



Industrial relations and social dialogue
**Italy: Developments in
working life 2022**

Authors: Michele Faioli (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), Silvio Bologna (Università di Palermo) and Alessandro Smilari (Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini)

Research manager: Christine Aumayr-Pintar

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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00

Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu

Web: www.eurofound.europa.eu

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Introduction

The year 2022 began dramatically, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This led European states to figure out how to support the Ukrainian state during the war. In addition, rising energy costs due to the war increased inflation. The inflation estimate in Italy announced by ISTAT (National Statistical Institute in Italy) was 11.6%, the average inflation for the year 2022 was 7.8%, while in 2021 it was 1.9%. ISTAT also explains that in the third quarter, the income of consumer households increased by 1.9% compared to the previous quarter, and final consumption rose by 4.1%.

According to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), Italy has an estimated GDP per capita of \$51,062 at purchasing power parity, and they have a GDP growth forecast of 3.2% in 2022, meaning that Italy is back to pre-pandemic economic levels. However, Italy remains one of the most indebted countries in the Eurozone, with a public debt of 147% of GDP in 2022.

As of 2022, according to ISTAT data, the employment rate is at 60.5%. The total unemployment rate drops to 7.8% and the youth unemployment rate to 23.9%.

Political context

The year 2022 began with the re-election of Sergio Mattarella as President of the Republic in January with 759 votes out of 1009. The first criticism to the government led by Mario Draghi came with the introduction of new stringent measures on the pandemic and vaccines, and for measures related to the economy, mainly from the right-wing and the 5 Star Movement.

The consensus of the centre-right parties and in particular that of Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia party began to increase, with the victory in the June city elections in many Italian cities such as Palermo, L'Aquila, and Genoa.

In July, a conflict arose between Draghi and the 5 Star Movement over the '*Decreto Aiuti*' law (Aid Decree), because of a provision concerning the creation of an incinerator in Rome. After failing to gain approval (5 Star Movement, Lega and Forza Italia did not vote to support the government) Draghi resigned and on 21 July President Mattarella dismissed the chambers and called for general elections for 25 September.

In the elections, the main coalitions are the centre-left parties (PD, +Europa, Alleanza Verdi-Sinistra and Impegno Civico), the 5 Star Movement running alone, the Third Pole (liberal coalition composed of Azione and Italia Viva) and the centre-right (Forza Italia, Lega and Fratelli d'Italia). The elections are won by the centre-right parties, and in particular thanks to a good result of Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia party, which obtained 26% of the consensus (although it must be said that there was a 63.9% drop in turnout, down 9 percentage points from the previous general election). Lega and Forza Italia got 8%, the PD got 19%, the 5 Star Movement got 15%. The Third Pole finished with 8%. Enrico Letta resigned as secretary of the PD and called for a party congress in early 2023. The Meloni government is officially sworn in at the Quirinale on 22 October. Giorgia Meloni thus became the first female Prime Minister in the history of the Italian Republic.

There have been several protests during 2022, due to price increases caused by inflation, such as the protest organised on 10 June by the major consumer organisations, which took place in the principal Italian cities. For the associations, in fact, the government has not done enough to limit the price increase and this has made goods even more expensive (Capponi, 2022).

Actors, institutions and processes

Social partners

According to a study by the Observatory of the ADAPT School of Higher Education, there is an increase of employee participation schemes in bargaining. Approximately half of the company agreements collected by the Observatory contain clauses on representative or direct worker participation, although in most cases this representativeness is obtained to inform and consult workers on particular company activities (it is therefore not an 'active' participation but more of an informative function). Often the topics touched upon are gender policies, professional grading, training, and organisational innovations, but sometimes consultations concern the production performance of plants and performance incentives.

Social dialogue bodies or frameworks

The Budget Law 2022 (Law No. 234/2021) introduced reductions or suspensions of work through the intervention of wage subsidies. Important changes to the solidarity funds were implemented to ensure this protection. In fact, employers in sectors not covered by wage supplementation must set up bilateral funds, which are in their own way bilateral social dialogue institutions between social partners, through trade unions and employers' organisations to ensure protection for the employment relationship in the event of reduction/suspension of work activity. These funds ensure the provision of a wage integration allowance. Already established bilateral funds will have to adapt to the new legal provisions by 31 December 2022. As of 1 January 2022, all employers with at least one employee belonging to sectors or size classes not covered by the Ordinary Wage Supplementation Fund (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni Ordinaria*, CIGO) or who have not established or adapted the envisaged bilateral funds will be included in the Wage Supplementation Fund (*Fondo di Integrazione Salariale*, FIS) (Petricca, 2022).

