



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità

National Strategy for Gender Equality

JULY 2021

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Foreword

The equality of citizens is one of the principles that deeply underpin the democratic life of our Republic and it is also one of the goals towards which our democracy is always required to work in order to be truly successful. In 2021, there are still profound inequalities affecting the everyday lives of women in our country, starting with the enjoyment of their rights. Unfortunately, our civil coexistence lacks gender equality in many respects, an equality that is all too often neglected even by the institutions themselves.

Seeking and pursuing equal opportunities means looking at the constitutional principles of equality to make them history in the stories of today's women and men. It means choosing to eradicate the unjust concepts and behaviours that still prevent female citizens from living, being and acting as equals with all other citizens. And this is the case in all aspects of life and at all levels, from work to family, from social to institutional commitment.

To overcome the actual gender inequalities of treatment, we need to structurally reform the welfare and investment system, to allow women to pursue the same goals as men in terms of fair competition and equal responsibility and recognition. The effect of the CoVid-19 pandemic has made this need more pressing around the world: as a result of the crisis, women are now 1.8 times more likely to lose their jobs than men, also due to the significant burden that the virus has imposed on unpaid care activities, which traditionally fell largely on women. If no action is taken to counter this growing employment imbalance, global GDP could drop¹ by more than USD 1 trillion by 2030.

We know that to achieve a real gender equality we need a profound social change. However, we also know that we are already in the midst of such change, which we have wanted, chosen, initiated.

Gender equality is an extraordinary driver of growth² and one of the most relevant and urgent cornerstones of the development and progress agenda of countries: the United Nations has listed Gender Equality as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, the European Union has promoted a Strategic Engagement on Gender Equality for the three-year period 2016-19 and a new Strategy for the five-year period 2020-2025.

It is in this context that, in full agreement with the European guidelines, the Italian Government has decided to draft this National Strategy (hereinafter the "Strategy"). It is the first in our history and it is intended to offer a clear perspective and a concrete path towards gender equality and equal opportunities, to clearly outline a system of integrated political actions bringing to life concrete, defined and measurable initiatives.

In drafting this document, which serves as a strategic framework for the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and the reform of the Family Act, the Department for Equal Opportunities started a wide-ranging and inclusive process, whereby the contributions from central Administrations, Regional and Local Authorities, as well as social partners and the

¹ COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects, McKinsey Global Institute (2020).

² Promuovere concretamente e urgentemente la parità di genere potrebbe valere fino a 13 mila miliardi di dollari di PIL mondiale al 2030. Cf. The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth, McKinsey Global Institute (2015) e COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects, McKinsey Global Institute (2020).

main associations active in promoting gender equality were collected, integrated and duly exploited. This joint effort makes this Strategy a shared asset: the path that was designed and mapped out together to move the country forward and see it finally reinvigorated by women's energy, ideas and freedom.

Background

Analytical approach

The first step in defining a National Strategy for Gender Equality is to fully understand the Italian context, the specific cases that have evolved the most and the areas of action identified as high priority.

To this end, a comparison of the Italian context with other European Union countries is made to ensure comparability between countries having similar cultural contexts and legislative approaches and, at the same time, countries with better record in terms of gender equality that have already faced changes in the intended direction.

The data used as reference for the analysis comes mainly from the Gender Equality Index (hereinafter the Index), developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (hereinafter EIGE) by aggregating data at national and European level, to ensure (i) certification and transparency of the data, given that it is published by an independent and recognised institute, (ii) full comparability, since EIGE adopts a standard methodology for data collection and processing, and (iii) temporal granularity of the time series, since the index has been published biennially since 2013.

The Index gives each country an overall score for its performance in the main areas surveyed by EIGE. This analysis focuses on the five domains - i.e. Employment (i.e. employment status), Income (i.e. economic and income status), Skills (i.e. education and training), Time (i.e. extra-work activities) and Power (i.e. leadership positions) - where Italy's gap with other countries and/or progress in recent years is most significant.

The aim of this comparison is to identify gender inequality situations as measured by the individual indicators: substantial inequality is considered negative regardless of the "advantaged" gender. In assessing the Italian context, the main benchmarks are (i) average of the 28 European Union countries and the best performing countries in terms of gender equality and (ii) the achievement of full gender equality.

The data presented by the Index predates the CoViD-19 pandemic, whose overall impact on the status of women and any potential opportunities that may have arisen are still being assessed and measured.

Finally, it should be noted that unlike the European Strategy on Gender Equality 2020-2025, this Strategy does not explicitly address or elaborate on gender-based violence. The latter, as known, is closely linked to the persistence of strong inequalities between men and women and there is full awareness of how women's empowerment represents one of the key points of the violence prevention strategy. Nevertheless, the problem of gender-based violence against women is the subject of a specific regulatory framework, partly linked to the commitments undertaken by Italy upon ratification of the Istanbul Convention. However, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers will be in charge of ensuring suitable coordination and dialogue as part of the implementation of the two Strategic Plans.

Italy in the European Context

From a comparative analysis with other European countries, Italy appears to have made significant progress in recent years, although the gap with respect to full equality and the most virtuous European countries is still significant and requires further progress.

In particular, Italy is currently ranked³ 14th in Europe for gender equality, with a Gender Equality Index score below the European average⁴ and well behind the top three countries (Sweden, Denmark and France), despite having made the most significant progress of all EU countries in recent years, with an increase of over 10 points over 7 years⁵.

This significant progress is mainly due to the improvement in terms of Power, i.e. 'leadership positions', which translates into female representation in top positions, as a result of a number of factors, the main one being the enforcement of the Golfo-Mosca Law on gender 'quotas' in the boards of directors of listed companies.

Analysing specific aspects, the situation in Italy appears to be broadly consistent, although areas such as employment status and extra-work commitments still show worrying data. At a social and cultural level, gender stereotypes also play a key role. These still support a view of women as subordinate to men, with such stereotypes being equally prevalent among men and women⁶.

In particular, the most popular belief among people as a whole, but also significantly among youths⁷, is that personal success and fulfilment at work are more important for men than for women⁸. This stereotypical view of men's and women's roles is also linked to gender-based violence: while violence is unacceptable for more than 90 per cent of people, in some regions of Italy up to 50 per cent of men consider violence in relationships to be acceptable, at least in some circumstances, and 30 per cent of people under 30 consider it okay to regularly check their partner's mobile phone and social network activity⁹.

As the issue of gender stereotypes is difficult to measure, this survey is broken down into 5 main areas, where these socio-cultural factors are intended as cross-cutting and recurrent.

Employment

In terms of female participation in the labour market, occupational quality and segregation in different sectors, Italy ranks 28th (and last) in Europe: female employment is significantly lower than male employment, especially for mothers.

³ EIGE Gender Equality Index Report 2020 (mainly based on 2018 data)

⁴ The European average is calculated taking into account the 28 EU Member States.

⁵ Calculated by comparing scores with EIGE Gender Equality Index Report 2013 (mainly based on 2010 data).

⁶ ISTAT – “Gli stereotipi sui ruoli di Genere” 2019

⁷ Save the Children and IPSOS “Stereotipi di Genere” 2020

⁸ ISTAT – “Gli stereotipi sui ruoli di Genere” 2019

⁹ ISTAT – “Gli stereotipi sui ruoli di Genere” 2019

The female employment rate (about 30% if calculated in FTE¹⁰) is lower than for men by more than 20 percentage points. This difference is also determined by the difference in total hours worked: 33% of employed women are part-timers compared to only 8% of men. As regards women's participation in the labour market, the decrease in the number of female hires registered in the targeted employment system - from 41.8 per cent in 2016 to 41.3 per cent in 2018 - which does not take into account the effects of the pandemic on the labour market participation of people with disabilities, and women in particular, is also critical¹¹.

