

THE VENETO (REGIONAL) GOVERNMENT

Each Italian Region has its own administrative and political structure, albeit with a still limited degree of autonomy from the central (national) government.

The Veneto Region has a legislative body, the Assembly, and an executive body, the Regional Council. At present, the Assembly is composed of 60 members. Members of the Regional Assembly are elected by Veneto's inhabitants for a 5-year mandate. The Assembly drafts Regional Bills and passes Regional Laws (in the fields that fall within Regional responsibility). The Regional Council is a more operative body with direct responsibility over the administrative machinery.

The President of the Regional Council has a double role: on the one hand he is the leader of the Council and, on the other hand, he is also the President of the Veneto Region. The Regional Council is made up of the President and of 13 Councillors (one of whom for Health Policies and another one for Social Policies).

The Region has responsibility over a number of sectors, namely: development planning, economy and industrial planning, health, tourism, local transport, social services, culture, the environment, road traffic, agriculture, crafts and vocational training.

The Health Policies Councillor is responsible for health services planning and management, health expenditure, public hygiene and the veterinary sector.

The Social Policies Councillor is responsible for support to minors, youths, elderly people, the handicapped, and activities in the field of voluntary groups and charities. Provinces (the second-tier local authority) have a similar structure with an Assembly and a Council. They have reduced responsibilities. In particular, Provinces have powers over social care, road maintenance and on some types of schools like, for example, technical colleges. Finally, Municipalities represent the third tier of local authorities, the one closest to the citizen. The Mayor is elected by the Municipality's inhabitants for a 5-year mandate.

The State's representative in each Province is the Prefect. Municipalities are responsible for personal social services. However, the Veneto Region has transferred the management of important areas of personal social services to LHAs through its own legislation, unique in Italy. Moreover, Italian public administration is presently undergoing a deep re-organization based upon the principle of subsidiarity.

Law and order are enforced by state bodies which are operationally organised on a provincial and regional basis.

The Veneto Region's operational structure is composed of 12 Secretariats.

Each Secretariat is subdivided into either Departments or Project Units. The Social Services and Health Secretariat is divided into:

- Health and Social Services Planning Dept.
- Prevention Dept.
- Social Services Dept.
- Hospital and Surgery Dept.
- Health and Social Services Personnel Dept.
- Information Technology applied to Health Services and Supervision Unit
- Technical Unit

The 20 regions of Italy deal with setting the legislative framework and planning for GP contracts, polyclinic and hospital services which are managed by the local health units. The region allocates funds to local health units (LHAs) which manage GP contracts, polyclinic and hospital services and health promotion and the prevention of communicable diseases at the local level. The health care system is funded mainly through taxation. There are mainly public hospitals, funded through a predetermined budget and primary care physicians are paid mainly by capitation.