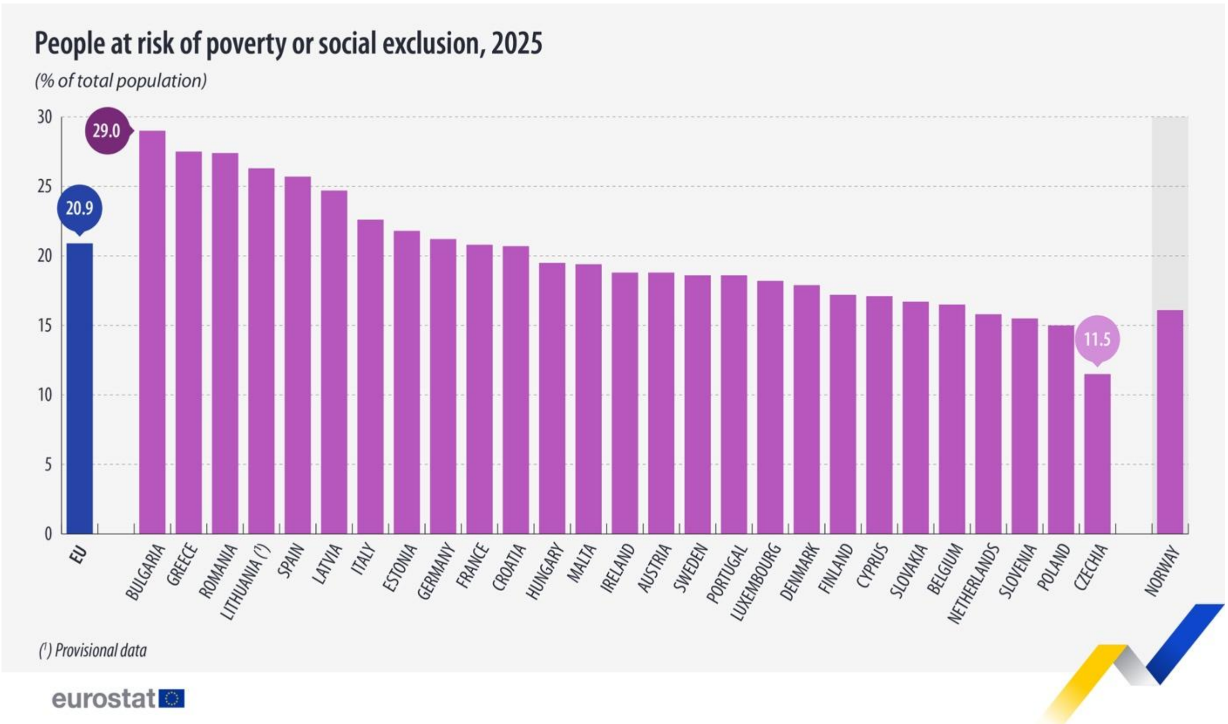
13th UILTuCS National Congress – Turin, 27–30 May 2026
INTERNATIONAL PANEL – "IN-WORK POVERTY: WHAT TRADE UNION STRATEGY?"
Discussion paper

IN-WORK POVERTY IN THE MARKET-BASED TERTIARY SECTOR[1]

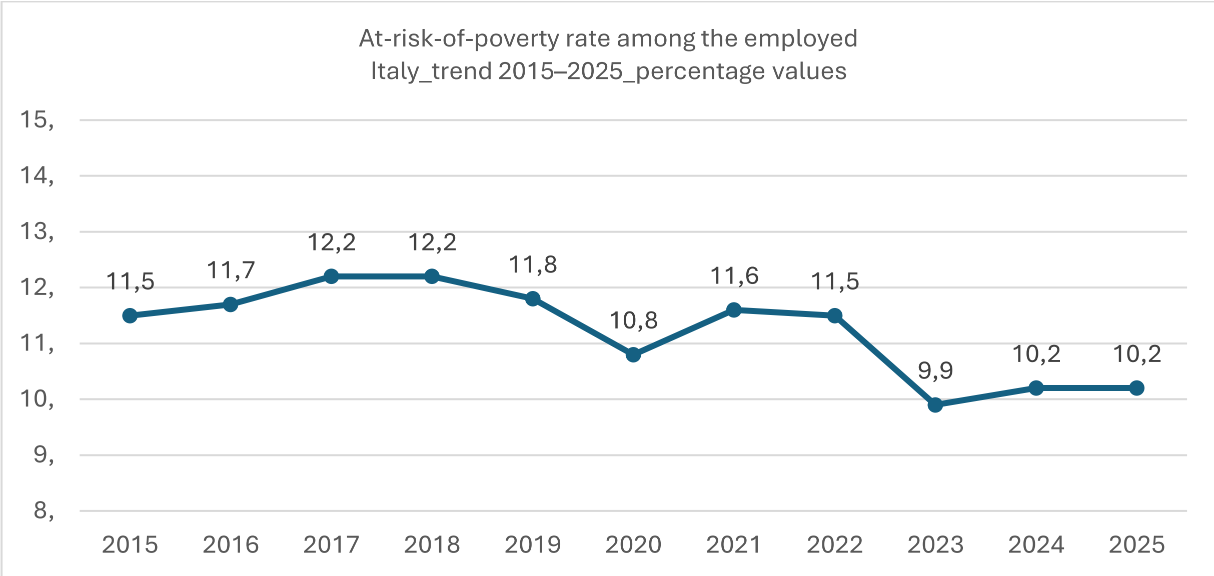
- The official European and international definition of in-work poverty:
  - In-work poverty refers to people who are in employment for at least 6–7 months in a year, but live in households at risk of poverty, with an income usually below 60% of the national median income. (An inadequate wage, on the other hand, is defined as an income below 50% of the national median income.)
  - The condition of in-work poverty is caused by low wages that fail to keep pace with inflation, the proliferation of temporary/precarious jobs, underemployment (working fewer hours than desired or necessary for a decent standard of living), involuntary part-time work, and high fixed costs such as housing.
  - The phenomenon affects millions of people, but disproportionately affects young workers (aged 18–35), women and those on unstable contracts.
  - In-work poverty often leads to severe financial hardship, reliance on food banks and a deterioration in psychological well-being.
  - This is a growing concern across Europe, with significant increases in countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The table below shows the incidence of people at risk of poverty in European Union countries, revealing that Italy is among the countries most at risk.