Worth mentioning is the ALEXUS project, concluded between the three confederations of trade unions, CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour), CISL (Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions) and UIL (Italian Union of Labour). The main objective of the project is to fight against undeclared work and to promote regular work by strengthening cooperation with national and European institutional and social stakeholders and by training the skills of regional and territorial leaders on the issue of undeclared work.

Other working life related institutions

Decree No. 140 of 2 August 2022 establishes sanctions for workers receiving wage subsidies who do not comply with training obligations. This decree, after setting out the different types of sanctions according to the seriousness of the infringement, indicates that it is the Labour Inspectorate who verifies the infringement. Persons applying income support measures under the Solidarity Funds are also subject to the same supervision. If the Labour Inspectorate detects absences in the records of the training provider, it will contest the sanction according to the number of unjustified absences. The competence of this action to the Labour Inspectorate is a novelty, as this mechanism of sanctions in the case of non-compliance with the training obligation with NASPI (monthly

unemployment benefit) and DIS-COLL (monthly unemployment for coordinated and continuous collaboration contracts) is managed by the Employment Centres.

Governmental responses to inflation

In view of rising energy costs and inflation, the Draghi government immediately moved to counter the impact of rising prices on Italian households' incomes. The first round of economic support was provided by Decree No. 50 of 17 May, enacted into law on 15 July, also known as the '*Decreto Aiuti*' (Aid Decree). The Aid Decree extends the social bonus for electricity and gasⁱ for the second quarter of 2022, and increases tax credits for companies with high gas consumption from 20% to 25%. The tax credit for companies with high electricity consumption increases from 12% to 15%. This decree not only provided support measures for businesses and investments affected by the Ukrainian crisis, but also economic support for the population affected by inflation. In fact, this decree provides for the payment of a one-off allowance of €200,ⁱⁱ giving instructions on the payment and the beneficiaries involved. On the aid decree, the government is committed to involving the social partners in a structured and permanent debate for the consultation and design of the decrees.

In September, Decree No. 115/2022, also known as the '*Decreto Aiuti Bis*' (Aid Decree Bis), was introduced, which extended the €200 bonus to workers not covered by the previous decree, revalued all pension cheques by 1.9% from 1 November 2022 and by 2% for cheques up to 35,000 from 1 October 2022. Moreover, This decree suspends the effectiveness of clauses allowing unilateral changes to energy contractⁱⁱⁱ terms until 30 April 2023, and requires suppliers to offer natural gas to vulnerable customers at a fair price starting from January 2023.

Then, in November, the third set of measures to support businesses and citizens was published in the Official Gazette: Decree No. 144/2022, also known as the '*Decreto Aiuti Ter*' (Aid Decree Ter). Through this decree, the €200 allowance provided for in the previous decrees is increased by €150.00 for persons whose total income in 2021 did not exceed €20,000.

Concerning the cut in fuel costs, the Energy Decree (Act No. 30 of 18 March 2022) provided for several cuts in fuel costs,^{iv} which were extended through further decrees until 31 December 2022.

ⁱ Eurofound (2022), [Energy bonus for enterprises](#), case IT-2022-21/2246 (measures in Italy), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.

ⁱⁱ Eurofound (2022), [One-time €200 bonus against inflation](#), case IT-2022-27/2880 (measures in Italy), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.

ⁱⁱⁱ Eurofound (2022), [Energy suppliers are not allowed to unilaterally modify contracts](#), case IT-2022-23/2914 (measures in Italy), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.

^{iv} Eurofound (2022), [Cut in gasoline excise duty](#), case IT-2022-13/2886 (measures in Italy), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.

Collective bargaining and inflation

How inflation features in wage negotiations

In Italy, collective bargaining is a way to directly control inflation by using specific mechanism. One of these mechanisms involves using inflation as a reference point but excluding the cost of energy goods (measured by HICP, the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices), adjusting wages based on this value. Additionally, inflation can be addressed by granting one-time allowances to all workers after collective bargaining is completed. (Ferrante, 2022).

