



Ageing Populations and Chronic Disease Management The Italian Case Study

Giovanni Vigano' – Senior
consultant and public policy
expert at ProMIS

Cascais International Health Forum



Introduction

The demographic shift towards an ageing population is a critical challenge for healthcare systems worldwide.

Italy serves as a **key case study** for chronic disease management and long-term care.

This presentation will cover:

- Policy reforms and regulatory changes
- The role of caregivers and technological innovations
- Economic implications and sustainable funding strategies
- Comparative insights from Mediterranean countries

Overview of Ageing in Italy

Demographic Trends:

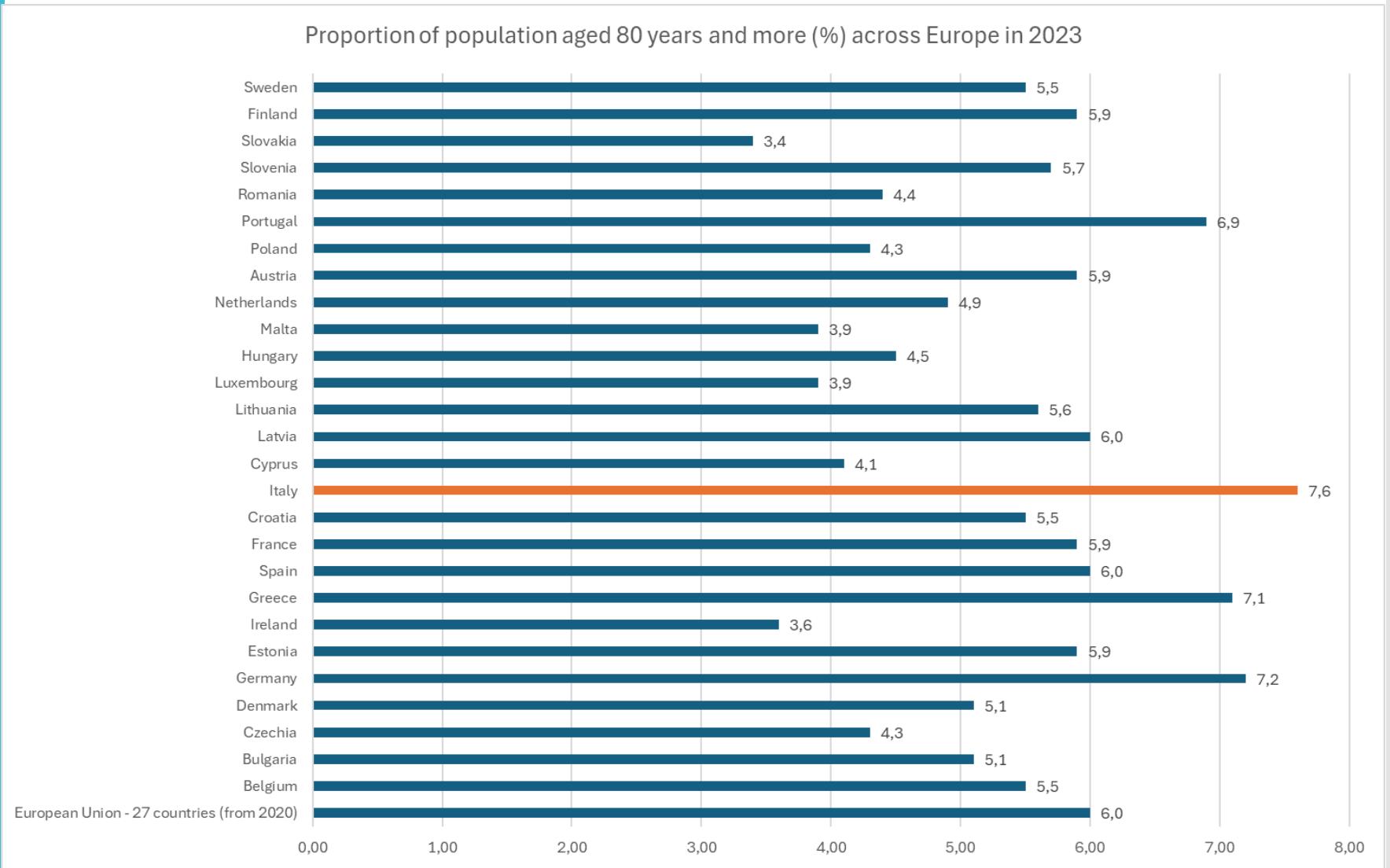
- Italy has one of the highest life expectancies in Europe (83.5 years in 2023, source: ISTAT).
- The population over 65 is expected to reach 35% by 2050 (source: Eurostat).
- Birth rates remain among the lowest in Europe (1.24 children per woman in 2023, source: ISTAT).

