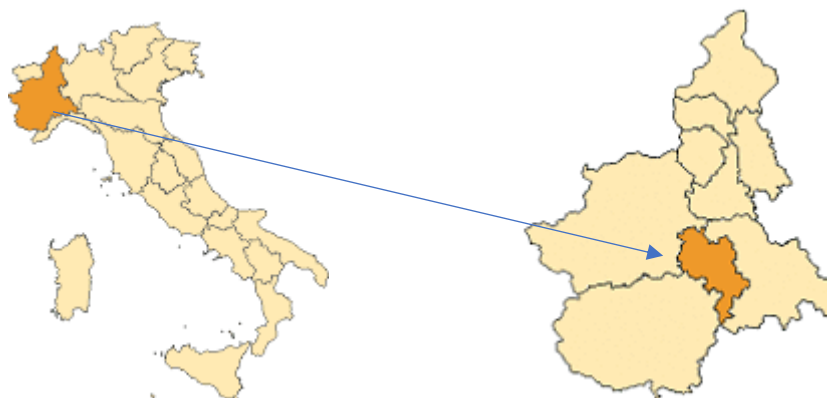


## SOCIO ECONOMIC DATA OF THE TERRITORY: Province of Asti

### A) INTRODUCTION



Source: [www.tuttitalia.it](http://www.tuttitalia.it)

The province of Asti is located in Piedmont region (Northwest Italy). The territory, with an extension of 1,510 square kilometres, is mainly hilly and it is part of Langhe Roero and Monferrato landscape Unesco world heritage Site.

The area is marked by a strong population decline, an ageing process, depopulation of rural areas and widespread emigration of youngsters and qualified human resources towards urban areas.

The territory is characterized by high quality wine culture and by a natural, historical and cultural heritage of excellence, with a development potential not yet totally expressed. In terms of production, it should be noted a dynamic wine-industry district and a very diversified mechanical sector. Tourism and food and wine sector are considered those with the highest potential for development.

The proximity to the regional capital, Turin, enhanced the development of a good infrastructure network (motorway and rail system), however the most peripheral areas, especially because of hilly landscape and the presence of several small municipalities, are still isolated and have difficulties with connections and local transport systems.

### B) POPULATION

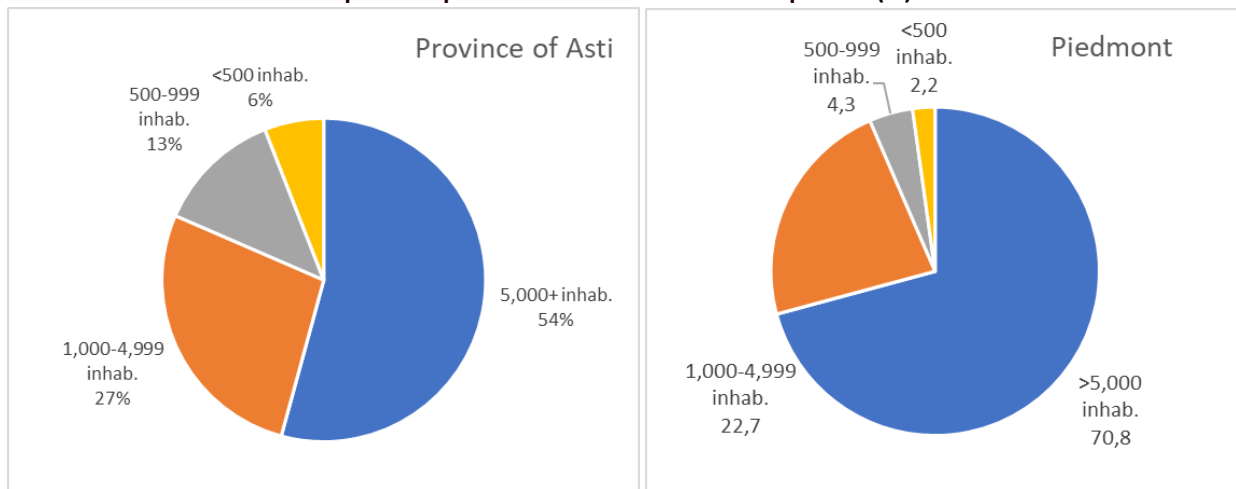
The province of Asti has 213,216 inhabitants and is composed by 118 municipalities, mainly of small size: 68% of municipalities counts less than 1,000 inhabitants and only six (equal to 5%) have more than 5,000 inhabitants (Istat, 2020).

**Municipalities by population**

Municipalities by population	v.a.	%
>5000 inhabitants	6	5
1000-4999 inhab.	32	27
500-999 inhab.	38	32
<500 inhab.	42	36
Total	118	100

Source: own elaboration based on figures from Istat

**Population per dimensional class of municipalities (%). 2019**



Source: own elaboration based on figures from Istat

*Population density*

The province of Asti, with 141.9 inhabitants per square kilometre, has a population density lower than Piedmont and Italy (respectively 170,51 and 198,02), but higher than EU-27 average (108.8).

**Population density. 2019**

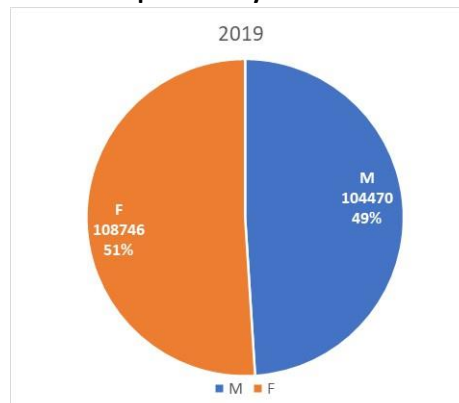
Area	Inhab. per km2
EU 27 (2018)	108.8
Italy	198.0
Piedmont	170.5
Province of Asti	141.2
Province of Cuneo	84.6
Province of Verbano Cusio Ossola	72.0

Sources: Eurostat; own preparation based on figures from Istat and Demos-Ires Piemonte

*Population by sex and age groups*

The current population in the province of Asti is 213.216 inhabitants, of which 51% females and 49% males (on 31 December 2019). Between 2018 and 2019 the population decreased 7.1%, more than in the rest of Piedmont (-4,2%; Ires Piemonte) and Italy (-3,2; Istat).

