



**WILCO**

Welfare innovations  
at the local level  
in favour of cohesion

## CITY REPORT: BRESCIA

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Brescia is a middle size city situated in the East of the Lombardy Region, with 193,879 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>. It is the chief-town of the Province of Brescia, one of the 12 provinces of the Region. It is the second Municipality in the Lombardy Region by population. The metropolitan area counts around 500,000 inhabitants, while the Brescia Province is the fifth most populated in Italy. The city has a long-lasting history as university site (with around 25,000 students), and a consolidated tradition of civil society organisation, especially socially active Catholic Third Sector agencies. Mainly governed by coalitions that were the expression of the progressive wing of the Catholic party, and later on by a coalition of left-centre wing parties, since 2008 the Municipality is governed by a right-wing coalition, including the localistic Northern League.

## 1. TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

### 1.1. Socio-economic trends

The province of Brescia is the second in the Lombardy Region, after Milan, both by demographic and by economic size (in terms of overall added value).

Since the mid-90s, economic growth has been steady in the province of Brescia (4.5% yearly average variation of added value), and stronger than at the regional (3.9%) and national level (3.8%).

The provincial GDP in 2011 is 33,212 millions of Euros, 12% of the regional one (282,528 mls€) The level of per-capita GDP is 30,309€, against a regional level of 32,314, and a national one of 25,615 (Camcom Brescia 2011).

With the crisis, the GDP per capita has increased at a much lower rate than in the previous period (from 2003 to 2006; see table 1).

Table 1 - Trend in GDP per inhabitant (Euro, current prices)

	2003	2006	2010
Italy	23,181.32	25,031.62	25,615.38
Lombardy Region	29,508.09	32,130.67	32,314.23
Province of Brescia	26,481.27	29,700.51	30,308.92

Source: Unioncamere, <http://www.asr-lombardia.it/>

Table 2 - Gross personal income levels, 2005 and 2009 (€)

	2005	2009	Δ%
Brescia	24,132	26,987	11.8
Province of Brescia	19,953	22,382	12.2
Lombardy Region	22,716	25,401	11.8
Italy	20,249	22,891	13.0

Source: Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze.

<sup>1</sup> January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 (<http://demo.istat.it/>).

The local Industrial Association was the first Industrial Association to be funded in Italy in 1897. Around 90,000 companies are active in the province of Brescia, mainly in the mechanic and metallurgic sectors. As in the rest of Italy, many firms in the Brescia province are small and family-based.

The Province is one of the most industrialised areas of the whole country (Provincia Brescia 2011). The strong industrial vocation of the area is reflected in the data about employment per sector, that show how the industrial employment is still relevant, over one third of all employees. Even if decreasing, this rate is higher than the Lombardy Regional level and 10 percent points above the national level.

Although the tertiarisation process has interested the Province of Brescia, the weight of the tertiary sector is lower in the Province of Brescia than in the Lombardy Region, and 9 percent points lower than the national average. Here also agriculture remains more relevant than in other Lombardy Provinces (see table 3).

Table 3 - Trends in employment per macro-economic sector

		2004	2007	2010
AGRICULTURE	Italy	4.4	4.0	3.9
	Lombardy Region	1.8	1.7	1.7
	Province of Brescia	4.2	2.7	3.1
MANUFACTURE	Italy	30.7	30.2	28.5
	Lombardy Region	38.3	36.0	34.3
	Province of Brescia	43.8	45.7	38.5
<i>Of which constructions</i>	Italy	8.2	8.4	8.4
	Lombardy Region	7.6	7.5	7.8
	Province of Brescia	8.5	8.7	9.4
TOTAL TERTIARY	Italy	64.9	65.9	67.6
	Lombardy Region	59.9	62.3	64.0
	Province of Brescia	52.0	51.6	58.3
<i>Of which Commerce, hotels, restaurants</i>	Italy	19.9	20.2	20.0
	Lombardy Region	18.0	18.4	17.8
	Province of Brescia	16.3	16.5	18.3
<i>Other activities and services</i>	Italy	45.0	45.6	47.7
	Lombardy Region	41.9	43.9	46.2
	Province of Brescia	35.7	35.1	40.1

Source: ISTAT 2005, 2008, 2011.

The labour market indicators show activity and employment rates at the provincial level higher than at the national one, as it is expected in a Northern area, but lower than the Regional one, especially for women, and equal or only slightly higher for men (see table 4 and 5).

Linked to the good economic performance is the ability of the local productive system to create a high number of jobs: total employed have increased in the province in the period 1993-2007 by 1.24 percent point (vs 1.09% of Lombardy region and 0.9% of Italy). This explains the substantial full employment experienced for years in the Province, similarly to other areas in the North of Italy, with an unemployment rate that was the half of the national level, and almost always lower than the regional one (Provincia Brescia 2011).

The Province of Brescia is also generally characterised by low long-term unemployment, except for the year 2006. Anyway, after the crisis clenched, both regional and provincial rates have increased (see table 5).

Table 4 - Main labour market indicators

		2004	2007	2010
<b>Activity rate</b>				
<b>Total</b>	Italy	62.5	62.5	62.2
	Lombardy Region	68.3	69.2	71.0
	Province of Brescia	66.5	66.4	67.6
<b>Male</b>	Italy	74.5	74.4	73.3
	Lombardy Region	77.9	78.8	79.2
	Province of Brescia	78.3	78.1	79.4
<b>Female</b>	Italy	50.6	50.7	51.1
	Lombardy Region	58.5	59.3	62.7
	Province of Brescia	54.1	54.0	55.3
<b>Employment rate</b>				
<b>Total</b>	Italy	57.4	58.7	56.9
	Lombardy Region	65.5	66.7	65.1
	Province of Brescia	64.1	64.2	63.7
<b>Male</b>	Italy	69.7	70.7	67.7
	Lombardy Region	75.6	76.7	74.2
	Province of Brescia	76.6	76.6	75.5
<b>Female</b>	Italy	45.2	46.6	46.1
	Lombardy Region	55.1	56.6	55.8
	Province of Brescia	51.0	51.1	51.3

Source: ISTAT 2005, 2008, 2011.

The global economic crisis sharply hit the Province of Brescia, because of the features of its economic system, characterised by a strong industrial vocation, a relevant tendency to international exports (Brescia is the third province in Italy by export level, after Milan and Turin) and specialised in traditional sectors, already hit by globalisation (such as textile and food industry) and in engineering industry and production of means of transportation, severely touched by crisis. Especially hit were the small firms, that have difficulties to hook the economic recovering trend (Provincia Brescia 2011).

The activity rate has kept increasing also between 2007 and 2009, signalling that the phenomenon of "discouraged workers" is not meaningful in the province of Brescia (Provincia Brescia 2011).

Consequence of the crisis on the labour market was mainly a decrease in men's employment, whereas women's one is slightly but continuously increasing.

The men's unemployment rate was frictional until 2008 (under 2%) and more than doubled in one year, reaching 4.6% in 2009; women's unemployment rate, that had touched a minimum in 2008 (5%), started to increase again, reaching 6.3% in 2009.

Table 5 - Main unemployment indicators

		2004	2006	2009
<b>Unemployment rate</b>				
<b>Total</b>	Italy	8.0	6.8	7.8
	Lombardy Region	4.0	3.7	5.4
	Province of Brescia	3.5	3.7	5.3
<b>Male</b>	Italy	6.4	5.4	6.8
	Lombardy Region	2.9	3.0	5.0
	Province of Brescia	2.1	3.0	4.6
<b>Female</b>	Italy	10.5	8.8	9.3
	Lombardy Region	5.6	4.8	6.4
	Province of Brescia	5.7	4.8	6.3
<b>15-24</b>	Italy	23.5	21.6	25.4
	Lombardy Region	12.7	12.3	18.5
	Province of Brescia	9.2	9.3	14.2
<b>Long-term unemployment rate</b>				
<b>Total</b>	Italy	3.8	3.3	3.4
	Lombardy Region	1.4	1.3	1.8
	Province of Brescia	1.1	1.6	1.6
<b>Male</b>	Italy	2.8	2.5	2.8
	Lombardy Region	0.8	0.9	1.3
	Province of Brescia	0.5	1.3	1.1
<b>Female</b>	Italy	5.3	4.4	4.3
	Lombardy Region	2.2	1.9	2.5
	Province of Brescia	2.1	2.0	2.4

Source: ISTAT 2005, 2008, 2011.

It has to be noted that the massive use of short time work schemes (CIG, see Italian WP2 report) has notably contained the increase of unemployment rates, since workers in CIG, even if working 0 hours/month, are not counted as unemployed. Nevertheless, this does not entail positive perspectives for the near future, as the number of hours of CIG authorised in the province of Brescia in 2009 (+875% than the average yearly level of the period 2000-2008) is clearly higher than the regional average (+646%).

Observers await that a sharper impact of the crisis on labour market will be observable when the final average data about 2011 are available.

Women have been harder penalised by the crisis, because employers - in harsh need to cut expenses - are even less ready than they used to be before to grant family-friendly schemes, such as leaves, flexible working hours, part-time, etc. This couples with weak public support to reconciliation policies. Moreover, and for the same reason, employers are more reluctant to hire women who have - or may have in the near future - children; as a consequence gender discrimination has become harder with the crisis.

As pointed out in the Italian WP2 report, the distribution of wages by gender is less unequal in Italy than in most of the EU countries, for two reasons: because in labour markets with low women's employment rates, women with low wage expectations often choose not to work, and because the level of men's salary is rather low as well. Yet, in 2010 this gender gap has increased, and women dependent workers' wages are on average 20% less than men's ones (Istat 2011b). Among autonomous workers the gap is more relevant (Istat 2007).

The width of the grey labour market is estimated in Italy at the national level at 10.3% of employed persons in 2010 (and 12.3% of "job units", higher because one person can have at the same time both a regular and an irregular job); this incidence is decreasing with respect to the estimation for 1991 (13.4%) and for 2001 (12.2%) (ISTAT 2011). In the latest year for which Regional data are available, 2007, 8.4% of job units were irregular in the Lombardy region, against a national average of 11.8%. Estimations at the urban level are lacking.

#### *A further increase in precarious jobs*

The use - and often the abuse - of non permanent contracts, collaborations, apprenticeships and stages has grown even more in the crisis years.

At the **national level**, recent data show an increasing trend for fixed-term employees (+7.6%) and a slight decrease for collaborators (-2.1%). The incidence is very high for young persons: fixed-term employees represent in fact 46.7% of all employed under 25; the percentage is much lower (18%) for persons between 25 and 35 years of age, and even lower for those aged 35-54 (8.3%) and for the over 55 (6.3%; ISTAT 2012).

