MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

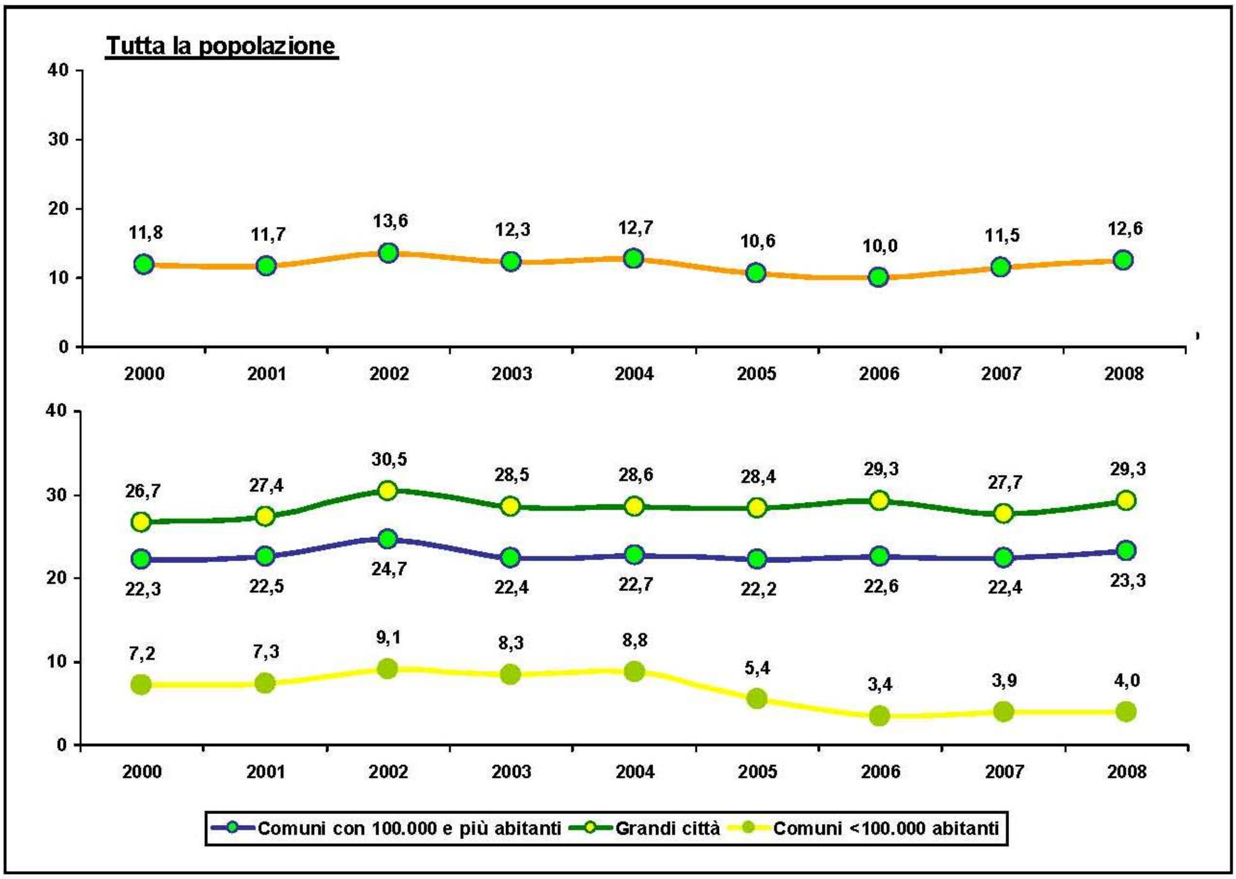
Urban mobility in medium-to-small sized cities: The Italian case

This paper provides a snapshot of mobility in Italian cities, in particular in medium-to-small sized cities, based on the data contained in the "6th Report on Urban Mobility in Italy".

- **Travel demand**

Travel demand is still on the upswing: in 2008, in fact, this sector took a further upturn with an increase in the number of public transport trips in urban areas.
However, this trend did not affect private car use which also increased.
Diagram 1 shows how the public transport share (motorised trips only) kept increasing in urban areas by slightly over 1%, reaching 12.6% in 2008.