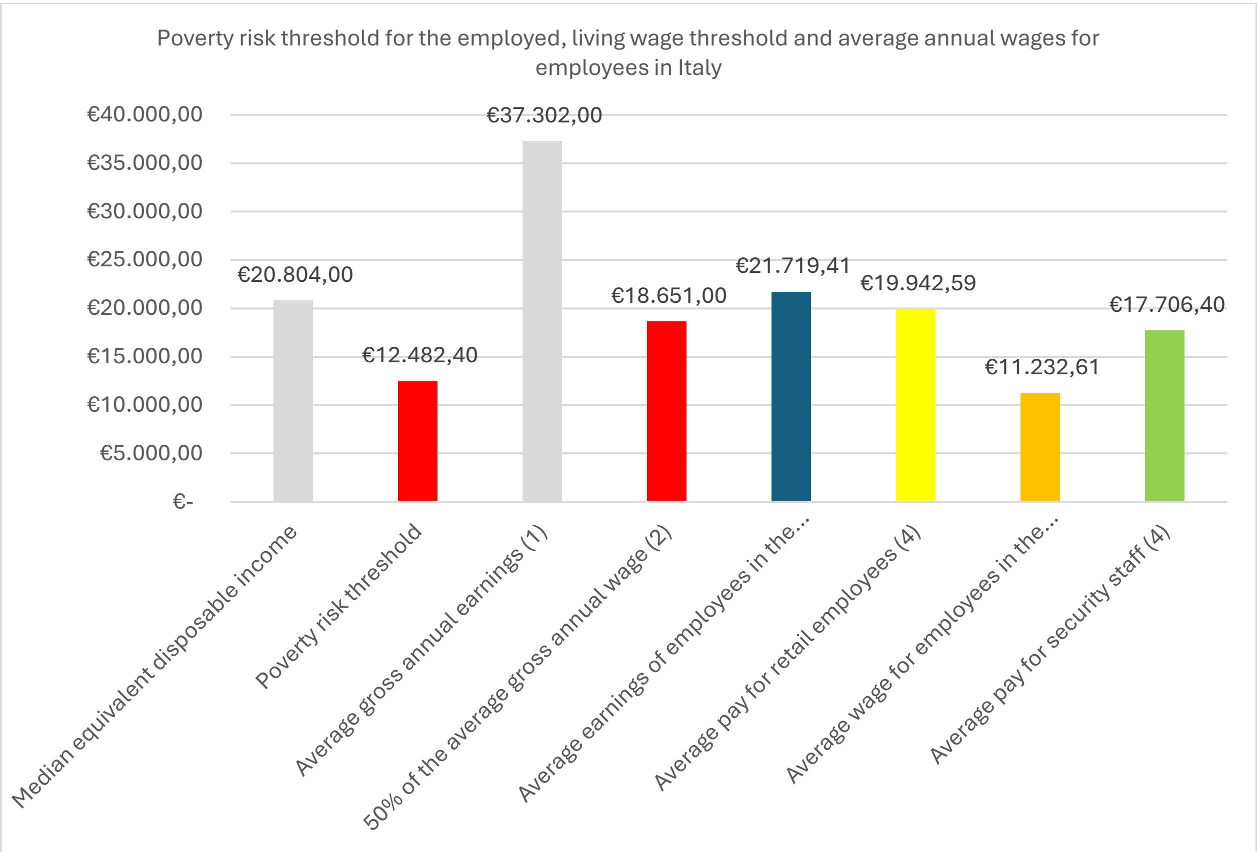
[1] *In this document, the term 'tertiary sector' refers to the so-called 'market-based tertiary sector', which encompasses all economic activities that produce services sold on the market to generate profit, and in particular sectors such as retail, tourism, and business and personal services.*

The table below shows the incidence of in-work poverty in Italy between 2015 and 2025. The figure refers to people with an equivalent disposable income (adjusted for household size) that falls below the poverty threshold, set at 60% of the national median equivalent disposable income.



Source: RVConsulting/AGSG analysis of Eurostat data

The table below compares the poverty line in Italy (60% of median income), the living wage threshold in Italy (50% of the national gross average wage, as defined by European Directive 2022/2041), and the average wages in the main service sectors in Italy. The average wage in the service sector in general and in the retail trade lies just above the living wage threshold; conversely, the average wage in the private security sector is below the living wage threshold, and that in the tourism sector (accommodation and catering) lies even below the poverty line.



Source: RVConsulting/AGSG analysis of ISTAT, Eurostat and INPS data

(1) *Gross annual pay per employee, adjusted to a full year and full-time equivalent. Annual pay includes remuneration in cash and in kind received directly and regularly by the employee in the reference year, including tax and social security deductions - (Source: ISTAT, 20 January 2025 – reference year 2022)*

(2) *EU Directive 2022/2041 threshold*

(1) *Total average annual earnings of all employees in the private tertiary sector (Source: INPS, 2024)*

(2) *Average annual earnings of all employees in certain sectors of the private tertiary sector (Source: INPS, 2024)*

- ***These figures clearly show that in Italy's service sector, in-work poverty is much more prevalent than the national average, and has become an endemic problem in certain sectors.***
- Among the main factors contributing to in-work poverty in Italy, particularly in the service sector, are:
  1. ***Real wages among the lowest in Europe***, with a decline in purchasing power over the years relative to inflationary trends and a failure to redistribute labour productivity;
  2. ***Contractual dumping*** generated by so-called 'pirate contracts', in the absence of a legislative framework on the representativeness of the social partners; this is compounded by significant levels of ***evasion/circumvention of the full application of collective agreements***, permitted by the absence of clear and adequate legal obligations;
  3. ***Precarisation of the labour market***, with high levels of instability bordering on exploitation, particularly affecting women and young people: fixed-term contracts, seasonal work, involuntary part-time work with unpredictable, limited and irregular working hours, excessive recourse to Sunday and public holiday work, disintermediation of work organisation, etc.

1. WAGES, INFLATION AND NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Over the last 10–15 years, Italy has seen a generalised decline in real wages, unparalleled in the most advanced European countries and particularly severe in the service sector. This has been due to a malfunctioning of the contractual systems for aligning wages with inflation and for redistributing labour productivity gains.
- Added to these critical issues is the situation of severe geopolitical and economic instability caused by ongoing global conflicts, which will lead in the short and medium term to a new surge in inflation and a slowdown in growth; this will have further depressive effects on wages, purchasing power and the quality of life of workers in our country, particularly in the service sector.

Italian wages: the sick man of Europe

- In the analysis that follows, we have compared wage trends in Italy with those of the main European Union countries where collective bargaining plays a prominent role in determining wages, often in combination with statutory minimum wage systems. This comparison shows that, over the period 2010–2024, real wages in our country fell by around 12%, resulting in a decline in workers' purchasing power and an increase in in-work poverty. This deterioration in wages is unparalleled in the rest of Europe.

The table shows a comparison of average gross wages (2024) and their percentage growth including inflation (2010–2024) in Italy and the other eight European countries where collective bargaining plays a prominent role in determining wages (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden). Italy was the country with the lowest wage growth.

PAESE	2024	CRESCITA % 2010-2024
Austria	€ 56.968	57%
Belgio	€ 59.091	51%
Danimarca	€ 70.488	39%
Finlandia	€ 49.020	35%
Francia	€ 44.909	32%
Germania	€ 52.257	58%
Italia	€ 33.148	19%
Spagna	€ 33.044	25%
Svezia	€ 48.264	50%

The table below compares net wage growth adjusted for inflation – that is, the real purchasing power of wages – between the same eight countries and Italy over the same period (2010–2024). In Italy, real wages have actually fallen by 12% over 15 years, the worst performance among all the countries considered, leading to widespread in-work poverty.

	Crescita salari medi 2010-2024	Crescita inflazione aggregata 2010-2024	Crescita salari al netto dell'inflazione
Austria	57%	37%	20%
Belgio	51%	39%	12%
Danimarca	39%	26%	13%
Finlandia	35%	29%	6%
Francia	32%	30%	2%
Germania	58%	33%	25%
Italia	19%	31%	-12%
Spagna	25%	29%	-4%
Svezia	50%	32%	18%

In the tables below, we have compared gross and net wages and their percentage changes in the retail and tourism sectors between Italy, 12 other major European countries and the EU average. In Italy, wages and their growth rates in these sectors are significantly lower than the European average and those of most of the countries considered.

