeting experiences.

Addabbo, T., Centra, M., Curtarelli, M., Fuscaldo, M. and Gualtieri, V. (2013) 'The quality of work dimensions. Results of a multivariate analysis from the Third Isfol Survey on Quality of work in Italy', *DEMB Working Paper Series*, October 2013, No. 17. Available at: [http://merlino.unimo.it/campusone/web\\_dep/wpdemb/0017.pdf](http://merlino.unimo.it/campusone/web_dep/wpdemb/0017.pdf).

After an overview of the theoretical framework of the quality of work, the paper identifies five quality of work dimensions, in line with Gallino and La Rosa: ergonomic, complexity, autonomy, control and economic dimensions. The dimensions are described and measured by means of multivariate analysis to detect differences in terms of the factors affecting the level of these quality of work dimensions achieved, using the Third Isfol Survey on Quality of Work (IsfolQdL) carried out in 2010 on a sample of 5,000 workers and that allows the five dimensions of the quality of work to be operationalized. The results of the multivariate analysis confirm the worse position in terms of quality of work of temporary workers and lower skilled workers and a lower level for women in the economic and complexity dimensions. Women are more likely to be found in part-time work and show an improvement in the ergonomic dimension (including work-life balance) at the expense of the economic and complexity dimensions.

Bosoni M. L. (2013) *Conciliare paternità e lavoro. Studi di caso aziendali [Reconciling paternity and work. Case studies in business]*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.

In the postmodern era, the transformations in masculinity have become a relevant issue: the traditional differentiation between male and female tasks (men more related to work and women to home) is no longer sustainable and needs to be reconsidered. Thus, the complex issue of balancing family and work represents a relevant challenge also for men. Several empirical studies highlight, in fact, a transformation of the father role, both in Italy and abroad, which implies a 'more involved' and 'new' father style. Nevertheless a strong relation with work remains a pivotal trait shaping men's identity, especially in Italy. In this context, the book presents findings from a study on working fathers, conducted in Italy between April 2010 and February 2011 and aimed to understand how men manage the 'double role' of fathers and workers, and how companies support their employees' needs. The hypothesis leading this research is that the expression of the father's role and the paternal reconciliation strategy are strongly influenced by the workplace. In particular, three case studies were undertaken, using a qualitative research technique. In total, 45 interviews were carried out: semi-structured interviews with managers, focused on corporate culture, and narrative interviews with employees (fathers of young children), focused on the transition to parenthood. The fathers interviewed were able to actively reflect on their experiences and regarded family and work reconciliation as a matter for men too. Company culture emerged as a central, powerful element shaping male reconciliation strategies.

Brilli Y., Del Boca D. and Monfardini C. (2013) 'Child Care Arrangements: Determinants and Consequences', *CHILD Working Papers Series* 18, Centre for Household, Income, Labour and Demographic Economics. Available at:

[http://www.child.carloalberto.org/images/documenti/child18\\_2013.pdf](http://www.child.carloalberto.org/images/documenti/child18_2013.pdf).

This report summarizes the most recent empirical research on the effects of non-parental and household time investments on child development. The results from the studies

considering non-parental child care policies are presented taking into account the timing of the intervention. The majority of large-scale policies providing non-parental child care have positive effects on children's cognitive outcomes, both in the short and in the medium run. Early childhood policies can have long lasting effects on adult outcomes, also boosting the development of non-cognitive skills. The empirical results of the literature assessing the effects of time and income investments within the household show that while maternal time is crucial for child development, the father's and grandparents' time may also be important. There is already some evidence that the father's time can be a good substitute for maternal time, especially when the child grows up. [Abstract from Authors]

Brilli Y., Del Boca D., Pronzato C.D. (2013) 'Does child care availability play a role in maternal employment and children's development? Evidence from Italy', *Review of Economics of the Household*, DOI: [10.1007/s11150-013-9227-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-013-9227-4) Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/28839>