In general, the crisis triggered by the pandemic has mainly affected female-dominated sectors: in 2020, women experienced a higher decrease in labour market participation than men (employment rate dropped from 50.1% in 2019 to 49% in 2020 for women¹² and from 68% to 67.2% for men). In early 2021, however, a year-on-year comparison of employment trends between genders shows slight signs of change: *"between February 2020 and April 2021, the number of employed women fell by 3.3% and the number of employed men by 3.6%, while trends in unemployment and inactivity rates showed a greater shift of men towards inactivity. Over fourteen months, the male unemployment rate rose to 9.8%, an increase by 0.9 points, and the share of inactive 15-64 year olds increased by 1.8 points (to 27.1%); for women, however, the unemployment rate increased by one point and the inactivity rate by 0.9 points to 11.9% and 45.2% respectively."*¹³

Parenthood has a significant negative impact on women's employment status: the difference in employment rates between mothers and fathers is as much as 30 percentage points and accounts for the widest gap in Europe; in fact, 38% of women change their employment status for family reasons (compared with 12% of men) and 33% of women stop working after having their first child, with rising rates as the number of children increases.

Occupational segregation in business sectors is also striking: women's participation in education, health and social work is significantly higher than for men across Europe, with only 26% of men employed in these sectors¹⁴.

Finally, the situation of women in entrepreneurial activity is particularly critical. As of today there are just over one million 'female' businesses¹⁵, or 22% of the total number of businesses in Italy, compared to a European average of over 30% in 2014. It should be noted that there are substantial differences between regions, with higher percentages in the south of Italy (27% in Molise and 18% in Trentino-Alto Adige) and between business sectors, where enterprises are mainly active in traditional sectors (services, health, education, accommodation and catering).

¹⁰ Full-time equivalents, i.e. measuring each worker by the "time" worked (each worker is worth 1 if working "full time" and a fraction of 1 proportional to the hours worked in the case of "part time" employment)

¹¹ Report on the current implementation of the Law on the Right to Employment of Disabled Persons by the Minister of Labour, submitted to Parliament in January 2021 and concerning 2016-2018

¹² See. ISTAT, Indicatori territoriali per le politiche di sviluppo - Statistiche sez. indice, indicatori e dati - Lavoro.

¹³ See. ISTAT, 2021 Annual Report, "La situazione del Paese".

¹⁴ *Gender segregation in education, training and the labour market* - EIGE report for the Council of the European Union, 2017

¹⁵ Defined by Unioncamere ('Rapporto Imprenditoria Femminile 2020') as sole proprietorships with female owners, partnerships with a majority of partners who are women, corporations where the majority of shares are owned by women, and cooperatives where the majority of partners are women.

Income

Considering the income and financial status of women, Italy is ranked 15th and in any case below the European average, showing a significant pay gap between women and men and a higher risk of poverty for women than for men. In particular, such a difference appears to be particularly striking in the private sector, with the gap widening as experience and skills increase.

In fact, if the country's gender pay gap is estimated at around 5% (equal to about € 946 of lower annual salary for Italian women), considering only the private sector, this difference is more than 20%, and reaches about 24% when hours worked are taken into account. According to the latest available Eurostat data, the gender pay gap in Italy in the private sector was 17% in 2019, having fallen compared to 2017 when it totalled 20.7%. In 2019, it stood at 22.9% in Germany and 20.4% in the Netherlands.

This gap widens further as skills and specialisation increase (33% for graduates alone compared to 10% for non-graduates¹⁶) and in typically "male" sectors with higher pay levels (26.4% for financial services companies and 16% for general services companies compared to -15.4% for construction companies and almost no difference for farms).

Given this gender pay gap, the strategy will also monitor this trend in the course of its implementation by means of specific tools and indicators, such as equal pay.

A disadvantaged economic condition lasts a lifetime: the gender pay gap is also reflected in a significant gender pension gap (30.8% and 32.1% in Europe and Italy respectively¹⁷), and both contribute to a lower saving capacity of women compared to men.

Skills

In terms of participation in education, achievements and segregation in academic career paths (especially for higher education), Italy is below the European average and ranks 12th among the other Member States.

Even though women are, on average, better educated than men (54% of the total number of European graduates¹⁸ and 59% of Italian graduates are women¹⁹, whereas in Italy the average graduation score for women is 2 points higher than for men), educational segregation is still significantly widespread.

While women are by far the most represented gender among graduates in teaching, psychology and law (94%, 81% and 64% respectively²⁰), the gender gap in STEM²¹ studies is the opposite, with women accounting for only around 27% (and 25% across Europe²²). This is particularly worrying also because it is strongly correlated with the gender gap on employment and pay, as these skills are currently the most in demand and best paid in the labour market.

¹⁶ Job Pricing, GENDER GAP REPORT 2020

¹⁷ Eurostat, Gender pension gap by age group – EU-SILC survey – 2017 data

¹⁸ Eurostat

¹⁹ Report AlmaLaurea – Profilo dei laureati 2020

²⁰ Ibidem

²¹ *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*, i.e. science and technology studies

²² 2017 Eurostat data for STEM disciplines

The gender gap is also evident in academic careers, as only 11% of full professors in Italy are women²³ (much lower than in more virtuous countries, like the United States, where only 28% are women in any case²⁴). This trend is exacerbated both by the long timeframe of the academic career path, which in fact prolongs the effects of a still greater segregation of women of previous decades, and by a "funnel" effect, which widens the gap throughout individual career paths (by way of example, the percentage of women among assistant professors is reduced by more than half when it comes to full professors, falling from 50% to 22% in Finland, from 47% to 28% in the United States and from 33% to 11% in Italy).

Time

As for the use of time, especially unpaid time devoted to care activities for the household/family/others (e.g. children, parents, elderly, in-patients) and to social and recreational activities, Italy ranks 17th, with a significant imbalance between the time devoted by women to family and domestic care compared to men (Italy is last in Europe in this respect); the opposite is true for leisure activities.

If it is certainly correct that throughout Europe the percentage of women involved in unpaid care and assistance activities is always higher than men's, the Italian context is significantly unbalanced: considering the gender gap in household care, Italy is ranked last in Europe with 81% of women dedicated to this activity every day compared to 20% of men (as opposed to 79%-34% in Europe and 74%-56% in Sweden). The belief that running a home and caring for children is the primary or exclusive responsibility of women leads to significant time and psychological strain. This problem has also been significantly and directly exacerbated by CoViD-19.

When looking at the gap between female and male workers engaging in sports, leisure or cultural activities outside of their homes, the proportion is higher for male than female workers in almost all of Europe, with the exception of Finland, Hungary and Denmark: cultural factors and "free" time available are the main factors driving this disparity.

Power

The overall situation in Italy regarding the representation of women in positions of power and in management bodies at political, economic and social level has improved significantly, mainly thanks to progress in terms of female participation in boards of directors. To date, female representation is higher than the European average, primarily as a result of initiatives such as the Golfo-Mosca Law: the proportion of women on the boards of listed companies is approaching 40% (38.8% in 2020), almost four times higher than prior to the adoption of said law (11.6% in 2012); in public companies, women hold one-third of the positions (33.1% in 2020) on the boards of directors and auditors, almost double the number in 2014 (17.5%). However, there is still a significant disparity in companies not subject to this law (where participation is only around 18%²⁵) and with respect to the most advanced countries in Europe (such as France, where participation stands at 44% and quotas are extended to unlisted companies with over 250 employees).

