

Annual report 2003

Building heritage improvement

(Derived from the XXXVII Italian report on the social situation in the country – December the 5th, 2003)

Italy is characterized by an exceptional concentration of high value artistic, historic and landscape goods.

The whole of these cultural resources is referable to goods typologies widely spread all over the national territory: villas and noble palaces (about 40.000), historic gardens (about 3.000), castles (about 20.000), convents (about 1.500) and further typologies hardly quantifiable (farms, coastal towers, hermitages, etc.) (cf. table 10).

TABLE 10

Architectonic patrimony: singular goods

Typology	Quantity (estimation)
Museums and galleries: (among which 402 state-owned)	4.150
Archaeological sites and monuments:	2.100
Churches and chapels: (among which 30.000 of high value)	85.000 subject to conservation
Convents:	1.500
Libraries:	6.000
Archives:	30.000
Historic gardens:	4.000
Old mansions (villas and palaces):	40.000
Fortresses and castles:	20.000

Source: CENSIS elaborations of ISTAT (Istituto Italiano Statistica), Association historic mansions and TCI (Touring Club Italiano) data.

Going further from single goods, the extraordinary data is that one concerning the urban dimension: that is the historic urban settlements. Through the project named “National census of old town centres” (completed in 1994) the Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation has determined, adopting a unified methodology all over the national territory (based on the comparison between inhabited resorts toponyms reported in the first Italy country census realized in 1881 and in the 1981 census), a number of about 22.000 old town centres according to an approximate by defect estimation (cf. Table 11).

TABLE 11
Urban settlements and minor building texture

Typologies	Quantities (estimation)
Main historic town centres:	900
Minor historic town centres:	6.850
Historic inhabited nucleuses: (isolated nucleuses, hamlets, burghs, villages, religious and military settlements)	15.000

Source: CENSIS elaborations of ISTAT (Istituto Italiano Statistica) data.

In a total of about 8.000 municipalities in Italy it is possible to count: almost 7.800 historic town centres among which 900 main ones (fortified citadels or anyhow old foundation ones); about 15.000 minor inhabited nucleuses (burghs, hamlets, villages, military and religious settlements).

With reference to foundation time of catalogued historic town centres, about 30% refers to roman or pre-roman time, more than 50% can be referred to middle age period (between IX century and 1380) and remaining 20% to Renaissance and following periods.

According to data base available and CENSIS surveys developed in various occasions, it has been possible to define a first rough measuring that brings to about 1.300.000 unused houses, among which 80.000 rural buildings. In the last decade the balance between new abandonment and requalification has, on the hole, permitted a substantial stability (the reduction is of about 2,7% with reference to 1991). The situation is, anyway, quite unhomogeneous all over Italy as building historic patrimony decay increases in the South, is stable in the North-West region, due too to highland locations, while rehabilitation produces positive effects in the North-East and in the central areas of Italy. (cf. table 13)

TABLE 13
Residential unused historic patrimony (2001 estimated values)

Number of houses (thousands)	%	%variation 1991/2001
North-West 413	32,1	-1,8
North-East 185	14,4	-12,7
Centre 225	17,5	-18,2
South and islands 463	36,0	+11,6
Italy 1.286 among which 81.000 rural buildings	100,0	-2,7

Source: CENSIS elaborations of ISTAT (Istituto Italiano Statistica) 2003 data.