

Italy

About



The progress of gender equality in the Italian legislative framework was due mainly to the need to adopt European Union (EU) directives and to the use of European Funds during the 1990s and 2000s.

In 2006, the National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men was established, with the view to regulating the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men in all areas of society. It organised and harmonised 11 laws on equal opportunities in a single text

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The strategic goal of gender mainstreaming was first foreseen in 1997 by the Directive Prodi-Finocchiaro, and reinforced two years later by the introduction of the first gender-mainstreaming operational tool (VISPO), which was fully developed during the 2000–2006 planning period. VISPO aimed at mainstreaming equal opportunities in regional programmes and facilitating the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the new programming period for use of Structural Funds.

Indeed, from 2000 onwards, gender-mainstreaming actions and activities have been coordinated through the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes. The Equal Opportunities Department is responsible for gender policy in Structural Fund planning, and coordinates and manages the complex framework set up at national and local levels to support equal opportunity policies.

Structures



At national level, gender mainstreaming is primarily coordinated by the Department for Equal

Opportunities within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (under the Vice-Minister for Labour and Social Policies). It was established in 1997 and acts as an operational unit. The department is in charge of designing, coordinating and monitoring policies for the promotion of equal opportunities.

Moreover, several gender-equality structures with advisory and monitoring functions have been established both at national and local level. These include the National Commission for Equality of Men and Women and the Equal Opportunity Commissions operating at local level, as well as the Network of Equality Advisors in the field of employment, and a National Committee responsible for proposing, informing and promoting positive actions in the field of equal opportunities in the labour market.

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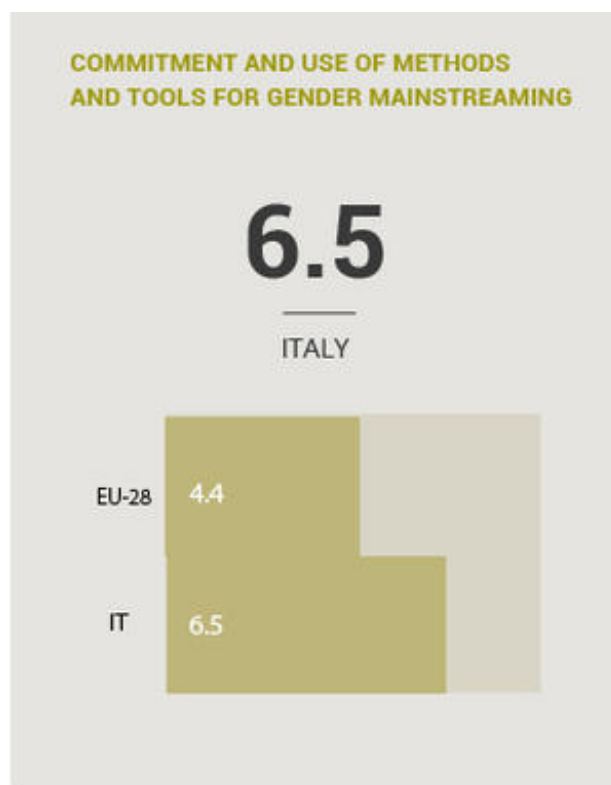
Laws and policies

The National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men provides the legal framework for the development of gender equality and gender mainstreaming at national level. Moreover, several guidelines provide for the implementation of gender mainstreaming both at national level. These include the directive on promoting the implementation of gender-mainstreaming methods within public administrations and the Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive on actions to promote the allocation of powers and responsibilities to women. However, as a political document, this directive was no longer considered a point of reference to guide national policies after the collapse of the government, and no new guidance document has been created by subsequent governments. VISPO – Strategic Impact Assessment on Equal Opportunity is a tool for implementing gender mainstreaming at local level, including gender impact assessment, gender analysis and evaluation.

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Methods and tools



At regional level, the VISPO guidelines provide a framework for the development of a model for the evaluation of equal opportunities, including gender impact assessment, gender analysis and evaluation. Other methods include capacity-building and gender planning. Since 2006, the Equal Opportunity Department has collaborated with the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT) to create three gender-sensitive surveys, namely gender-based violence, work–life balance and women’s participation in public life.

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Good practices

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