Furthermore, the probability to pass from an atypical job to a standard one has decreased: in 2009 only 15% of young employed with a precarious contract have a standard contract one year later, against 24% in 2007-2008. On the contrary, those who still have an atypical job after one year have increased from 53.3 to 60.1% (ISTAT 2011c).

The following table shows the very important increase of temporary contracts (measured on the whole of new job contracts in a year) in the Province of Brescia. A proportion that was around 40% in 2000, and is already 15 percent points higher 4 years later. Women are more concerned than men: 62.5 of job contracts initiated by women are temporary in 2010. The young are also characterised by high rates, but not higher than the adults (aged 30-49). More in general, no considered category has a value below 50%.

Table 6 - New temporary contracts as % of all new job contracts,  
Province of Brescia, years 2000, 2002

	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2004 <sup>1</sup>	2010
Total	39.5	55.2	67.0
Female	45.8	62.5	69.5
Male	36.0	50.4	65.2
Aged 19-29	40.2	56.4	64.8
Aged 30-49	42.4	56.9	69.9
Aged 50 and more	39.9	51.9	61.4

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> <http://sintesi.provincia.brescia.it/portale/repository/Fascicolo%20statistiche.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Province of Brescia upon request.

The main problems that the young precarious and unemployed face is - obviously enough - the lack of continuity of their income. Yet, this is not only due to short duration of fixed-term contracts, but also to their exclusion from welfare measures. The strongest impact on the income maintenance of these workers and jobseekers is given by the lack of entitlement to unemployment benefit and to short time work schemes. This is particularly relevant in periods of crisis like the current ones, when fixed term employees are the first to lose their job once their contract expires.

Another major problem is exclusion from bank loans, above all to access homeownership. This is particularly penalising as in Italy the rent market is limited, expensive and not publicly supported (see § 4).

Part of the atypical workers are also excluded from family allowances, that are only paid to subordinated workers (permanent or fixed-term) and pensioners, and some categories of autonomous workers. Moreover, access to childcare services is generally conditioned on the effective employment of both parents (or of the only one present in the household), and entitlement for atypical workers is often only granted as long as their contract is valid.

Finally, a key risk is linked to the low level of old age pensions of persons who work long years with atypical jobs, since the pension system has been reformed in a contributive way.

All this has consequences in terms of the opportunities the young have to leave their family of origin, access a dwelling, form new households, with unavoidable repercussions in terms of average age at birth, number of born children, and more generally the balance of fertility rate.

## 1.2. Public regulation

As pointed out in the Italian WP2 report, the responsibility for passive monetary support in labour policies belongs to the **national** level, whereas responsibility for active policies belongs to Regions and Provinces; more precisely, the provision of active policies depends on Provincial Employment Centers. Municipalities may or not organise municipal employment offices, providing specific services or developing projects for specific target groups, generally in collaboration with other local services, both municipal (basic or specialised services social) and provincial ones, third sector (also Catholic) and private commercial ones (agencies for temporary jobs).



Exceptional pre-dismissal and short time work schemes (Mobility and CIG) schemes (so called *Ammortizzatori Sociali in Deroga, ASiD*), have been introduced in response to the last economic crisis in order to partly cover the gaps left by the strong category basis of existing social protection. They include firms that do not meet the size or sector requirements for existing schemes; in order to apply, the firm needs to reach an agreement with the Trade Unions. These schemes are co-financed by the State and the Regions, that have agreed to link ASiD monetary benefit to activation measures (training and employment services). Each Region defined specific modalities to implement these activation policies.

Changes both in vertical and horizontal subsidiarity in labour policies started in the Nineties. On the vertical dimension, with the shift of competencies from the national level to the regional and provincial ones. On the horizontal dimension, with the end of public monopoly in the management of job services, private actors, both commercial and third sector have increased their role in employment services. Commercial agencies increased their role especially in connection to the growth of temporary contracts, and the introduction of legislative obligation to dedicate resources of the inter-professional funds to training programs. Third sector agencies, particularly Catholic ones have increased their role in this field, and even more in the last years due to the economic crisis and in response to the significant quota of unemployed not covered by any monetary benefit (e.g. workers with expired atypical contracts, first-job seekers).

In the Lombardy **Region** a strong development towards a quasi-market approach in the provision of employment services is observed. Originally introduced in the management of socio-health services, this approach has been then applied to training and, more recently, employment services, in the framework of a growing rhetoric about activation. The *Dote* (that literally translated means dowry or endowment) system is the most recent mechanism with which the Lombardy Region both organises the provision of various services to beneficiaries and finances public and private bodies, among the ones accredited by the Region itself, that deliver them. Persons who are entitled to one of the different types of *dote* ("training", "employment", "social shock absorbers", etc.) can "choose" among the accredited bodies the one with which they will submit the application to the Region, through strict online procedures and within rigorously defined periods of time. Successful applicants are entitled to individual monetary contributions to finance the services that the chosen body will provide them with, such as counselling, coaching, training courses, labour demand/supply matching, subsidised job experiences, etc. This mechanism is at the same time strongly centralised at the regional level for what concerns financing and strongly individualised for what concerns implementation. In this sense, it has pulverised the programming, management and provision of training, orientation and employment services, jeopardising coherence, efficiency and continuity of the system (Sabatinelli and Villa 2011).

The **Province** of Brescia has launched nine pilot-projects to be managed through the territorial network of services to intervene over specific conditions, support the reorganisation of PES, promote active policies, involving different actors of the local economies:

1. *Over 55*: addressed to 100 persons coming from unemployment benefit or mobility benefit (see WP2 Italian report), who need maximum 36 more months of social contribution to be eligible for old age pension. Contributions are paid to firms who hire them full time for at least 12 months, also with internal training;
2. *Jobless Women*: 100 women who do not receive any income support will be offered a personalised path of work insertion, coherently with the local economic needs and vocation;

3. *Vouchers for Unemployed*: 4,772 vouchers paid by the Province of Brescia + 850 paid by the Municipalities for unemployed who lost their job in the last 3 years and who are not entitled to any income support benefit. Municipalities that participate to the programme can benefit from the work of these persons;
4. *Jobless Persons in Charge of Social Services*: 100 vouchers reserved to jobless persons in conditions of severe personal and professional fragility:
  - over 45 unemployed with obsolete or no professional competences;
  - single unemployed women with family charges (see below § 2.2);
5. *Job Insertion of Apprentices*: aimed to transform 100 traineeship contracts of persons under 36 into job contracts (apprenticeship, temporary or permanent contracts);
6. *Training Apprenticeship in Tribunal Offices*: 60 places of 6 + 6 months;
7. *Experimental Apprenticeship in High Technical Training and Education*: for persons aged 18-30;
8. *Job Insertion of Apprentices with a High Training Diploma*: contributions for firms that commit to train apprentices on the job and, afterwards, to hire them on a permanent basis;
9. *Workers in Exceptional Mobility Scheme* (see WP2 Italian report): the Lombardy Region reserves an "adequate" number of *Dote* vouchers to reinsert these workers in the labour market through an accredited body.

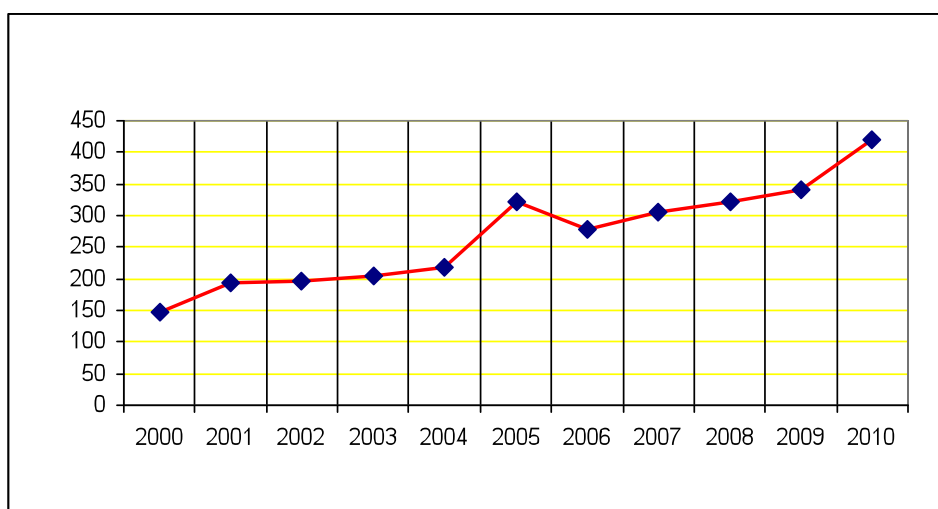
The **Municipal** regulation for monetary contributions paid by Brescia social services is currently being reviewed. Due to budgetary cuts, the level of benefits is being lowered and the entitlement criteria are being strengthened (including taking into account more income sources to define the applicant's income level); discretionary power of social assistants in granting access will be reduced, too. Benefits will be reorganised into continuous and exceptional ones, food vouchers, medicine vouchers, etc.

The reduction of monetary benefits will increase pressure on the job search, both by applicants and social assistants. As a matter of fact, through implicit workfare, applicants are always asked to activate and improve either their employability, or at least their personal and social abilities.

The Municipality of Brescia traditionally manages an Employment insertion service (*Servizio per l'Inserimento Lavorativo*, SAL), a second-level service, only dealing with persons signaled by either public or Third Sector social services. The SAL was first created at the end of the Eighties in order to support the employment of disabled persons. The SAL works with a specific methodology: individualised placement, stage, assessment of competencies, relation with the firm, mediation between the beneficiary and the labour market, individualised accompaniment and training. Since the half of the Nineties, this methodology has been applied first to beneficiaries with severe social disease (i.e. homeless people, etc), and then more in general to applicants and beneficiaries of the Municipal social services, like people with addiction, prisoners, single mothers, over50 long term unemployed, etc, and all persons signalled by basic and specialised social services, also Third Sector ones (such as Caritas). For persons in traineeship, the traineeship indemnity substitutes the monetary benefit.

The number of users of the SAL service has increased by three times in the last decade, as it is shown in the following graph.

Graph 1 - Trend in number of users of SAL service from 2000 to 2010



Source: Municipality of Brescia.

In 2010 the S.A.L. service dealt with 421 persons: 289 Italians, 127 non EU migrants and 5 EU migrants. The increase in the number of users was mainly due to the persons aged 30 to 40 (+30 cases) and 40 to 50. This was partly due to the new commitment of the service towards psychiatric patients (that were in charge of the Local Health Agency until 2009). 55% of users are disabled (according to the national law 68/99); 60% of these have a disability under 75%, what means that they do not have any national income support for it. Of 218 cases signalled by public and third sector social services, 202 were admitted (including 72 persons previously in charge of the Local Health Agency).