According to OECD data, the average wage growth in Italy has been significantly lower than that of Germany and France since 1990. Specifically, while Germany experienced a growth rate of 20.1% and France a growth rate of 23.9%, Italy's average wage only grew by 0.5% over the same period of time. For this reason, it was crucial to raise wages through collective bargaining: in the period from January to September 2022, the average hourly wage increased by 1% (in the same period in 2021 it had increased by 0.6%). The increase in contractual wages was 1.5% for employees in industry, 0.6% for employees in private services and 1.5% for public administration. (Carucci, 2022).

In 2022, several national collective agreements were renewed in Italy to counteract the impact of inflation on workers' salaries. Notable agreements include the chemical-pharmaceutical, energy, electrical, mechanics, construction, telecommunications, agricultural workers and floriculturists, and services sectors, all of which involve wage increases or other compensations to address inflation.

Examples of recent responses

In 2022 there were many contract renewals of national collective agreements also to counter the effect of inflation on workers' salaries. The most recent agreements signed are the chemical-pharmaceutical (increase in inflation compensated by an overall increase of around €200 to be paid in five payments until 2025), energy (total increase of €235 over the three-year period, divided into three payments with an additional 20 euro per month), electrical (increase of €243 overall distributed in four payments, to which must be added €15 of productivity bonus, paid for 14 months for two years), but very important contracts were also signed, such as those for mechanics (new minimum wages adjusted for inflation, revaluation of travel allowance and on-call allowance), construction (provides for an increase from €92 to €184 based on the level, paid in two tranches), telecommunications (increase in minimum wages of €100 distributed in 4 tranches until October 2022), agricultural workers and floriculturists (salary increase of 4.7% divided into three tranches, until June 2023) and services (provides for the payment of €300 in two payments and a down payment from April 2023 of around €30 per month).

Developments in working time

Changes to legislation

From this year, with the introduction of Law 104/2022, known as the Transparency Decree (*'Decreto Trasparenza'*), it becomes mandatory in contractual agreements to inform employees of their working hours and their scheduling. In fact, where working hours are predictable, the employer is obliged to inform the employee about normal working hours and overtime conditions. In addition, he must inform about the relevant remuneration. If, on the other hand, the organisation of working time is complicated to foresee, the legislation provides that the employer must inform the employee of this, indicating the minimum number of paid hours and the remuneration for overtime, the hours and days on which the work is to be performed (Garretta, 2022).

Bargaining outcomes

Several national collective agreements have bargained on working time. The NCBA for the health public sector (signed in November 2022) provides for derogations and allowances for working time: article 43 of the aforementioned NCBA regulates working time, which is 36 hours per week and is divided into various flexibilities for an organic distribution of workloads. Shift scheduling, to facilitate distribution, must be formalised by the twentieth day of the previous month. Additional flexibilities are also provided in the case of parents with young children. An additional break of 30 minutes is also defined in case the daily performance exceeds 6 hours. There is a daily allowance for night shifts.

A case of reorganisation of working time is that one of the Chemical-Pharmaceutical NCBA (signed in June 2022), which intervenes by recognising that the category of workers who perform management functions is not subject to time limitations or the application of overtime bonuses but recognises special bonuses for the same categories in the case of additional work on Saturdays or at night, if it is not dictated by the worker's preference (Citterio, 2022).

A further case of organisational flexibility of working time provided by collective bargaining can be found in the NCBA *Metalmeccanici Industria* (signed in February 2021). This NCBA provides for various possibilities for the employer in terms of reorganising working time, including the possibility of unilaterally planning a daily midweek division (also in a non-uniform manner) of the ordinary 40-hour working time, after consultation with the trade unions, or the possibility of unilaterally defining the change from 'day' to 'shift' hours, in particular cases (Malandrini, 2022).

Finally, the NCBA for agricultural and floricultural workers signed in May 2022 provides for the possibility of making ordinary, overtime, holiday and night working hours more flexible for various activities (e.g., in view of the specific work organisation requirements of agritourism activities, territorial agreements may provide for special arrangements for the application of ordinary working hours). The NCBA does not go into much detail but leaves it to territorial agreements.