However, discrepancies in other top positions remain significant.

²³ Data from the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research for the academic year 2019/2020

²⁴ According to estimates by the European University Institute - these data, dating back to 2017, estimate the number of female full professors in Italy at 11.4%.

²⁵ Cerved-Fondazione Marisa Bellisario, 2020

Participation in top public administration bodies is more or less in line with the European average at national level (with around 35% in Government and Parliament), although it lags behind the more advanced countries (for example Sweden, Finland, France), which have now achieved parity; by contrast, the gap at regional and local authority level is still bigger (below 20%), partly due to a lack of rules and less media attention.

Finally, female representation in the top positions of the most important socio-cultural organisations (e.g. research institutes, public service broadcasting companies, Olympic committees) is still very low and far from the most virtuous countries (which have de facto achieved parity).

Impact of CoViD-19 on women's status

This paper presents statistics and measurements from the most up-to-date findings, often covering the year 2019. However, it should be noted that the effects of the CoViD-19 pandemic have in general led to economic and social dynamics that exacerbate gender inequalities.

This is confirmed not only by the main and most reliable sources of information, but also by the available preliminary data. The most recent ISTAT data shows²⁶ that the decrease in female employment is approximately 2.5 times greater than for men, also due to the high number of women in sectors most affected by the pandemic, such as housework, hotels and catering, hospitality and trade. Moreover, in December 2020 alone, an alarming 98% of the approximately 100,000 people who lost their jobs²⁷ were women. The estimates of the International Labour Office (ILO) on the unemployment rate confirm this particularly negative trend for women also at European level (the female unemployment rate has increased by +16% year-on-year) and is particularly dramatic in Italy (+30% by the same indicator).

Regional inequalities

A regional overview of the Italian context with respect to the targets set by the Lisbon Strategy clearly shows that Italy's disappointing results in the Gender Equality Index are largely linked to the performance of the southern regions.

With regard to the Employment objective set in Lisbon (60 per cent of women in employment by 2010), the female employment rate in the North²⁸ - 11 years later - is still one point off: 59 per cent. The South is stuck at 32.5% with only a few regions (Campania, Sicily) standing at 28-29%. The incidence of NEETs²⁹ (young women who are not in education or employment) in the 15-29 age bracket is 19.7 per cent in the North and 34.2 per cent in the South, with peaks of 36.2 per cent (Campania). Female graduates or those with other higher educational qualifications in the 30-34 age bracket³⁰ account for 37.1 per cent in the North and 27 per cent in the South: in both areas the number of female graduates exceeds the number of male graduates (25.6 and 15.8 per cent respectively), although it is still far from the European averages (46.1 per cent). This confirms not only regional inequalities, but also the 'Italian paradox' whereby a higher number of qualified women does not translate into a higher number of employed women. With regard to the objective

²⁶ Year-on-year (December 2019-December 2020)

²⁷ Compared to November 2020

²⁸ 2020 Istat data

²⁹ 2020 Istat data

³⁰ 2019 Istat data

of 33 day-care centres for every 100 children set by Lisbon by 2010 (a share to be achieved through public and private partnerships), the North stands at 29.2 per cent eleven years later³¹ while the South accounts for 22.6 per cent. Among the northern regions, only four (Valle D'Aosta, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and the autonomous province of Trento) exceed this share. None of the southern regions gets even close to the target: four regions (Abruzzo, Campania, Basilicata and Calabria) are below 20 per cent.

Actively contributing to overcoming regional inequalities is one of the main conditions for a successful implementation of this Strategy. With respect to the relevant areas examined (employment, income, skills, time and power), specific target values may be identified for southern Italy, i.e. specific and measurable improvement rates to be achieved by 2026.

Government action will be oriented towards tailoring the measures proposed by the Strategy to regional inequalities, so as to ensure that progress in the various indicators is more consistent in areas that lag furthest behind.

This is crucial, since gender-neutral policies can also widen existing gaps.

³¹ 2019-2020 Istat survey

Five-year vision and ambition

The National Strategy for Gender Equality is part of the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and its goals, and is developed on the basis of a long-term vision for Italy embodying its values, policy guidelines and goal in terms of gender equality.

This vision is then articulated into a five-year ambition that is the goal to be pursued in the relevant period 2021-2026, then further broken down into five strategic priorities aimed at guiding government action along five priority action areas.

Italy's vision for gender equality is:

Making Italy a country where people of all genders, ages and backgrounds have the same opportunities for personal and professional development and growth, for access to education and employment, with no inequality in terms of income or dignity, and can realise their potential, knowing that equality is guaranteed with no compromises in a modern country that is ready to face the challenges ahead.

This vision takes into account not only the institutional orientation and the contribution of the many social partners involved, but also the principles set out in Article 3 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic: "[...] *It is the task of the Republic to remove economic and social obstacles which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person [...]*".

The Strategy's five-year ambition outlines a clear goal to pursue::

Gain 5 points in EIGE Gender Equality Index ranking over the next 5 years, to outperform the European average by 2026 and to be among the top 10 European countries in 10 years.

The ambition defines in a quantitative and measurable way the overall goal in terms of progress on gender equality, using the ranking as calculated by EIGE and the score given to each European country following the assessment of multiple dimensions in line with the 5 strategic priorities of the Strategy.

The ambition defines a global goal in terms of total score ("gain 5 points") and a specific goal with respect to other European countries, both within the Strategy's timeframe ("to outperform the European average by 2026") and in subsequent years ("to be among the top 10 in 10 years"). In fact, the Strategy intends to outline initiatives that will lead to a significant improvement for the country and reaffirm its leading role at European level.

It should be noted that EIGE score and ranking generally measure the difference between several indicators calculated for women and men. The ambition is closely linked to improving the situation of the historically disadvantaged female gender. An improvement in scores due to a worsening of the status of men or the historically advantaged gender, rather than an actual improvement of the status of women or the historically disadvantaged gender, is not part of the Strategy's goals. The same applies in the case of worsening scores in other European countries, as they would imply a worsening of the female situation in the European Union.

To pursue the ambition, 5 strategic priorities are also defined, one for each gender equality pillar, to outline and guide government action:

- **Employment:** Create a fairer labour market in terms of equal career opportunities, competitiveness and flexibility, by supporting women's participation, also after the dramatic impact of the pandemic, in particular by helping parents to achieve a work-life balance, and by stimulating female entrepreneurship, especially in innovation. Supporting the increase in female employment, in particular by enhancing collective bargaining, emphasising the quality of work, and removing sectoral segregation - promoting the presence of women in typically male sectors and the presence of men in typically female sectors;
- **Income:** Reduce gender pay gaps by facilitating women's participation and retention in the labour market through support for care responsibilities, enhancing skills, ensuring fair remuneration for jobs and occupations with equivalent socio-economic value and promoting economic independence.
- **Skills:** Ensure equal opportunities in skills development and in the expression of individual talents in all fields of knowledge, in particular mathematics and science and technology, by removing cultural barriers and gender stereotypes, as well as ensuring equal gender representation in academia; in addition, promote an approach towards desegregating women's and men's skills in all gender-sensitive fields.
- **Time:** Promote equal sharing of unpaid care and assistance tasks (childcare, parenting and elderly care) between men and women and ensure quality, affordable and comprehensive primary care throughout the country.
- **Power:** Support an equitable gender distribution in top management and economic, political, social and cultural leadership roles, in terms of both representation and accountability, and encourage the training and development of a large talent pool of equal gender representation.

Indicators and Targets

Starting from the above vision and ambition, and considering the strategic priorities, a set of indicators is defined to measure key factors of gender inequality.