Table 7 - Users of Brescia Municipal SAL service per type of activity, year 2010

ACTIONS	Cases already in charge	Activities	New cases 2010	Activities
<b>Preliminary Actions</b>	237	- cv drafting; - competences' assessment; - training to active research.	202	- cv drafting; - competences' assessment; - training to active research.
<b>Training Actions</b>	87	- 18 in professional training group; - 69 in training apprenticeship.	29	- 8 in professional. training group; - 21 in training apprenticeship
<b>Support to hiring</b>	203	- 109 hired in a cooperative; - 91 hired in a firm; - 3 extraordinary post-hiring interventions.	47	- 22 hired in a cooperative; - 24 hired in a firm; - 1 extraordinary post-hiring interventions.

Source: Municipality of Brescia.

Because of the current economic crisis, the duration of the insertion period has become longer, and personal fragility of applicants has increased. Due to the increased difficulty in inserting the applicants into the labour market, the SAL tends to develop longer traineeships.

The SAL staff is currently made up of two civil servants and of social cooperatives linked by an agreement to the Municipality, one specialised in employment services for the disabled, the other one for persons with social disadvantage. In the close future a reorganisation is foreseen: only the coordination will be held by the Municipality, all other activities will be outsourced.

Since '85 the Municipality has an agreement with social cooperatives about staff to hire in order to carry out municipal tasks, such as maintenance of green areas, clearing services, data-entry, etc. These cooperatives obtain contracts to develop these outsourced activities and accept to hire persons signalled by the social services (around 50 persons per year). Such an agreement is, nevertheless, contested because it makes it impossible to sign outsourcing contracts at the lowest price possible, what is difficult to defend in a period of heavy budget constraints.

With the beneficiaries/applicants with the most difficult situations "social traineeships" are carried out, a kind of voluntary activity with an educative value, in order to give them a social role, enhance their self-esteem and justify the monetary benefit they receive. This may be propaedeutical to a real insertion in the labour market.

Data about access to SAL do not show an increase of young applicants (21 to 30 years of age). Also cases signalled by specialised social services for addicted persons are decreasing. The NEETs' phenomenon is not observed by municipal social services: family support is, in fact, still very strong, and they probably turn to other kinds of services: temporary agencies and, possibly, PES.

Municipal social services rather observe an increasing problem related to children out of the family (e.g. in step families or small community houses) who turn 18 and need a different kind of support, because they are not autonomous yet; many of these are children of foreign citizens. The Municipality aims to tackle this phenomenon soon with specific projects.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND FAMILY STRUCTURES

### 2.1. Trends

As anticipated, Brescia Municipality counted 193,879 inhabitants at the beginning of 2011. Its population decreased over the Nineties, from 197 thousands in 1990 to 195 in 2000, to 194 in 2005; got back to 195 thousands in 2009 and then fell down again, losing more than 1 thousand inhabitants (see table 8).

Table 8 - Population by age range in Brescia city, years 1990, 2000, 2005 and 2009 (%)

	1990	2000	2005	2009
Population (abs. values)	196,598	194,697	194,097	195,093
Under 15	11.9	12.0	12.9	13.3
15-64	71.5	67.5	64.5	63.2
65 and over	16.6	20.5	22.6	23.6
<i>of which: over 75</i>	7.0	9.3	10.9	11.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SISTAN Brescia 2010.

As it is known, Italy experiences a long-term decline of birth rates, that touched minima levels at the half of the Nineties (1.19 children per woman in 1995), and that combined with growing life duration origins a sharp ageing of the population.

The same phenomenon is experienced, even in stronger terms, in the city of Brescia, where the proportion of the elderly (residents over65) reached in 2009 24%, and is almost 4 percent points higher than at the National and Regional level, and 5.5 higher than in the Province of Brescia. Also the increase in time, from the beginning of the 2000s, has been steeper at the Municipal level than at the other scales (table 9).

Table 9 - Proportion of the over65 population, years 2000, 2005 and 2009 (%)

	2000	2005	2009
Italy	18.4	19.7	20.2
Lombardy Region	17.9	19.4	20.1
Province of Brescia	16.6	17.9	18.5
Brescia city	21.1	22.8	24.0

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>

The old age index in Brescia city has passed from 152 in 1990 to 178 in 2009 (against 144 at the national level), and more precisely 242 for natives and only 5.3 for foreigners. Linked to this, and thus similarly increasing are the dependency rates. Structural dependency rate in Brescia was 58 in 2009, against 52 in Italy (SISTAN Brescia 2010).

Table 10 - Old age index and dependency rates in Brescia city, various years

	1990	2000	2005	2009
Old age index <sup>1</sup>	152.4	170.9	174.4	177.8
Structural dependency rate <sup>2</sup>			55.0	58.3
Elderly structural dependency rate <sup>3</sup>			34.9	37.3

Source: SISTAN Brescia 2010.

<sup>1</sup> Ratio between population aged 65 and over and the population aged 0-14, per 100.

<sup>2</sup> Ratio between population in non active age (0-14 and 65 and over) and population in active age (15-64), per 100.

<sup>3</sup> Ratio between population aged 65 and over and population in active age (15-64), per 100.

The fertility rate has been lower in Brescia Municipality than it was at the national and provincial level (1.21 children per woman in 2000, same as the regional value), but during the last decade it recovered more than all other scales, reaching 1.62 in 2008 (+34%). Although still well below the substitution level (2.1), this value was higher than the regional (1.50) and national one (1.42).

Table 11 - Total fertility rate, years 2000, 2005 and 2008 (children per woman)

	2000	2005	2008
Italy	1.26	1.32	1.42
Lombardy Region	1.21	1.35	1.50
Province of Brescia	1.30	1.44	1.64
Brescia city	1.21	1.36	1.62

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>.

This trend is observed also in the birth rates (see table 12). The mentioned increase is partly the result of the contribution of a very important immigrant population (see below § 3), and partly of the recover of fertility of cohorts of women born at the end of the Sixties

and in the Seventies, who visibly postponed maternity after 30 years of age (at the national level women born in 1950 had only 25% of their children after age 29; those born in 1960 39%; those born in 1970 will have around 60% of their children after that age; Caltabiano 2010).

Table 12. Birth rates, years 2000, 2005 and 2010

	2000	2005	2010
<b>Italy</b>	9.54	9.45	9.29
<b>Lombardy Region</b>	9.49	9.80	9.91
<b>Province of Brescia</b>	10.17	10.48	10.88
<b>Brescia city</b>	8.87	9.16	9.78

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>

These same factors contribute to explain - together with the economic crisis - why this recovery of birth rate in Italy seems to have been only temporary. As a matter of fact, foreign women's behaviour with regard to fertility is becoming more and more similar to natives' one: nationally, their fertility rate has passed from 2.31 in 2008 to 2.13 in 2010, and their age at birth has increased to 29, against 31 for Italians (Mencarini 2011).

Table 13 - Average age at birth, years 2000, 2005 and 2008

	2000	2005	2008
<b>Italy</b>	30.22	31.1	31.44
<b>Lombardy Region</b>	30.85	31.55	31.78
<b>Province of Brescia</b>	30.08	30.73	30.91
<b>Brescia city</b>	30.96	31.48	31.57

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>.

There is, in fact, a relation between the number of children per woman and the age of women at birth. Without distinguishing between natives and migrants, at the beginning of the decade the Brescia city level (30.96) was higher than the provincial regional and national ones. It further increased during the date, reaching 31.57 years in 2008, when only the regional datum is higher (see table 13). Age at first child, that had been stable at 25 since the half of the Fifties, had increased to 29 in 2006 (Comune Brescia 2007).

The marriage rate is steadily decreasing on the long run, and this trend, that has continued during the years 2000s, has been more even accentuated in the Province of Brescia than at the national and Regional level. In the Municipality of Brescia the latest datum available is even lower: in 2008 the rate was at 3.2‰ (see table 14).

Table 14 - Marriage and divorce rates, various years (%)

Marriage rate <sup>1</sup>				
	2001	2003	2005	2008
Italy	4.63	4.58	4.23	4.12
Lombardy Region	4.21	4.04	3.70	3.54
Province of Brescia	4.36	4.35	3.82	3.62
Brescia city	4.40	4.10	3.40	3.20
Divorce rate <sup>2</sup>				
	2000	2003	2005	2007
Italy	0.66	0.76	0.80	0.85
Lombardy Region	0.79	0.93	0.96	1.05
Province of Brescia	0.64	0.90	1.11	1.06

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>

<sup>1</sup> N. of weddings / average resident population \* 1000.

<sup>2</sup> N. of divorces / average resident population \* 1000.

On the contrary, the divorce rate increases in the same years, and again the growth in the last decade is much higher in the Province of Brescia rather than in the Lombardy Region and at the national level.

The proportion of civil and religious marriages has also deeply changed over the last decade: civil ceremonies were 36.3% in 2000, and reached 57.3% in 2010; religious marriages were 63.7% in 2000, and became 42.7% in 2010.

Recent data about *de facto* couple are not available at the urban level. In 2001 non married couples represented 3.8% of all couples in the Province of Brescia, and 4.3% at city level. In the same year, non married couples were respectively 6.4% of Italian couples and 13.6% of foreign couples without children, and 2.6% of Italian couples and 4.5% of foreign couples with children at the province level (SISTAN 2006).

In Brescia city, births out of wedlock continue to increase; they were 23.5% of all births in 2007 and 26.7 in 2010<sup>2</sup>.

The family structure has deeply changed in the long term. Even in the last decade, the average size of households has decreased, and in 2010 is only slightly higher than 2 members, which is rather lower than the national, provincial and regional value.

Table 15 - Trends in the family size, years 2003, 2005 and 2010

	2003	2005	2010
Italy	2.52	2.48	2.40
Lombardy Region	2.38	2.35	2.29
Province of Brescia	2.45	2.41	2.37
Brescia city	2.10	2.07	2.04

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.comune.brescia.it/NR/rdonlyres/48BB3A96-B4D8-425E-9D36-4917B4FE2895/0/DCS0509NATI2008.pdf>



The shrinking average size of the households is explained by the very high proportion of single person households, that in 2000 was already almost 38%, of all families and in 2009 reached 42.6% (see table 16). In parallel, the number of couples with children has further decreased in the last decade, from 27.8 to 21.9%.

In the same years single parent families have slightly increased, from 9.2 to 9.7%; a further 2.9% is represented by single parents living with their children and other family members (that is almost 30% of the "other" category in table 16).

Among families with children, more than one quarter are single parent families (26.9%) in 2009; a further 8% is represented by single parents living with their children plus other family members (more men than women), meaning that 35% of all families with children are headed by a single parent.