**Population by sex. 2019**



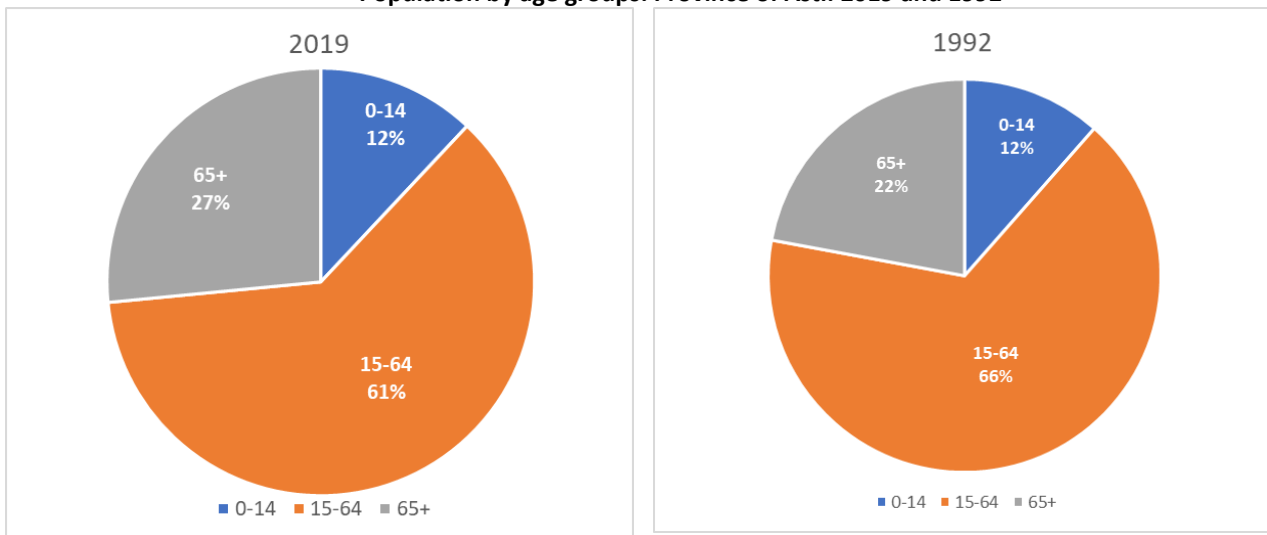
Source: Ires Piemonte, Osservatorio Demos, 2019

In 2019 the median age of population in the province of Asti is 47.7 years, in line with Piedmont figure (47.3), but even higher than the Italian figure (46.7), though this is the highest figure registered across EU-27 Member States (median age in EU-27 is 43.7).

The population is mostly concentrated in the middle age class: in 2019 the share of population aged from 15 to 64 is 62%. The second group is represented by senior population: 27%, that is more than one person in four, is aged 65 and over; in EU-27 the share of people aged 65 or over in 2019 is 20.3% (Eurostat). The youngest population (0-14 years old) represents only 12% of the total.

If we compare this composition to 1992 figures, we can observe a significant increase of senior population: on one hand, the age group 65 years and over raised from 22% in 1992 to 27% in 2019; on the other hand, the middle age class – where it is concentrated the main part of workforce – lost 5 percentage points in the same period, passing from 66% to 61%. However, the youngest group aged 0-14 years – that is the forthcoming workforce – maintains the same portion.

**Population by age groups. Province of Asti. 2019 and 1992**



Source: Ires Piemonte, Osservatorio Demos

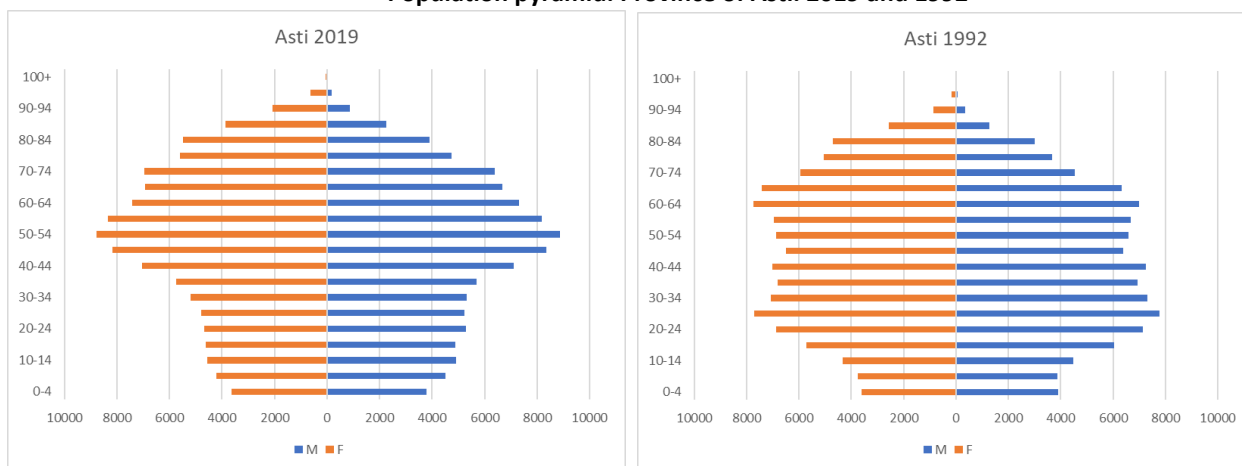
The population pyramid referred to 2019 has the following characteristics:

- A loss of fertility in the last 10 years. This can be appreciated in the narrowness of the base.
- Most of the population is concentrated between the ages of 40 and 64, especially in 50-54 group.
- An unbalanced relationship among age groups, in favour of the older groups, especially from 65 to 79 years old.
- A greater number of women in the oldest age groups.