For these indicators, in addition to the current value, a target value is also identified, i.e. the specific and measurable goal to achieve; both are intended to guide government action and ultimately monitor the success of all initiatives.

The indicators are selected among those developed by the various official sources such as Ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research), European and international institutions (e.g. OECD), statistical institutes (e.g. ISTAT, Eurostat, Eurispes), trade associations (e.g. Unioncamere) and the like. The proposed indicators and their targets are detailed below, broken down by the five strategic priorities.

The set of indicators proposed below will be enriched and integrated with further indicators for monitoring the outputs of the strategy, specially selected in line with the provisions set out in the section "Strategy Implementation and Monitoring".

Employment

To reduce the gender employment gap and increase female participation in employment, with a focus on the inclusion of female parents and female entrepreneurship, the following are measured:

- **increase in the female employment rate.** In line with the objective set in the NRRP, the Strategy aims to help increase the female employment rate by four percentage points, bringing Italy in line with other benchmark countries. The relevance attributed to this goal, also in the Strategy, results from taking into consideration the serious effects of the pandemic crisis on the gender gap in employment, along with the specific goal on the **difference between the female and male employment rate**³² - In 2019³³, the difference was about 27 percentage points ('p.p.') and the target was to reduce it to less than 24 p.p.: This is a challenging goal, especially considering the further negative impact of the pandemic, but nevertheless achievable, since it reflects comparable efforts to those made by European countries like Italy (e.g. the United Kingdom has recorded a 23 p.p. reduction in the gap over the last five years, starting from a comparable scenario);
- **An additional gap in female employment rate for women with children** (compared to women having none)³⁴ - This gap (adding to the difference in the gender employment rate) is currently about 12 p.p. and the aim is to reduce it to less than 10 p.p., bringing it in line

³² Measured in FTE (Full Time Equivalents), as calculated by the OECD, so as to reflect the structurally different prevalence of part-time work between men and women.

³³ Pre-CoViD-19 situation.

³⁴ Further employment gap for mothers, calculated by comparing the difference in employment rates of childless women and men and that of mothers and fathers on a unit basis (per worker, not in FTE), based on Istat and Eurostat; 2019 data.

with the European average (9 - 9.5 p.p.³⁵) or peer countries (approx. 9 p.p. in Spain and 8 p.p. in France);

- **The percentage of 'female' businesses³⁶ out of the total number of active ones** - the percentage, currently at 22%, should reach about 30%, bringing us into line with the European context and resulting in a growth of less than 1.5 p.p. per year.

Income

To reduce gender pay gaps, particularly in the private sector and for positions requiring a medium-high level of technical and managerial skills, the following are measured:

- The **gender pay gap in the private sector**, i.e. the difference between the average female and male salary³⁷ - this value is currently at 17%³⁸ and the aim is to reduce it to about 10%, a more challenging decrease than what happened in Italy in the last years (e.g. from 2013 to 2018, the difference was about 3 p.p.) in order to get closer to the European context (in Sweden, the pay gap is already at 11.5%). The goal of reducing the gender pension gap - which also derives from lower female participation in the labour market, the pay gap, shorter and more fragmented contribution periods - could also be considered and measured.
- The **gender pay gap for graduate workers³⁹** - the pay gap rises to 22%⁴⁰ if we consider only graduate workers and should be reduced to below 15% (between 2013 and 2017 a 3 p.p. reduction has already been achieved in a few sectors such as professional, scientific and technical activities).

In general, as already outlined in the background review, additional tools and possibly dedicated indicators (such as Equal Pay) will be used here to also account for the different factors affecting the overall gender pay gap (such as differences in terms of hours worked, type of work, company size etc).

Skills

To ensure equal access and equal development of mathematical and scientific skills as a means of reducing the gender gap in education, the following are measured:

- **The percentage of female seniors in high school who do not yet have the minimum skills level in mathematics⁴¹** - around 50% compared to 36% of male

³⁵ Assuming a proportion of 1, 2 and 3+ children in line with Italy (around 51%, 41%, 8%), source Eurostat data

³⁶ According to the 'IV report on Female Entrepreneurship' published by Unioncamere

³⁷ In percentage delta to the median male wage, calculated by Eurostat

³⁸ 2018 data

³⁹ i.e. the difference between average gross hourly pay for female and male employees with at least a bachelor's degree, 2017 ISTAT data

⁴⁰ 2017 data

⁴¹ Compared to the total number of female students as calculated by the Invalsi Institute on the 2018 PISA tests for seniors

seniors: the minimum target is to bring this percentage down to less than 35%⁴², in order to at least bridge the gender gap; this does not exclude a set of actions aimed at raising the skill level for all students;

- **The percentage of female students enrolling in STEM degree programmes**⁴³ - this percentage, compared to the total number of enrolled students⁴⁴, is currently 27%, and should be at least 35%, following the steady progress of recent years in our country and in line with the best European countries (e.g. Sweden, where this percentage is already 32%);

To increase female participation in the academic world, the following is measured:

- **The percentage of female full professors**⁴⁵ in relation to the total - currently at 25%, expected to be around 40%, corresponding to the share of female professors in previous levels of the academic career (Level II), i.e. around 39% of the total⁴⁶;

To enhance the digital and information and communication technology ("ICT") skills of women, the following is measured:

- **The percentage of women with "above-average" digital skills** out of the total female population - today only 19% are "above-average", which is below both their male counterparts and the European female average (currently at 30%): the aim is to increase digital skills to around 35%, bringing them into line with peer countries such as Spain and Ireland (currently at 33-35%, with a recent increase by 10 p.p.); however, this figure would still be below the most advanced countries with rates above 50%.

Time

To reduce the burden of parenting and caring mainly borne by mothers and to promote a fairer sharing of these tasks between men and women, also by ensuring an accessible and quality supply of childcare services, the following are measured:

- **The percentage of fathers taking paternity leave**⁴⁷ - currently only 21% of those entitled, whereas the target is over 50%, in line with virtuous examples from European countries that have introduced compulsory parental leave by law supported by institutions, where this percentage is much higher (e.g. 70% in Sweden); in addition to this indicator, the percentage of fathers currently benefiting from non-compulsory paternity leave will also be considered.

⁴² It should be noted that the difference between female and male students in other fields is, in general, much less dramatic and such trend is more significant in southern regions.

⁴³ Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction courses, Information and Communication Technology courses, FToE codes 6, 7 and the like

⁴⁴ MIUR data for the 2019/2020 academic year

⁴⁵ Considering Level I - Source MIUR Open Data

⁴⁶ Source data MIUR Open Data - 2019

⁴⁷ From "Osservatorio sui conti pubblici Italiani, issue "Congedi parentali e di maternità/paternità: chi si prende dei minori?" of March 2021", based on INPS data.

- The **availability of spots in open day-care centres**, out of the total number of eligible children (children under 3 years of age)⁴⁸ - currently about 25%, with substantial differences throughout the country: the twofold goal is therefore to exceed 50% coverage at a national level, but to reach at least 33% (i.e. the minimum value recommended by the European Union in 2010) in all Italian regions. This goal seems challenging, but achievable, if we look both at European economies like Italy, such as Belgium or France, where coverage is 51%, and at many Italian regions that have already achieved premium levels, such as Emilia Romagna (40%) or Valle d'Aosta (almost 50%). Major efforts are needed especially in southern regions, where the average is still below 15%.