Estimates of gross and net monthly wages in the retail and tourism sectors in selected European countries. Year 2024, absolute values in euros*

	Retail		**Tourism**	
	Gross pay	**Net pay**	**Gross pay**	**Net pay**
Denmark	4,700	3,250	2,700	1,900
Luxembourg	4,600	3,000	3,700	2,450
Belgium	4,100	2,100	2,400	1,300
Finland	3,700	2,300	2,750	1,750
France	3,500	2,000	2,550	900
Sweden	3,350	2,100	2,400	1,500
Germany	3,350	1,900	2,350	1,350
Austria	3,300	1,900	2,100	1,200
Italy	**2,300**	**1,350**	**1,500**	**1,000**

Spain	2,150	1,400	1,550	1,000
Portugal	1,900	1,200	1,350	900
Poland	1,600	1,100	1,300	900
Greece	1,600	1,050	1,700	1,100
EU27	**2,800**	**1,750**	**1,900**	**1,250**

**Values estimated on the basis of gross hourly wages and conventional average monthly hours, calculated as a weighted average between the 40 weekly hours of full-time work and the 24 hours estimated for part-time work, based on the FT/PT composition of employment for each country. Net wages were calculated by applying the 2024 OECD total tax wedge to the estimated gross monthly wages. The figures obtained represent a comparative proxy and do not correspond to the net wage actually received in the pay packet. Source: Calculations by Eures Ricerche Economiche e Sociali/UILTUCS based on Eurostat and OECD data.*

Gross pay per hour worked by employees in the retail and tourism sectors in selected European countries. Years 2016–2024, values in euros

	2016			**2024**		
	Retail	**Tourism**	**Total economy**	**Trade**	**Tourism**	**Total economy**
Luxembourg	26.6	18.4	33.9	35.7	30.0	48.4
Denmark	33.5	25.2	35.9	39.9	25.6	43.6
Finland	24.1	18.6	26.0	29.7	23.2	31.3
Sweden	26.6	18.5	25.6	27.3	21.5	27.5
Germany	21.9	13.8	25.5	28.3	20.8	33.3
Belgium	26.2	20.0	29.3	32.9	20.7	37.1
France	20.6	15.4	23.3	26.7	20.1	29.7
Austria	21.6	13.1	23.9	27.7	17.7	32.4
Italy	**18.0**	**13.2**	**19.9**	**20.2**	**14.4**	**22.3**
Greece	10.7	7.4	12.1	11.7	12.9	13.3
Spain	13.0	10.2	15.8	16.5	12.4	18.9
Portugal	10.8	6.6	10.9	13.9	10.2	14.7
Poland	6.0	4.7	7.1	11.7	9.8	14.2
Romania	3.9	2.6	4.3	10.8	7.6	11.8
EU27	**16.7**	**11.5**	**19.2**	**21.7**	**15.6**	**25.2**

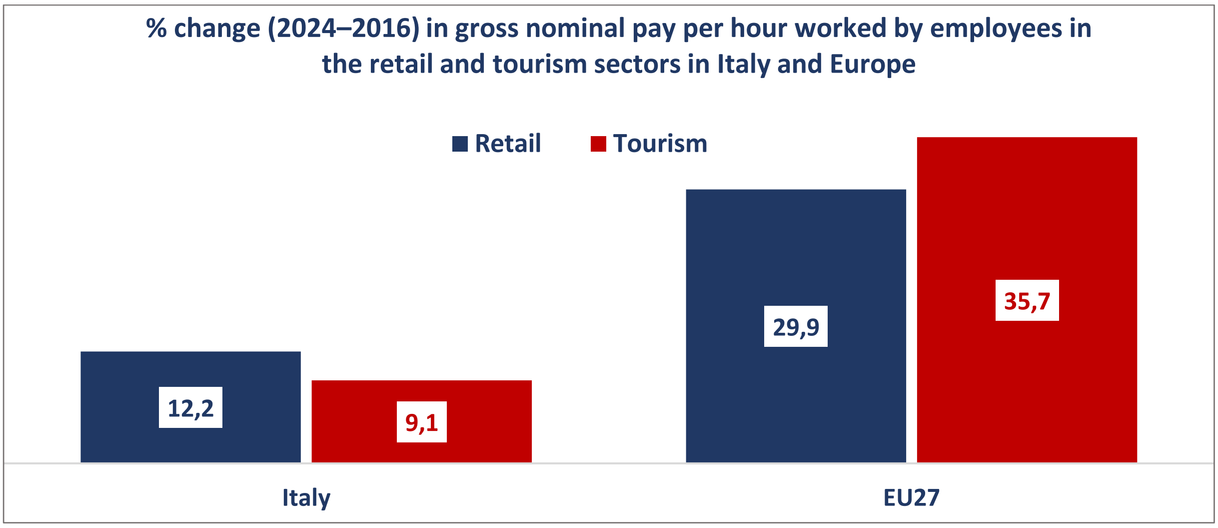
Source: Calculations by Eures Ricerche Economiche e Sociali/UILTUCS based on Eurostat data

Nominal change in gross pay per hour worked by employees in the retail and tourism sectors in selected European countries. Years 2024/2016

	Retail	**Tourism**
Luxembourg	34.2	63.0
Denmark	19.1	1.6
Finland	23.2	24.7
Sweden	2.6	16.2
Germany	29.2	50.7
Belgium	25.6	3.5
France	29.6	30.5
Austria	28.2	35.1
Italy	**12.2**	**9.1**
Greece	9.3	74.3
Spain	26.9	21.6

Portugal	28.7	54.5
Poland	95.0	108.5
Romania	176.9	192.3
EU27	**29.9**	**35.7**

Source: Eures Ricerche Economiche e Sociali/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

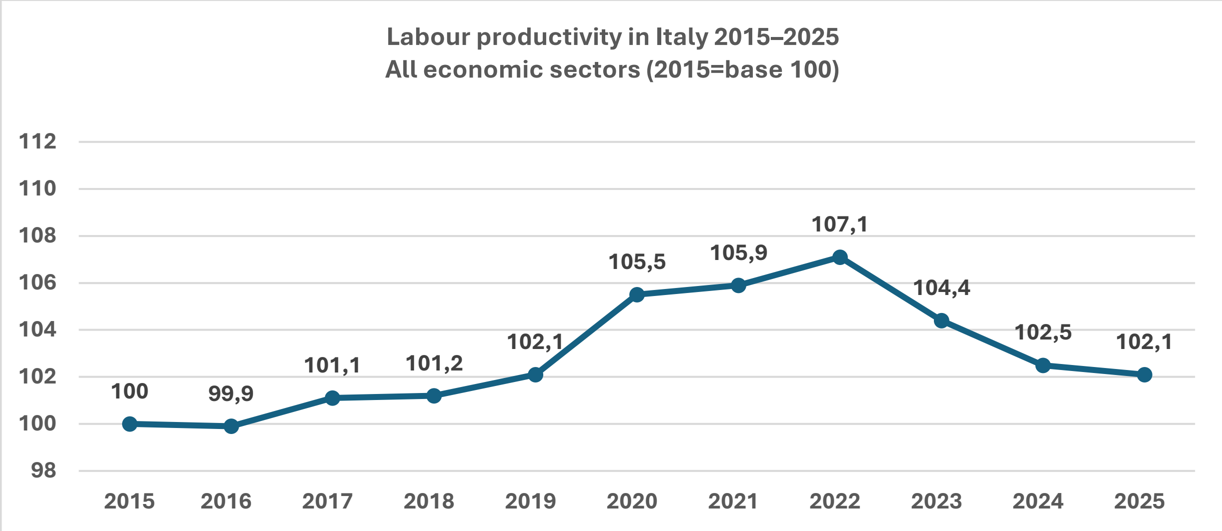


Source: Eures Economic and Social Research/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

- Furthermore, we analysed the trend in labour productivity[2] across all private sectors in Italy and, for the retail sector, we compared the trends in labour productivity and corporate profits. There has been a generalised growth in labour productivity across almost all sectors, with particularly significant peaks in the retail sector, whilst corporate profits have skyrocketed over the same period; however, this growth has not led to a redistribution of productivity gains towards wages, and this has further exacerbated the phenomenon of in-work poverty, particularly in the service sector.