In 1992 the population pyramid had some different characteristics:

- a larger base (fertility rates were higher than today);
- higher concentration of population between the ages 25 and 40;
- homogeneous distribution within the central age groups between 15 and 70.

### Population pyramid. Province of Asti. 2019 and 1992

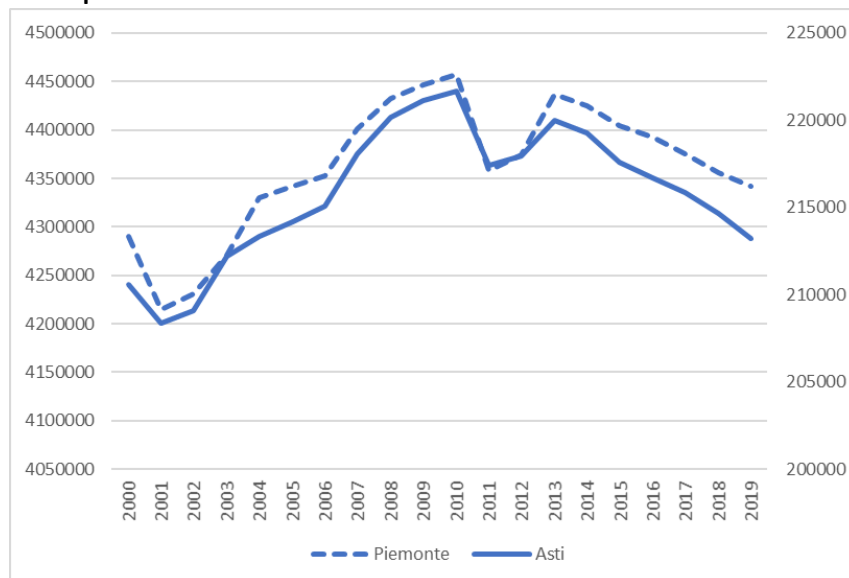


Source: Ires Piemonte, Osservatorio Demos

### Population evolution along the last 10 years

The current demographic evolution in the province of Asti shows a downward trend in the last years. After a slight recovery, since 2013 the demographic trend has become negative and the population is progressively decreasing. If compared with regional figures, the trend is similar but in the province of Asti the downward process is more significant than in Piedmont.

### Population evolution. Province of Asti and Piedmont. 2000-2019



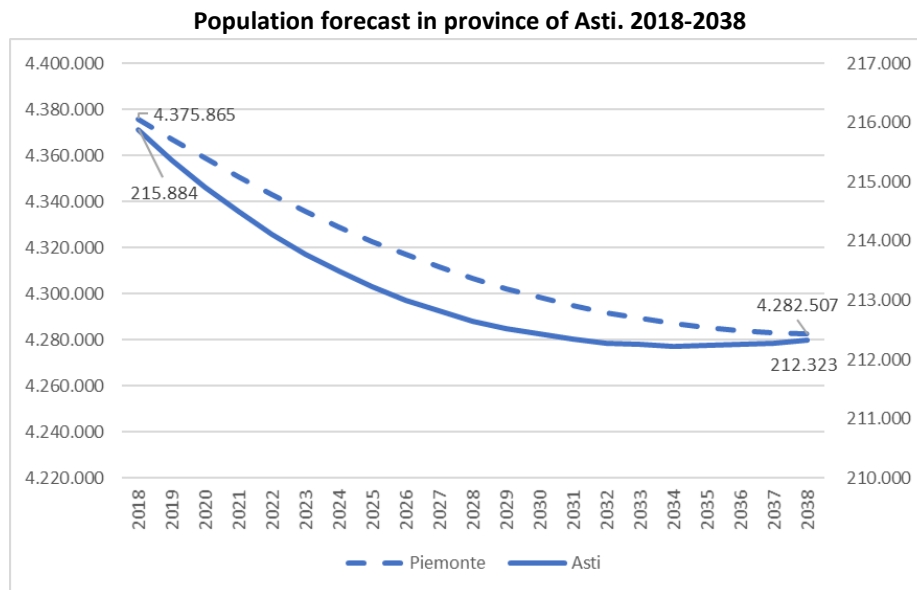
Source: own preparation based on figures from Ires Piemonte – Demos Observatory

### Population forecast (total, by sex and age group)

Ires Piemonte<sup>1</sup> elaborated a population forecast for Piedmont region and its 8 provinces to 2038, based on 2018 figure. According to this analysis, the province of Asti in the next 20 years should lose 3,561 inhabitants,

