

The evolution of official statistics on Nonprofit Institutions in Italy

As the Italian nonprofit sector has significantly grown in the last decades, the Italian Institute of Statistics (Istat) has been conducting statistical surveys and producing official estimates on key characteristics of nonprofit institutions (NPIs) for 20 years despite the absence of international regulations as basic statistics.

Istat is committed to analyzing nonprofit sector and social economy by providing policy makers, scholars and stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of nonprofit institutions considering their social and economic dimensions as well as type of business, prevalent source of financing and destination of services. Our national strategy to measure the relevance and social impact of the nonprofit sector was built over the last two decades and now it includes the following items:

- The business register on NPIs is built upon administrative data sources which has been updated yearly since 2015 and disseminated every year in the framework of a scientific conference that involves both scholars and main stakeholders
- The past business census framework included a dedicated census survey on NPIs carried out every 10 years since 1999.
- The new business census framework, named permanent census, includes a set of surveys on NPIs to be carried out every three years based on a sampling design. The questionnaire includes both previous and new sections finalized to investigate emerging issues such as access to finance, management capability, technological innovation etc.
- The introduction of a set of questions in the business census survey (since 2019) versed to market-oriented firms in industry and services finalized to collect new information on the evolution of business firms toward a wider range of goals other than profits, such as environmental protection and engagement in social relevant activities.
- Joint research programs with academics to develop insight on NPIs and related Institutions (cooperatives, mutual societies, social enterprises) to identify emerging issues that need to be addressed such as the estimates of the dimensions of the social economy sector in Italy.

Since 1999 Istat periodically has been carried out the Census survey of Nonprofit Institutions, particularly for the reference years 1999, 2001 and 2011, based on a the pre-census list integrating both administrative and statistical sources. Furthermore, in the last years the specific surveys have been realized on social cooperatives, voluntary associations and foundations.

The definition of Nonprofit Institution (NPI) adopted by Istat refers to the criteria laid down by the System of National Accounts (SNA 2008) and the European System of Economic Accounts (ESA 2010). According to these criteria, NPIs are defined as “separate legal entities, which serve households and which are private non-market producers. Their principal resources are voluntary contributions in cash or in kind from households in their capacity as consumers, from payments made by general government and from property income.” (SNA 2010, § S.15).

Following ESS Vision 2020 principle in strengthening the use of administrative data while reducing the overall costs and burden, Istat has implemented the permanent census strategy, involving in this process economic units such as enterprises, public and nonprofit institutions. Unlike traditional census, held every



ten years, the economic permanent census is conducted by creating yearly a register of economic units as well as by conducting periodically a survey. This process of data integration increases the quantity and quality of the data output, by providing continually economic units updated data on the structural characteristics through the register as well as by collecting periodically information on thematic topics through the survey.

In the framework of permanent census strategy the register on nonprofit institutions was set-up and it provides identification (fiscal code, name, address and municipality) and stratification (main economic activity, size, legal form, date of creation and date of cessation, turnover) variables. The register contains data on the individual (workers' characteristics such as sex, age, education, nationality, etc.) and the main job variables (professional status, type of contract, etc.) by job categories. Particularly, employment is formed by internal, employees and self-employed, and so-called external workers of an enterprise which represents all people that, not classified as employees or self-employment participate to the productive process of the enterprise on the base of a contract. The group of external workers contains also those temporary workers which can be utilized from a temporary employment agency. Employment is measured both in terms of yearly average of job positions (computed on the base of the weekly presence of workers) and number of workers employed at the end of the year.

In 2015 Istat created yearly the register of nonprofit institutions updated through a process of integration of administrative and statistical sources and its regular maintenance ensures the updating of the active units, providing an official source of data for statistical analysis of the nonprofit sector and its demography. The implementation process of the register has addressed two methodological issues: the identification of the statistical units and the estimate of active institutions. With respect to the first issue, Italian nonprofit institutions have a variety of legal and organizational forms (cooperatives, mutual aid societies, voluntary associations, foundations, etc.) due to a fragmented regulatory framework, therefore, it is necessary to integrate several administrative archives and sources to identify them. With regards to the second methodological issue, the presence in administrative sources does not guarantee nonprofit institutions existence or activity, thus a statistical model has been implemented to distinguish active institutions from not operating institutions.