Impact on Healthcare:

- Rising demand for geriatric care and chronic disease management.
- Increased strain on social security and long-term care (LTC) systems.



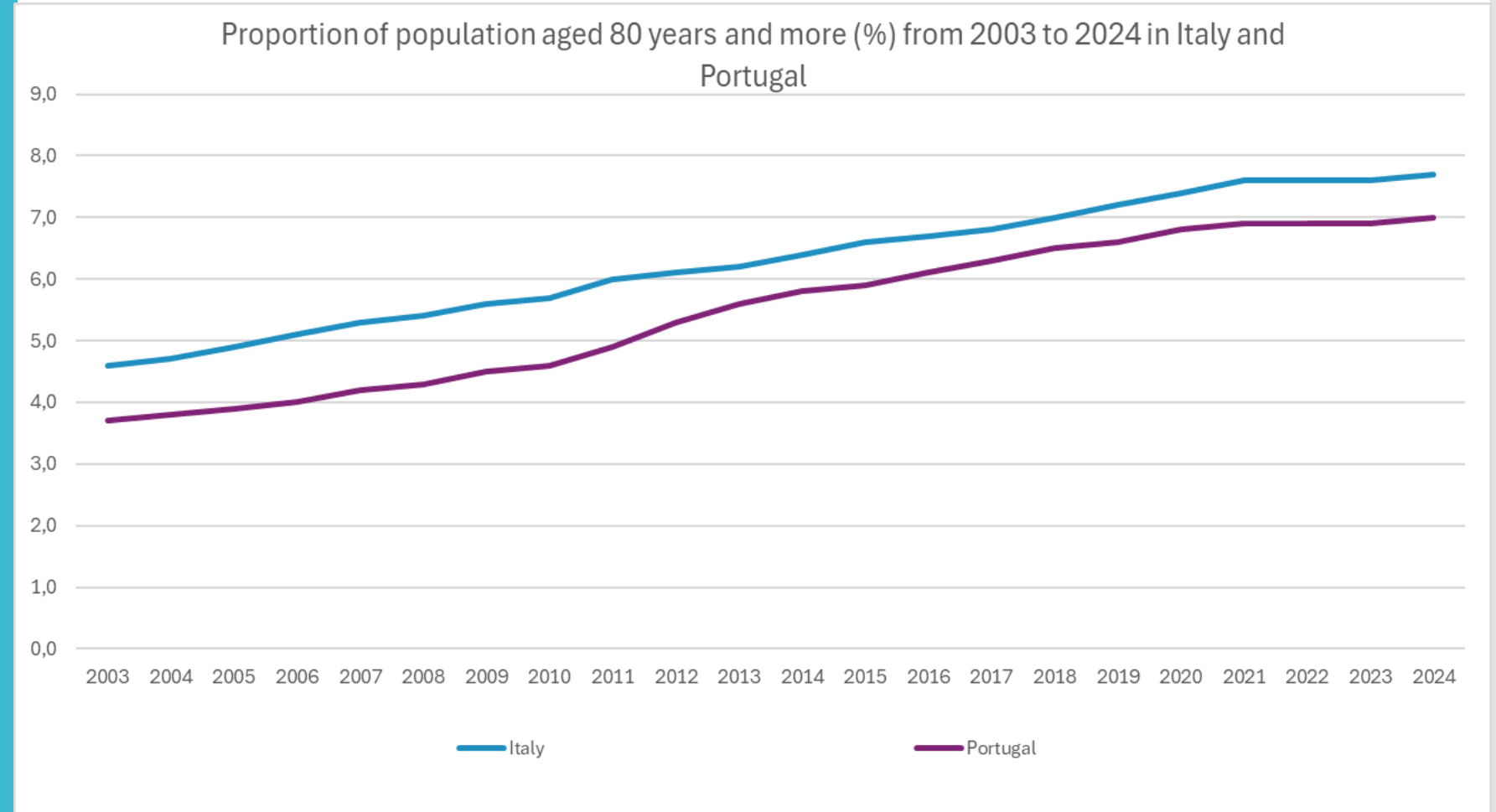
Italy has the highest proportion of population aged 80+ in Europe