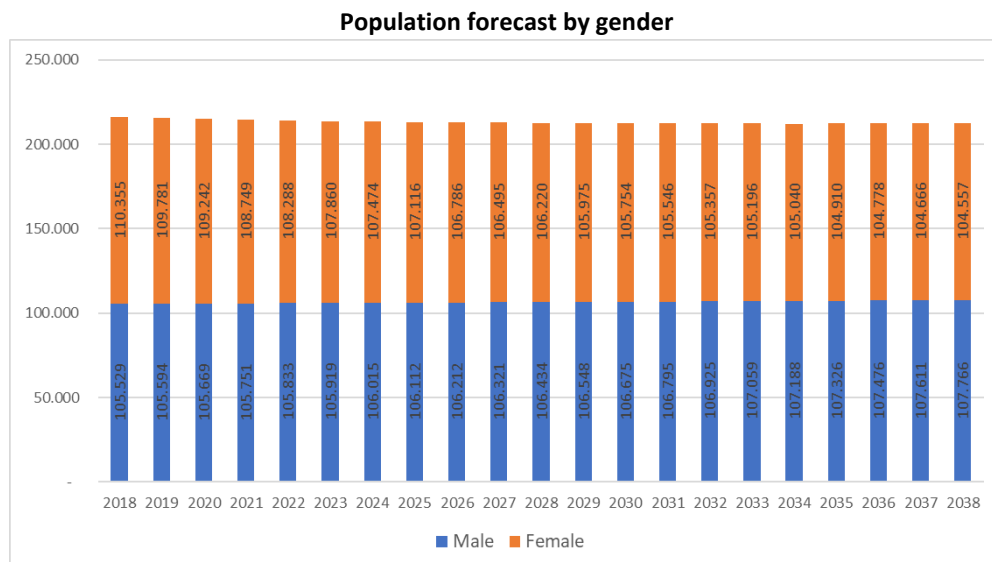
<sup>1</sup> Ires Piemonte is the Regional Institute for Economic and Social Research in Piedmont ([www.ires.piemonte.it](http://www.ires.piemonte.it)).

passing from 215,884 in 2018 to 212,323 in 2038. The decrease should be motivated by a reduction of birth index and by a limited immigration from abroad, not enough to compensate the natural demographic decrease.



Source: Ires Piemonte

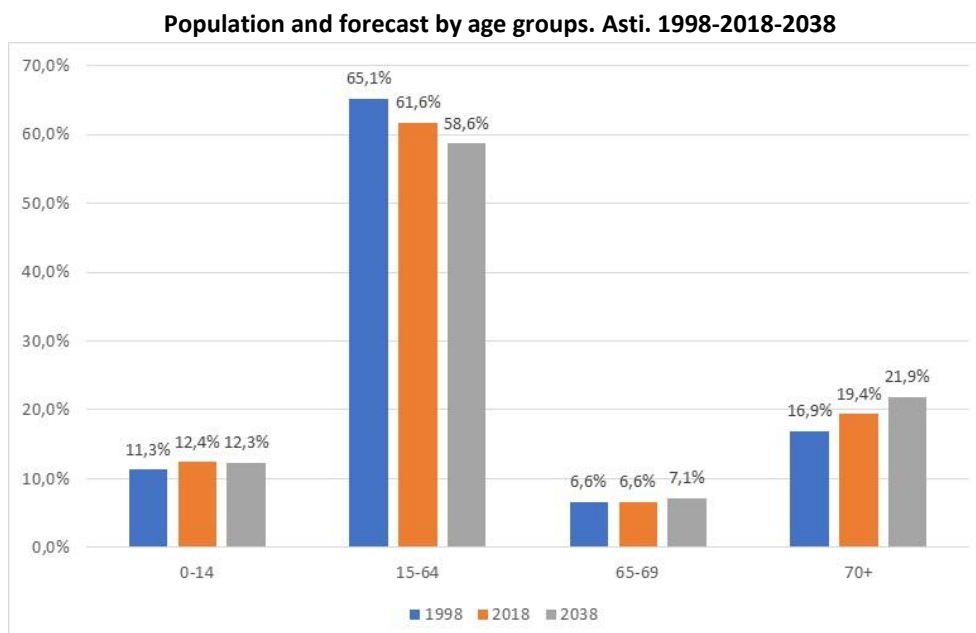
Between 2018 and 2038 it is expected a strong decrease of female population (-5,798 units) in the face of an increase of male population (+2,237 units). This phenomenon could be motivated especially by an increased life expectancy rate among men, due to genetic and social reasons, and a reduction of male mortality rate especially among the oldest age groups (Ires Piemonte, 2019).



Source: Ires Piemonte

Between 2018 and 2038 the forecast shows a decrease among youngsters in the age group 0-14 (-578 units) and an even stronger decrease in the middle age group 15-64 (-8,451). Instead, it is expected an increase of 5,558 inhabitants for the population over 65 years old.

When comparing the composition by age groups in three different years (1998, 2018 and 2038), the ageing process of the population is even more clear. In terms of percentage composition, the population in Asti should face a decrease of the age group 15-64 (passing from 65.1% to 58.6% between 1998 and 2038) and an increase of the senior age groups, especially of the class aged 70 years and over (from 16.9% to 21.9%). The percentage of the youngest age group 0-14 should remain unchanged around 12%.



Source: own preparation based on figures from Istat and Demos-Ires Piemonte

### C) EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

#### *Activity rate*

The activity rate of the province of Asti (71.9%) is in line with that of Piedmont (71,6%). The male activity rate shows a higher value than the female one in both the considered areas. It is remarkable the lower female activity rate compared to the value of Piedmont.

**Activity rate by sex (%). 2019**

	Province of Asti	Province of Cuneo	Province of VCO	Piedmont
Total	71.9	73.1	67.7	71.6
Male	81.1	80.8	75.0	77.9
Female	62.6	65.3	60.3	65.3

Source: Piedmont Region – Regional Observatory on Labour Market

#### *Employment rate by sex and sector*

In 2019 the employment rate in the province of Asti (67.8%) is slightly higher than in Piedmont region (66%), but the difference with the Italian rate is almost 9 points (59% in Italy). In terms of employment rate, Asti is the second province of Piedmont after Cuneo (69,4%).