This paper investigates the effects of public child care availability in Italy on mothers' working status and children's scholastic achievements. The authors use a newly available dataset containing individual standardized test scores of pupils attending the second grade of primary school in 2009–2010 in conjunction with data on public child care availability. The estimates indicate positive and significant effects of child care availability on both mothers' working status and children's language test scores. They find that a percentage change in public child care coverage increases mothers' probability to work by 1.3 percentage points and children's language test scores by 0.85 percent of one standard deviation; they do not find any effect on Math test scores. Moreover, the impact of a percentage change in public child care on mothers' employment and children's language test scores is greater in provinces where child care availability is more limited

Cardinali, V. (2013a) 'Voucher per asili nido. Perché così non va' ['Voucher for nurseries. Why so wrong']. *Ingenere* online. Available at: <http://ingenere.it/articoli/voucher-nidi-e-baby-sitter-perch-cos-non-va>

The article provides a gender assessment of the introduction of vouchers to cover childcare expenditure introduced by the Monti Government.

Cardinali V. (2013b) par. 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.1. in: Isfol (2013). *Rapporto di monitoraggio del mercato del lavoro 2012* [Monitoring report of the labor market 2012]. Roma: Isfol.

The chapter. analyses the context of the Italian labour market from a gender perspective and proposes a gender impact evaluation of the labour market reform carried out by the Monti Government.

Consigliera Nazionale Pari Opportunità (2013a) *Congedo per il padre: istruzioni per l'uso* [Leave for the father. Instructions for use]. Available at: [http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In\\_Evidenza/20130319+Congedo+di+paternit%C3%A0.htm](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In_Evidenza/20130319+Congedo+di+paternit%C3%A0.htm)

This publication provides an explanation of the new Paternity leave arrangements.

Consigliera Nazionale Pari Opportunità (2013b) *Voucher di cura: Istruzioni per l'uso* [The childcare voucher. Instruction for use] Available at: [http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In\\_Evidenza/20130403+Voucher.htm](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In_Evidenza/20130403+Voucher.htm)

This publication provides an explanation of the new childcare voucher arrangements.

Consigliera Nazionale Pari Opportunità (2013c) *La procedura di convalida delle dimissioni e risoluzioni consensuali introdotta dalla L.92/2012* [The validation procedure for resigning and consensual resolutions introduced by L.92/2012]. Available at:

[http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In\\_Evidenza/20130404+Procedura+convalida+dimissioni.htm](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/In_Evidenza/20130404+Procedura+convalida+dimissioni.htm)

This publication provides an explanation of the new arrangements for monitoring to avoid 'dimissioni in bianco'

Del Boca D., Pronzato C. and Sorrenti G. (2013) 'La crisi economica bussata alla porta dei nidi' ['The economic crisis is knocking at the door of the nurseries'], *Ingenere online*, 2 August 2013. Available at: <http://ingenere.it/articoli/la-crisi-economica-bussa-alla-porta-dei-nidi>.

In Italy in 2013, nearly one-fifth of children live in households below the poverty line. The impoverishment of families and the increase in female employment make the nursery more and more important. But early childhood services are threatened by cuts and lower revenue from fees. The primary aim is to balance a high level of service quality by a ratio of revenue:cost that allows sustainability. In most areas there is a rationing of the supply of nursery places: in fact, this number is less than the demand. The rationing of the service is through access criteria that assign different scores to the characteristics of different households. The choice of criteria determines the selection of families and consequently of their contribution, the revenue of the municipality, and the sustainability of the service itself.

De Vita L. (2013), *Il welfare mancante delle partite Iva. Alla ricerca di nuove tutele* [The missing welfare of VAT. Looking for new protections]. *Ingenere online*, 31 October 2013. Available at: <http://ingenere.it/articoli/il-welfare-mancante-delle-partite-iva-alla-ricerca-di-nuove-tutele>.