Power

To promote greater and fairer representation of women in economic leadership roles, the following are measured:

- The **share of women on the boards of listed companies**⁴⁹ - this is currently 38.8%, where the goal is to exceed 45% by achieving substantial gender parity, following along the lines of more virtuous European (and non-European) countries (such as France, Iceland and Norway) that report over 45% female participation in boards already. The Strategy may consider including also public companies as part of the goal to exceed the current 28.8% of women on boards.
- The **share of women in top and management roles**⁵⁰, out of the total number of positions - currently around 24% whereas the goal is to reach around 35%, following along the lines of countries like Spain and Switzerland (currently above 33%) which have recorded a 4 p.p. increase over the last 5 years; however, this figure would still be lower than countries like Sweden (already above 40%)

To ensure a fair representation of men and women in the different institutional and government levels by promoting equal access to political representation, the following are measured:

- the share of women appointed in public entities, independent authorities and judiciary bodies.
- the **share of women in regional councils**⁵¹, out of the total number of elected members - currently about 21% on average: the goal is to reach at least about 40% on average at national level and ideally also for individual regional councils, following the example of regions like Emilia Romagna where the share is already 38%;
- The **number of regional electoral laws that include gender equality principles** both in the electoral lists (i.e. gender requirements in the composition of the lists) and in voting (e.g. gender preference or double preference), as defined by Law 165 of 2004 and according to the feedback from the Senate of the Republic presented in

⁴⁸ As a percentage of available spots over total potential users - Source: 2017-18 ISTAT report on day-care centres

⁴⁹ According to the criteria already set out in Law 120/2011 (the so-called " Golfo-Mosca Law)

⁵⁰ *Senior and middle management*, as measured by the International Labour Organization ("ILO")

⁵¹ According to Openpolis (September 2020)

note 220 of August 2020 - to date, only 15 regional councils apply these principles⁵²; the aim is to see them applied in all 21 regional councils.

- the **share of women in the councils and governing bodies of municipal and provincial governments**, as well as in the entities, companies and institutions that depend on them.

⁵² The Autonomous Province of Trento also has its own law on this matter, i.e. no. 4 of 2018.

Measures

This section describes the key measures to achieve the goals set out in this paper. First of all, some cross-cutting and enabling measures are identified with respect to the whole Strategy. Next, measures related to the five strategic priorities (Employment, Income, Skills, Time, Power) are described by affinity. It should be noted that each measure can have effects on the other priorities and can contribute directly or indirectly to changing the socio-cultural context of reference and overcoming gender stereotypes.

It should also be pointed out that in some cases the proposed measures refer to, and make the most of, ongoing parliamentary and governmental activities, which, together with the provisions of the NRRP and the cohesion policy, will contribute to achieving the goals set by this Strategy. This is the case, for example, of the draft enabling law on the Family Act currently being examined by the Chamber of Deputies, and of the opinions recently rendered by Parliament on the draft EU directive to enforce equal pay for men and women.

Finally, the Strategy can be integrated with further general measures that may have different effects on gender when implemented (e.g. reform of social security systems) according to the gender assessment approach required by the EU and consolidated by EIGE.

Cross-cutting measures

- **Promoting gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting.** Measures to mainstream the gender perspective into all areas of social, economic and political life and to disseminate tools for assessing the impact of public policies on gender (gender budgeting).
- **Introducing gender impact assessment of all legislative initiatives.** To make the ex ante gender impact assessment method transversal and structural, introduction in all parliamentary committees, in addition to economic impact assessments, of a mandatory gender impact assessment as a methodology for the design and analysis of every legislative, regulatory and political initiative. By identifying regulatory, principle and implementation issues, this analysis could indicate which areas are relevant for gender equality and what the expected impact on gender equality is, laying the groundwork for an in-depth analysis of the most affected stakeholders and measuring (expected and actual) effects.
- **Taking into account challenging factors in the implementation of gender equality.** Addressing - in the design of legislation as well as throughout the implementation of the Strategy - the "men's issue" as a relevant criterion for all actions aimed at greater gender equality, to ensure greater understanding and support for the cause from male citizens as well as balanced social change.
- **Supporting vulnerabilities.** Mainstreaming of the gender perspective associated with the vulnerabilities (disability, social and economic hardship, violence, labour exploitation and gangmastering) in the design of the Measures of the Strategy and adoption of specific Measures for vulnerable targets.
- Promotion of the principles and of the instruments of the Gender Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP) as established by the decree-law of 31 May 2021, no. 77 ("Simplification Decree");

- **Strengthening of official statistics**, in order to reinforce the development of gender-disaggregated indicators, including administrative ones, through ISTAT and SISTAN; this will help collect increasingly detailed gender statistics covering different areas;
- **Promoting language that favours dialogue and overcomes sexist expressions or manifestations.** Adoption of a protocol for non-sexist and discriminatory language throughout the Public Administration and Public Offices, as well as sensitisation of the media and journalists through training courses on sexist and discriminatory gender language.
- **Establishing a "Cultural Pact" among institutions and between them and civil society to ensure collective action to promote gender equality.** Sharing and creating - with all the political, institutional, educational, association, trade union, journalistic and similar realities - a pact to guarantee equal opportunities and linguistic and factual gender equality, as well as appreciation of individual differences regardless of gender; such a pact shall be based on a set of shared values and ideas;
- **Keeping up the promotion of role models for gender equality and overcoming gender stereotypes:** promotion of positive role models for gender equality and for the deconstruction of gender stereotypes as well as the fight against hate speech and multiple discrimination through educational initiatives in schools and universities and dedicated communication campaigns, also focusing on women with disabilities, and in general on the risks linked to multiple discrimination.
- **Promoting gender-specific medicine. Initiatives for the integration of the gender perspective in medicine.** Looking at EIGE Gender Equality Index 2020, Italy has one of the highest scores in the "health" domain compared to the European average of 88.4. The life expectancy of women in Italy is 4.4 years higher than that of men. In the last 15 years in Italy, men have increased their life expectancy at birth by more than 2.6 years, compared with only 1.3 years for women. Women's higher life expectancy is characterised, however, by years of disability and illness as the number of healthy years of life is the same for men and women - 67 according to EIGE.
Gender-specific medicine means not only that medicine takes proper account of the differences between men and women in the face of health and illness, but also that medicine and surgery are adapted to gender differences. According to this approach, every doctor in every speciality must be aware of the gender differences of different diseases. Special attention will also be paid to specific topics, including reproductive health. A first step in this direction is the Plan for the application and dissemination of Gender Medicine, provided for in Article 3 of Law 3/2018, approved on 3 June 2019 after consultation in the State-Regions Conference. This National Strategy may represent an important opportunity for the entire NHS to take a step forward, also in terms of Basic Benefit Package.

Employment

The initiatives related to the strategic priority on **Employment** are:

- **Tax breaks or incentives for companies hiring women.** Tax breaks, or similar incentives, on the cost of labour for companies that hire female workers, thus extending to other age groups the provisions of the 2021 Budget Law (Law No. 178 of 30 December 2020, Article 1, paragraphs 16-19 for the exemption of women over 50 in the 2021-22 period). Possible implementation by reducing the percentage of the tax wedge for employers on the cost of individual employees, only for female workers within given limits

of gross remuneration and length of service (e.g., only for the first few years of employment). The aim is to encourage the hiring of a significant number of female employees in the coming years. Extending the benefit for further years should be considered in case the female employee, hired for an open-ended period, lost her job during the CoViD-19 pandemic. Part of these incentives could be made conditional on existing policies.