The male employment rate is higher than the female one (77.4% versus 58.2%). If compared with Piedmont region, the male employment rate in Asti is higher than the regional one, while the female rate is slightly lower. Thus, the gender gap in Asti is stronger than that registered at the regional level.

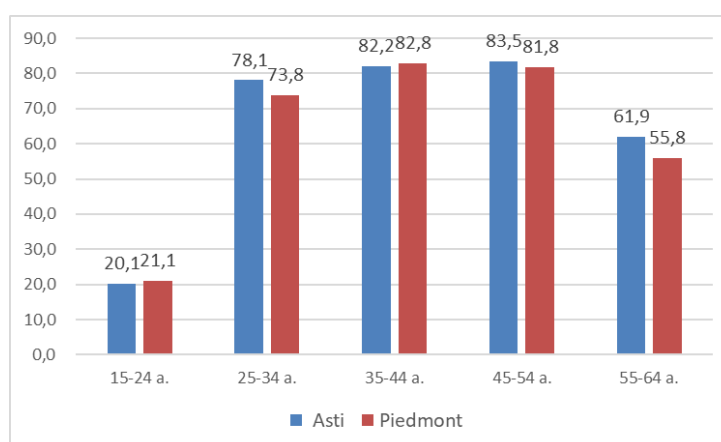
**Employment rate (15-64 years old) by sex (%). 2019**

	Province of Asti	Province of Cuneo	Province of VCO	Piedmont	Italy
Total	67.8	69.4	63.6	66.0	59.0
Male	77.4	77.3	71.4	72.8	68.0
Female	58.2	61.4	55.7	59.2	50.1

Source: Istat

In 2019 the highest employment rate in the province of Asti is related to 45-54 years old age class, equal to 83.5%, followed by age groups 35-44 years (82.2%) and 25-34 years (78.1%). In comparison with Piedmont, there is an alignment regarding the age groups 35-44 and 45-54 years, while the figure related to youngsters 25-34 years and the senior group 55-64 years are higher in Asti than in Piedmont.

**Employment rate by age (%). 2019**

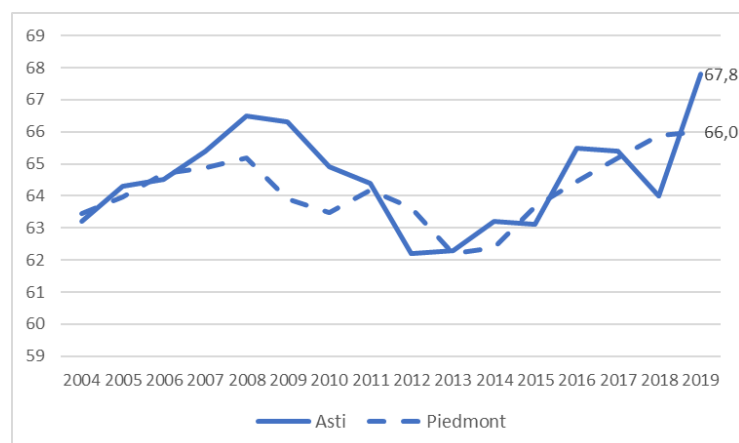


Source: Piedmont Region – Regional Observatory on Labour Market

### Evolution of employment rate

Between 2004 and 2019 the employment rate in the province of Asti registered a fluctuating performance, due to the effects of the economic and financial crisis and recoveries. In 2019 there has been a positive recovery of almost 4 percentage points, after three negative years.

**Employment rate in the province of Asti (%). 2008-2019**



Source: Istat

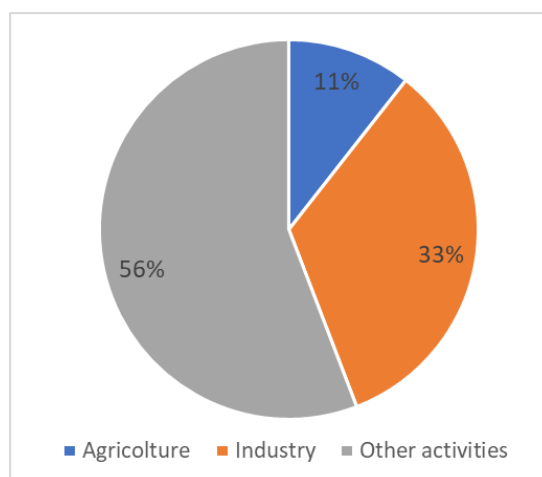
### Evolution of the Employment by sector, age group and sex

The employees in the province of Asti are 91,476 in 2019 (Istat). Compared with 2018 the figure has increased by 5% (+4,000 units), while at the regional level there is a substantial stability (-0.1%) (ORML).

Employees are mainly men (58% equal to 52,838 units), while women are 42% (38,638 units).

Considering employment by sector, the largest share of employees in the province of Asti, equal to 56%, in 2019 is employed in “Other activities”, one out of three in Industry and 11% in Agriculture. The 71% is employee, the rest is self-employed.

**Employment by sector in the province of Asti (%).2019**



Source: Piedmont Region – Regional Observatory on Labour Market

### Employment by sector

The ISTAT data related to the databank of enterprises with employees (ASIA) allow to observe the employment phenomenon from the point of view of activity sector and size. The following statistics are referred only to firms with employees (thus, individual companies are excluded) operating in the private sector, agriculture excluded.

According to ASIA databank, in 2018 the main portion of employees in the province of Asti, equal to 36.6%, is employed in manufacturing sector; services employ a quarter of total employees, while trade sector represents 21.7%, followed by construction (10.2%). Compared to regional level, Asti presents a lower level of employment especially in services sector, that in Piedmont is 34.5%, while trade and construction are more relevant than in the region.

