

- ➡ Public Social Housing
- ➡ Private Rental
- ➡ Owner Occupiers
- ➡ Other
- ➡ Total occupied

	# OF DWELLINGS	% OF TOTAL
Approx. 900,000	3.5	
4,081,963	16	
18,789,110	73.2	
1,918,984	7.3	
25,690,057		

SOURCE: ISTAT Population and Housing Census (2022); Nomisma (2024).



THE ROLE OF PUBLIC, COOPERATIVE, AND SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS

In the Italian context the term social housing ('*Edilizia residenziale sociale*' or ERS) is not frequently used, and when it is it usually refers to supply of intermediate/affordable housing typically led by private initiative, including cooperatives and banking foundations – although public housing companies also manage a small but increasing number of dwellings as ERS, and so do to a lesser extent some not for profit and church-based organisations. Precise data on the ERS sector are not available, however it's estimated this segment could include altogether roughly 85,000 units¹.

However, a larger sector is that defined as 'public residential housing' ('*Edilizia residenziale pubblica*' or ERP), commonly known and referred to by the wider public as 'people's housing' ('*case popolari*'). It consists of units rented out by public housing companies, and to a lesser extent directly by municipalities, to low income and vulnerable households, usually at very low rents². Altogether ERP includes roughly 900,000 units corresponding to 3.5% of the total occupied housing stock, or 2.5% of the overall stock (including vacant properties and non-primary residences).

It's also worth noting that housing cooperatives are present in several Italian regions and have housed 930,000 households since the second post-war period through homes for sale and for rent. Today there are about 1,200 housing cooperatives represented by the two main federations Legacoop Abitanti and Confcooperative Habitat.

DYNAMICS OF HOUSING SUPPLY

Funding difficulties have constrained new supply of public housing, which is extremely limited (only about 1,100 new housing units in 2023 according to Nomisma³). Overall, public housing companies in the past decade have mainly focused on managing the existing stock and increasing renovation activities (63,200 units renovated in 2023). One key issue for the sector is to renovate and put back into use vacant units, which according to recent estimates could be as many as 63,700⁴.

New supply by housing cooperatives also has declined due to a lack of adequate financing and policy framework, however the sector currently includes about 8,000 dwellings under construction at the moment.

As for ERS, a major driver for its production was the establishment of a dedicated fund in 2010 with the public bank Cassa Depositi e Prestiti as the main investor, that has so far produced roughly 12,000 units.

HOUSING NEEDS TODAY

First, it is worth mentioning that there is no official estimate of housing needs in the country. The establishment of a Housing Observatory within the Ministry of Infrastructures was announced several times over the years but never concretely materialized. Examples of housing observatories exist at the regional level including for instance the ones set up by the regional governments in Emilia Romagna and Tuscany.

1 _ Information provided by Fondazione Housing Sociale.

2 _ Pittini, A. (forthcoming), Italy. In Social and public housing in the EU & UK. The Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage.

3 _ Nomisma (2024), Osservatorio nazionale ERP 2023, preliminary findings presented at Federcasa General Assembly on 13 December 2024.

4 _ Ibid.

Furthermore, additional research centres have been established at the local level (including for instance the Affordable Housing Observatory established by the university Politecnico di Milano) or as a sectoral initiative (Osservatorio ERP produced by Nomisma for Federcasa).

Despite the persisting issue of lack of reliable data, it is estimated that around 650,000 households are registered at local level on waiting lists for public social housing.

More broadly, housing affordability is increasingly an issue with an estimated 1.5 million households facing disproportionately high housing costs, especially tenants. Furthermore, data from 2024 show about 3 million families express an interest in purchasing a home but only 980,000 can afford to do so, while at the same time 580,000 households are looking for rental housing solutions that are affordable relative to their income⁵.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HOUSING

As increasing cost of living and the housing crisis are gaining political attention, a Housing Plan has been announced in 2025. The Plan, which will be the first in Italy since 2008, is being developed on the basis of the outcomes of extensive consultations with stakeholders in the housing sector.

It should serve as a programmatic tool to tackle the housing crisis across the national territory, and aims at defining strategies for reorganizing housing supply.

The plan is supposed to allocate 660 million euros until 2030, starting with 100 million in 2027-28 for pilot projects, followed by an additional 560 million for the years 2028-2030 for broader take up. The announced budget falls short compared to the demand for social housing, and so far the Plan does not seem to provide for innovative governance and financial mechanisms able to support a stable production of affordable housing. However, at the time of writing this report details are yet to be confirmed in the framework of the finance bill for 2026.

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC, COOPERATIVE, AND SOCIAL HOUSING



- Encourage better data and monitoring to support policy making
- Ensure stable and long-term funding in the framework of a consistent national housing plan, while recognizing competence of the regional and local authorities
- Consider mechanisms to support households in need through housing benefits, which unlike most EU countries do not exist in Italy
- Work towards the establishment of an investment platform for social housing involving both public and private not for profit/cooperative stakeholders, combining national resources with EU funds and EIB loans

THE EU'S ROLE IN BETTER SUPPORTING THE SECTOR

- Offer guidance for policy making through the European Affordable Housing Plan
- Support the creation of better conditions to access EIB loans including by mobilising InvestEU as guarantees
- Consider the need to offer grants in combination with financial products, aiming to mobilize and encourage additional public and private investments
- Simplify access to EU funds including Cohesion Policy