- **Strengthening, especially in the southern regions**, some of the incentives provided, such as decontribution for hiring women, measures for the effective use of part time employment, incentives to return to work after maternity leave, and for setting up female businesses.
- **Incentive to return to work after maternity leave.** Incentives for female workers in the form of a one-off bonus, to be paid directly or as an additional benefit to existing measures (e.g. baby bonus, child benefit, etc.) and also in proportion to the family ISEE; this is conditional on the mother continuing to work in the months following her return from maternity leave.
- **Limiting the exit from the labour market of new mothers.** Multi-year employer incentive in the form of a % cut in the tax wedge payable by the employer on the cost of a specific employee should the latter be promoted (with a resulting increase in salary) within the first few months after returning from maternity leave.
- **Limiting the exit from the labour market of female workers on fixed-term contracts.** Introduction of an additional tax reduction proportional to the employer's tax wedge for those enterprises that convert fixed-term contracts for maternity replacement into open-ended contracts by hiring female workers.
- **Incentives for the start-up of female enterprises.** Enhancing the Women's Entrepreneurship Fund to increase the resources directly granted to firms, i.e. tied to the financing of working capital and contributions, including non-refundable ones, but not intended for the promotion purposes currently provided for in the Fund. As a further incentive for female entrepreneurship, temporary management will be promoted to support female entrepreneurs, especially in small enterprises, to acquire new managerial skills and competences with respect to the evolving production context. Particular attention will be paid to inland and peripheral areas that are less covered by technical support structures.
- **Provision of facilitated credit to promote the growth and consolidation of female enterprises.** Setting up, within the existing Guarantee Fund for SMEs, of a specific additional allocation intended exclusively for female enterprises to facilitate access to bank credit for purchasing machinery or constructing buildings with low or zero energy impact, by means of a state guarantee on a given credit amount, limited in time and up to a maximum unit value for each investment. Potential option to act in continuity with existing policies. In the agricultural sector, strengthening of the existing measures for access to credit for women of all ages.
- **Reform of support for female entrepreneurs who are mothers.** Introducing protection measures, during and for the first months after pregnancy or adoption, for workers with a sole source of income from self-employment (e.g. VAT holders, entrepreneurs, researchers, scholarship holders, etc.) up to a maximum monthly amount and with a predefined duration, starting from a given month in pregnancy; this will be granted if a similar benefit is not provided by other bodies (e.g. social security funds, insurance

companies, pension funds) and considering a major reduction in turnover during the statutory maternity period.

- **Additional flexibility of remote working for parents with dependent children according to age requirements.** Guaranteeing by law the right to voluntary remote working - for tasks that allow it and taking into account the technical, organisational and production needs of the company – for a predetermined number of additional remote-working days for parents with children up to a maximum age limit, to be organised in agreement with the employer so as to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of work while balancing parental duties (this measure could also be extended to care givers). In this context, greater investment in digital technologies and in the development of managerial skills needed to reorganise work should also be supported.
- **Effective use of part-time work and reduction of involuntary part-time work.** Adoption of measures aimed at reducing involuntary part-time work or compulsory part-time work, which is one of the most segregating forms of female employment, with the aim of supporting female workers and limiting the spread of involuntary part-time work, also by amending the relevant legislation.
- **Governance and monitoring of diversity and gender parity in the business sector and in public administration.** For listed companies, responsibility for monitoring gender parity is assigned to a diversity manager, through a dedicated position or to an acting officer (e.g. Human Resources Director) reporting to top management. In all Public Administration bodies, this task may be carried out by a person who reports to or is a member of the Single Guarantee Committee for Equal Opportunities (i.e. CUG).
- **Definition of rules for the adoption of a Gender Policy in public and private companies and the disclosure of information on gender parity.** Extension of what has already been defined by the Ministerial Decree of 3 May 2018, for all companies above a certain number of employees (threshold introduced by the current legislation), of the obligation to (i) measure and analyse its wage gap annually, (ii) share the results of the analysis with its employees and the relevant authorities and (iii) define a Gender Policy, including, in case of existing inequality, improvement targets and concrete actions that the company intends to pursue to promote better gender equality. Extension of the obligation for listed companies to publish results, improvement goals and actions on their website should also be considered. Potential strengthening of corrective actions / sanctions imposed by the relevant authority in case of non-compliance with obligations.
- **Introduction of a national certification system for gender equality, based on the size/turnover of companies.** Possibility of certifying companies that are particularly virtuous with regard to gender equality issues, supporting them with incentive mechanisms so that they adopt adequate company policies to reduce the gender gap in all the most "critical" areas: growth opportunities in the company, equal pay for equal tasks, policies for managing gender differences, maternity protection. Corporate policies adopting specific measures (including positive discrimination) that go beyond specific regulatory provisions can also be promoted. The certification system may also be extended to companies operating in social agriculture as regards the introduction of new female jobs, also with a view to enhancing the quality of women's work in agriculture.

Income

The initiatives related to the strategic priority on **Income** are:

- **Definition of the gender pay gap in accordance with the law in order to clearly define illegal or irregular practices:** Definition of the gender pay gap in accordance with the law, with related sanctions for illegality and identification of threshold limits (e.g. 5% according to European Commission guidelines).
- **Adoption of equal pay measurement systems at company level** following a study aimed at (1) identifying the most suitable indicators for measuring equal pay, broken down according to the different factors affecting workers' pay (position, qualification, seniority); (2) defining a standard measure summarising the indicators described above, to be calculated by private companies and subsequently disclosed (e.g. on the corporate website); developing and providing companies with technical reference tools and support for calculating the indicators and the summary index.
- **Definition of guidelines for companies to adopt a Gender Policy** (see initiatives below) and introduction of ad hoc regulations that also take into account (i) the right of workers to ask for gender pay transparency and (ii) the ban for (prospective) employers to inquire about the candidate's previous wage levels (in line with European Commission guidelines).
- **Support for working mothers and fathers:** Raising the parental leave allowance, which is currently set at 30% of the ordinary wage for a period of 6 months. Increase in parental leave days for fathers, along the lines of the increase to 10 days already provided by the 2021 Budget Law for working fathers in the private sector (Art. 1, para. 363) and as part of the broader Family Act strategy; the aim is to provide an instrument equally enjoyed by both parents, in order to overcome the stereotype of solely maternal care.
- **Analysis of the penalising factors for women and creation of credit/micro-credit products for low-income women/victims of violence/single or divorced mothers:** Introduction of facilitated credit instruments, channelled through the banking system, potentially in the form of discounts on credit rates for female borrowers and flexibility, as for instance the option to freeze the mortgage for some time for women in difficulty (e.g. newly divorced or single mothers on low incomes or unemployed, low-income women with dependent parents, victims of violence, etc.) and for self-employed women and entrepreneurs/professionals.
- **Reduction of the pension gap due to maternity:** Extending the accrual of notional pension contributions for mothers and fathers for the entire duration of compulsory and/or extended maternity or paternity leave, thus considering periods of leave as eligible for contributions. If necessary, consideration could be given to facilitating early access to retirement for working mothers as a means of addressing Italy's demographic imbalances and recognising the social value of childcare. Equal pay is in fact one of the measures to combat poverty of women and families, especially for single-parent households and later on for the elderly.

