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charting a new pa-th forward.

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The Italian Public Administration (PA) is facing an unprecedented transformation. In the next decade, a significant portion of the workforce will leave service due to generational turnover, while a growing number of professions are exposed to the impact of artificial intelligence and new digital technologies. This combination represents both an extraordinary challenge and an opportunity: if governed effectively, it can enable the PA to make a true leap in quality, increase productivity, and become a driving force for the country's economic growth.

Sector snapshot: who works in the PA

The PA in the strict sense has 1,181,762 employees. Structural analysis reveals significant critical issues:

- **significant Aging:** 66.5% of workers are over 45; one-third have already exceeded 55 years of age and are approaching retirement in the coming years.
- **Gender Imbalance:** The male component represents 64.8% of the total, a characteristic historically linked to security and defense functions.
- **Education Level:** 52.8% of employees have a high school diploma, and 36.5% are graduates. Compared to healthcare and education (over 60% graduates), the PA is closer to the private service sector.
- **Territorial Distribution:** The density of employees per inhabitant is strictly correlated with administrative fragmentation. Valle d'Aosta and regions with special

statutes show the highest values; Lazio and Piedmont show the highest absolute concentrations.

Employment dynamics: the PA is regenerating

After more than a decade of negative balances, 2023 marked a historic watershed: for the first time, the PA recorded a net active balance of +12,707 units, driven almost entirely by the female component (+12,401 units). The overall replacement rate reached 115.4%.

Among the most significant trends in new entry flows:

- **increasing Feminization:** Women represent approximately 60% of new contracts activated; the female turnover rate hit 20.8% in 2022.
- **Higher Education Levels:** The percentage of graduates among new hires rose from 34.7% in 2010 to 47.7% in 2023, accelerated by the Recruitment Decree and the needs of the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan).
- **Contract Stabilization:** Indefinite-term contracts exceeded almost 49% of new activations in 2023, a clear reversal compared to the peak of temporary employment in 2012-2013.
- **Growing Mobility:** The turnover rate has almost doubled compared to ten years ago; nearly 1 in 5 new hires with an indefinite contract leaves the organization within three years.

Remuneration: the challenge of purchasing power

Remuneration dynamics show a generalized loss of purchasing power between 2015 and 2023. The PA in the strict sense showed relative resilience, maintaining a positive real balance of +1.5% compared to 2015, thanks to contractual renewals that marginally exceeded inflation (+21.4% nominal vs +19.6% NIC). However, the picture for other sectors is much more critical: school and healthcare recorded real losses of about 9 percentage points. At the regional level, only Lazio and Valle d'Aosta maintain a positive balance; Liguria (-10.8%), Umbria (-9.6%), and Abruzzo (-9.2%) are the most affected areas.

Artificial Intelligence and automation: differentiated impact

The analysis of technological exposure reveals a marked polarization within the PA:

- High-skilled profiles (managers, specialists, technicians): Over 67% fall into the high exposure band to AI, which acts as a tool for enhancing cognitive and decision-making capabilities.
- Medium-skilled profiles (employees, office workers): 86.8% are at high risk of traditional automation, due to the repetitive nature of bureaucratic tasks. These 245,000 workers represent the main reskilling challenge.
- Low-skilled profiles: Almost impervious to AI, but exposed to physical automation for the most elementary tasks.

The challenge for the PA lies in the ability to govern this transition, guiding the most exposed profiles toward higher value-added tasks, preventing technological advancement from eroding their professional value.

Investments and Megatrends: the PNRR as a lever

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) allocates over 21 billion euros to the PA, of which 14.6 billion are for technological modernization and over 6 billion are specifically for digitalization. The investments are structured around four axes: access and recruitment, good administration, skills development, and digitalization. In parallel, demographic changes—population aging, falling birth rates, and growing poverty—increase the demand for welfare services, while the PA itself must cope with the dispersion of knowledge linked to mass retirements.

Future profiles and skills

The transformation of the PA requires a profound evolution of skills, which must become hybrid, dynamic, and innovation-oriented. Five macro-areas define the profile of the future public employee:

- E-Leadership and Change Management: The ability to drive technological innovation by mediating between the potential of technology and institutional goals.
- Data and Privacy Management: Data governance, the once-only principle, and privacy by design as an integral part of procedures.
- Cybersecurity Culture: Widespread awa-

renewedness of cyber risk at every level, not just among IT technicians.

- Ethical AI Governance: Supervision of algorithmic systems, prevention of bias, and maintaining human centrality in decisions.
- Sustainability and Public Value: Green procurement, creation of positive impact on the territory, and results orientation beyond mere compliance with norms.

The emerging strategic profiles, from the Head of Digital Transition to the Ethical AI Auditor, from the Specialist in Data Governance to the Sustainability Manager, mark the overcoming of the bureaucratic-procedural model toward a digital PA oriented toward public value.

Conclusions: to govern or to suffer the transformation?

The transformation of the Public Administration requires a shift from the concept of a “permanent job” (posto fisso) to that of the “right job” (posto giusto), characterized by so-

cial value and innovation. The success of the reform will depend on the ability to integrate new technologies without losing sight of the humanity and ethics of public service.

Two decisive challenges are emerging:

- The Generational Handover: Ensuring that the know-how built up over decades is not dispersed with mass retirements, through structured mentoring and skills transfer programs.
- The Cultural Transformation: The modern PA is breaking down the boundaries that separated it from the private sector. Communicating this modernity is essential to attract talent who choose the “right job”, where the impact on the general interest represents a unique added value compared to any private employer.