Table 16 - Families by type in the Municipality of Brescia, % on 100 families

	2000	2003	2005	2009
Singles	37.9	39.5	41.2	42.6
Single parent families	9.2	9.1	9.4	9.7
Couples with children	27.8	25.9	24.3	21.9
Couples without children	16.8	16.5	16.2	16.1
Other	8.4	8.8	9.0	9.8

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>

In 2009, the great part of these are represented by single mother families: 7,499 families (8.1% of all families), of which 618 are foreign and 119 mixed. In addition, 1,193 families are single mother households with other members. In total, then 8,692 single mother families live in Brescia city in 2009. There are no local data available about the number of single mother households with at least one child aged 4-5.

Single men families only account for 1.6% of all families (1,462 families, of which 213 are foreign and 4 mixed), plus almost as many single father families including also other members (1,454; see table 17).

Table 17 - Single parent families by type in Brescia Municipality, year 2009 (abs.values)

	Single mothers	Single fathers	Total
Single parents	7,499	1,462	8,961
<i>of which: Italian</i>	6,762	1,245	8,007
<i>of which: foreign</i>	618	213	831
<i>of which: mixed</i>	119	4	123
Single parents + other members	1,193	1,465	2,658
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,692</b>	<b>2,927</b>	<b>11,619</b>

Source: SISTAN 2010.

The incidence of single parent families is double among Italian families (10.4%) rather than among foreign ones (5.9%; Comune Brescia 2010).



Over 72% of single parent families living in Brescia have 1 child; over 23% have 2 children; 3.5% of single fathers and 4% of single mothers have 3 children (whereas among couples with children 50.1% have 1 child, 39.2% have 2, and 8.5% have 3; *ibidem*).

By contrast, the composition of families with children by number of children has remained basically stable over the year 2000s in the Municipality of Brescia, as the following table shows.

Table 18 - Trends in the number of children per family in the Municipality of Brescia  
(% on 100 families with children)

	2002	2005	2008
1 child	59.1	58.5	57.7
2 children	33.5	33.6	33.7
3 children	6.1	6.5	6.8
4 children and more	1.3	1.4	1.8

Source: ISTAT, <http://sitis.istat.it/sitis/html/>.

Given the high rate of women's employment and activity (see § 1.1), the Brescia area is characterised by high need of work and life balance solutions. Trade-offs concern the availability and cost of early childcare services, especially for parents who have long or atypical working hours. Since the Italian welfare model relies so much on family support, single parents are particularly affected by reconciliation difficulties, as they cannot share care within their household. This is even more relevant for those single parents who cannot count on their extended family members (particularly grandparents), because these are still working, are not in good health conditions, are not in good family relations, or live far away. The latter is especially the case for migrants.

## 2.2. Public regulation

The Children's Service manages first of all a Social Secretariat Office in every neighbourhood (according to the Regional law n. 3/08), that works as a filter to the central service (for information and appointments) and that, since recently, can also directly deliver some measures, such as temporary monetary support in some specific cases (i.e. if the family need is basically economic and no harder social support is needed).

The Children's Service has two main lines of action:

- on the one hand, prevention activities for households with children with some kind of difficulties: economic, conflict separations, lone parenthood, abuse. 70-80% of applicants/beneficiaries are foreigners. 10 social assistants are dedicated to this area.  
In 2008 1,182 cases were taken up by the service, with a high percentage of single mothers (abandoned by their partner, or having undergone a hard separation or divorce, or because of spouse's death); an important part of the applications belong to families that are "new" to the service, and that have turned to it because of unemployment.
- Interventions for families with a tribunal decision about parental authority. 10 social assistants are dedicated to this area.

Lone parenthood, and motherhood, is transversal to the two areas.

Cultural and ethnic mediation, and pedagogical support are added values of the Service, transversally to both areas.

Demands for monetary support have significantly increased in the last two years, because of the crisis. Their regulation is currently being reviewed, and in particular it will foresee:

- extraordinary interventions (*una tantum*, for instance to cover months without unemployment benefits, or to avoid evictions);
- temporary economic help, paid for 4 months, renewable for 4 more months if necessary.

Access criteria have, nevertheless, been sharpened: family obligations (of separated parents, of grandparents, etc) are more often solicited; a wider definition of income sources is used to define disposable income to be confronted with thresholds; persons or households that have been assisted on the long-term by the Municipality may be dismissed if they don't meet access requirements (anymore); activation, through the SAL (see § 1.2 and below) is more strongly boosted.

A particular project in this sense is reserved to single mothers and over45 unemployed: persons signalled by basic services (in case of single mothers: Children's office or third sector ones, such as Caritas) apply in agreement with SAL for a voucher (*Dote Investing in Expertise* funded by the Province of Brescia; see § 1.2) to receive employment services, tutoring, and an apprenticeship period, with a benefit of 600€/month for 6 months. Involved firms are not obliged to hire the person at the end of the apprenticeship period. Most of the involved single mothers are immigrants.

Because most of the available jobs have atypical working hours, the Children's Office organises a baby sitting service defined on a case by case basis, involving a relative, a neighbour, or another mum in charge of the Children's Office.

In order to tackle monetary need a *Food Bank* project promoted by since 2005 by a local association has been strongly supported by the Municipality. Households in need receive vouchers to be spent in a supermarket-like space, with a value that varies according to the family size and conditions.

The "Food store" is open, thanks to volunteers' work, from Monday to Thursday, from 5 to 6 p.m. It provides food, detergents and products for personal hygiene. Products to be distributed come from food collection organised by volunteers and from selective purchases in big stores. Entitled families, at present around 150-180 households, receive a package of products once every month. Since 2010 also a weekly distribution of fresh food is organised.

Other traditional lines of intervention are represented by:

- Home assistance and tutoring, strongly required also by the tribunals;
- Foster care;
- Residential centres.

#### *ECEC services*

The population of pre-school age in the Municipality of Brescia is slightly increasing in the last decade, both in absolute values and as a percentage of the overall population. In 2011 children aged under 3 are 5,458, and children aged 3-5 are 5,372; each age range is 2,8% of the resident population (<http://demo.istat.it>). Table 19 shows the evolution of the decade.

Table 19 - Population in pre-school age ranges in Brescia city, years 2000, 2005 and 2009 (abs. values and %)

	2000		2005		2009	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Aged <3	5,119	2.7	5,218	2.7	5,377	2.8
Aged 3-5	4,791	2.5	5,182	2.7	5,232	2.7
Aged <6	9,910	5.1	10,400	5.4	10,609	5.4

Source: Own calculations on SISTAN 2010.

The availability of places in services for children 0-2 is 1,395; 832 are the ones provided by the Municipality (Municipal day care centres plus places in private accredited centres, including 47 places covered by Municipal vouchers); the latter figure was 762 in the year 2001/2002, what implies an increase of 9.1%.

Even more important has been the increase in the private provision: from 120 to 563 places (increase by almost 4 times in less than a decade), thanks to the opening of new day care centres, and the widening of the number of places for which the existing ones are authorised.

As a consequence, the overall provision has increased of almost 60% from 882 to 1,398 places (PdZ Brescia 2011).

If compared to potential demand these places covered 16.5% of the number of children under 3 in 2001/2002, and reaches 25.9% in 2008/09, that is quite close to the EU Barcelona target of 33%; if we only consider the Municipal supply, the coverage rate is 15.5% (own calculations on Brescia PdZ 2011 and SISTAN 2010).

Children from households with social problems have a priority to access Municipal crèches or to receive the Municipal voucher to pay for childcare services. At present, 63 children from weak families (25 Italians and 38 foreigners, 15 of which with voucher) are attending Municipal (or Municipally financed) services, what represents 7.6% of all children in Municipal ECEC services.

One part-time childhood service, without canteen, exists in Brescia, as well as two integrative services ("Time for Families") are at the disposal of children aged 12-36 months not attending day-care services, who can spend there a few hours every week with a parent, grandparent or childminder, and together with a group of peers.

Brescia is a virtuous Municipality: core services will not be cut due to reduced transfers from the State. On the contrary, innovative projects and less crucial services may be cut, such as youth centres with prevention purposes, which - in turn - may increase basic and special services' cost.

### 3. MIGRATION

#### 3.1. Trends

Italy has traditionally been an emigration country: from the Italian unification (1861) onwards, in one century around 30 millions of Italians have left the country towards Western European countries, Americas and Australia (Caritas 2011). The 1970s represented a turning point in the shift of Italy from emigration to immigration country. Since then, the presence of foreigners has steadily increased, exceeding 1 million persons in 1991 and,

similarly to Spain and Ireland, sharply growing since the 1990s (OECD-SOPEMI 2007). Their growth explains most of the population and employment growth in Italy in these two decades. The attractiveness of Italy for migrants has been due to the easy entry, the tolerance towards irregular residents (that was lately reversed during the 2008-2011 centre-right government, even with the introduction of a crime of illegal immigration, see below § 3.2), and the availability of jobs - be it stable, precarious or in the grey market - in: care and cleaning services, construction, small and medium industrial and handcraft firms and, seasonally, agriculture and tourism (Barberis 2008).

Risks of ghettoisation are scatter in Italy compared to other European countries, also because of the presence of a wide number of nationalities and because of the diffusion of migrants' settlement over the territory, and not only in cities. Nevertheless, one can observe a strong concentration in the Northern and Central regions (86.5% of foreigners live here), particularly due to the attractiveness of economic systems and labour markets. Almost one fourth (23.3%) of foreigners living in Italy resides in Lombardy region (Caritas 2011).

Brescia is the first province in Italy by incidence of foreigners on resident population, 12.9% in 2010 (followed by Prato in Tuscany, with 12.7%). Immigration is more recent here than in other Italian provinces: at the half of the Nineties incidence was 2% and at the beginning of the new century it was still 4%, but the increase has been rather steep in the last decade (Provincia Brescia 2011).

The incidence of foreign residents on the population has been even more important in the Municipality of Brescia throughout the years 2000s, and increasingly higher than it is at the national, regional and provincial level. In 2009 it reached 33,571 residents, representing 17.5% of the population, an incidence 2.5 times higher than the national one (table 20).

Table 20 - Incidence of foreign resident on the total population, years 2003, 2005 and 2009 (%)

	2003	2005	2009
<b>Italy</b>	3.4	4.5	7.0
<b>Lombardy Region</b>	5.2	7.0	10.0
<b>Province of Brescia</b>	7.2	9.4	12.9
<b>Brescia Municipality</b>	10.7	13.4	17.5

Source: Caritas 2011.

It is estimated that in 2010 85.7% of foreigners in the province of Brescia are regular residents, 7.9% are irregular residents and 6.4% are regular (have a permit to stay) but not resident (Caritas 2011).

The presence of irregular migrants has changed over the last decade, also due to regularisation processes passed in Italy, and to the fact that new countries have become members of the European Union, thus changing the status of their citizens living in Italy. Table 21 shows the rate of irregularity in the province of Brescia by macro-area of origin.