Debates on duration and organisation

During 2021, the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CGEU) has questioned the regulation of on-call time, asking whether it constitutes working time and, therefore, whether the period during which the employee is outside his or her working hours but

remains on call and contactable for possible work performance. The question concerns job categories such as doctors, plant engineers or fire fighters. The answer is to be found in the CGEU's elaboration (sentences of 3 October 2000 C-303/98 and 9 September 2003, C-151/02) of the criteria for distinguishing periods of on-call time that constitute working time, to which the Italian Court of Cassation has adapted. For doctors, an on-call period (*periodo di reperibilità*) and an availability period (*periodo di guardia*) have been identified (in the first one, it is not considered working time, as they are only obliged to be reachable, in the second one, on the other hand, they are and must be present at the workplace and at the employer's disposal). For the remaining cases, the judge will have to assess whether the conditions exist by resorting to two elements: a) the brevity of the time within which the employee must reach the workplace in the case of immediate performance of work; b) the average frequency of work performed during the on-call periods (Patanè, Toffoletto, 2022).

Labour market shortages and social partners

According to preliminary estimates by ISTAT, in the third quarter of 2022 the vacancy rate is at 1.9% for all economic activities, thus an increase of 0.2% compared to 2021. For industry, the rate stands at 1.9%, up from 1.7% in 2021. As regards services, the rate is instead 2.0%, also up from 1.7% in 2021.

The 2022 Bulletin of Excelsior, the labour market monitoring tool of the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, the international issues surrounding the conflict in Ukraine do not seem to have had a negative impact on the employment needs for 2022 of private companies in industry and services operating in Italy. There is a growth in the number of workers (any form of contract) entering the companies, reaching about 5.2 million in 2022 (an increase of 11% compared to 2021, when the number was about 4.6 million). What emerges is a difficulty for employers in finding the profiles they are looking for, a difficulty that concerns 41% of the entries (this figure is also on the rise, in 2021 it was 32%). This problem is found, in almost two cases out of three, on a lack of available people and only in one case out of three on a poor preparation of candidates.

In the agricultural sector, to facilitate the finding of manpower (this is very often seasonal work), the new fixed-term occasional work contract was introduced, an experimental measure valid for the two-year period 2023 and 2024 which allows farms to use occasional services for a maximum of 45 working days for each worker, this represented no change in the previous practice. The worker involved must not have had a subordinate employment relationship in the agricultural sector in the previous three years. The categories of workers that can be hired with this type of contract are the unemployed, recipients of social safety nets, students under the age of 25 and prisoners.

Other important policy developments

Employment status and contracts

The 2023 Budget Law (Law No. 197/2022) introduced several measures in favour of private employers who hire certain categories in 2023, such as young people under 36, women and persons receiving citizenship income. For employers who hire persons receiving the citizenship income on permanent basis, there is an exemption from social security contributions. The exemption from social security contributions for permanent hires of young people under 36 years of age and women (at least 50 years old and unemployed for more than 12 months, or resident in regions eligible for EU structural fund financing) has also been extended for the year 2023 (it has been active since 2020, by Law No. 178/2020).

Self-employed

As regards professional self-employment (regulated by Art. 2229 of the Civil Code), the 2022 Budget Law (Art. 1, para. 927) provides for the postponement of tax obligations in the event of the professional's illness.

In addition, the Budget Law 2022 introduced several changes regarding the taxation of income from occasional self-employment. The no tax area (the area up to which income cannot be taxed) was raised from €4,800 to €5,500.

Gender pay gap

The NRRP (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) has devoted special attention to women's employment as a cross-cutting priority of all the 'Missions' of the NRRP. It contains a national strategy for gender equality from 2021 to 2026 and, based on this, Budget Law 2022 and Law No. 162/2021 aim to overcome the gender gap. It is precisely Law No. 162/2021 (in force since 3 December 2021) that introduces modifications to the Equal Opportunities Code, mainly with two objectives: the provision of interventions to prevent the gender pay gap, through rewards for companies that seek to remove this discrimination; and through specific measures to encourage women's participation in the labour market. The first objective is reflected in the introduction of a 'Periodic Report on the Situation of Male and Female Personnel', which strengthened the reporting obligations of large companies. The second objective is realised in the new 'Gender Equality Certification' system, which sets new standards to be adopted through various incentives (Scofferi, Consiglio, 2022).