Italy, in 2012, has the highest number of independent workers in Europe: 16.2 per cent of working women have a business or are self-employed compared to 7.5 per cent in Germany and 6.6 per cent in France. The progressive feminization of this type of work concerns professional, scientific and technical activities, and above all health care and social assistance services where women are employed almost twice as often as men. This feminization of self-employment seems to happen in a total absence of social policies, with the exception of the maternity allowance (introduced in 2007). This article presents a number of limitations. In addition to the gaps in the pension plan and the lack of parenting support, the allowance is differently configured for professionals who can only subscribe to the *gestione separata* of INPS than for those who are equipped with autonomous pension funds and assistance linked to different professional associations.

Galasso V., Profeta P., Pronzato C. and Billari F. (2013) 'The Difficult Case of Persuading Women: Experimental Evidence from Childcare', *IZA Discussion Paper No. 7677* Available at: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp7677.pdf>

Gender stereotypes are well established also among women. Yet, a recent literature suggests that learning from other women's experience about the effects of maternal employment on child outcomes may increase female labour force participation. To further explore this channel, the authors designed a randomized survey experiment, in which 1500 Italian women aged 20 to 40 were exposed to two information treatments on the positive consequences of formal childcare on children's future educational attainments. They found that women reduced their intended labour supply. However, this result hides diverse effects: highly educated non-mothers were persuaded by the information treatments to increase their intended use of formal child care (and to pay more); whereas low educated mothers reduced their intended labour supply. These findings are consistent with women responding to monetary incentive and/or having different preferences for maternal care. These responses send a warning signal about the true effectiveness – in terms of take-up rates – of often advocated public policies regarding formal child care. [Abstract from Authors]

Inps, Istat and Ministero del lavoro e delle politiche sociali (2013) *Rapporto sulla Coesione sociale: Anno 2013* [Report on Social Cohesion: year 2013]. Available at: <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/108637>

Amongst the different indicators provided in this report, there is data on the allocation of time and difference in the time devoted by men and women to unpaid care and domestic work. This shows the persistence of an unbalanced distribution of unpaid work by gender in Italy,

though there has been a small increase in the time devoted by men to unpaid work activities and a decrease on the amount provided by women in domestic work. The report also provides figures on employment rates by gender and household composition to understand the effect of parenthood on employment. Data on the number of recipients of Maternity leaves, Parental leaves and leaves to assist disabled relatives are also provided up to year 2012 by type of contract and employment.

Istat (2013a) *Bes 2013: il benessere equo e sostenibile in Italia [Bes 2013: equitable and sustainable well-being in Italy]*. Available at: [http://www.istat.it/it/files/2013/03/bes\\_2013.pdf](http://www.istat.it/it/files/2013/03/bes_2013.pdf)  
This first report on equitable and sustainable wellbeing – carried out by CNEL (National Council for Economy and Labour) and Istat (National Institute of Statistics) - presents the results of an initiative that puts Italy at the forefront of the international scene in terms of developing health status indicators that go beyond GDP. The report presents the most important elements in twelve domains considered crucial to the wellbeing of Italians: Health; Education and Training; Work and work-family reconciliation; Economic well-being; Social relationships; Safety; Subjective well-being; Policy and institutions; Quality of services; Research and Innovation; Environment; Landscape and cultural heritage. It ends with a summary table of trends.

Istat (2013b) *Natalità e fecondità della popolazione residente: caratteristiche e tendenze recenti [Birth and fertility of the resident population: characteristics and recent trends]*. Available at: <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/104818>  
Italy is in demographic decline: the average rate of fertility is declining and the average age at first birth is on the rise (more than 7 per cent of those born in 2012 have a mother of at least 40 years). The decline of the birthrate is mostly due to a decrease among Italian-born parents, while those born of foreign parents are still increasing, although to a lesser extent than in previous years. Fertility levels are slightly higher in the North and Centre (1.5 and 1.4 children per woman compared with 1.3 of the South); the highest rates are among women living in Bolzano and Trento (1.6 children per woman), Valle d'Aosta (1.57), and Lombardy (1.51). This, however, is due to the greater numbers and fertility of foreign people.