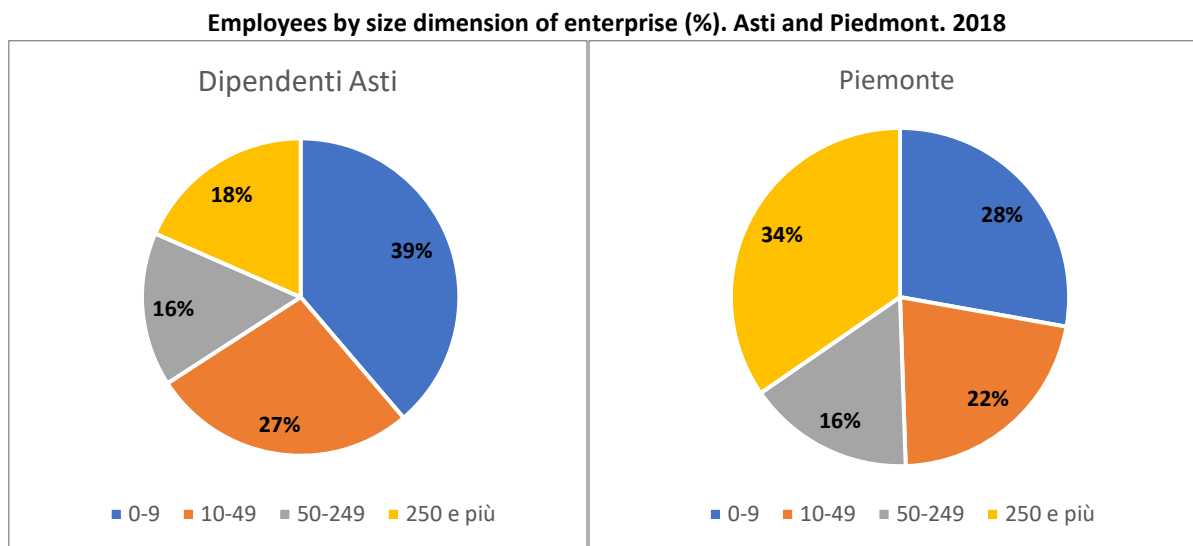
**Employment by sector in the province of VCO (%) 2018**

	VCO	Asti	Cuneo	Piedmont
Mining	0,5	0,1	0,1	0,1
Manufacturing	32,1	36,6	37,6	36,0
Energy, waste	2,5	2,3	1,4	2,1
Construction	13,0	10,2	9,1	6,5
Trade	21,3	21,7	23,7	15,6
Logistics	4,7	4,3	4,5	5,2
Services	25,9	24,7	23,6	34,5
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: ISTAT – Asia



The distribution of employees by size dimension of enterprises underlines some differences between entrepreneurial system of Asti and that of Piedmont. The 39% is employed in very small enterprises with less than 10 employees; overall, two thirds are employed in companies under 50 employees. At the regional level, the structure by size dimension is different: in Piedmont the 34% is employed in big enterprises (more than 250 employees), while people employed in enterprises with less than 10 employees is equal to 28%.



Source: Istat - ASIA

*Recruitments (flow data by Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro - Employment Centres)*

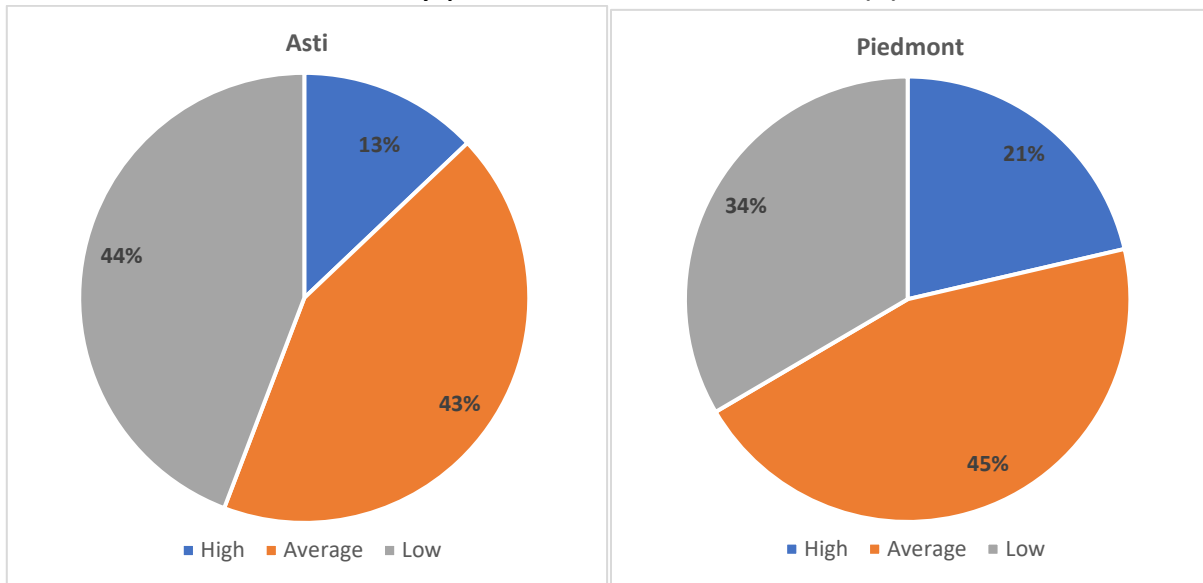
The 30 Employment Centres (CPI) of Piedmont Region collect a relevant quantity of data on employment flows referred to people recruited by companies in the private sector. Data are referred to the local basins/areas, one for each Employment Centre in Piedmont, and they mainly correspond to the local labour systems (LLS): every Employment Centre provides its services within a specific local area, which is composed by a variable number of municipalities.