Health and safety

Through Law No. 215/2021, published in the Official Gazette on 20 December 2021, in occupational health and safety, a new requirement has been laid down for principals who must notify the Labour Inspectorate in advance of services assigned to occasional self-employed workers. The aim is to strengthen occupational health and safety measures, especially for those companies that are most deficient in terms of prevention and protection of the weaker categories. It is specified that the communication must be made prior to the start of work by text message or e-mail. The reporting obligation is mandatory for the category of entrepreneurs, but not for private households,

professional firms (not organised in corporate form), amateur sporting and cultural non-profit associations. The communication must include the identification data of the parties involved, the client and the service provider, a brief description of the activity and the remuneration, the place, the date of the start and the duration of the service. In the event of non-communication, there is an administrative sanction ranging from €500 to €2,500 for each worker with an omitted communication (Iacopini, 2022).

Work–life balance

Legislators and social partners have reflected on the importance of flexibility and work-life balance due to the remote work trend of the past two years. Many company collective agreements (such as the company contract of "Che Banca!", of "2I Rete Gas", "of Leonardo", etc...) have been updated to allow for more flexible work hours and remote work options, which is likely to continue in the future. This shift benefits both employees, who can better manage their time, and companies, who can save on costs and manage their space more efficiently. Law n.32/2022 (also called Family Act) delegates the Government to issue legislative decrees that support parenthood and work-life balance, with the aim of giving greater support to the family. The guideline on which this law moves is the promotion of the equitable division of tasks between parents to harmonize family management, at the same time facilitating women's work and women's return to the labour market. Furthermore, a further purpose of the legislator is to favour the education and training activities of the child, recognizing tax breaks, such as deductions and/or deductions, for education expenses, especially for families with disabilities. With a view to sharing family tasks, the goal is to provide greater availability of parental leave for the father, also trying to include self-employed workers and freelancers (Quintavalle, 2022). With regard to parental leave, the overall duration of the right to parental leave is increased from 10 to 11 months. In addition, the months of paid leave (30% of pay) have increased from six to nine in total. Finally, the age of the child at which parents can take parental leave rises from six to 12 years. Furthermore, for working parents with children up to 12 and for caregivers they have a preferential lane on smart working: in fact, employers who enter into smart working agreements must give priority to requests made by workers with children up to 12 years of age or without any age limit in the case of disabled children. The worker cannot be sanctioned, demoted, fired, or transferred for such requests (Tucci, 2022).

Lifelong learning and skills development

The Ministry of Labour has issued a decree implementing Article 88 of Decree-Law No. 34 of 2020, establishing the 'New Skills Fund'. The measure is a consequence of mission 5 of the NRRP, dedicated to labour policies and continuous training of workers. The purpose of this fund is to offer financial support to companies that want to reskill their workers and reorganise their production processes, by signing an agreement to reorganise working hours in order to allocate these training activities to workers. Through the previously mentioned decree, the structure of the fund, the amounts that can be reimbursed, and the operating methods have been changed. In fact, the fund will reimburse 60% of the hourly wage and, in addition, it is specified that the training must only be provided by training agencies and not by the employer itself (thus avoiding particular abuses) (Tiraboschi, 2022).

Working life of Ukrainian refugees

Employment and working conditions

According to the Italian Civil Protection website, from 01 March 2022 to 16 December 2022 (last available data), approximately 175,000 Ukrainian refugees arrived in Italy, of whom 125,000 were adults and 50,000 minors. Out of the total number of adults, 74.4% are women. The peak of arrivals in the period was in March, July and August. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has released, through the Migrant Integration Portal, information on the recruitment of Ukrainian migrants. They can in fact be hired as soon as they have received a residence permit for temporary protection, to facilitate a quick placement. In addition, registration with employment centres is made free of charge. There is no data on the percentage of Ukrainian migrant workers in employment. Ordinance 872/2022 of the Civil Protection provides that, with only an application for a residence permit linked to EU temporary protection, Ukrainians will also be able to work on a seasonal or self-employed basis, through the opening of a VAT number, as well as with an employee contract. EU protection lasts for one year, renewable for two further periods of six months each. In 2023, it will be verified that the employed workers renew their permit. Temporary protection gives also the right to access to education. Consequently, holders of such protection are granted access to the education system on an equal footing with Italian citizens, as well as access to vocational training or internships in companies (which may include Italian language courses, if necessary).

Social partner initiatives to support Ukrainian refugees

The social partners carried out several actions to support Ukrainian immigrants during 2022.