Skills

The initiatives related to the strategic priority on **Skills** are:

- **Cross-cutting promotion of the principle of gender equality at all levels of education and training as well as introduction of gender mainstreaming notions in curricula:**

Lectures or classes on gender mainstreaming to be held during school hours by qualified staff, including assessment of the minimum number of hours/interactions with the students

- **Reform of the requirements for textbooks and training materials to encourage publishers to give visibility to women:** Reform of the requirements for publishing and/or recommending the purchase of school books for primary and secondary schools; this is to ensure that they do not promote gender stereotypes, but on the contrary encourage parity and equality, focusing on examples of women who have made a fundamental contribution to building up knowledge and understanding of the subject in question - if not, such books will not be authorised for distribution in schools.
- **Promotion of measures to counter school drop-outs and educational and training poverty,** through targeted initiatives in favour of younger and older women (including forms of computer and digital literacy, financial literacy, and support for non-discriminatory skilling and risk-taking processes that enhance female skills, etc.).
- **Introducing upgrading courses in STEM disciplines.** Allocation of funds for voluntary upgrading courses in scientific and mathematical disciplines (e.g. mathematics, physics, chemistry, geometry) as well as in financial education; these courses will be held at school, in classrooms and laboratories in extracurricular hours and will be intended for all students enrolled in high schools scoring below the average in the INVALSI-PISA tests. Places will be made available in proportion to the total number of students and in classes with fewer students to enable teachers to pay greater attention to the needs of each participant. Any further "gender" interpretation or classification will be evaluated.
- **Use of school premises for STEM-themed 'summer camps'.** Setting up STEM-themed summer camps for primary, secondary and tertiary students to promote scientific subjects from an early age through fun and hands-on activities (e.g. experiments carried out by the students, trips to laboratories or technology parks), over the summer break, especially for girls.
- **Strengthening mathematics curricula in terms of hours and quality of teaching.** Strengthening teaching in mathematical disciplines through extracurricular hours of compulsory maths, especially in those middle and high schools showing particularly severe weaknesses in these disciplines (e.g. based on the percentage of girls with below-minimum skills as measured by INVALSI-PISA tests).
- **Granting of public scholarships for female STEM students.** Granting of public scholarships (in addition to any private or public-private scholarships).
- **Strengthening individual educational guidance services to promote access to STEM studies.** Enhancing psychological support programmes (i.e. school psychologists or provincial guidance offices) in middle and high schools, aimed at providing aptitude guidance and overcoming gender stereotypes and focusing on how girls consider STEM disciplines and the influence of cultural and family background on academic and career choices. This may include 'shadowing/mentoring' programmes (e.g. having female university students speak in schools or offer one-to-one interviews), and encouraging business representatives to speak in schools or online for outreach purposes.
- **Reform of ministerial and school activities to guide high school students through university and employment.** Strengthening ministerial and school activities to guide high school students through university and employment, especially directed at encouraging career development for women in the STEM and technological fields; this includes mandating a tour during the 'open university' days for fourth and fifth grade students.

- **Promotion and guidance for vocational qualifications in traditionally male-dominated jobs and vice versa**, with the aim of encouraging female entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.
- **Having places reserved for female students in STEM disciplines by means of entry tests, especially in universities with a very low female presence.** Having a minimum number of places reserved for female students in public or private university faculties requiring entry tests and which have recorded a lower percentage of female students in previous academic years, subject to a minimum score in the tests.
- **Support for female student-mothers at university.** Exemption from the payment of tuition fees and suspending calculation of course years for female students who are mothers from the time they get pregnant until the early months or years of their child, while still guaranteeing them the opportunity to attend classes and take exams.
- **Introduction of gender quotas in university staff evaluation boards and gender-neutral evaluation of academic performance.** Introduction of gender quotas in the boards responsible for the selection, appointment and evaluation of all professors (full and associate professors) and in all joint decision-making bodies (e.g. the Academic Senate); definition and application, during the above-mentioned evaluations, of objective gender-neutral criteria for the evaluation of academic performance, under penalty of disqualification of the body and sanctions for the universities in proportion to the funds allocated by MIUR for ordinary activities.
- **Reform of the mechanism for allocating funds from the Ministry of Universities and Research for universities to reflect gender differences in teaching staff and/or academic institutions.** Allocation of ad-hoc MUR funds to universities that achieve minimum levels of gender representation in teaching staff, research staff, administrative departments, Academic Senate, number of female students in STEM disciplines, and university's top professors and researchers according to the H-Index. Further incentives or sanctions should be considered.
- **Increasing the number of ICT classes in curricula and funding extra-curricular courses in compulsory education to promote digital literacy in schools.** Increasing the minimum number of computer science hours (including code learning) in all schools, and funding extra-curricular (e.g. afternoon) computer science courses to obtain certifications (e.g. ECDL) or the like in high schools; a minimum number of places should be allocated in proportion to the school population in each school.
- **Tax deductions or incentives for private companies to provide after-school digital and ICT literacy courses for female target groups.** Allocation of grants to private companies for the organisation of digital literacy courses on ICT skills (basic or advanced) for their female employees (regardless of whether these skills are required in their daily activities). This measure can also be extended to self-employed women and entrepreneurs/professionals.
- **Organisation by local authorities of free after-school digital and computer literacy courses.** Organisation by local authorities (e.g. municipalities, regional authorities, job centres) of digital, computer and financial literacy courses and activities (e.g. basic use of software, social media, basics of personal finance) within existing public facilities (e.g. computer labs in public schools); evaluation of possible rewarding mechanisms to promote participation of target groups (unemployed women, women on maternity leave, women willing to advance their career).

- **Compulsory training for teachers on gender mainstreaming and gender stereotyping, especially in STEM and high-segregation disciplines:** Introduction of compulsory refresher courses, for all teaching staff of first and second grade schools, public or private, to promote the recognition and correction of gender stereotypes in teachers' conduct and to give them concrete tools to promote consideration of highly gender-segregated subjects by female students (especially, but not exclusively in STEM disciplines) and students (especially in literary, humanistic and social disciplines) in their curricular activities with students.

Time

The initiatives related to the strategic priority on **Time** are:

- **Measures to encourage the sharing of parental responsibilities.** Extension of compulsory parental leave for fathers, even if they are self-employed, and under the same conditions as for maternity, following European best practices. In addition to compulsory leave, we may consider the introduction of incentives for parents to share responsibility for the additional months of voluntary parental leave, even if not on a continuous basis (but still covering the early years of the baby) (e.g. extension of or access to optional leave for the mother, linked to or conditional on the father taking his mandatory leave).
- **Adoption of ad hoc measures to promote paternity leave.** One-off payment in addition to the so-called Baby Bonus or Child Benefit for fathers who extend their paternity leave for a few more months beyond the minimum legal threshold; the latter could be increased if the mother goes back to work for a certain number of months during the same period. In addition, in order to encourage their actual use, these measures could be combined with promotional campaigns (also to prevent possible discrimination against fathers), as well as with incentives for businesses.
- **Implementation of the day-care plan, part of the Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan, in order to improve the offer of services for children aged 0 to 3 years.** Increasing the capacity of day-care facilities through the allocation of funds to municipalities for the development of (new or renovated) day-care centres so as to guarantee a minimum standard of service for children aged 0-3 on a national level and within a defined timeframe. Such funding could be distributed in proportion to the regional conditions, focusing in particular on the South and on inland areas, and also taking into account the European target set in Barcelona of at least 33 per cent coverage. The growth of both public and private supply must necessarily be linked to the rationalisation of the financial contribution system for families with children already envisaged by the Family Act, both in terms of a child and universal benefit and of tax reform, as well as to reduce tuition fees.
- **Strengthening the 0-6 Poles and supplementary services,** as already provided for in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, and in continuity with what is provided for in the Legislative Decree No. 65 of 2017.
- **Obligation or incentives for large companies with factories/offices to set up in-house day-care services or the like.** Creation of a system of non-refundable contributions to set up in-house day-care centres, with a minimum number of places, at plants or offices with a minimum number of employees and under suitable environmental conditions. Funding may be limited to a portion of the overall amount of the works and

conditional on the unavailability of places in public or private facilities in the surroundings of the site concerned; payment of funds may be subject to the start of the care activity.