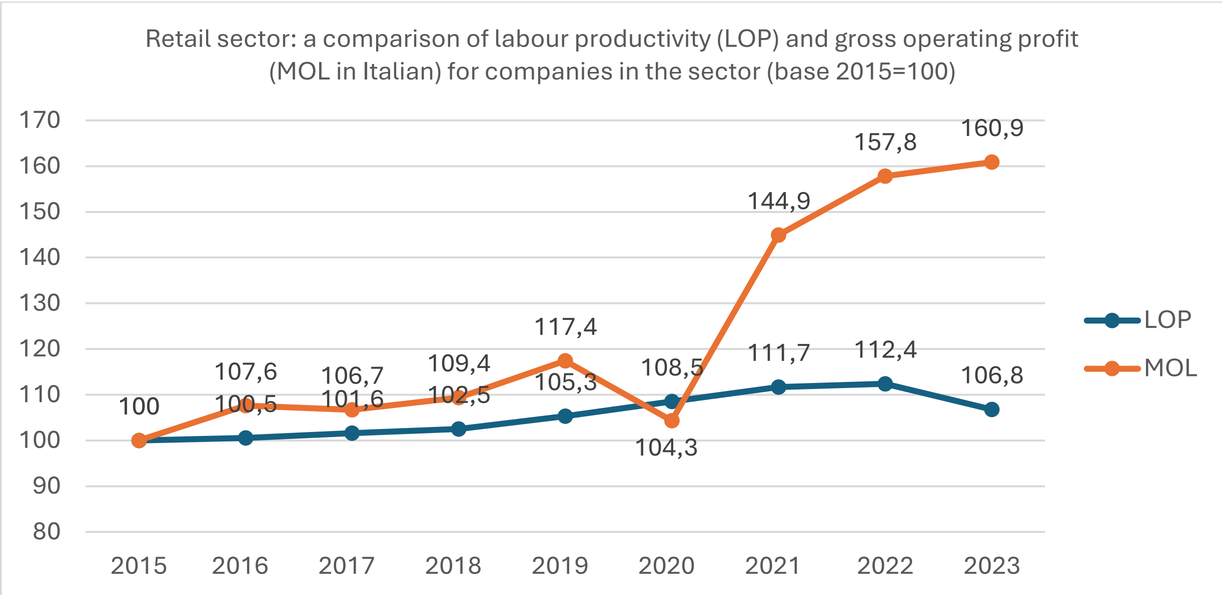
  The table below shows the trend in labour productivity across all economic sectors in Italy (2015–2025). Over the period considered, the trend in labour productivity remained consistently positive, whilst the trend in total factor productivity was negative (an average of -1%), a unique case in Europe compared to countries with more advanced economies.

[2] Labour Productivity is determined by the ratio of value added to hours worked. Value added refers to the sum of wages, depreciation, profits and financial income. This is a different concept from Total Factor Productivity, which is determined by the ratio of Value Added to the volume of primary growth factors, such as technological progress, innovations in production processes, improvements in work organisation and management techniques, and improvements in the experience and educational level of the workforce. Total Factor Productivity is the figure commonly used by firms to measure productivity, but whilst it includes the specific contribution of labour to the creation of the firms' value, it does not highlight this contribution.



Source: RVConsulting/AGSG analysis of ISTAT data

The table below shows the comparative trend in labour productivity and gross operating profit in the trade sector (2015–2023): it can be seen that labour productivity in this sector has grown three times faster than the overall rate in the private sector, whilst there has been a huge increase in corporate profits; however, this has not been followed by a redistribution of labour productivity gains into wages.



Source: RVConsulting/AGSG analysis based on ISTAT data

<u>The wage crisis in the service sector in Italy: the causes</u>

- In light of these analyses, it is clear that wages in Italy's service sectors have fallen significantly in real terms in recent years, pushing hundreds of thousands of workers below the poverty line and millions of workers below the living wage threshold. This wage crisis has clearly been caused by a failure to keep pace with real inflation and a failure to redistribute labour productivity.
- This occurred for a number of reasons, essentially stemming from the reform of the contractual systems for determining wages introduced by the Cross-Sectoral Social Partners Agreement of 15 April 2009, which radically altered the mechanisms set out in the previous Tripartite Agreement of 23 July 1993.
- In particular, the following measures had a significant negative impact on wage dynamics:

- The replacement of the planned real inflation indicator with the IPCA-NEI (inflation excluding energy products) indicator, which, particularly in recent years, has prevented wages from being linked to the rise in the cost of living.
- The elimination of mechanisms for adjusting discrepancies between the inflation rates included in the wage increases of national sectoral collective agreements and the actual inflation recorded in the previous year.
- The abolition of the contractual gap allowance mechanism, which served to automatically recoup at least part of the inflation increases in wages in the event of a delay in the renewal of national sectoral collective agreements beyond their natural expiry date.

- In addition to these general elements introduced by the 2009 reform, certain factors specific to the service sector have further negatively affected collective bargaining and wages in the sector; these factors include:
  - Excessive reliance on precarious, intermittent and part-time contracts – mostly involuntary – with irregular and excessively flexible working hours, the fall of the total annual wage below the poverty line, and the resulting irregularity and insufficiency of social security contributions paid.
  - The widespread use of lowest-bid tenders and outsourcing.
  - The absence of incentives and/or obligations to renew contracts upon their natural expiry.
  - Chronic delays in the renewal of many contracts between 2015 and 2024.
  - The fragmentation of employers organisations in the retail and tourism sectors and the consequent proliferation of various national sectoral collective agreements signed by FILCAMS-FISASCAT-UILTuCS with the numerous employers organisations in the service sector.
- With regard to the failure to distribute labour productivity, further factors specific to the service sector are highlighted:
  - The fragmented nature of the sector, with a large prevalence of small and micro-enterprises, which makes decentralised bargaining difficult, if not impossible, in the majority of companies, resulting in the failure to distribute labour productivity gains.
  - The growing difficulty in achieving significant wage gains even in decentralised agreements with large enterprises, particularly those with multinational ownership and a strong presence of outsourced activities.
  - The absence of mechanisms to ensure the distribution of labour productivity through regional/local bargaining (which is virtually non-existent) or national bargaining.
- In addition to these problems, in recent years Italy has seen a proliferation of collective agreements unparalleled in any other European country, with over a thousand national collective labour agreements registered with the CNEL (the Italian Economic and Social Committee), of which around 80% are signed by non-representative trade union and employer organisations, the so-called 'pirate contracts'.
- Although these agreements apply to a limited number of firms and workers, they are growing steadily and significantly and have led to a race to the bottom in terms of pay and regulatory standards, which is having a particularly severe impact on the service sector, where the prevalence of 'pirate agreements' is, on average, higher than in other sectors.
- In addition to the problems of wage poverty and the proliferation of dumping contracts, there are significant instances of the total or partial non-application of national sectoral collective agreements, affecting between 2.5 and 3 million workers, concentrated in particular in the south of the country and in the tertiary and service sectors: consequently, in these sectors, the overall coverage rate of collective bargaining is often below the minimum convergence rate of 80% set out in European Directive 2022/2041. These instances of contractual evasion and circumvention are caused by the lack of a legal obligation to apply the national sectoral collective agreement in full and by the absence of mechanisms to extend such agreements to all workers in the relevant sector.