Firstly, an agreement was signed between the country's main employers' organisations and the three main trade union organisations at national level, CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour), CISL (Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions) and UIL (Italian Union of Labour), to jointly support Ukrainian immigrants. A 'Solidarity Fund for the Ukrainian people' was set up, into which workers and companies could make voluntary contributions, guaranteeing free adhesion to the initiative. A 'steering committee' was subsequently appointed to assess the destination of the accumulated resources. The fundraising ended on 31 October 2022.

In May, a protocol was signed by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of the Interior, FILLEA-CGIL (Italian Federation of Wood and Related Workers in CGIL), FILCA CISL (Italian Federation of Construction and Related Workers in CISL) and FENEA-UIL (Italian Federation of Building and Related Workers in UIL) (the three most representative trade union associations for the construction sector) and the president of ANCE (National Association of Building Constructors) for the socio-occupational insertion of at least 3,000 people, among international and temporary protection applicants and holders, in training courses of the construction schools, coordinated by the paritarian body Formedil.

Through an agreement between the main social partners in the domestic sector, the Supplementary Health Insurance Fund has provided, until 31 March 2023, a financial contribution of €300 for expenses in food, education, pharmaceuticals, clothing and family reunification for Ukrainian citizens who have left the country. In addition, training courses are planned to foster knowledge of Italian and skills in the domestic work sector, through the bilateral sector body Ebincolf.

In April, two agreements were signed between the employers' associations Assolavoro and Assosomm and the trade unions of the staff leasing industry for the support of people who have requested international and temporary protection due to the Ukraine crisis. The aim of this agreement is to facilitate the reception, inclusion and socio-occupational integration of Ukrainian refugees, identifying special training paths to facilitate their job transitions and reduce the mismatch of skills. The basic training courses are financed through the Forma.temp fund, while a one-off allowance (€1,000-1500 gross) is envisaged through the Ebitemp fund for the support and accommodation of refugees participating in the training courses or for staff leasing workers who host refugees. The agreement was renewed until 31 October 2022 until 31 December 2022 (Regina, 2022).

Commentary and outlook

The strong tension between the country's major parties resulted in the fall of the Draghi government in July. Elections had to be organised quickly, also because of the difficult national and international situation due to the war in Ukraine and inflation. The new centre-right government, after winning the elections, worked on the 2023 budget law, most of which included further measures against the high energy price, as well as measures to reduce the tax burden.

There was also a decrease in the number of infections due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed many workers to return to their workplaces. The remote work used in the previous two years has, however, made legislators and social partners reflect on the importance of flexibility and work-life balance, with many national company collective agreements introducing more flexibility in the distribution of employees' working hours or leaving them the choice (where possible) of where to work. This seems to be a trend that is likely to continue in the coming years, as it ensures on the one hand that employees can manage their working time better, and on the other hand that companies can save on fixed costs and manage their space more efficiently. In this regard, important steps forward have been taken with regard to work-life balance, through the introduction of the 'Family Act' (Act 32/2022), increasing parental leave and favouring smart working for those categories with children.

Like other European states, Italy immediately made itself very available to host Ukrainian refugees, who are approximately 175,000 since the outbreak of war. In order to facilitate their stay, the government has made it easy for migrants to take up employment from the outset, while the social partners have worked to facilitate recruitment through training to reduce mismatches in skills and income support. Not knowing whether the war will end anytime soon, it becomes crucial to continue to support the Ukrainian refugees who will inevitably continue to arrive, and education will become a key principle in this regard.

Italy has been hit hard by rising inflation in 2022, with an estimated inflation rate of 11.6%. This resulted in a series of government aid to the population, through one-off payments to various categories of beneficiaries. Moreover, the social partners have also updated the main NCBA to try to respond to the effects of inflation on employees' salaries. In fact, the recent agreements (among the most important are chemical-pharmaceutical, construction, services, agriculture) of the NCBA provide for salary increases divided into several tranches. The updating of national collective agreements was an important opportunity to increase wages in Italy, which had remained stable for decades, unlike other major European countries such as France and Germany (the average wage since 1990 in Italy grew by 0.5%, compared to 20.1% in Germany and 23.9% in France, according to OECD data). If inflation continues to rise, along with rising energy costs, there will have to be more discussion about salary and further support for workers.

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