In this analysis it is taken into consideration the number and the type of recruitments of individuals by companies with at least one employee in 2019.

The Employment Centre of Asti, representative of the whole province, has registered 33,672 recruitments in 2019.

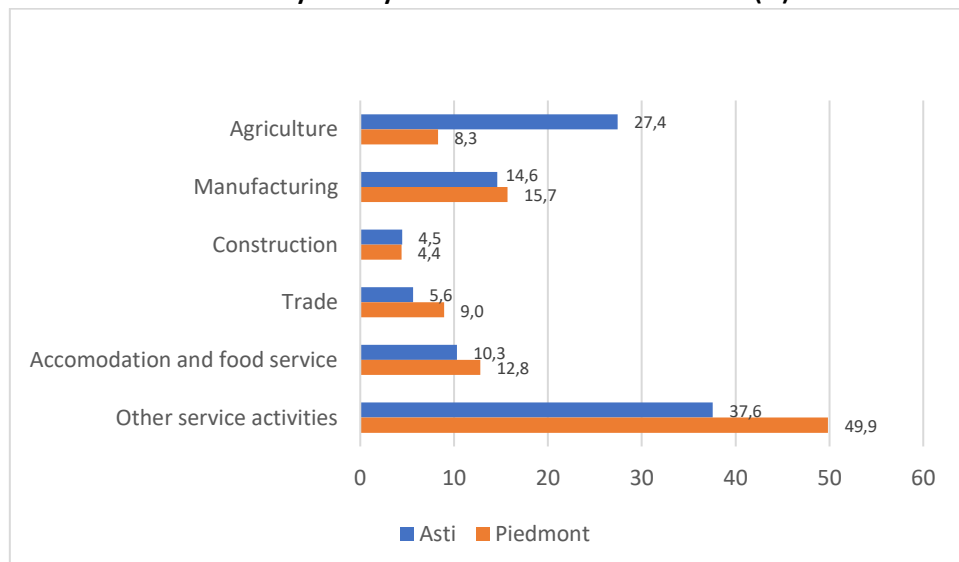
The 43% is referred to individuals with a medium skill level, the 44% low and 13% high. In the comparison with the regional figure, it should be noted that there is a higher share of low-skilled workers (34% in Piedmont), compensated by a small number of recruitments of high-skilled workers (21% in Piedmont).

**Recruitments by qualification in CPI Asti and Piedmont (%). 2019**



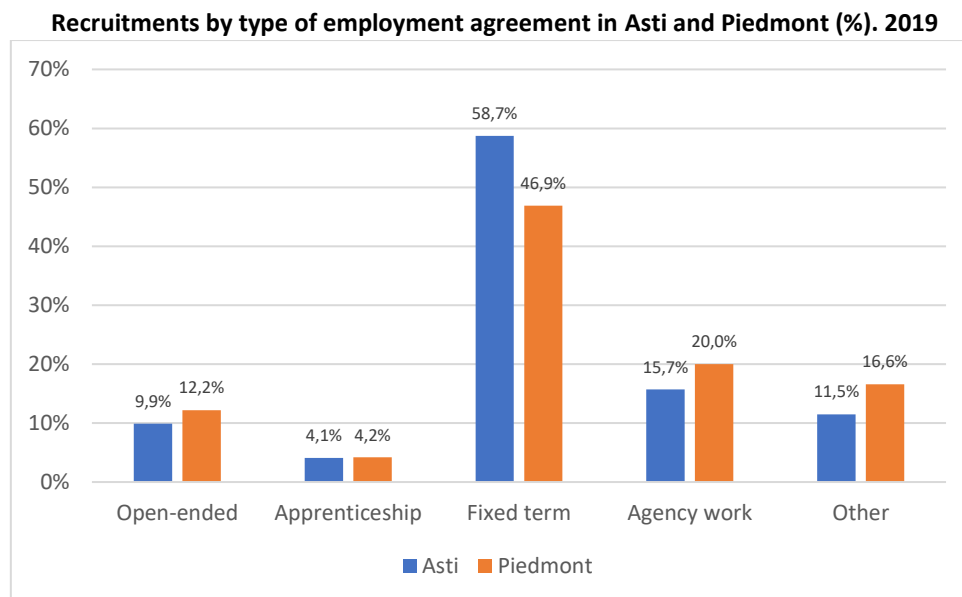
Taking into consideration the activity field of recruiting companies, it seems clear the vocation for agriculture of the province of Asti: recruitments in this sector are equal to 27.4% (8.3% in Piedmont). In the comparison with the regional level, lower levels of recruitments are registered in other services (37.6% versus 49.9%) and trade (5.6% versus 9%).

**Recruitments by activity sector in CPI Asti and Piedmont (%). 2019**



Moreover, the data referred to the type of employment agreements is useful to describe the job stability during the year.

In 2019 the number of open-ended employment agreements is equal to 9.9%, lower than the regional level (12.2%) while fixed-term employment agreements are equal to 58.7% in Asti and 46.9% in Piedmont. The share of recruitments by agency work is 15.7% (20% in Piedmont).

