



Ostuni, the White City –  
jewel of Puglia

## Puglia Region, Italy

### General overview

The Puglia Region, with about 4 million inhabitants distributed over 19 345 km<sup>2</sup>, is situated in southern Italy, bordering the Adriatic Sea to the east, the Ionian Sea to the south east, and the Strait of Otranto and Gulf of Taranto to the south. It extends from Mount Gargano in the northern part of the Region to Santa Maria di Leuca in the southernmost part, known as the Salento Peninsula, which forms the heel of the boot of Italy. Puglia has direct borders with three other Italian regions: Molise in the north, and Campania and Basilicata in the north west. Across the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Puglia faces Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, and Montenegro. The capital city of the Puglia Region is Bari (in the Bari Province). The other five Provinces are Foggia, Lecce, Brindisi, Taranto and Barletta-Andria-Trani, with a total of 258 municipalities.

Puglia has a coastline of 829 km, a wonderful sea and an exceptional cultural heritage from the Messapi and Japigi to the Ancient Greeks and Romans, and from the Byzantines to the Normans and Angevins. In addition to its beautiful “masserie” (manor farms) and “casali” (rural homes), it has three Unesco World Heritage sites: Castel del Monte, the mysterious fortress of Fredrick II (near Andria); the “trulli”, characteristic

drystone huts, unique in the world; and the Sanctuary of San Michele Arcangelo in Monte Sant’Angelo, a masterpiece of Templar medieval art and an international pilgrimage destination, very close to San Giovanni Rotondo, where the Tomb of Padre Pio attracts millions of pilgrims from all over the world.

The quality of life in the Puglia Region is excellent. Because of its warm climate, however, the Region is prone to water shortages, a problem that has been addressed through the construction of Europe’s largest aqueduct (Acquedotto Pugliese). The large-scale production of extra virgin olive oil in the Region is the basis of the Mediterranean diet (MD) traditionally adopted by the people living there. MD was inscribed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013.

Although the quality of life in the Region is high, there is a high unemployment rate (as a result of the emigration, over the last ten years, of 250 000 young people on finishing their education) and the number of people living on low incomes is increasing. Problems related to the ageing population are being addressed through further

welfare policies, such as “Reddito di Dignità” (Minimum Salary for Dignity) (RED) (1), and the Regional Healthcare System; the latter is committed to delivering “Livelli Essenziali di Assistenza (Essential Levels of Care) (LEA), in the fields of prevention (primary prevention and screening), treatment (diagnosis and cure) and rehabilitation. The regions are responsible for the delivery of health-care services to their populations within the framework of LEA.

The Italian health-care system, which was designed to provide health-care services to the whole population, is funded through citizen taxes.



## Strengths

The strengths of the Puglia Region are:

- ✓ a universally accessible health-care system;
- ✓ a focus on public health issues, environmental protection and sustainable development;
- ✓ use of a participatory approach with citizens' involvement.



## Aspirations

The Puglia Region aims to:

- ✓ achieve the goals of the “Long and happy life” programme of the current regional government;
- ✓ pursue the application of the precautionary principle in the promotion of public health (for example, in connection with the implementation of the Puglia Region Road Map towards Decarbonization (2–7);
- ✓ enhance people's well-being.

## Challenges

These are to:

- ✓ tackle social and health inequities by addressing the social and environmental determinants of health;
- ✓ adequately cope with population ageing;
- ✓ increase commitment in research and innovation.

## Potential areas of collaboration

The Puglia Region would be interested in collaborating with other regions on:

- ✓ assessing the impact of carbon-fired coal and steel plants on environment and health;
- ✓ the monitoring of air and water quality;
- ✓ climate change and health.

## Working groups

The Puglia Region is interested in participating in working groups on:

- ✓ environment;
- ✓ women's/men's health;
- ✓ participatory approaches/resilience.

## People active in the Regions for Health Network (RHN)

### **Michele Emiliano**

President of the Puglia Region and  
Deputy Director of the Regional Healthcare System  
Bari

### **Barbara Valenzano**

Head, Environmental Department of the Puglia Region  
Bari

### **Prisco Piscitelli**

Staff member of the Presidential team for European  
initiatives on Environment and Health  
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