Diagram 1 – The public transport share in urban areas (% of motorised trips 2000-2008)



Source: Isfort, Osservatorio "Audimod" on mobility in Italy

However, conversely from 2007, the increase in public transport use in 2008 was mainly recorded in large cities (with more than 250,000 inhabitants) where the incidence on the total number of trips increased from 27.7% in 2007 to 29.3% in 2008.

Still too small is the incidence of public transport use in small cities: only 4% of motorised trips. If one looks at public transport trends in small cities between 2000 and 2008, one can see that the crisis starts in 2005 (5.4%) after three years – 2002-2004 – in which the modal split amounted to 8-9%.
Consequently, private car use shows a clear difference in the modal shares. In large cities, private car trips represent less than 60% of urban motorised trips, whereas **in cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants the share of private car trips in 2008 was 90%, despite the overall trend of private car use in urban mobility**.
It should be further underlined that despite the upward trend in collective transport, huge gaps between small towns and large cities on one hand, and between the urbanized Central-Northern Italian regions and Southern Italy on the other hand have been emerging over the years. And these gaps inhibit the development potential and further growth of the urban public transport sector.

- **Public Transport performance (supply)**

The main economic and production data relating to a sample of Local Public Transport (LPT) companies operating mainly in urban areas indicate a positive trend in LPT supply which is in line with travel demand.
The increase recorded in 2007 is confirmed in 2008. An ASSTRA survey of some of the major LPT companies reveals that in some areas the increase in demand - calculated from the number of tickets sold - was significant. The average growth in large cities was 3%. However, the increase recorded in 2007 was not uniform in the urban areas included in the sample (see diagrams 2 and 3).

Diagram 1: Trend in kms travelled in differently sized cities (var. % 2006-2007)

Fonte: ASSTRA

Actually, **this uptrend in terms of both passengers carried and kms travelled was mainly driven by large cities**.
In particular, the data indicate that the increase was more significant in cities where underground networks are available which have turned out to be highly appreciated by users.

Furthermore, the current growth perspectives are less favourable: a survey of the major LPT companies conducted by ASSTRA in the first months of 2009 reveals a decrease in the number of passengers carried. This can be explained by oil prices going back to 2007 levels as well as by the drop in demand flows due to the economic crisis.

- **Fares**

An analysis of differently sized cities over two years – 2008 and 2009 – highlights that **the larger increase in the prices of tickets and monthly passes was recorded in cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants**. (See Table 1)

Table 1 – Trend in the prices of LPT tickets and monthly passes in differently sized cities

	Ticket with time limit – Euros, nominal value		
	1/1/2008	1/1/2009	% var. 2008-2009
Cities >250,000 inhabitants	1.01	1.05	3.96
Cities bet. 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants	1.00	1.00	0.00
Towns <100,000 inhabitants	0.89	0.95	6.74
National average	1.00	1.03	3.00
	Ticket with time limit – Euros, hourly value		
	1/1/2008	1/1/2009	% var. 2008-2009
Cities >250,000 inhabitants	0.78	0.79	1.28
Cities bet. 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants	0.78	0.80	2.56
Towns <100,000 inhabitants	0.74	0.80	8.11
National average	0.78	0.80	2.56
	Standard monthly pass – Euros		
	1/1/2008	1/1/2009	% var. 2008-2009
Cities >250,000 inhabitants	33.42	33.38	-0.12
Cities bet. 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants	28.69	28.66	-0.10
Towns <100,000 inhabitants	24.71	26.67	7.93
National average	31.15	31.85	2.25

Source: Data from corporate websites processed by ASSTRA

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Notes to Editors

UITP (International Association of Public Transport) is the international network for public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, scientific institutes and the public transport supply and service industry. It is a platform for worldwide cooperation, business development and the sharing of know-how between its 3,100 members from 90 countries. UITP is the global advocate for public transport and sustainable mobility, and the promoter of innovations in the sector. For more information, visit www.uitp.org.

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