

## 24. Italy

*This country profile presents key self-employment and entrepreneurship indicators for women, youth, senior and immigrant entrepreneurs in Italy and benchmarks them against the European Union average. It also highlights recent policy developments and current issues related to inclusive entrepreneurship.*

### Key trends

While the self-employment rate has declined slightly over the past decade (22.5% in 2009 to 20.6% in 2018), it remained well-above the European Union (EU) average in 2018 (13.5%). Similarly, the proportions of women (14.9%), youth (12.6%) and seniors (23.7%) that are self-employed are relatively high. However, the self-employment rate for immigrants is approximately equal to the EU average. Although few new entrepreneurs over the period 2014-18 appear to be motivated by a lack of employment opportunities, the proportion of new entrepreneurs that expected to create at least 19 jobs over the next five years was below the EU average. The gap was particularly large among youth (7.1% vs. 11.1%) and senior entrepreneurs (2.5% vs. 8.9%).

### Hot issue

A new bill was enacted in May 2017 called the *Jobs Act for Self-employment and Smart Working*, which is part of a suite of reforms that aim to reduce the differences in the protection granted to self-employed workers and employees. Key provisions pertain to the self-employed who work in a dependent relationship with one client (i.e. *lavoratori parasubordinati*). The bill protects these self-employed workers in the case of injury, sickness or maternity leave by “suspending” their work arrangement for up to a maximum of 150 days without giving up rights to payment.

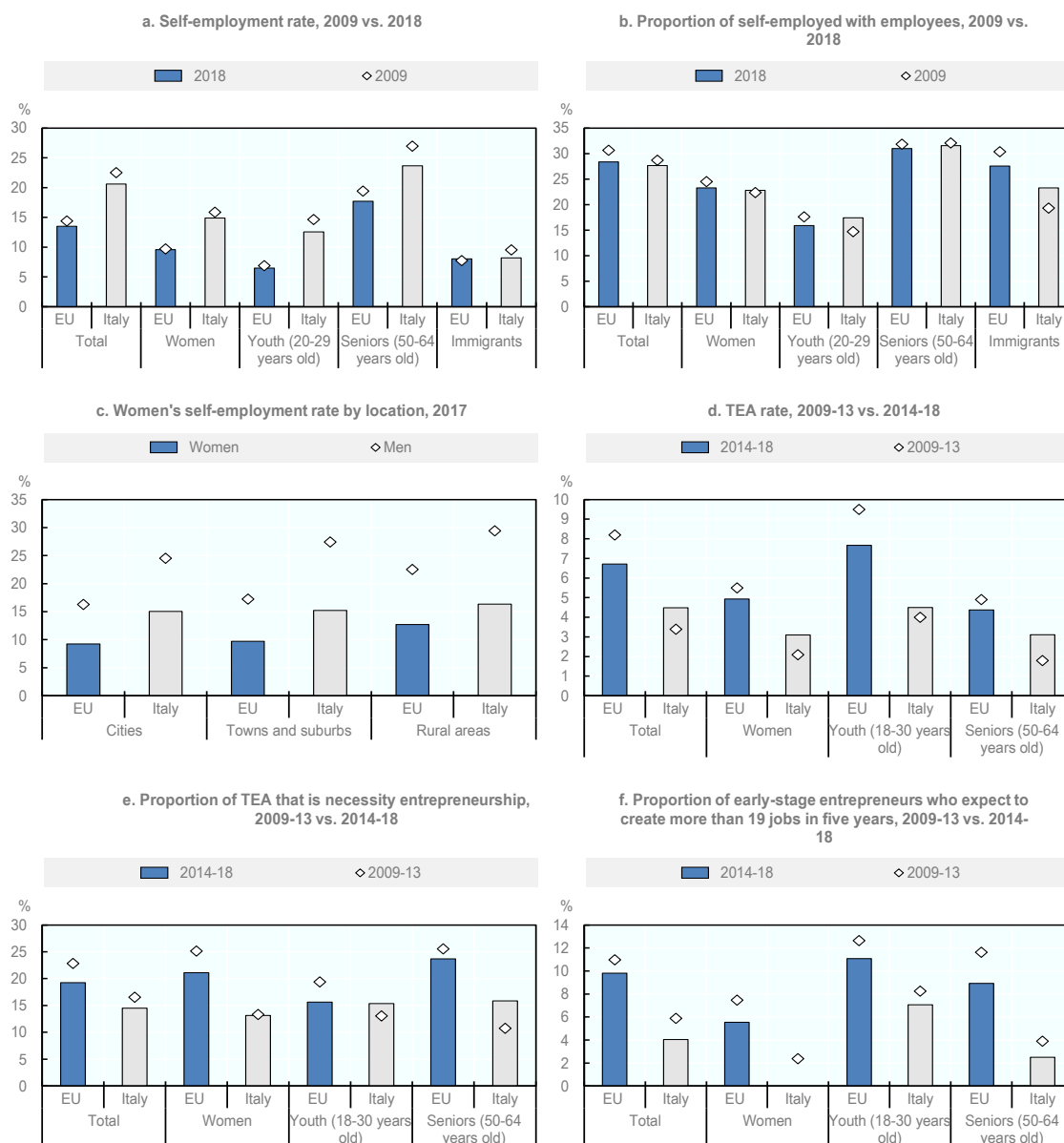
### Recent policy developments

Support for youth entrepreneurs continues to be strengthened. For example, the measure *Resto al Sud* (“I remain in the South”) was introduced in 2017 to support youth entrepreneurs (18-35 years old) in Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sardegna and Sicilia. The support is expected to be expanded in the 2019 Budget Law. Support will be open to entrepreneurs under 46 years old, as well as freelance workers. The measure offers up to EUR 40 000 (35% is non-repayable and 65% is repayable with a subsidised interest rate) and consulting services. The measure is managed by Invitalia.

This profile is based on a recent country assessment report, which can be found at: [www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm).

## Key inclusive entrepreneurship data

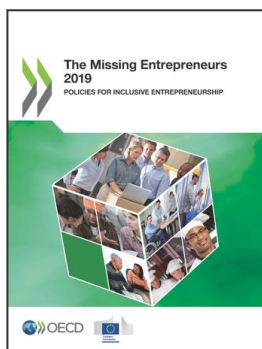
Figure 24.1. Entrepreneurship and self-employment data for Italy



**Notes:** The self-employment rate is defined as the number of self-employed people (15-64 years old) divided by the number of people in employment. The TEA rate is the proportion of adults (18-64 years old) involved in setting up a business or managing a business that is less than 42 months old. Necessity entrepreneurship is defined as entrepreneurship activities that were launched because there were no other options in the labour market. Early-stage entrepreneurs are those who are in the process of setting up a business or managing a business that is less than 42 months old. The EU average in Panels D-F excludes Czech Republic and Malta for the period 2014-18 and Malta for the period 2009-13.

**Sources:** Panels A and B: Eurostat (2019), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>; Panel C: Eurostat (2018), Self-employment, Labour Force Survey ad-hoc module, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>; Panels D-F: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2019), *Special tabulations of the GEM survey 2014-18*.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934066862>



From:

## The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019

### Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/3ed84801-en>

#### Please cite this chapter as:

OECD/European Union (2019), "Italy", in *The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/297b1eaf-en>

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