Table 21 - Foreigners irregularly present in the province of Brescia by macro-area of origin, years 2001, 2005 and 2010, (%)

	2001	2005	2010
East Europe	23	12	6 <sup>1</sup>
Asia	12	9	9
North Africa	15	11	10
Other Africa	20	12	11
Latin America	16	13	8
Total	18	11	8

Source: Caritas 2011.

<sup>1</sup> If one excludes countries having become EU members, the irregularity rate of East Europe is 9%.

Due to the weakness of Italy's colonial experience, migration towards the country is made up of a variety of nationalities (identities, languages, cultures, etc.), way wider than what is found in other European countries, also implying a more complex reality to deal with (ISTAT 2011). A wide number of nationalities are, in fact, represented also among foreigners who are present in the area of Brescia. The first settlements in time in the Province of Brescia were Senegalese and Ghanaian. At present the most represented nationalities are Albania, Morocco and Romania, each with around 20 thousands regular residents and slightly more than 3 thousands non residents, and each representing slightly more than 12% of all foreigners present in the province (Caritas 2011).

Table 22 - Composition of foreigners resident in Brescia city by citizenship (main nationalities), years 2003, 2005 and 2009 (%)

	2003	2005	2009
Pakistan	9.8	10.3	9.8
China Republic	7.6	7.6	6.6
Egypt	7.5	8.4	7.1
Albania	7.1	6.7	6.7
Ghana	6.4	5.4	4.1
Sri Lanka	4.7	4.5	4.3
Bangladesh	4.5	5.3	5.9
Morocco	4.4	4.0	3.2
Ukraine	4.1	5.8	7.0
Romania	3.8	4.3	7.5
India	3.7	4.4	5.6
Moldova	2.2	3.6	6.3
Philippines	3.7	3.4	3.7

Source: OPI 2011.

By contrast, at the city level the most represented ones were in 2009 Pakistanis, followed by Romanians, Egyptians, Ukrainians, Albanians and Chinese. Pakistanis were the most numerous group already in 2003, but they used to be followed by people from China, Egypt, Albania, Ghana and Sri Lanka back then (see table 22).

If migration towards Italy is recent compared to other European countries, it dates however back three decades now. As a consequence, the features of migrant population has changed a lot, with a reduction of the gender gap, an increase of children and births, a growth of marriages and family reunions.

The gender composition of foreigners present in the province of Brescia has, in fact, changed over time: in 2001 men represented 61.2% of all foreigners; they became 56.5% in 2006 and 55% in 2009; in parallel, women have increased their incidence from 38.8% in 2001 to 43.5 in 2006 to 45% in 2009 (Caritas 2011).

Persons under 18 are 27.2% of all resident migrants (against 22% among Italians); the incidence of children of foreigners who are born in Italy is 16.9% of all foreigners (against 13.5% at the national level), that is 29.8% of all children born in the province of Brescia, a quota higher than at the regional (21.3%) and national level (13.6%; Provincia Brescia 2011).

Foreign households (households with only foreign members) are 15% of all households resident in the Municipality of Brescia in 2009 (against 9.8% in 2002), whereas mixed families (households with both Italian and foreign members) represent 2%. The average household size is 2.06 for Italian households, 1.94 for foreign households and 3.4 for mixed ones (Comune Brescia 2011).

Table 23 - Residents in Italian, foreign and mixed families per household type, year 2009 (%)

Household type	Italian <sup>1</sup>	Foreign <sup>2</sup>	Mixed <sup>3</sup>	Total
Single woman	25.3	24.4	0.0	24.8
Single man	15.8	29.9	0.0	17.7
Couple	18.6	2.5	15.5	16.1
Couple with children	23.0	15.3	26.3	21.9
Single mother with children	8.8	4.4	8.3	8.1
Single father with children	1.6	1.5	0.3	1.6
Other <sup>4</sup>	6.9	22.0	49.6	9.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Comune Brescia, 2011.

<sup>1</sup> Households with only Italian members.

<sup>2</sup> Households with only foreign members.

<sup>3</sup> Households with both Italian and foreign members.

<sup>4</sup> Different household types + other members.

If we compare Italian and foreign families by type of household, we notice that couples, with and without children, are less represented among foreign families (see table 23). On the contrary, single men are over-represented among migrants (almost twice as much as among Italians), due to the fact that many migrants have their spouse and children back in the country of origin (either with the future perspective of family re-union in Italy, or of going back to the country of origin) and of young single men migrating alone. Also meaningful among foreigners are "other types of families", that is all kinds of families that comprehend other members beyond spouses, parents and children: these are more than 3 times more present among migrants than among natives. This is even truer for mixed families, suggesting that cohabitation is a relevant housing solution among foreigners, even when they live with natives (Comune Brescia 2010).

As to space distribution, as the following table shows, foreign families are comparatively more concentrated in the centre neighbourhood (32.5%, against 21.8 of Italian families and 23% of mixed ones), and much less present in the East area (7.9%, vs 13.9 of Italian ones and 15.9 of mixed ones; Comune Brescia 2011).

Table 24 - Families present in the province of Brescia by presence of foreigners and neighbourhood of residence, year 2009 (%)

Neighbourhood	Italian <sup>1</sup>	Foreign <sup>2</sup>	Mixed <sup>3</sup>
North	17.4	17.5	18.1
East	13.9	7.9	15.9
South	22.5	24.8	24.2
West	19.1	17.3	18.7
Centre	21.8	32.5	23.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Comune Brescia, 2011.

<sup>1</sup> Households with only Italian members.

<sup>2</sup> Households with only foreign members.

<sup>3</sup> Households with both Italian and foreign members.

As to the housing tenure, it has to be noted that most of migrants who are resident in the Province of Brescia have a private housing solution, either on an autonomous basis or with relatives. This percentage has passed from 61.3 in 2001 to 77.9 in 2008. Of these, ownership as type of tenure has steadily increased over the years 2000s, passing from 8.2% in 2001 to over one fifth in 2008. In parallel, the quota of migrants living in cohabitation has decreased, from 29.3% to 12.9%. A small percentage lives on the job place (5.2%), or in a precarious solution (3.3%), while only a really marginal quota is hosted in emergency centres (hostels or refuges).

Table 25 - Housing tenure of the migrant population, Province of Brescia (%)

	2001	2005	2008
Private solution, alone or with the family	61.3	63.5	77.9
<i>of which: in ownership</i>	8.2	14.3	20.9
Private solution, in cohabitation	29.3	24.4	12.9
Precarious solution	3.5	7.3	3.3
Hostels/refuges	2.0	1.3	0.3
On the working place	3.9	3.7	5.2

Source: OPI Brescia 2011.

The educational level declared by foreigners present in the province of Brescia has clearly increased over the last decade: persons without any diploma have passed from 11% to 7%; persons with only the compulsory school diploma have also decreased by 11 percent points (from 47 to 36). In parallel, migrants declaring a high school diploma have grown of 17 percent points, while university degrees have slightly decreased (see table 26).

Table 26 - Foreigners present in the province of Brescia by educational level, years 2001, 2006 and 2009 (%)

Declared educational level	2001	2006	2009
None	10.9	10.8	6.9
Compulsory school	46.9	31.9	35.8
High school	30.4	44.9	47.1
University level	11.8	12.4	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: OPI Brescia 2011.



The composition of foreigners by employment condition shows the importance of employment, especially for men. In fact, in 2010 71% of foreign men are employed, but if we sum up working students and those who are employed but temporarily not working (either in short time work schemes, or ill), this value reaches 78% (see table 27). Half of foreign women present in the province of Brescia are employed in the province of Brescia, whereas almost one third of them are inactive (housewife or in other non working condition) and thus a lower quota of them is unemployed (searching for a job) than among men (almost half of them).

Table 27 - Foreigners over 14 present in the province of Brescia  
by employment condition, year 2010 (%)

	Men	Women	Total
Unemployed	15.9	8.3	12.5
Housewife	0.3	31.8	14.9
Student	5.4	7.5	6.4
Other non working condition	0.4	0.6	0.5
Working student	0.9	1.2	1.1
Employed	70.9	48.9	60.8
Employed, in short time work schemes	5.6	0.7	3.4
Employed in illness/maternity/injury	0.6	0.9	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: OPI Brescia 2011.

The previous table shows the snapshot of foreigners' employment conditions in 2010, after three years of economic crisis, whereas the following one allows us to observe the evolution from the beginning of the years 2000s and - year by year - during the crisis period.

In the evolution of the last decade it appears clear how the incidence of unemployed among foreigners had almost halved from 7.8% in 2001 to 3.8% in 2007. With the impact of the crisis, it increased back to 6.7% in 2008 and then almost doubled in 2009-2010, when it overcomes 12%, more than 3 times the value of 2007 and more than 1.5 time the original value of 2001.

In parallel, the share of employed persons among foreigners over 14 increased from 75.5% in 2001 to 83% in 2007 (particularly high, if we consider that this is a men + women average), and then got back to the 2001 value in 2008, and dropped to 60.8% in 2010, with almost 4% of foreigners interested by short time work schemes (see table 28).



Table 28 - Foreigners over 14 present in the province of Brescia by employment condition, years 2001 and 2006-2010 (%)

	2001	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Unemployed (looking for a job)	7.8	4.7	3.8	6.7	12.7	12.5
Housewife	16.2	8.4	10.6	12.7	14.7	14.9
Student	0.6	3.8	2.4	5.4	8.0	6.4
Other non working condition	-	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5
Working student	-	-	-	-	0.7	1.1
Employed	75.5	82.7	83.0	75.1	63.6	60.8
Employed, in short time work schemes	-	-	-	-	-	3.4
Employed in illness/maternity	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: OPI Brescia 2011.

Foreigners are widely present in non-standard jobs. In 2008, every 100 foreigners over 14 present in the Province of Brescia only 41.8% were regularly and permanently employed full-time; 6.5% were regularly self-employed (they were 8% in 2001). 11.2% of them were employed on a seasonal basis or with a fixed-term contract (against 7.3% in 2001); 4.9% were employed part-time (2.7 in 2001); those irregularly employed were 8.6%, decreasing from 14.1% in 2001 (OPI Brescia 2011).

As to sectors, migrants are mostly concentrated in heavy industry and traditional manufacture sectors (metallurgic and steel industry, chemical and plastic, dairy farming and shoe production), constructions and agricultural and zoo-technical sectors). Women migrants are mostly relevant in the service sector.

A crowding out effect towards natives is hardly observable, since foreign workers are mostly employed in low qualified jobs: more than 1/3 are unskilled industry workers, while women are concentrated in personal services (cleaning, child and elderly care). In a crisis period, migrants are even more interested by unemployment, precarious and irregular jobs. Rather, for the future observers recommend to attract workers with higher skills, and to enhance the competences of already resident migrants, in order not to favour the exploitation of the low cost of labour, that would slow down the modernisation of the local productive system (Provincia Brescia 2011).