- **Tax exemption for corporate welfare where linked to the provision of services or funds for day-care centres.** Allowances for corporate welfare facilities (e.g. benefits, bonuses, etc.) directly aimed at providing support to parents, including access to day-care centres, by means of tax deductions (from the employer's income and exemption from the employee's taxable income), as well as decontribution of the amounts paid by the company for this purpose.
- **Offering the option of breaking down the last weeks of parental leave in order to facilitate return to work,** so as to balance work and family responsibilities (also by splitting working hours according to collective agreements).
- **Revision of the tax exemption regime for costs incurred for childcare services (e.g. baby-sitters), elderly parents (e.g. carers) or disabled people (e.g. educators).** Definition by law of "non-self-sufficiency", as well as possible reform to harmonise tax exemption or deductibility regimes for expenses incurred for babysitting, domestic helpers, caregivers, educators and nurses under regular contract who take care of children below a certain age, or for persons (parents, elderly, in-patients, disabled,...) who need care and assistance as certified by the competent body (i.e., temporary or permanent non-sufficiency); the aim is to support and recognise the role of women in particular in caring for family members.
- **Promotion of childcare and assistance to children, the elderly, in-patients and personal care by means of tax exemption on necessary goods.** Reducing VAT to 4% for the purchase of toiletries for women, newborn babies, baby products in general and/or basic necessities (e.g. nappies, incontinence pads for sick elderly people, pads). Other consumer goods for infants (e.g. baby's chairs, prams and cots) should also be included in the tax reduction.
- **Converting allowances for vulnerable people (e.g., Mobility Allowance) into hours of guaranteed services.** Option to convert allowances (e.g., Mobility Allowance) into hours of guaranteed services (e.g., on an equivalence basis between the amount to be received and the hours of home care service) [TBD].
- **Extending school hours and school terms either through curricular lessons or by summer school services.** Extending the school year by additional weeks to be used for ordinary teaching activities, including half-time, or to provide alternative leisure and recreational activities (e.g. school visits, STEM summer centres, science, music, theatre and film workshops). This might be combined with other educational activities during the same period (e.g. school-leaving exams), in order to bring school calendars, and especially the summer break, into line with the European average and parents' needs. Considering the introduction or extension, in nursery and primary schools, of full-time or extra-curricular afternoon activities (e.g. homework) for all applicants, with access to the cafeteria service for lunch (priced in proportion to the family' s ISEE), with the aim of supporting parents in reconciling working time with parenthood, also through local authorities and the private social sector.
- **Supporting full-time schooling,** especially in southern regions, as provided for under the cohesion policy.

Power

The initiatives related to the strategic priority on **Power** are:

- **Raising the legal quota under the Golfo-Mosca law, with possible extension to other companies.** Amending the Golfo-Mosca law (i.e., gender quota in the boards of listed companies), so as to consider the possibility of (i) extending its obligations to all companies above a given turnover or number of employees; (ii) raising the current minimum quota for listed companies already subject to the obligation to a higher proportion of female presence; and (iii) applying the same gender quota also to executive members of boards, preventing female presence from being limited to non-executive members of such bodies. Furthermore, guaranteeing the enforceability of the quota to appoint the sole director (Legislative Decree No. 175 of 2016) through an annual report and dialogue between the Equal Opportunities Department and the defaulting public shareholder to overcome the obstacle to compliance with this quota and to be able to effectively do so in the future.
- **Introducing mandatory transparency and publication of short-lists (i.e., lists of candidates being considered for the final selection phase) for top management levels as well as pipelines for listed companies.** Legal provision requiring listed companies to publish anonymised but gender-detailed profiles of internal and external candidates being considered in the final selection phase for CEO, CEO -1⁵³ and CEO -2⁵⁴(or equivalent) positions, also looking at the additional obligation to share personal data, documents and other information at the request of the relevant supervisory body (e.g. Ministry of Labour); this is to verify that candidates of both genders have been considered in the selection process, subject to penalties for not sharing or publishing the required data.
- **Acting on the "par condicio" law to guarantee fair air time for candidates during electoral campaigns.** Proposed amendment to the law on "Par Condicio", to ensure that candidates of both genders for each party receive equal media exposure (e.g. equal air time) during electoral campaigns.
- **Implementation of existing legal provisions on gender equality in regional electoral laws.** Implementation of existing legal provisions on gender equality in regional electoral laws, including gender preference mechanisms and gender equality requirements in electoral lists. As regards Municipalities and provincial authorities, amending the Consolidated Text of Local Authorities, introducing in their statutes and regulations procedures to be followed in appointments to achieve gender balance and sanctioning instruments in case of inactivity of the bodies.
- **Introduction of gender quotas in the governing bodies of the public administration and its related bodies.** Introduction of gender quotas in public governing bodies of departments or institutions (e.g. academic senate), bodies (e.g. professional roll of CPAs, medical board, etc.) or public competitions and selections (e.g. commissions for public recruitment competitions), testing of mentoring and compilation of CV databases.

⁵³ Direct / first level reporting to the CEO / Managing Director

⁵⁴ Second-level reporting (i.e. direct reports of first level)

Strategy implementation and monitoring

The Gender Equality Strategy is set in a time horizon ending in 2026 and aims to bring about structural and lasting changes.

To achieve the ambitious goals set out in the Strategy, all institutional and civil society stakeholders must be effectively mobilised and work together consistently.

Gender equality is a priority for the entire community and all stakeholders must be mobilised and supported by an appropriate governance system.

The measures foreseen by the Strategy will be implemented by the central Administrations, Regional and local authorities in accordance with their institutional powers, taking into account the relevant sectors and the nature of the measures.

With regard to the monitoring of this Strategy, international benchmarking will be combined with monitoring indicators (and related targets) based on national statistical data with the aim of promoting the national goals of the Strategy⁵⁵. The selection of indicators will take place after due involvement not only of experts but also of institutional representatives.

The institutions and bodies listed below will also participate in the implementation of the Strategy (to be completed):

- National councilor for equality and network of equality councilors:
- INPS;
- ISTAT;
- CNR;
- CRUI;
- Bank of Italy;
- MEF - RGS
- Consob;
- Anac;
- Agcom;
- Antitrust;
- INAPP
- Network of Joint Guarantee Committees for the well-being of workers and against discrimination.
- Women's Enterprise Committee at the MISE

The Conference of the Regions (with one representative for each of the three Commissions involved), the Union of provincial (UPI) and municipal (ANCI) authorities, the social partners and

⁵⁵ In particular, indicators can be selected by drawing on the large set of indicators (128 in 2019) of the State Gender Balance, published annually by the Department of the State General Accounting Office (RGS) of the Ministry of Finance (MEF).

the main employers' associations and/or networks of associations committed to promoting gender equality will also be permanently involved.

The governance of gender equality policies will be strengthened by setting up an inter-institutional Steering Committee and a National Observatory for the integration of gender policies.

The Steering Committee, chaired by the President of the Council of Ministers or by the delegated political authority, will liaise between the different administrations involved and departments at different levels of government.

The National Observatory for the Integration of Gender Policies, a technical body supporting the Steering Group, will be established at the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with the aim of implementing and monitoring the Strategy.

Information on the monitoring of the Strategy implementation will be acquired by the Department for Equal Opportunities, also by means of a web-based information system specifically developed for this purpose.

In the light of the impacts on the socio-economic context caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the monitoring activity may also concern the medium- and long-term effects of the crisis, in order to ascertain how effective the measures envisaged by the NRRP are with respect to the goals set.