Istat (2013c) *Rapporto annuale 2013 – La situazione del Paese (Annual Report 2013 – The situation in the country)*. Available at: <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/89629>  
The twenty-first edition of the Annual Report develops a documented reflection on the transformations affecting the Italian economy and society, integrating the information produced by Istat (National Institute of Statistics) and the National Statistical System. The complex situation of the Country is also analyzed through the information that emerged from the early results of the Census of industry and services, using innovative perspectives (i.e. the examination of public perceptions with respect to the economic and social context and the functioning of the institutions) and adopting new tools and microsimulation models. There are four major thematic areas addressed: macroeconomic and social context (chapter 1); competitiveness and growth potential of the system of Italian firms (section 2); opportunities and participation in the labour market (Chapter 3); the point of view of citizens (Chapter 4). In a context marked by deep economic difficulty (decline in GDP and in purchasing power of households, rising unemployment, youth unemployment and long-term unemployment) women's employment increases. This is due to the increase in foreign workers, older women remaining in the labour market due to the pension reform, and more women entering the labor market (even in conditions considered non-acceptable in the past) to replace the loss of male income. This increase in female employment continues to be concentrated in low-skilled and part-time jobs; there is also a high gender pay gap.

Istat (2013d) *'Rapporto sulla coesione sociale: anno 2013 - nota per la stampa' [Report on Social Cohesion: year 2013 - Note for the press]*. Available at [www.istat.it](http://www.istat.it)

This note summarizes the main results of the Fourth Report on social cohesion, including data on the take up of Parental and Maternity leaves, confirming low take-up of Parental leave by fathers.

Istat (2013e) 'L'offerta comunale di asili nido e altri servizi socio-educativi per la prima infanzia: anno scolastico 2011-2012' ['The offer of municipal nurseries and other social and educational services for early childhood: 2011-2012 school year'], *Istat* 25 July 2013. Available at <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/96663>

This note provides data on municipal child care services in Italy. Since 2003 the data shows an increase in coverage for children under three years (from 9 to 11.8 per cent), but a reduction in the last year connected to cuts in public spending. It confirms the variation across regions from 26.5 per cent in Emilia Romagna in the North of Italy) region to 2.5 per cent in Calabria in the South.

Mazzucchelli S. (2013) 'Families, care and work facing the challenges of a globalized world: the role of companies', in: E. Carrà (ed.) *Families, care and work-life balance services. Case studies of best practices*. Milano: Centro di Ateneo, Università Cattolica.

The paper presents the results of a national survey carried out on behalf of the National Observatory on the Family aimed at identifying some good practices in companies of work-family reconciliation. Italian companies have been mapped with a quantitative methodology; then case studies have been made. Using a complex methodology (both quantitative and qualitative), it has been possible to reach an articulated judgment about the case studies and to highlight interesting elements, dimensions and dynamics of corporate and management culture. The analyses carried out generally disclose a strong coherence especially with corporate culture and the modality with which these values are translated on a daily basis into the reality of each company and in concretely implemented reconciliation measures; this reveals transparency in company processes and the communication modalities used. Finally the enacted reconciliation programmes turn out to be well developed, structured and coherent in their constitutive parts.

Mencarini L.(2013) *Ancora meno figli in tempo di crisi? [Even fewer children in times of crisis?]*. *Ingenere* online, 16 September 2013. Available at: <http://ingenere.it/articoli/ancora-meno-figli-tempo-di-crisi>.

What happens to fertility in times of economic crisis? The question is crucial in national and international debates. Demographic Research (the most popular on-line journal of Demographic Studies) explored this theme by relating fertility to unemployment in different European countries. The results suggest that the crisis (even in its early stage, i.e. in the three/four years beyond 2008) has left a visible trace on fertility rates in Europe: the modest upward trend in fertility has stalled in some countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland, Slovenia, Poland, Great Britain) and was even reversed in others (Spain, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia). The crisis (measured by the change in unemployment) seems to have a negative effect on fertility. But the relative change of fertility with respect to the relative change in unemployment rates has some differences: it is relatively greater at younger ages; it is not the same for all birth orders, but more noticeable for first born; it is higher at all ages in the countries of Southern Europe; it is generally not very strong.

