

Social security

Pensions

The earliest official government figures on pensions and pensioners were provided, as early as the second half of the 19th century, by the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury and, in the early years of the Republic, by the Treasury (State General Accounting Office). However, they are not available for every period, and this, combined with the fact that they refer exclusively to public employee pensions, means that these figures have not been included here. The series presented in this section start from 1951 – albeit not on a regular annual basis – and until 1974 are the result of calculations using data provided by the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

From 1975 to 1996 the official source of pension statistics was the *Statistical survey on pensions* conducted by ISTAT with the main pension institutions, introduced in implementation of a Chamber of Deputies Finance and Treasury Commission resolution dated 23rd January 1975. The technical methods for performing the survey were agreed with pension system experts, as part of the Commission set up to study and formulate proposals to improve social security statistics, established by ISTAT and composed of representatives from the INPS, INAIL, Ministry of the Interior, Italian Treasury (for the private sector), ENPAS and INADEL (for the public sector). The preliminary examination of existing information, performed when the first survey was conducted (1974), revealed inconsistent classification methods not only between different institutions but even between different departments within the same institution. Harmonisation – in part as a result of *ad hoc* analyses carried out by the social security institutions themselves - improved the quality of the data in terms of consistency and comparability, as early as the second edition of the survey (1975) which, for the first time, presented a far-ranging analysis of pensions provided to ex-civil servants.

From 1997, on the other hand, statistical information was produced by ISTAT in collaboration with INPS, using the *Central register of pensioners*, making it possible to produce and publish figures concerning pension recipients for the first time. This administrative register, managed by INPS, aims to collect, conserve and manage data and information on those entitled to:

- general invalidity, old age and survivor's pensions based on obligatory insurance;
- pensions from obligatory social security schemes substituting the abovementioned obligatory insurance;
- pensions from obligatory social security schemes for self-employed workers;
- pensions from any other obligatory social security scheme;
- any other form of supplementary or complementary social security insurance;
- pensions or ongoing welfare benefits;
- war pensions;
- permanent invalidity allowances or allowances for accidents at work or occupational diseases.

Data drawn from administrative sources, reclassified by ISTAT on the basis of pre-established definitions ([see Glossary](#)) have been processed according to the Pension Benefits Classification System (SCPP). This classification system was created by ISTAT in accordance with the European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS). This has allowed ISTAT, from 2006 data onwards, to meet EU requirements set out in European regulation no. 458/2007 to provide Eurostat with data regarding pension recipients on an annual basis.

For a correct interpretation of the statistics presented, we should point out that the term “pension”

means regular, ongoing cash payments paid individually by the government or by public and private institutions when the recipient reaches a certain age or number of years of contributions, or upon reduction or loss of his/her capacity to work due to congenital malformation or the death of the person insured.

The number of pensions does not coincide with the number of recipients, insofar as each pensioner may receive more than one pension. For example, the recipient of an old-age pension may also be entitled to a part of their deceased spouse's old age pension. Moreover, each person may be entitled to one or more pensions from different categories, as when an old age, invalidity or survivor's pension is summed with a pension granted due to an accident at work or welfare benefit.

In order to provide, as consistent and complete an overview of the various forms of pension considered, the tables separate benefits into three types, according to the event which caused the pension to be granted:

- *Disability, old-age and survivors' pensions (OADS)*. Old-age and disability pensions are provided as a result of the working activities of the individual insured, when he/she reaches a certain age, after a certain number of years of contributions paid or in the case of reduced work capacity (direct pensions). In the event of the insured individual's death either during his/her working life or retirement, the pension may be paid out to dependent relatives (indirect pensions). An OADS pension may also, in certain cases, be combined with other pensions paid out to the same beneficiary, even by the same institution or social security provider. Furthermore, some institutions provide "supplementary" or "complementary" pensions in addition to obligatory social security insurance, while substitute forms also exist which exclude and exempt ordinary OADS pensions.
- *Compensatory pension*. Compensatory pensions are regular allowances paid out for accidents at work or occupational diseases. They are designed to compensate for an injury, in line with its seriousness, or death (in which case the pension is paid out to survivors) following an event occurring during the course of working activities. Damage may also result in indirect pensions, according to the number of survivors entitled to receive support. These benefits are provided only if a minimum number of years of contributions have been paid by the insured individual.
- *Welfare pensions*. Welfare pensions are allowances paid to the blind, deaf and disabled during their active life and again when they reach the age of 65, as well as for citizens with no or insufficient income. War pensions that include living allowances for veterans enrolled in the Vittorio Veneto order and recipients of the Military Cross (Medaglia e croce al valor militare) have also been assigned to this category. The main characteristic of social security pensions is to guarantee a minimum income to people who cannot otherwise obtain it due to congenital or other malformations or simply old age. These pensions, in any case, are not linked to any form of contributions.