Also the number of migrant entrepreneurs is relevant in the Province of Brescia, and has been steadily growing during the second half of the years 2000s, reaching 12,159 individuals in 2009. They represent 9.4% of all entrepreneurs active in the Province of Brescia.

The most represented nationalities among foreign entrepreneurs are Egyptians and Moroccans, accounting respectively for 12 and 11% of all foreign employers; Pakistanis and Chinese represent almost 10% each, and are followed by Albanians (see table 29).

Table 29 - Main nationalities of migrant entrepreneurs in the Province of Brescia  
(% on all foreign entrepreneurs)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Egypt	12.1	11.8	12.6	12.4	12.0
Morocco	11.4	11.3	11.5	11.4	11.2
Pakistan	8.5	8.8	9.6	9.8	9.9
China	8.6	8.7	9.7	9.7	9.8
Albania	4.9	5.2	6.2	6.6	7.0

Source: own calculations on CamCom,

<http://www.bs.camcom.it/files/Studi/Statistiche%202010/Cap5Imprenditoriaextracom2009.pdf>

### 3.2. Public regulation

For what concerns policies on migration (flows, permits to stay, access to citizenship, etc.), it is the **State** that has the legislative and normative power. The previous Government (May 2008 - November 2011) put a strong emphasis on security and public order, that have clearly conditioned regulation and policies about migration. A crime of "illegal immigration" was introduced in 2009, punishable by 1 to 4 years of jail. Pressure was put on civil servants to report such cases to the police, with extended controversy about their duty/right to refuse. This has reduced the use of public services (particularly health services and schools) by irregular immigrants, for fear of being denounced.

In the last year, several sentences of the Italian Constitutional Court and of the European Court of Justice have denied such a crime, also on the basis of the European directive on migration, approved in December 2010, fostering repatriation in the respect of fundamental rights.

The present "technical" Government (in charge since November 2011, with the main objective to heal public accounts and avoid financial default) has largely loosened such a security-based approach to migration. In parallel, in the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian national unification (1861-2011), the President of the Republic has vigorously urged the Parliament to reform the norms about citizenship access, advocating for the introduction of *ius soli*, instead of *ius sanguinis*, for children of immigrant who are born and grow up in Italy.

In the same period a network of association was born, "*L'Italia sono anch'io. Campagna per i diritti di cittadinanza*" (Italy is also me. Campaign for citizenship rights"), promoting the introduction by popular petition both of the *ius soli* and of the right to vote in local elections for foreign workers regularly resident in Italy since at least 5 years.

In this field 70% of projects are covered by national funds linked to specific laws (e.g. law n. 40/98, law 285/97, etc). The National Fund for Integration has been substantially reduced to zero in the 2011 three-year "Stability Law", in the framework of major cuts to social policies (e.g. since next year the National Fund for Social Policies will be reduced of more than the half).

At the **Regional** level, an Observatory for integration and multiethnicity (*Osservatorio Regionale per l'integrazione e la multiethnicità*, ORIM) was created in 2000, in virtue of the awareness that migration is a structural phenomenon, particularly relevant in Italy because of its geographical position, and in Lombardy because of its economic and productive importance. The Observatory collects and produces data to support the regional

government and legislative activities. The Observatory has built a network system of provincial Observatories for Immigration (*OPI*) that grant a systematic flux of territorial information.

At the **Province** level, the Provincial Observatory for Immigration was created in 2005, in the framework of the activities in support to ORIM (see above). The Observatory develops its activities of data collection within the Social Activities and Family Department, with the support of different professional profiles.

At the **municipal** level, the *Service for Integration and Citizenship (Servizio per l'Integrazione e la Cittadinanza)*, originally placed in the Personal Services Area, has been recently moved to the Social Services Sector.

Until recent times there was only one Municipal Desk for foreigners, plus a number of desks managed by Third Sector organisations. Since one year, the Municipality has taken up the coordination of all desks active in the city.

An accreditation process has been developed for the territorial supply units of the Third Sector providing information, basic support services, support in filling in applications and documents for permits to stay, citizenship, etc. Minima requirements have been defined, among which the need to have rooms especially dedicated to recognised activities, specifically dedicated to immigrants' support. The Municipality covers a small part of the expenses of these bodies, that however need to raise funds from other sources. The level of Municipal expenditure dedicated to this has been stable in the last years.

Besides this, the Municipality manages other specific services:

- a service for refugees;
- a service in prison (to support the applications for the permits to stay);
- language and cultural mediation, also in support of basic Municipal services;
- a Municipal Fund for the assisted and voluntary repatriation, that exists since 2 years (linked to the NIRVA network, <http://www.retenirva.it/index.asp>), with partly Municipal and partly Third Sector staff;
- a Regional project against the slave trade;
- Support to the birth and consolidation of neighbourhood groups, in order to give value to proximity networks;
- A desk within the Police Headquarter for reception, information, orientation, mediation (800 contacts a day); it is a supra-district project, financed with the resources of the national law n. 40 and Municipal resources;
- 2 shelters, one for women and one for men. The latter one is financed with the hosts' fees; a part (10 places out of 59) is reserved to non accompanied foreign minors. As the crisis has changed the demand, it is going to be opened also to Italians.
- there has been an experiment to provide apartments to persons exiting the collective shelters towards autonomy; this project however has failed, because of arrearage;
- Support to access to housing;
- Fight against discrimination;
- Projects with Italian Sinti community (whereas Rom groups are supported by the Municipal Children's Office, because all concerned families have children).

## 4. TRENDS IN THE HOUSING FIELD

Because of the absolute prominence of private housing solutions in Brescia, as well as in Italian cities in general, the analysis of the housing field will be, when it is possible, divided in two main parts, the "private city" and the "public city". The *fil rouge* of public discourse towards housing policies in the last decade was to develop and promote what has been called a "third housing market" (Comune di Brescia 2008) accessible to the middle class. Brescia is classified as a "high tension municipality concerning housing" being the centre of certain National and Regional policy interventions<sup>3</sup>. Brescia is as well considered to be a Province capital with a medium-high level of real estate competitiveness, following cities with a higher commercial vocation, Milan, Rome and Florence. The city housing market is the second one of the Region after Milan for many indicators.

### 4.1. Socio-economic trends

*What have been the main changes in the local housing market, distinguishing the rental market and the property market? How has been the trend of real estate prices?*

#### The "Private City" Housing Market

The Brescia private housing market was till 2006-2007 considered as very dynamic, both the rental and the property one. According to 2001 Census data (the only available ones at the local level towards tenure status), the distribution of housing tenure status in the Province of Brescia was the following: 70.37% owners and 20.47% tenants. The proportion of housing ownership in the city of Brescia was significantly lower than in the whole Province, 62.34%, and higher rates of tenancy 31.32%. In the beginning of the decade Brescia were already an attractor of migrant populations because of its labour market, a peculiarity that persisted all over these years.

In 2008 the housing stock of the city of Brescia consisted in 581,100 dwellings (Cresme estimates), they were 520,000 in 2001 (Census 2001), with an increase of 12% in 6 years. It has been estimated that the demand for housing units was around 42,000 in the Province of Brescia in 2007, 67.3% for re-housing purposes, 25.2% for new households, 1.7% because of evictions and 5.8% for investment (IreR 2010). These figures can be better understood if we take into consideration that the housing stock, according to Census data (2001) is quite old. Many families look for better housing solutions, in terms of larger disposable space, material quality and location (ibidem).

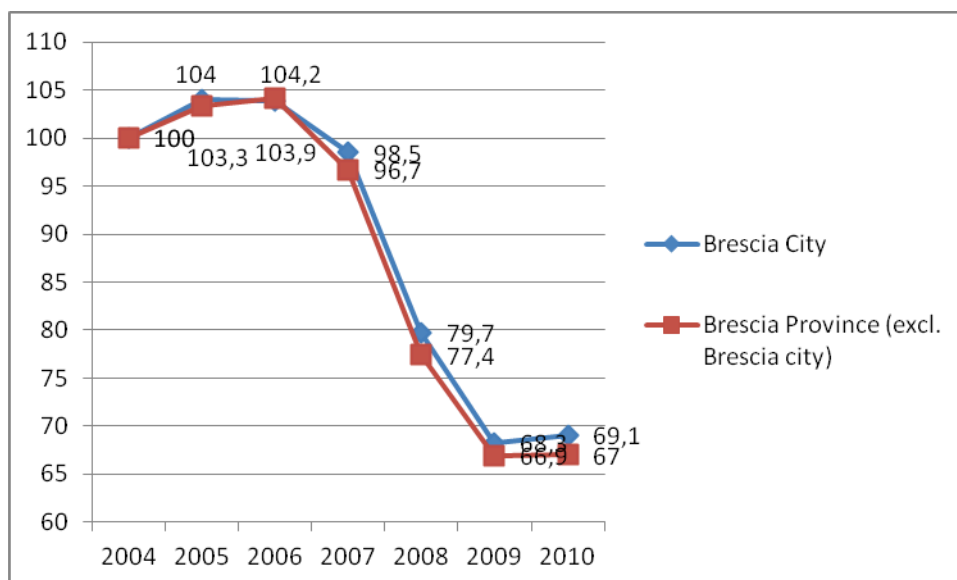
Since 2000 to 2007 Brescia has experienced an increase in homebuyers transactions, a positive trend that has all of a sudden been blocked afterwards, as shown in fig. 1. Transactions figure decrease by more than 40% in just two years time and figures reached the same numbers of the beginning of the decade. Brescia city performance is slightly better than the Province's one.

After many years of positive trends in transactions figures started to decrease in the last two years. The shrinking numbers of transactions are due to the economic crisis that affected families' finances and to credit restrictions.

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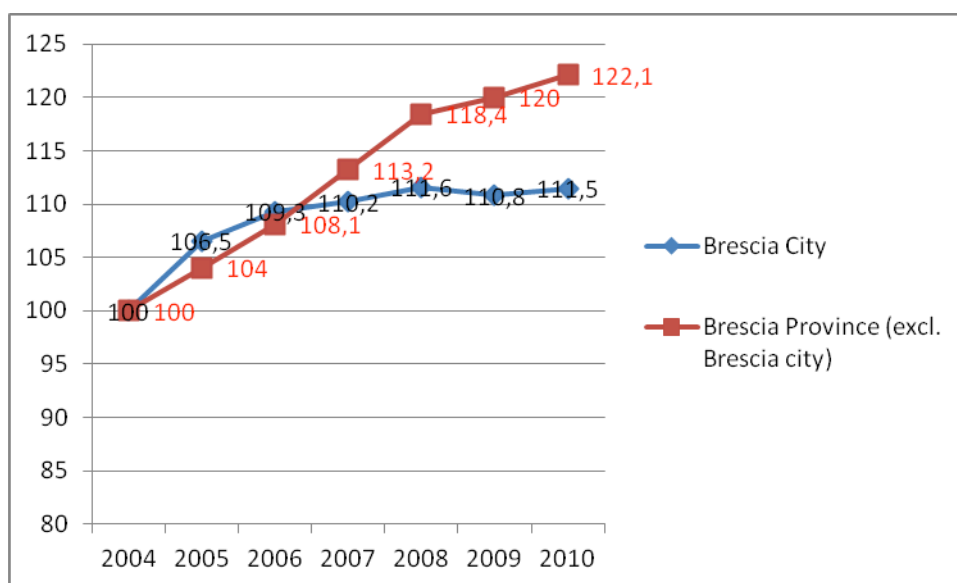
<sup>3</sup> Their are identified by a Government agency (Cipe) on the basis of many parameters. Special policies refer to their local rental market: tenants that decide to rent can have fiscal benefits (for contracts in a special regime, "canone concordato", see WP2 or for university students); postponement of evictions for some kinds of contracts or evictions suspension for some kinds of frail tenants populations (national laws 431/'98 and 200/2003).