Pacelli L., Pasqua S. and Villosio C. (2013) 'Labor Market Penalties for Mothers in Italy', *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol.34, No.4: 408-432

The authors use a large Italian employer-employee matched dataset to study how motherhood affects women's working career in terms of labour force participation and wages. They confirm that the probability of exiting employment significantly increases for mothers of pre-school children; however, this is mitigated by higher job quality, human capital endowment and childcare accessibility. Most importantly, the availability of part-time jobs reduces their probability of moving out of the labour force. Women not leaving

employment after becoming mothers experience lower wages than women with no pre-school child, and there are no signs of this gap closing five years after childbirth. Contrary to previous literature, the wage gap penalty emerges only among women working full-time, thanks to the high protection accorded to part-time jobs in Italy

Prifti E. and Vuri D. (2013) 'Employment protection and fertility: Evidence from the 1990 Italian reform', *Labour Economics*, Vol. 23(C): 77-88.

This paper investigates the effect of Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) on fertility decisions of Italian working women using administrative data. The authors exploit a reform that introduced in 1990 costs for dismissals that did not have 'fair cause' or 'justified motive' in firms below 15 employees, while leaving costs unchanged for bigger firms. They use this quasi-experimental situation to study the hypothesis that increased EPL reduces future job insecurity and positively affects a female worker's proneness to take childbearing decisions. They find that reduced economic insecurity following a strengthening of the EPL regime has a positive and sizable effect on fertility decisions of Italian working women. This result stands after controlling for possible interactions with other policy reforms occurring around 1990, changes in the sample of workers and firms, and use of an alternative set of exclusion restrictions.

Riva E. (2013) 'Workplace work-family interventions: Italy in times of welfare state retrenchment and recession', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 33 No. 9/10: 565 – 578

The purpose of this article is to investigate work-family interventions in Italian organizations within the context of a national welfare regime and in the face of recession. Case studies of eight leading companies in the field of workplace work-family policies is supported by a literature review as well as an analysis of national legislation and the political agenda concerning work-family issues. Findings indicate that, against the backdrop of the institutional framework, one impact of the recession may be the setting aside of workplace work-family interventions, especially in small and medium-sized organizations with limited resources. Evidence collected using case study research suggests that this has not happened in larger companies where employers have adopted a strategic approach to work-family issues. In these larger firms, work-family policies have been assessed and reorganized as a result of an increasing concern for workplace performance and efficiency. In this regard, resilience to the crisis in workplace arrangements is related to the fact that the adoption of an evidence-based approach makes economic sense and contributes to obtaining the long-term support needed from important stakeholders.

Rossi G. (2013), 'The family-work balance: how to turn it into a virtuous relationship for families and society?', in: I. Crespi and G. Rossi (eds.) *Balancing work and family care: European experiences*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

The subject of this chapter is to verify empirically whether, and under what conditions, the work-family relationship - as it is actually experienced in everyday life -- can be considered 'good' and turn the family into a resource for itself and society. To answer this important research question, the results emerging from a recent quantitative study (*The Family, a Resource for Society*) are taken as the starting point. The study is based on a sample of 3,527 individuals, men and women, aged 30 to 55, living in highly urbanised areas of Italy. After exploring the ideal family in relation to work and family expectations in the near future, the survey investigated the motivations underlying reconciliation choices and also the practice of reconciliation, that is, what people have actually done to reconcile family and work.

Ruspini E. (2013) 'Men Who Care. Men's Changing Commitments to Care in Italy', in: I. Crespi and T. Miller (eds.) *Family, Care and Work in Europe: an Issue of Gender?*, Macerata: EUM Edizioni Università di Macerata.