Data source: EUROSTAT available at

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_pjanind_custom_11304223/bookmark/bar?lang=en&bookmarkId=de7deacf-ccea-488bo-gd899f6e1fo8

Italy and Portugal share the same increasing trend over the years



Data source: EUROSTAT available at

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_pjanind_custom_11304223/bookmark/bar?lang=en&bookmarkId=de7deacf-ccea-488bo-9d899f6e1fo8

Demographic Projections and Caregiving in Italy

Current Trends:

- Over 4 million elderly individuals require assistance, a figure projected to rise sharply in the next decade (source: ISTAT, 2023).
- 70% of caregiving is provided informally by family members (source: Italian Ministry of Health, 2022).

Regional Disparities:

- Liguria has the highest ageing index, with 30% of its population over 65 (source: ISTAT, 2023).
- Southern regions face more significant challenges due to economic constraints.

Future Projections:

- The number of professional caregivers needs to increase by 30% within the next 10 years to meet demand (source: OECD, 2023).
- Need for more structured policies to support both formal and informal caregivers.

Mediterranean Countries and Ageing Trends

Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal face similar pressures: high elderly populations, low birth rates, and economic constraints (source: Eurostat, 2023).

Traditional reliance on family caregiving, but decreasing due to urbanization and economic pressures.

Policy Comparisons:

- **Spain:** Expanded home-based care services and telemedicine initiatives (source: Spanish Ministry of Health, 2023).
- **Greece:** Limited public LTC support, heavy reliance on informal care (source: Greek National Health Service, 2023).
- **Italy:** Strong policy framework but regional disparities in implementation.
- **Portugal:** Integrated LTC system (RNCCI), but challenges remain with regional disparities and high out-of-pocket costs (source: Portuguese Ministry of Health, 2023).

Chronic Disease Burden in Italy

- **Leading Chronic Diseases:**
 - Cardiovascular diseases (leading cause of death, accounting for 35% of mortality, source: WHO, 2023).
 - Diabetes and metabolic disorders affecting 5 million people (source: Italian Ministry of Health, 2023).
 - Neurodegenerative diseases (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's) increasing with age (source: Alzheimer Europe, 2023).
- **Economic Impact:**
 - 75% of healthcare expenditures are dedicated to chronic disease management (source: OECD, 2023).
 - Indirect costs (loss of productivity, caregiving burden) amount to billions annually (source: European Commission, 2023).

Key laws and policies adopted in the Italian system

Regulatory Framework and Key Reforms under RRF

To meet these challenges, healthcare organizations have introduced a series of reforms and regulatory measures, including:

- **RRF (National Recovery and Resilience Framework):** Focused on enhancing healthcare infrastructure and digitalization.
- **Ministerial Decree 77:** Frameworks for healthcare system reorganization, with an emphasis on territorial assistance.
- **Law 227 on Disability:** Strengthens support and inclusion measures for individuals with disabilities.
- **Law 33 on Non-self sufficiency:** Serves as a fundamental tool for chronic disease management and socio-healthcare coordination.