Graph 2 - Index transactions volumes in Brescia and Brescia Province (2004-2010)



The economic crises and the reduction in transactions did not affect the local housing market trends in terms of prices (fig.2). According to the Agenzia del Territorio data (database on line), they went on increasing with any pause in quotations. Dwelling prices in the Province of Brescia Municipalities centres were in 2010 in average 30% of those in the capital.

Graph 3 - Trends in newly built or renewed housing units €/sm index (2004-2010)



Source: own elaboration on Agenzia del Territorio 2011.

Prices range from €/sm 1,700 to 3,900 (see table 21).

Table 30 - Medium prices for new or renewed residential units (€/sm), year 2009

Areas	€/sm	Range €/sm
Central	2,570	1,700-3,900
Semi-central	2,235	1,800-2,600
Suburban	1,965	1,800-2,400
Brescia City	2,150	1,700-3,900

\*Nominal values (not adjusted for inflation).

Source: OMI (2010).

In 2009/2010 the proportion of transactions with mortgage loans increased by 4% in the city of Brescia, representing X% of total transactions. Mortgage average values in 2010 consisted in €140.000 and the monthly pay €643 (Agenzia del Territorio 2011).

As far as the private renting market it concerned, The Province of Brescia counts for 12% of the rental Lombardy market, following Milan (39%) and Varese (13%) (Nomisma 2009). Brescia city shows relatively higher levels of rental tenancy in comparison with the province area which, according to many scholars and observers, is an indicator of the housing market adaptation to a dynamic economy (Rabaiotti 2007). The rental market consists in around 25,000/30,000 units (estimates given by the Municipality).

The rental market in Brescia is living a showdown period, an issue that entered in the public agenda mainly because there are many unrented dwellings (estimates done by the Municipality indicate them as being around 4/5,000) and because the economic crisis impacted on the capacity of middle income families to access the housing market.

Brescia Municipality has in all these the "*edilizia convenzionata*" (see Italian WP2 report) ad a planning instrument to increase renting units in the market. Planning regulations imposes a percentage of *edilizia convenzionata* for new constructions of more than 7,000 sm (Caroli *et al.* 2005).

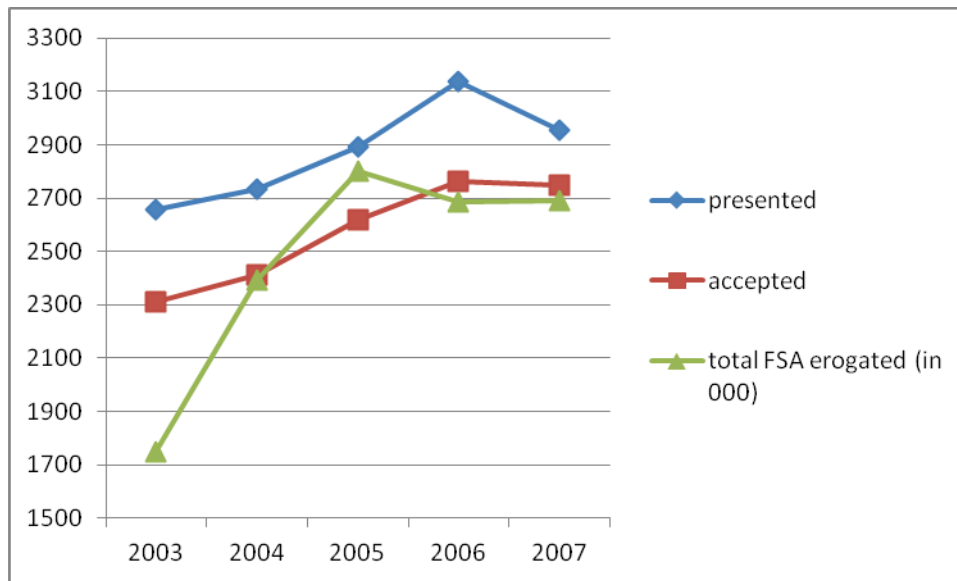
The Municipality has also promoted a special agreements between the associations of homeowners and the associations and trade unions of tenants to promote the number of renting dwellings since 1999. Brescia was one of the first Municipalities in Lombardy to develop such market. A new agreement have been re-launched this year. The agreement for the "*canone concordato*" (see Italian WP2 report), allows homeowners to have different fiscal reductions, guaranties in case of arrears of tenants and shorter contracts<sup>4</sup>. In 2007 2,350 contracts were in place with this formula. Since 2009 Brescia Municipality introduced a special bonus for tenants using this contract in order to sustain lower income families in the payment of rents. It is called "*bonus a sostegno della locazione a canone concordato*". Its eligibility rules are quite stringent and the allowance works in a similar way than the "*fondo sociale affitto*".

#### Housing allowances for low income tenants

The "Fondo Sostegno Affitto- FSA" aims to help low income families with a high incidence of renting costs on income to access or stay in private rented dwellings. It can be applied for only by those who are regular tenants and have certificated incomes; workers or renters in the black economy cannot access it. Its eligibility criteria is defined by Regions.

<sup>4</sup> See "Progetto Rilancio delle locazioni a canone concordato L.431/98 art. 2 comma 3".

Graph 4 - Applications for FSA in Brescia years 2003-2007



Source: Comune di Brescia 2008.

According to the Regional Observatory of Housing Conditions, the medium family revenue of those to which the FSA contribution/benefit is accorded in Province of Brescia is € 6,242 in 2010. Their medium rent cost in the private market is € 5,990 and the medium FSA allowance is € 832 per year. Since 2004 the Municipality anticipates the allowance to families involved in eviction procedures by arrears. In 2006, 31% of applications came from elderly people, 55% from families with children, 9% by families composed only by adults and 5% by individuals living alone (Comune di Brescia 2008).

#### The "Public City" Housing market and public social housing policies

In 2008 Lombardy public social housing stock (owned by Municipalities and by ALER agencies, see Italian WP2 report) consisted of around 165,000 units (Dossier Casa 2008), a figure that has not changed significantly since then even if dismissal plans re-started from 2006 onwards after a block period of 7 years<sup>5</sup>. In the Province of Brescia are located 12.000 units of this stock, owned by Municipalities and by ALER Brescia. The latter is the second public ALER agency in Lombardy.

In Brescia City there are two owners of the public stock, the Municipality and ALER Brescia. Around 90% of the municipal whole stock is managed by ALER<sup>6</sup> while the assignments procedures (evaluation of requests, administrative issues) are the responsibility of the Municipality.

Brescia public housing stock in 2007 was distributed as follow (tab. 31). The public stock is mainly destined to low income tenants which can access the "*canone sociale*".

<sup>5</sup> Law 560/1993 allowed public agencies to alienate their patrimony to finance new activities and the renewal of the public stock.

<sup>6</sup> Other 3 agencies manage the rest. Brescia Municipality diversify the managers in order to control and evaluate performances.



Table 31 - Brescia City public housing stock per owner and per kind of contract

	Municipality	ALER Brescia	Total
ERP dwellings - canone sociale	1,892	2,590	4,482
ERP dwellings - canone moderato	58	6	64

Source: Comune di Brescia 2008.

In the last 4 years, other 111 dwellings have been built and assigned with the "*canone moderato formula*", 84 built by the "Congrega Apostolica" and 29 by Coop Case.

Municipality dwellings are in average smaller than those of ALER but all of them are characterised by being bigger than what needed nowadays with the reduction in the number of components of families. Because of this, one of the main investments in these years made on this stock is the renewal of apartments dividing them in smaller units, along with the development of better instruments to match the existing stock dwellings with families characteristics.

Migrants represented 14.1% of inhabitants in the public stock already in 2001, they were 15.5% in 2006 (Censis-Federcasa 2008). According to Municipality data, they were 12.54% in 2007 (Comune di Brescia 2008).

Brescia public neighbourhoods have been at the very center of different urban planning public programs in these years. Brescia could be able to attract many National and Regional Resources to renew public houses buildings and dwellings and to develop residential services, mainly through the second edition of "*Contratti di Quartiere*" (see Italian WP2 report), with one intervention financed and the two editions of the Regional Program for Public Housing (called PRERP, 2002-2004 and 2007-2009), with 5 interventions financed, one of them having the Municipality as main the main actor, 4 having the Congrega Apostolica as leader (Comune Brescia 2008).

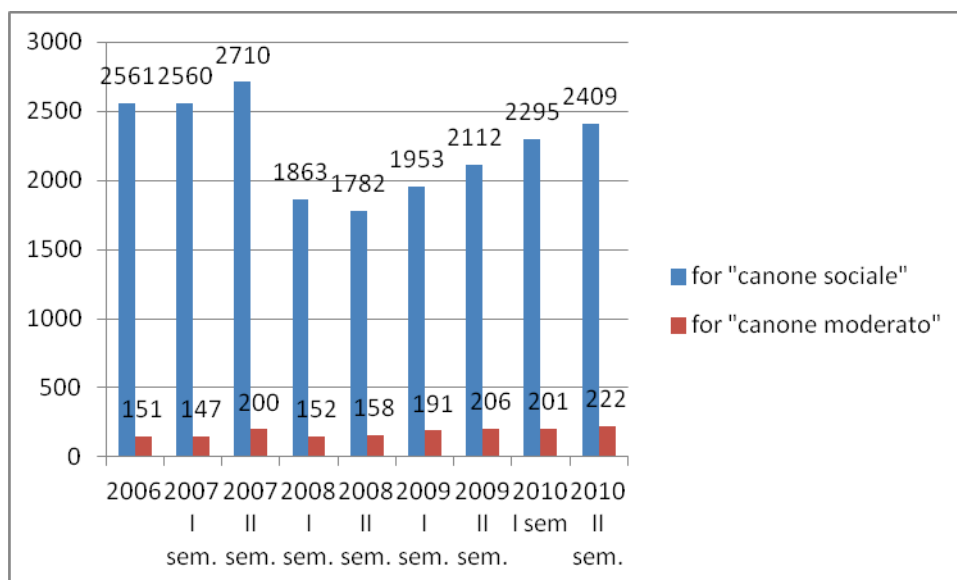
#### Public Housing Provision in Milan and social demand

Brescia, even developing housing options for lower income families since the beginning of the last century, is in a situation of shortage of public housing, as can be shown by the gap between demands and available dwellings.