On the other hand Istat triennially conducts the sample survey of nonprofit institutions which intends to provide an overview on nonprofit sector in Italy comparable over time, at local level, by directly collecting data on thematic issues, such economic dimensions, service provided, social exclusion, networking, Communication and fundraising. Particularly, in 2016 Istat conducted the survey involved a sample of about 43 thousand nonprofit institutions. The questionnaire has been realized by a Scientific Committee composed of internal personnel, focused on National accounts and business statistics, as well as external experts such as academic scholars, experts and relevant stakeholders in order to meet emerging needs and priorities of users. The main results released provided information on active nonprofit institutions at the reference year of 2015, by disseminating data on the following issues:

- Human resources: volunteers and external workers;
- Economic resources: balance sheet and type of funding;
- Activities: Prevalent activities and services provided;
- Vulnerability: type of vulnerable person categories;
- Networking: type of stakeholders and type of participation;



- Communication: communication tools and products;
- Fundraising: type of fundraising carried out.

Guarantying a coherence with previous permanent census, Istat is planning the new sample survey of nonprofit institutions in the second semester of 2019. The reference year is 2018.

Furthermore, several items related to social, cultural, and environmental goals pursued by enterprises have been added to the questionnaire of 2019 permanent census of enterprises (to be held in first semester). Undeniably, the next census will measure statistically enterprises' behavior generating a positive "return to society" .

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Annex 1: main figures of the nonprofit sector in Italy

Annex 2: contents of the sample survey on nonprofit institutions

ANNEX 1
Table 1 – Nonprofit institutions and employees by Region. Year 2016

Regions	Institutions		Employees	
	N°	Var. % 2016-2015	N°	Var. % 2016-2015
Piemonte	29.017	1,7	70.297	2,6
Valle d'Aosta / Vallée D'Aoste	1.370	2,3	1.865	-4
Lombardy	54.984	4,4	181.143	0,7
Liguria	10.668	2	22.035	2,5
Northwest Italy	96.039	3,3	275.340	1,3
Bolzano / Bozen	5.365	0,5	8.401	4,2
Trento	6.155	2,5	12.838	3,7
<i>Trentino-Alto Adige / Südtirol</i>	<i>11.520</i>	<i>1,6</i>	<i>21.239</i>	<i>3,9</i>
Veneto	30.235	1,2	75.068	4,3
Friuli Venezia Giulia	10.495	2,5	18.268	3
Emilia Romagna	27.162	0,7	75.260	5
North East Italy	79.412	1,3	189.835	4,4
Tuscany	26.869	1,1	47.606	3,4
Umbria	6.745	-0,5	11.632	2,7
Marche	11.443	-0,4	17.919	0,5
Lazio	31.274	1,2	105.798	3,6
Center Italy	76.331	0,8	182.955	3,2
Abruzzo	7.853	0,2	10.958	4,8
Molise	1.933	8,7	3.064	2,8
Campania	19.562	1,6	32.389	7,9
Puglia	17.355	3,2	35.551	4,4
Basilicata	3.627	8,8	7.000	9,5
Calabria	9.070	5,6	11.054	3,9
South Italy	59.400	3,1	100.016	5,8
Sicily	21.291	2,9	42.579	3,4
Sardinia	10.959	1,6	21.981	2,9
Islands	32.250	2,4	64.560	3,2
ITALY	343.432	2,1	812.706	3,1

Table 2 – Nonprofit institutions and employees by legal form. Year 2016

Legal forms	Institutions			Employees		
	N°	%	Var. % 2016-2015	N°	%	Var. % 2016-2015
Associations	292.174	85,1	1,8	154.908	19,1	0,3
Social cooperatives	15.600	4,5	-3,3	428.713	52,8	3
Foundations	7.509	2,2	16,4	98.164	12,1	10,3
Others legal form	28.149	8,2	5,2	130.921	16,1	1,9
TOTAL	343.432	100	2,1	812.706	100	3,1