Towards a New Framework Law for Caregivers

Purpose

- Establish a comprehensive legal framework to recognize and support informal caregivers, addressing their rights and needs within the Italian LTC system.

Key Features

- **Legal Recognition of Informal Caregivers:**
 - Defines the role and responsibilities of caregivers.
 - Formalizes their inclusion in care planning and policy discussions.
- **Support Measures:**
 - Financial Incentives:
 - Introduction of the Caregiver Bonus to alleviate financial burdens.
 - Work-Life Balance:
 - Flexible work arrangements, including teleworking and part-time options.
 - Additional leave entitlements tailored for caregiving responsibilities.
 - Access to Services:
 - Guaranteed access to LEPS (Essential Levels of Social Benefits), such as respite care, psychological support, and domiciliary services.

The National Technical Table on Caregiving overseeing the law's development and implementation.

Law 33/2023 ("Decreto Anziani") – Elderly Care and Support Reform

Primary Goals:

- Promote **active aging**, reduce social isolation, and support home care services for non-self-sufficient elderly.

Key Provisions:

- **Universal Allowance for Elderly Care:** Monthly financial support combining current allowances with extra funds for vulnerable groups over 80 years old.
- **Intergenerational Solidarity:** Initiatives for senior cohousing and community engagement to reduce caregiver burden.
- **Integration of Services:** Coordination across social and healthcare services to offer continuous support, avoiding unnecessary institutionalization.

DM 77/2022: Standards for Territorial Assistance and Integrated Home Care

Organizational Model:

- Establishes **Community Health Houses (Case della Comunità)** and **Territorial Operations Centers** as hubs for health and social care coordination.

Role of Informal Caregivers:

- **Active Involvement in Care Plans:** Caregivers participate in creating Individual Care Plans (PAI) and receive training on telemedicine and health navigation.

Target:

- Increase integrated home care to reach 10% of the elderly population by 2026.

TSI Integrated Care Program – Supporting Reforms in Long-Term Care

Objective: Enhance integration between health and social care systems in Italy.

Key Features:

- Develop seamless care pathways aligning healthcare and social services.
- Empower informal caregivers with training and tools for effective participation in care plans.
- Implement region-specific models to address local needs and disparities.

Stakeholder Role: Ministries, ProMIS, regional governments, and OECD technical experts collaborate to pilot scalable care models.

Outcomes: Early pilot results demonstrate improved service delivery and caregiver inclusion.

Resources: <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/dg-reform/towards-person-centered-integrated-care-in-italy.html>

Chronic Disease Management and Future Outlook

- Effective management of chronic diseases is a cornerstone of these reforms. The objectives outlined in the **RRF for Integrated Home Care (ADI)** include:
- **Strengthening Home-Based Services:** Reducing hospital dependency.
- **Support for Families and Caregivers:** Expanding financial and professional aid.
- **Advancing Telemedicine:** Enhancing accessibility and efficiency in elderly care.

JACARDI Initiative: An EU-Wide Response to Chronic Diseases

The Italian National Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità - ISS) is the **coordinator** of JACARDI, a large-scale **multi-country collaboration**, bringing together **various national health agencies, universities, research institutions, and ministries of health** across the European Union.

The **Joint Action on Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes (JACARDI)** aims to:

Reduce the burden of **cardiovascular diseases (CVD)** and **diabetes (DM)** by integrating best practices across EU nations.

Improve patient **awareness and health literacy**.

Strengthen **data collection and accessibility** to enhance decision-making and policy planning.

Develop **integrated care pathways** that align with national healthcare strategies.

Promote **patient self-management** and participation in the workforce to maintain quality of life.

www.jacardi.eu

Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Italy as a Policy Laboratory:

- Leading case for managing an ageing society.

Future Priorities:

- Enhancing caregiver support, financial sustainability.
- Expanding regional initiatives nationally.
- Strengthening EU cooperation.



**Thank you for your
attention!**

Giovanni Vigano' – Senior
consultant and public policy
expert at ProMIS

giovanni.vigano@aulss4.veneto.it