- All these factors have led us to conclude that in Italy the convergence targets set by European Directive 2022/2041 are not being met, particularly in the tertiary and services sectors, and that therefore a correct transposition of the Directive would help to resolve the problem of low and inadequate wages, and the problem of low collective bargaining coverage, particularly in the tertiary and services sectors.
- However, the Italian government has so far refused to implement the Directive in our country, providing the European Commission with false statistics and biased data aimed at concealing this wage emergency. At the same time, the Italian government is also proposing laws to transpose Directives 2023/970 on pay transparency and 2024/2831 on workers on digital platforms, which distort their content and effectively neutralise their objectives.

Low wages in the service sector: what are the possible solutions?

- It is therefore the responsibility of the social partners to lift service sector workers out of this state of in-work poverty. To this end, a reform of the contractual systems for determining wages in our sectors in Italy is necessary, ensuring that wages are fully adjusted for inflation and that a share of labour productivity is redistributed to all workers.
- While we will keep claiming for the Directive 2022/2041 on minimum wages to be fully transposed in Italy, a new collective bargaining model can be defined autonomously by the social partners in the service sector, through the identification of innovative contractual mechanisms that combine business growth and competitiveness with workers' right to receive a decent and adequate wage, in line with Article 36 of our Constitution and the provisions of Directive.
- Indeed, if we compare wage trends in the service sector with those in other sectors of private employment in Italy, particularly in industry, we can see that in these other sectors real wages have largely kept pace with inflation or have even grown faster than real inflation. It follows that, notwithstanding the generalised situation of low wages in Italy, the phenomenon of in-work poverty takes on much more serious proportions in the service sector than in the private sector as a whole.
- A possible reform could therefore draw inspiration from the contractual mechanisms for determining wages introduced in industrial sectors through autonomous agreements between the parties, but also from the automatic inflation adjustment systems of other European countries, where wage growth in recent years has been much higher than in Italy, even in the service sector (e.g. Belgium, Germany, Austria, the Nordic countries).
- We are aware that it is certainly not feasible to ask service sector businesses in Italy to bear the burden of compensating workers for what they have lost in the past due to the failure of contractual mechanisms. At the same time, a further decline in real wages and workers' purchasing power is unacceptable, as a consequence of a likely new surge in inflation driven by the international situation. New mechanisms must therefore be introduced to ensure, for the future, that wages are fully aligned with real inflation and that a share of labour productivity is redistributed to all workers.
- There are sound macroeconomic reasons supporting this reform of our contractual model. Indeed, adjusting wages to the previous year's real inflation and distributing a share of the labour productivity already generated—without affecting the remuneration of capital and investments—does not trigger further inflationary spirals nor does it depress productivity itself; this is clearly demonstrated by the experiences of other European countries and other sectors in Italy.

  On the contrary, aligning wages with inflation and redistributing shares of labour productivity are measures that support domestic demand, boost corporate profitability, and consequently have a positive impact on public finances through taxation and social security contributions, generating resources available for investment.

The UILTuCS proposals

- ***UILTuCS has put forward a number of proposals for reforming the collective bargaining system in the service sector:***

- ***Replace the IPCA-NEI index (inflation excluding energy products) with an index that measures real inflation, to be defined through an agreement between the social partners in the tertiary sector.***
- ***Introduce new contractual mechanisms for the annual adjustment of wages to real inflation, through forms of indexation that guarantee their enforceability, to be defined between the parties each year with reference to the previous year's inflation and with the full recovery of any discrepancies.***
- ***Recognise additional wage and social security contribution rates for part-time and intermittent contracts, aimed at ensuring that the workers concerned receive a decent annual total remuneration and a decent pension.***
- ***Where necessary, consider forms of arbitration and conciliation to ensure that contracts are renewed within a fixed timeframe, taking effect from the day following the expiry of the previous contract.***
- ***Consider including in national sectoral collective agreements stricter rules for decentralised bargaining – at company or regional level – which also ensure the distribution of productivity bonuses at that level.***
- ***Provide, in national sectoral collective agreements, for forms of wage compensation for those workers who do not benefit from decentralised bargaining.***
- ***Continue, in coordination with the UIL, with measures aimed at overcoming and eliminating the phenomenon of 'pirate contracts', by assessing the representativeness of the social partners, extending the most representative and protective national sectoral collective agreements to all workers, and introducing an obligation for all employers to apply these agreements in full.***
- ***Ensure that, where several companies operate within the same production unit (e.g. hotels), they all apply the same most protective national collective agreement for their sector, encouraging internalisation processes.***
- ***Strengthen 'social clauses' in the case of public procurement, business transfers and restructuring, ensuring the application of the most protective national collective agreement in the relevant sector and the joint and several liability of contracting authorities and all enterprises in the subcontracting chains.***

2. ***PRECARITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET***

- The service sector is characterised, to a far greater extent than any other sector of the Italian labour market, by extremely high levels of precariousness and flexibility unilaterally imposed by companies, with a prevalence of precarious and underpaid employment relationships, often involuntary part-time work, unpredictable working hours and conditions, and a high incidence of Sunday and public holiday work. These forms of work with low levels of protection affect the majority of workers in our sectors, but to an even greater extent women and young people, contributing to an endemic condition of in-work poverty, which also translates into pension poverty.
- This situation has developed over time due to numerous factors, including: the phenomena of globalisation and the spread of multinational companies; the liberalisation of the regulations that governed the service sectors in the past; the deregulation, through various legislative reforms, of the labour market, contractual arrangements, and wage and regulatory protections; the removal from the autonomous contractual authority of social partners, through repeated legislative interventions, of numerous powers regarding the regulation of the employment relationship, the organisation of work, working hours, etc.; the shift towards outsourcing practices and the extension of lowest-bid tendering to a large part of the service sector.

The tables below show data on the proportion of permanent (open-ended) and atypical (fixed-term, seasonal, freelance) contracts out of total employment in the retail, tourism and services sectors in general. The first table highlights the different proportions by age group (up to 34 years old/over 35 years old), whilst the second table highlights the different proportions between men and women.

Employees in the non-agricultural private sector by age group and contract type. Year 2024, % composition

	Permanent	**Non-standard**
	Trade	
Up to 34 years	68.9	31.1
35 years and over	87.9	12.1
Total	**81.3**	**18.7**
	Tourism	
Up to 34 years	37.2	62.8
35 years and over	53.8	46.2
Total	**45.4**	**54.6**
	Total services	
Up to 34 years	53.2	46.8
35 years and over	74.8	25.2
Total	**67.1**	**32.9**

Employees in the non-agricultural private sector by gender and contractual status. Year 2024, % breakdown

	Permanent	**Non-standard**
	Retail	
Men	84.0	16.0
Women	78.6	21.4
Total	**81.3**	**18.7**
	Tourism	
Men	44.9	55.1
Women	45.9	54.1
Total	**45.4**	**54.6**
	Total services	
Men	81.3	18.7
Women	45.4	54.6
Total	**67.1**	**32.9**

The tables below show data on the proportion of full-time and part-time contracts out of total employment in the retail, tourism and general services sectors. The first table highlights the different proportions by age group (up to 34 years old/over 35 years old), whilst the second table highlights the different proportions between men and women.