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This chapter discusses some aspects of Italian men's changing attitudes towards care, and especially childcare. This is explored from two viewpoints: the individual and the institutional. On the one hand, men (especially if belonging to the younger generations) are beginning to claim a greater share in bringing up their children. The desire to discover (or rediscover) the terms and values of one's specific masculinity also seems to be growing. On the other hand, these changes are influencing the institutional level: in order to support contemporary processes of social change, some legislative and educational initiatives have been developed, aimed at a reconsideration of masculinity (as it is traditionally defined); at a deconstruction of the violent symbolism still affecting the process of male socialization; at education to 'new' forms of masculinity. The author discusses some initiatives aimed at supporting changes in traditional forms of masculinity towards a culture of gender equality; and presents some collective efforts that have arisen as part of a national men's network of critical thought on dominating models of masculinity.

Todesco L. (2013) *Quello che gli uomini non fanno. Il lavoro familiare nelle società contemporanee* [What men don't do. Family work in contemporary societies]. Roma: Carocci.

What is domestic work? Why is it a fundamental element of our society? What is its economic value? Why does it continue to fall primarily on women, despite the progress in equality between the sexes? What are the consequences of the family work division on the couple's stability and psychological well-being? These are just some of the questions that the book aims to answer through a research review. The picture that emerges reveals that family work is a complex element of social reality and it is essential for the functioning and well-being of families. Many questions remain open despite the large number of studies conducted on the subject. However, it seems clear that family work goes beyond the mere processing of individual tasks involving complex dynamics on the identity level. In addition, although the issue is often taken for granted, the choices in the management of family labour appear to be fraught with consequences for both the professional and family life of individuals as well as for the well-being and equal opportunities of the society as a whole.

Zanatta A.L. (2013), *I nuovi nonni* [The new grandparents] Bologna: Il Mulino.

This book aims to make a contribution to knowledge about grandparents, rather neglected in sociological studies although in contemporary Western society they have taken on greater importance than in the past, for a number of reasons: they live longer and in better health; thanks to the pension system they have become economically independent (and often they help the families of their children); the relationships with their grandchildren become closer and more affectionate, because grandparents often play a crucial role in caring for them to allow mothers to work outside the home. Finally, they are often a point of reference in times of crisis and change in the family, such as a separation, a divorce, a family recomposition. In these cases, intergenerational solidarity can stop the increasing fragility of the family.

Brilli, Y. (2014) 'Public investments in children's human capital. Evidence from the literature on non-parental child care', *Rivista Italiana degli Economisti*, Vol.XIX, No.1: 169-194.

The article surveys the literature on the effect of childcare services on children's human capital. Attention is paid to the theoretical and econometric models followed in the literature to assess the impact. The literature analysed shows a positive effect of non-parental childcare on children's cognitive outcomes and mixed effects on non-cognitive ones.

School of Management del Politecnico di Milano (2014) *La diffusione e i benefici dello smart working in Italia* [The diffusion and the benefits of smart working in Italy]. Available at: [http://www.osservatori.net/dati-e-pubblicazioni/dettaglio/journal\\_content/56\\_instance\\_vp56/10402/1408650](http://www.osservatori.net/dati-e-pubblicazioni/dettaglio/journal_content/56_instance_vp56/10402/1408650)

The report, based on research involving 600 Italian companies and 1,000 professionals, analyses the Smart Working phenomenon in Italy, describing in detail the innovative

approaches and benefits associated with new patterns of work, in terms of organizational policies (teleworking, flexitime), physical layout of work spaces and digital technologies.

Verashchagina, A. and Capparucci, M. (2014) 'Living through the crisis in Italy: the labour market experience of men and women', in: M. Karamessini and J. Rubery (eds.) *Women and Austerity: The economic crisis and the future for gender equality*. New York: Routledge.

In assessing the impact of the crisis on the Italian labour market by gender, this chapter stresses the unbalanced distribution of paid and unpaid work by gender in Italy and highlights the difficulties faced by women workers when they are pregnant (forced dismissals) or in their return to work and how they could be affected by the crisis and the impact of recent policy reforms carried out by the Italian government.

### **c. Ongoing research**

None reported.

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