In the last years, applications for public social houses per bid (two per year) ranged from around 1,800 to 2,700 (FIG.4). The waiting list gets longer with new demands but decreases with those who are not eligible any more, those who get a house assigned and those who do not renew their application.

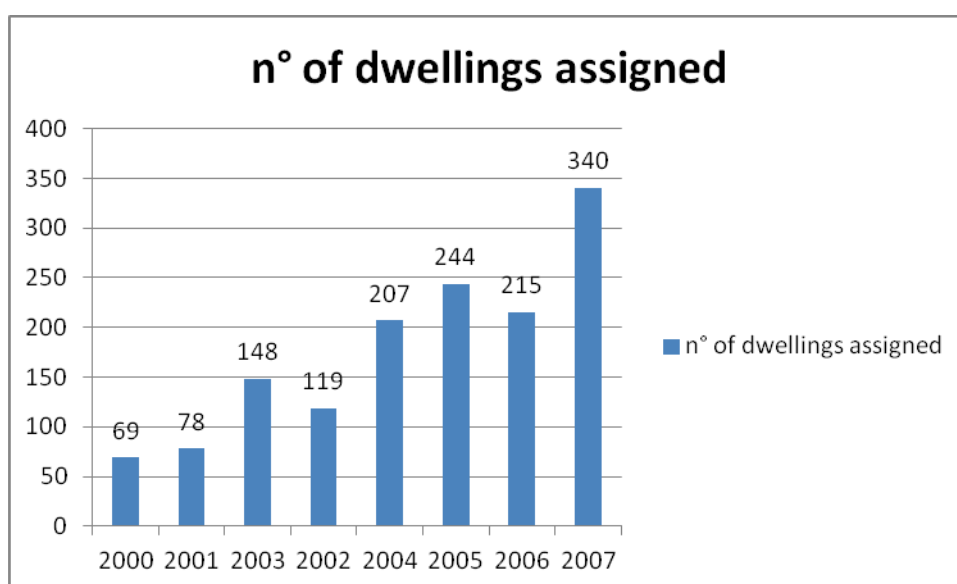


Graph 5 - Number of eligible applications by bid in Brescia



From 2000 to 2007 1,420 dwellings have been assigned (fig.5), most of them with the common procedure and only around 100 with the "urgent" one, derogating to the waiting list. In 2006 and 2007, 26% of total assigned units were destined to migrant families.

Graph 6 - Number of dwellings assigned in Brescia (2000-2007)



Source: Comune di Brescia 2008.

Most requests in Brescia for ERP- housing for rent is relate to the "social regime". They concern, thus, families with very low incomes. Eligible requests within the "moderate contracts" reached 8.4% of the total ones in the second bid of 2010. Municipality housing units available for "moderate" rents are very few but there is clear strategy of expanding them and differently from other Municipalities they are completed assigned.

In the last three years the improving trend in migrants' housing conditions slowed down in the whole Region. The ownership rate has remained at 22% since 2007 but there is a

polarisation that sees some immigrants (especially those with spouses and children) completely integrated and some others entrapped in very precarious housing situations (Tosi 2010). According to most recent data, ownership rates started to grow again reaching 23.2% in 2010. Migrants from Asia and Latin America show higher rates than the regional average and housing ownership increases to 43.3% among those families that have been living in the Region more than 10 years. Housing patterns of migrants and in general their immigration model should be examined over time to assess migrants' housing career. In the Province of Brescia the housing arrangements of migrants are quite better than in other areas of Lombardy. Migrants' arrangements for housing are much better in the Province of Brescia if compared with those in other areas because non standard solutions, characterised by temporary, informal or unsafe tenure status are quite lower. Ownership is relatively lower in Brescia and renting arrangements are higher, which, according to some observers is an indicator of the dynamicity of migration models in the city.

Access to housing is relatively more difficult for migrants because being a migrant is not a condition that gives any priority in the waiting lists (criteria are defined by Lombardy Region). Migrants requests for social housing in "canone sociale" in 2000-2007 period from 39.8% to 46.74%. Migrants families, even representing almost 50% of eligible application for a public social housing benefit relatively less from them than Italian population. In 2006 and 2007 they represented only 26% of the total benefit families.

*Has there been a spread in critical situations such as overcrowding, difficult affordability, hard hygienic conditions, evictions, homelessness? What social groups have been mainly been affected?*

According to many observers, in the last years there has been a differentiation and pluralisation of housing distress causes and forms. According to the only data available (Census 2001), overcrowding situations have decreased since comparing 1971 to 2001, each resident has a residential space 30% larger. According to Menonna (2010), the overcrowding index is 0.6 for the whole city.

An evident indicator of housing vulnerability regards tenure status. Evictions procedures started to grow again after 2007 with a huge acceleration in 2010. Evictions for arrears almost doubled between 2007 and 2010 in the city, passing from 285 to 564. In 2011 they are estimated to be more than 600, involving families that were economically solid, not able any more to pay their rents because of the loss of occupation (internal documents Comune di Brescia 2011). Even if there is no systematic empirical data about the impact caused by the economic crises on housing needs and hardships, many observers state that migrant families' capacity to cope with mortgage costs and housing costs in general are decreasing fast and many of them are losing their homes because of banks executions. It has been observed also that migrant families risked too much in taking mortgages in the last years.

In public dwellings the arrears on total due revenues passed from 3.3% in 2001 to 6.5% in 2006 (Censis- Federcasa 2008), an important indicator of hardship for families living there.

According to the Regional law 27/2007 that imposes the revision of rental values in public housing units, prices in Brescia increased in average 30% more at 50% which, according to observers will constitute a hardship factor for many families actually living in public dwellings.

*What has changed in the most critical urban areas with high concentration of problematic social groups? E.g. worsening or improvement of existing problems, emerging of new problems, etc.*

Brescia has renewed a central and historical neighborhood called "Il Carmine" with a Recuperation Plan since 2001 (using the law 457/1978). It was mainly inhabited by migrants because properties were very degraded and rents quite low compared to other areas of the city. Security problems were overcome due to the renewal interventions that consisted in the recuperation of degraded private buildings, the installment of public facilities and public spaces, the promotion of economic activities and territorial control actions. Il Carmine hosts many migrant commercial activities but it is not appealing any more for residential uses.

There is a huge concentration of Senegalese migrants in a completely degraded Residence called "Prealpino" which is considered to represent an "acute social problem" (Comune di Brescia 2008, p. 17). They have been evacuated many times in these years but they did not leave the building, opening an inter-institutional table with the Municipality of Brescia and ALER Brescia.

#### **4.2. Public regulation**

*What is the division of responsibilities among national, regional and municipal level in the regulation of the housing market and in the provision of services and benefits to people who have difficult access to the house (including social housing)? What is the role played by third sector and for profit organisations in this policy field?*

There were no particular changes towards housing policies regulations in the last years but it is worth mentioning that many projects were launched at the Municipal level to redesign internal competences to what regards housing issues. There is a direct relationship between ALER Brescia and the Municipality.

The non-profit sector has a strong and long tradition in managing housing services for frail or problematic situations in Lombardy, much less in building or managing standard residential units at affordable prices, with the exception of building and inhabitants' cooperatives that have been among the most important actors in the urbanisation of the city during 20<sup>th</sup> century (Caroli et al 2005).

The issue of "social housing" developed by private actors is developing in the country<sup>7</sup> but the pluralisation of actors in the social housing arena has to face two main obstacles: the weakness of the third sector and the effective contribution that private actors can make in the production of social units (Rabaiotti 2007).

The most important non-profit organisation in the housing field is the "Congrega Apostolica" which plays an important role in renewing and managing dwellings in Brescia, been sometimes active actors and partners in large investment programs. Other organisations are developing mainly through the support of Bank Foundations<sup>8</sup>. Non-profit

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<sup>7</sup> As showed in WP2, following local experiences, the 2008 Budget Law (law 244/2007) defined a new typology of dwellings defined "residence of general interest destined to location", non luxurious real estate localised in Municipalities with "high tension housing needs" and bound by contract to at least 25 years renting destination. The law introduces an important principle: dwellings destined to long term renting, even if private, represent an economic service of general interest. They can be privileged by tax exemptions, and by planning and economic support by public actors (ANCI 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See ANCI (2010) for the experience of the "Immobiliare Bresciana".

agencies are pretty much involved in programs that plan to support inhabitants with "housing services", like the "*Contratti di quartiere*" among others.

A recent study in Lombardy mapped organisations housing services for migrants, be they first aid solutions or more continuous ones. A recent study in Lombardy mapped organisations housing services for migrants, be they first aid solutions or more continuous ones. The Province of Brescia is the second in all Region in terms of number of places, after the capital province, Milan (Orim 2011). Private structures (33) are much more than public ones (5). There are available 974 places but only 3,6% for emergency situations; what seems to be a good indicators of the capacity of giving support to frail populations (*ibidem*).

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### THE WILCO PROJECT

**Full title:** Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion

**Acronym:** WILCO

**Duration:** 36 months (2010-2013)

**Project's website:** <http://www.wilcoproject.eu>

#### **Project's objective and mission:**

WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The results will be directly connected to the needs of practitioners, through strong interaction with stakeholders and urban policy recommendations. In doing so, we will connect issues of immediate practical relevance with state-of-the-art academic research on how approaches and instruments in local welfare function in practice.

#### **Brief description:**

The effort to strengthen social cohesion and lower social inequalities is among Europe's main policy challenges. Local welfare systems are at the forefront of the struggle to address this challenge - and they are far from winning. While the statistics show some positive signs, the overall picture still shows sharp and sometimes rising inequalities, a loss of social cohesion and failing policies of integration.

But, contrary to what is sometimes thought, a lack of bottom-up innovation is not the issue in itself. European cities are teeming with new ideas, initiated by citizens, professionals and policymakers. The problem is, rather, that innovations taking place in the city are not effectively disseminated because they are not sufficiently understood. Many innovations are not picked up, because their relevance is not recognised; others fail after they have been reproduced elsewhere, because they were not suitable to the different conditions, in another city, in another country.

In the framework of WILCO, innovation in cities is explored, not as a disconnected phenomenon, but as an element in a tradition of welfare that is part of particular socio-economic models and the result of specific national and local cultures. Contextualising innovations in local welfare will allow a more effective understanding of how they could work in other cities, for the benefit of other citizens.