Employees in the non-agricultural private sector by age group and working hours, Year 2024, absolute figures and percentage composition

	Up to 34 years			**35 years and over**		
	Full-time	**Part-time**	**Total**	**Full**	**Partial**	**Total**
Retail	446,376	459,622	905,998	1,018,566	683,627	1,702,193
Tourism	426,806	614,458	1,041,264	431,492	591,892	1,023,384

Total services	2,339,514	1,972,320	4,311,834	4,691,698	3,082,443	7,774,141
	Composition %					
Trade	49.3	50.7	100.0	59.8	40.2	100.0
Tourism	41.0	59.0	100.0	42.2	57.8	100.0
Total services	54.3	45.7	100.0	60.4	39.6	100.0

Employees in the non-agricultural private sector by gender and working hours, 2024, absolute figures and percentage composition

	Men			**Women**		
	Full-time	**Part-time**	**Total**	**Full**	**Partial**	**Total**
Retail	944,830	375,009	1,319,839	520,112	768,240	1,288,352
Tourism	459,245	515,598	974,843	399,053	690,752	1,089,805
Total services	4,094,231	1,747,295	5,841,526	2,936,981	3,307,468	6,244,449
	Composition %					
Trade	71.6	28.4	100.0	40.4	59.6	100.0
Tourism	47.1	52.9	100.0	36.6	63.4	100.0
Total services	70.1	29.9	100.0	47.0	53.0	100.0

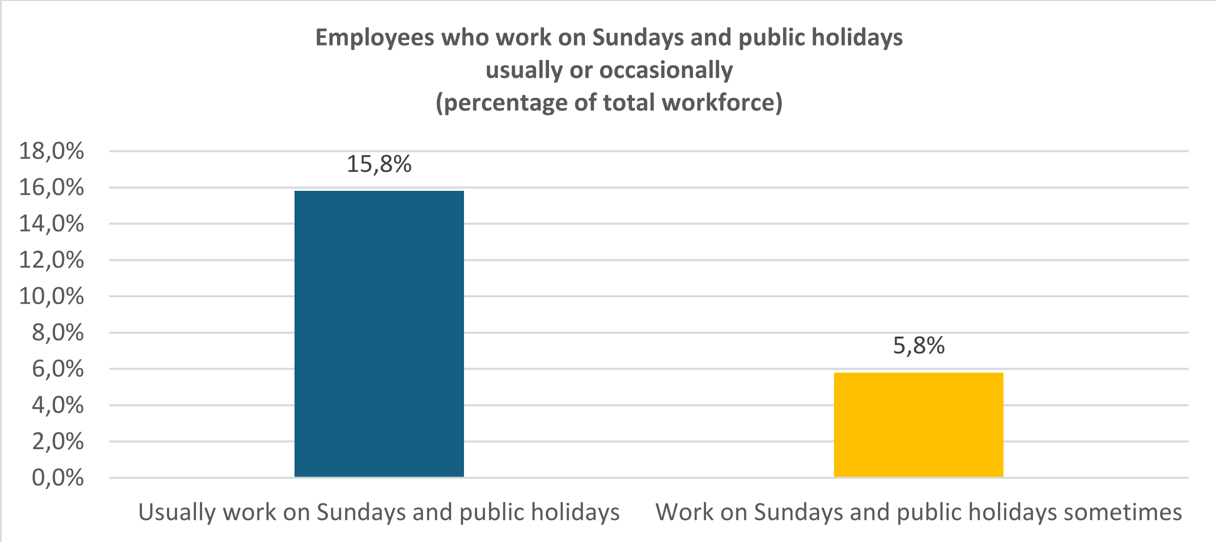
The tables below show the huge downward wage disparities which, in the service, retail and tourism sectors, affect part-time workers, women, young people, and atypical and precarious workers. The figures shown refer to average gross annual wages.

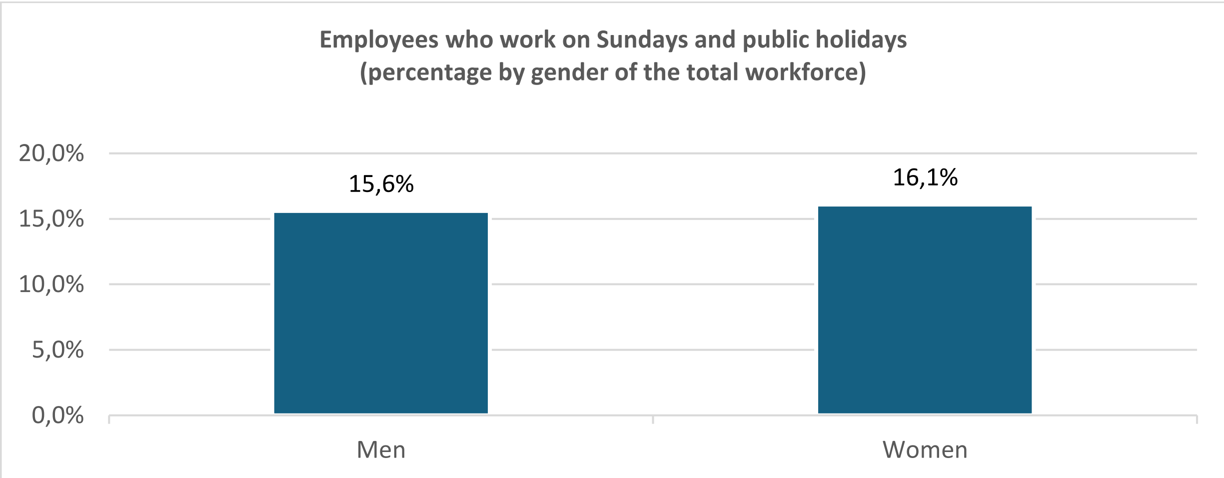
	Men			**Women**		
	Full-time	**Part-time**	**Total**	**Full**	**Partial**	**Total**
Retail	33,055	12,530	27,223	28,515	13,970	19,842
Tourism	16,727	8,942	12,609	13,110	8,853	10,412
Total services	31,467	11,270	25,426	25,067	12,201	18,252

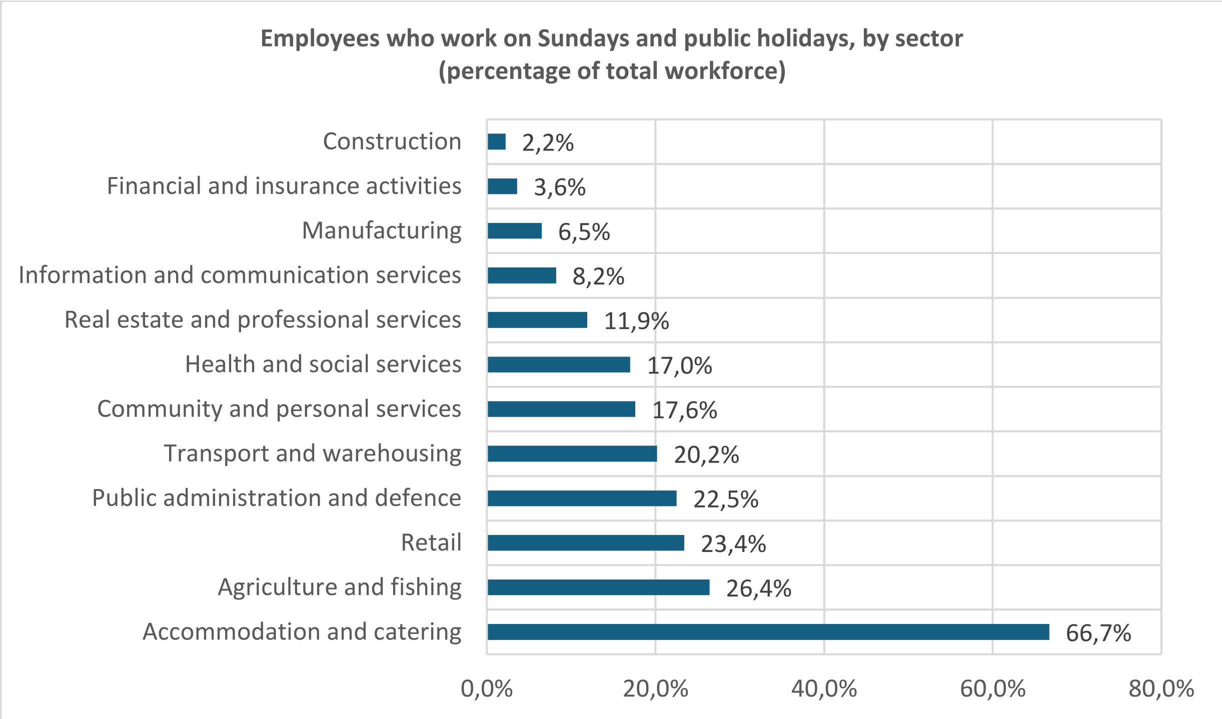
	Fixed	**Non-standard**	**Total**
	Retail		
Up to 34 years	20,853	8,590	17,044
35 years and over	29,283	10,882	27,055
Total	26,800	9,559	23,577
	Tourism		
Up to 34 years	13,755	6,128	8,966
35 years and over	18,164	9,103	13,976
Total	16,343	7,377	11,449
	Total services		
Up to 34 years	20,838	8,552	15,083
35 years and over	30,040	11,622	25,400
Total	27,438	10,064	21,719