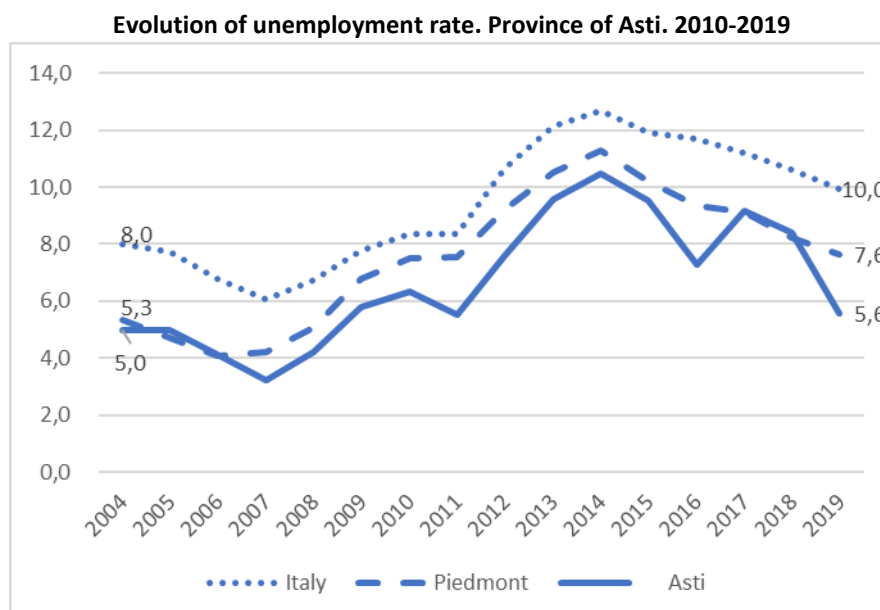


## D) UNEMPLOYMENT

### *Evolution of unemployment*

In 2019 unemployed in the province of Asti are 5,393, mainly women (2,921, equal to 54%). The unemployment rate is 5.6%, lower than in Piedmont and Italy.

Between 2004 and 2014 unemployment progressively increased, with a peak in 2014. Between 2015 and 2019 the unemployment rate in the province of Asti registered a downward trend, achieving in 2019 the best figure since 2012.



Source: Istat

**Unemployment rate: comparison (%)**

	Province of Asti	Province of Cuneo	Province of VCO	Piedmont	Italy	EU-27
2019	5.6	4.8	5.9	7.6	10.0	6.7
2018	8.4	4.3	5.7	8.2	10.6	7.2
2017	9.2	6.1	6.8	9.1	11.2	8.1

Source: Istat; Eurostat

*Unemployment by age group and sex*

Overall, women are more involved in unemployment than men: in the province of Asti the unemployment rate for women is 7%, while for men is 4.5%.

Unemployment in Asti is concentrated among youngsters: in the age group 15-24 years one out of four (25,1%) is unemployed, in line with the regional figure. The phenomenon of unemployment is particularly strict for girls between 15 and 24 years in the province of Asti (37.4%). Girls' unemployment in Asti is even stronger than in Piedmont (33.5%) and in the other provinces considered in this analysis.

**Unemployment rate by age group and sex. 2019**

Area	TOTAL				MALE				FEMALE			
	15-24 years	25-34 years	35+ years	TOT	15-24 years	25-34 years	35+ years	TOT	15-24 years	25-34 years	35+ years	TOT
Asti	25,1	7,8	3,7	5,6	15,4	6,1	3,2	4,5	37,4	10,8	4,2	7,0
Cuneo	16,6	6,6	3,2	4,8	12,9	7,7	2,2	4,0	23,0	5,5	4,5	5,9
VCO	25,3	5,9	4,3	5,9	21,7	6,6	2,7	4,6	30,3	4,9	6,4	7,5
<b>Piedmont</b>	<b>26,8</b>	<b>10,0</b>	<b>5,7</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>21,5</b>	<b>9,4</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>6,3</b>	<b>33,5</b>	<b>10,7</b>	<b>7,1</b>	<b>9,2</b>

Source: Piedmont Region – Regional Observatory on Labour Market

**E) COVID-19**

*How has the education system responded to the Covid-19 crisis?*

The pandemic crisis has represented a big challenge for the educational system and this issue is still central to the public debate. Since March 2020 schools have been closed and distance teaching and learning has been activated. The academic year 2020/21 has started with in presence activities, but since November the school system has got back to a prevalent distance learning and teaching modality, except for educational services for children 0-6 years old, that have maintained presential activities in compliance with security protocols.

Vocational training system suffered also during these months and several activities (apprenticeship, traineeships, laboratorial activities, etc.) have been stopped. The situation is still in progress.

On one hand, the implementation of distance learning has accelerated the digitalization process of educational system; on the other hand, it has underlined several weaknesses, especially the digital divide.

Among the main factors that can impact on the results of distance teaching and learning, there are teachers' and students' digital skills and the availability of digital devices and connectivity among families and teachers.

There is awareness about potential negative effects on learning, on youngsters' psychological and emotional conditions, on growing inequalities and on an increase of early school leaving.



*Has the Covid-19 crisis caused population movements to rural areas?*

The increase of smart working has generated a reduction of commuting towards urban centres. In summer, because of restrictions on mobility, many people discovered rural areas and a domestic and proximity tourism increased.

However, currently, there are no data available related to permanent movements of people towards rural areas. Certainly, the pandemic has contributed to focus the attention of public debate on some issues that are traditionally connected to rural areas: access to services, transport system, digitalization. In this sense, the pandemic could represent an opportunity not only to reconsider our own lifestyle, but also to bring at the centre of the debate the rural area issues.

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#### MAIN SOURCES

- Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro, *Cronache del lavoro 2020*, [www.agenziapiemontelavoro.it](http://www.agenziapiemontelavoro.it)
- Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>
- Ires Piemonte, [www.ires.piemonte.it](http://www.ires.piemonte.it)
- Ires Piemonte, Demos - [Regional Demographic Observatory](#)
- Istat, [www.istat.it](http://www.istat.it)
- Istat, [ASIA Databank](#)
- Regione Piemonte, [Regional Observatory on Labour Market](#)