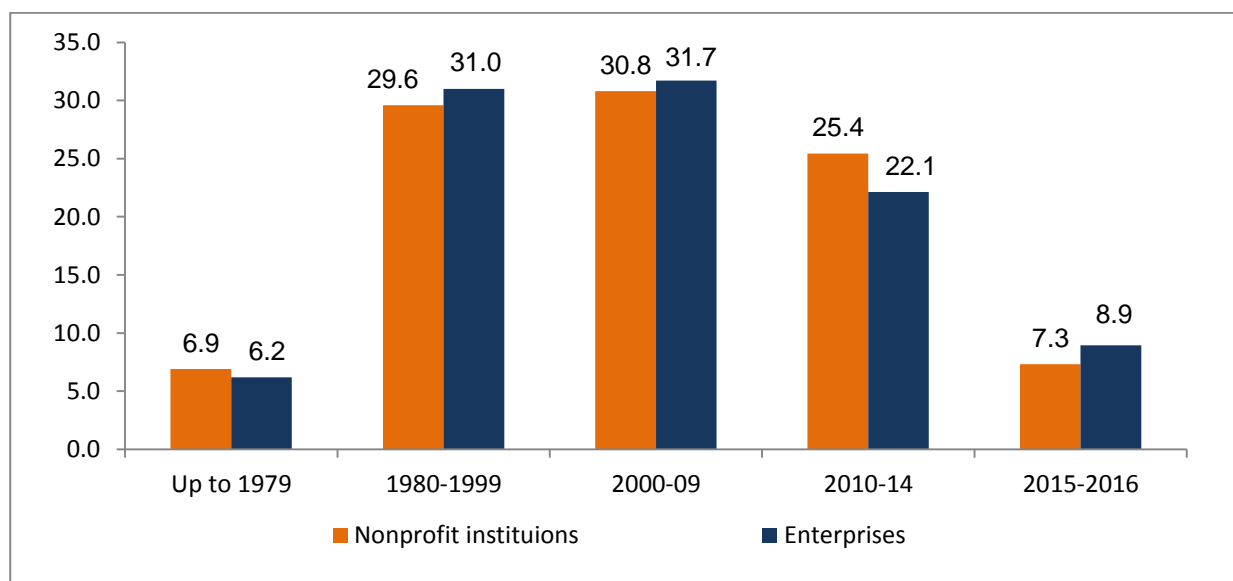
Figure 1 - Nonprofit institutions by period of birth. Year 2016


Table 3 - Nonprofit institutions and employees by sector of activity (ICNPO). Year 2016

Sector of activity	Institutions			Employees		
	N°	%	Var. % 2016-2015	N°	%	Var. % 2016-2015
Culture, sports and recreation	220.859	64,3	1,2	51.079	6,3	9,1
Education and research	13.417	3,9	-0,5	122.928	15,1	-1,6
Health	12.080	3,5	4,2	183.662	22,6	3,3
Social services and emergency prevention	32.105	9,3	4	295.423	36,4	4,1
Environment	5.422	1,6	6,2	2.070	0,3	4,3
Development and housing	6.613	1,9	-3,3	96.737	11,9	4,4
Law, advocacy and politics	5.268	1,5	0,4	3.474	0,4	-1,5
Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion	3.604	1	-4,7	1.966	0,2	-9
International/international co-operation	4.049	1,2	-6,5	4.072	0,5	-6,4
Religion	16.455	4,8	14,4	8.579	1,1	28,2
Business and professional associations, unions	21.813	6,4	5,8	38.041	4,7	0,3
Other activities	1.747	0,5	0,1	4.675	0,6	-16,8
TOTAL	343.432	100	2,1	812.706	100	3,1

Figure 2 - Main characteristics of nonprofit institutions' and enterprises' employees. Year 2016