The tables below show the percentage of workers who work on Sundays and public holidays, as a proportion of the total workforce, broken down by gender and sector. It is evident that the sectors with the highest incidence of Sunday and public holiday work are tourism and, to a lesser extent, retail, and that women are affected to a greater extent than men.

Source: ADAPT survey based on ISTAT/Eurostat data (2026)

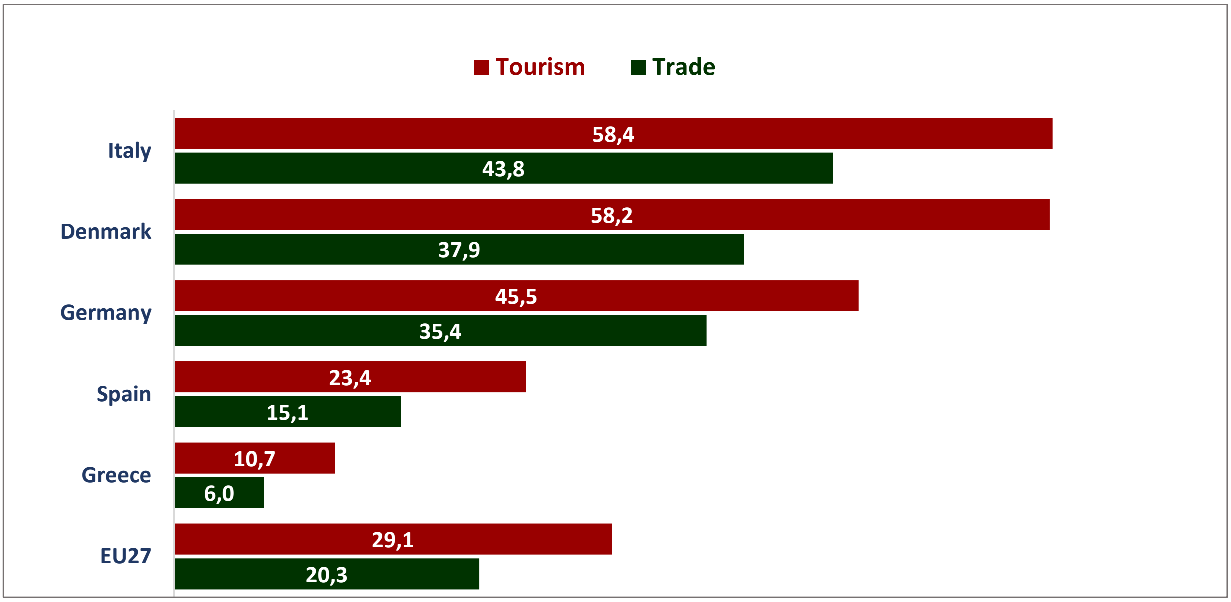






- This situation appears even more serious when compared with that of other European countries, against which Italy ranks among the lowest, as can be seen from the tables below.

Percentage share of part-time workers in selected European countries in the retail and tourism sectors. Year 2024



Source: Analysis by Eures Ricerche Economiche e Sociali/UILTUCS based on Eurostat data

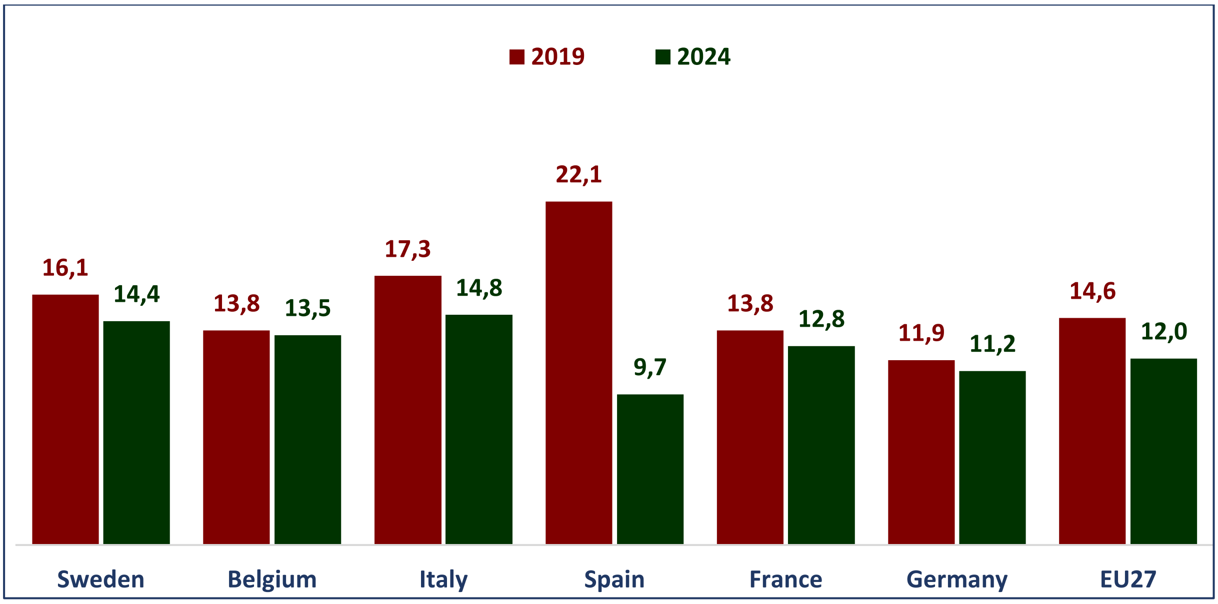
Ranking of European countries based on the percentage of workers on part-time contracts (%) in the retail and tourism sectors. Year 2024.

	Retail (%)	Tourism (%)
Italy	**43.8**	**58.4**
Denmark	37.9	58.2
Sweden	27.4	48.3
Germany	35.4	45.5

Belgium	26.5	39.2
Finland	26.8	36.8
Austria	36.4	34.2
Luxembourg	17.1	25.1
Spain	15.1	23.4
France	14.0	21.3
Poland	8.8	11.5
Greece	6.0	10.7
Portugal	9.0	10.1
EU27	**20.3**	**29.1**

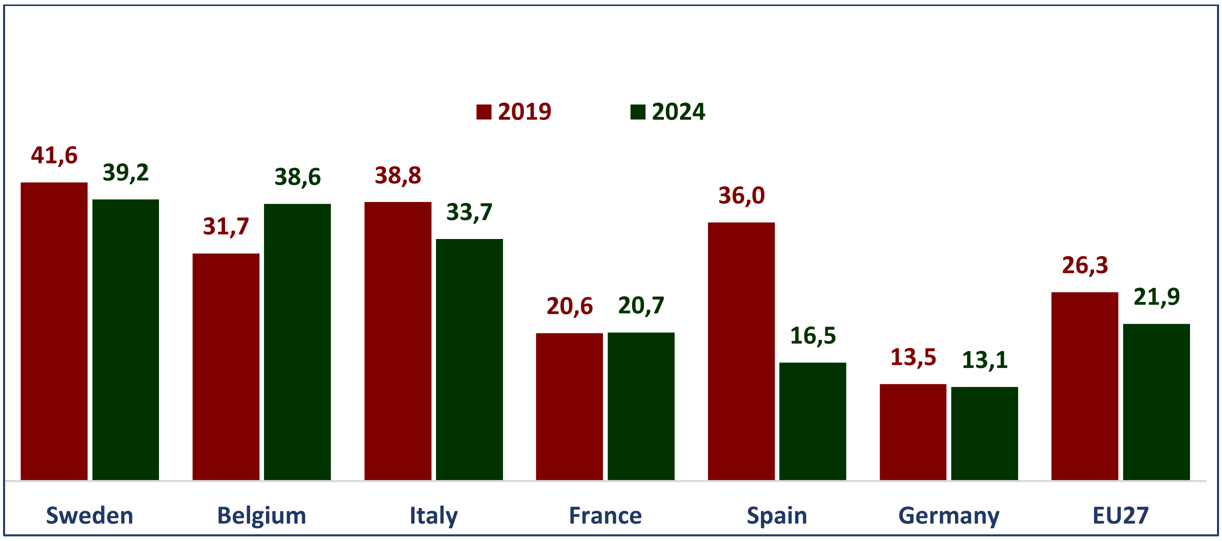
Source: Eures Economic and Social Research/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

Percentage share of temporary workers in the retail sector in selected European countries. Years 2019, 2024.



Source: Eures Economic and Social Research/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

Trends in the percentage of temporary workers in the tourism sector in selected European countries. Years 2019, 2024.



Source: Eures Economic and Social Research/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

Ranking of European countries based on the proportion of temporary workers in the retail and tourism sectors. Years 2019 and 2024.

	2019		2024	
	Retail	**Tourism**	**Retail**	**Tourism**
Sweden	16.1	41.6	14.4	39.2
Belgium	13.8	31.7	13.5	38.6
Italy	**17.3**	**38.8**	**14.8**	**33.7**
Poland	26.6	40.7	17.9	33.3
Portugal	21.7	34.7	15.8	27.8
Greece	7.4	30.9	3.2	27.2
France	13.8	20.6	12.8	20.7
Denmark	13.0	15.2	13.5	20.4
Finland	12.5	16.7	11.4	17.5
Spain	22.1	36.0	9.7	16.5
Austria	7.3	14.1	7.3	14.6
Germany	11.9	13.5	11.2	13.1
EU27	**14.6**	**26.3**	**12.0**	**21.9**

Source: Eures Economic and Social Research/UILTUCS analysis of Eurostat data

The UILTuCS's proposals

- ***UILTuCS has put forward a series of proposals to limit and regulate the various forms of precarious employment and excessive flexibility in the service sector.***
- ***The '25/50/100' proposal, which consists of the following demands:***
  - ***A general increase in the weekly working hours for part-time workers to 25 hours.***
  - ***An increase to 50% in the hourly wage supplements for Sunday work.***
  - ***An increase to 100% of the hourly wage supplements for work on public holidays.***
- ***These demands form part of the broader collective bargaining strategy proposed by UILTuCS to tackle low-paid work and of our institutional lobbying for legislative reforms, in coordination with the UIL; these include:***
  - ***National and decentralised pay rises, linked to inflation and labour productivity – (see Chapter 1).***
  - ***The conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent contracts.***
  - ***Additional pay and social security contributions for part-time and intermittent contracts, to ensure that these workers receive a decent annual total remuneration and a decent pension at the end of their working career – (see Chapter 1).***
  - ***Increase in minimum working hours and consolidation of overtime for part-time workers – (see previous point).***
  - ***Increase in hourly wage supplements – (see previous point).***
  - ***Strengthening of collective bargaining on work organisation.***
  - ***Review and restriction of the liberalisation of Sunday and public holiday opening hours in the retail sector, in consultation with sectoral partners and institutions at national and local level.***
  - ***Extension and mandatory enrolment provisions for occupational supplementary pensions and occupational supplementary healthcare.***
  - ***Actions, in consultation with the UIL, to improve labour market legislation and to return to collective bargaining as many matters as possible relating to employment contracts and their organisation.***

3. ***<u>UILTUCS ACTION AT EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL</u>***

- At UILTuCS, we are aware that to tackle the emergency of in-work poverty in Italy, it is necessary to coordinate national trade union strategies with European and international ones, which is why in recent years we have decided to strengthen our action at those levels and to forge closer ties with our parent federations, UNI Europa and EFFAT at European level, and UNI Global and the IUF at international level.
- ***<u>The various areas in which we are active at European and international level, and in which we intend to build stronger synergy and mutual support with our parent federations, include:</u>***
  - ***The full and proper transposition in all EU Member States of European directives in the social and labour fields, in particular Directive 2022/2041 on minimum wages, Directive 2023/970 on pay transparency, and Directive 2024/2831 on workers on digital platforms. In this regard, we expect the European federations to play an active role vis-à-vis the ETUC and the European institutions, to push national government to comply with their obligations.***
  - ***Measures to protect migrant workers, mobile and posted workers, and seasonal workers, particularly in the service sectors, through the full implementation of existing legal instruments at European and international level, and also by countering the potential risks to workers arising from the various legislative deregulation initiatives implemented by the European Commission, such as the Omnibus packages and the 28th regime for businesses at European level.***
  - ***A stronger role for our federations within the ILO, to ensure the defence and implementation of conventions concerning labour in our sectors, and participation in negotiations for new conventions (e.g. platform work).***
  - ***The campaign for a worker-friendly revision of the European Directives on public procurement. UILTuCS strongly supports this campaign and expects close coordination between the European federations and between them and the ETUC, to ensure effective negotiation with the European institutions. It is of vital importance to us that the revision includes provisions extending social clauses and joint and several liability throughout the subcontracting chain to contracts in the private sector as well.***
  - ***The strengthening of the European trade union strategy in support of workers' participation and information rights, through coordinated and active support from all federations for EWCs. This requires support for existing EWCs, a push for the establishment of new EWCs in multinational companies where they are not yet present, a strengthening of training initiatives for EWC members, and the full implementation of the provisions of the new revised EWC Directive.***
  - ***A stronger strategy towards multinational companies, to counter behaviour that undermines workers' rights, and to promote collective bargaining with multinational companies, through the use of transnational agreements at both global and European level, with strong coordination between the federations.***
  - ***The promotion and strengthening of social dialogue within our sectors, with more ambitious objectives than in the past, in order to develop a productive dialogue with our European counterparts and have a tangible impact on European institutional and legislative processes.***
  - ***An active role for our federations, in conjunction with the ETUC, in promoting new legislative instruments and public policies to support workers facing processes of economic and social transformation, such as climate change, the digital revolution, corporate restructuring processes, the evolution of skills, and so on.***

UILTuCS is convinced that, with even more ambitious European and international action and stronger cooperation with our partner federations, the trade union movement will be able to protect workers in our sectors more effectively and to a greater extent.