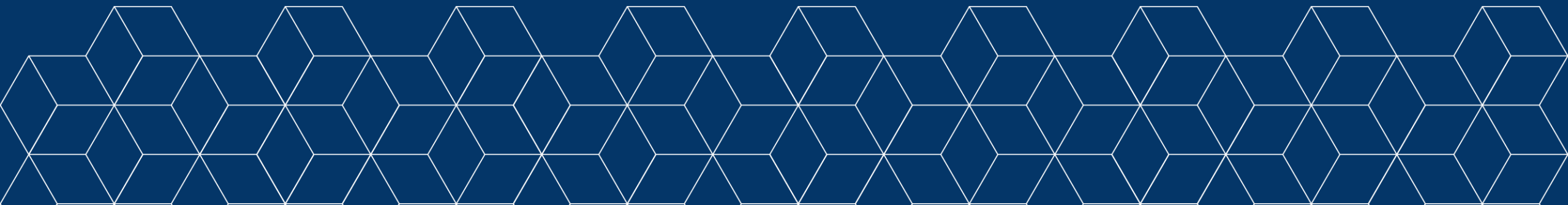


CRISTINA LION · CRISTINA LOLLI · SIMONA TESTANA

***THE ITALIAN NATIONAL FAMILY PLAN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK
OF THE EU FAMILY POLICIES: CONVERGENCE POINTS AND
POTENTIAL COMPLEMENTARITY***

ESPANET Conference

Sapienza Rome September 10, 2026



RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

- ❑ If and how EU soft governance are shaping national family policy
- ❑ Criteria: Convergence and/or complementarity
- ❑ Methodology: Qualitative comparative analysis and interpretive categories

FAMILY POLICIES

EU policy documents

Italian National Family Plan



OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION

- ✓ Family policy: definitions, models and welfare state
- ✓ The European Union and family policy
- ✓ The Italian National Family Plan
- ✓ EU and Italy: convergence points and potential complementarity



FAMILY POLICIES: TENTATIVE DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Family policies include a core set of public interventions designed to act upon and influence the living conditions of **families** through various measures (*“umbrella term”*).

- Autonomous vs Traditionally
- Explicit vs implicit
- Promotional vs compensatory

Saraceno (2009), family policies *“are the set of public measures that influence the **formation, functioning and well-being** of families, through cash transfers, services, tax measures, and the regulation of work and care responsibilities”*.



FAMILIES AND WELFARE: POLICY AREAS AND SUPPORT MEASURES

Financial support

Child benefits
· tax relief

Services

Childcare ·
home care

Work–life balance

Parental leave
· flexible work

Relational inclusion

Parenting support·
mediation



FAMILY POLICIES AND WELFARE SYSTEMS: ITALY VS EUROPE

31.8%

of GDP
total social
expenditure

1.2%

of GDP
for families and
children

2.4%

EU-27 average
for families and
children

€379

Italy per capita

vs

€777

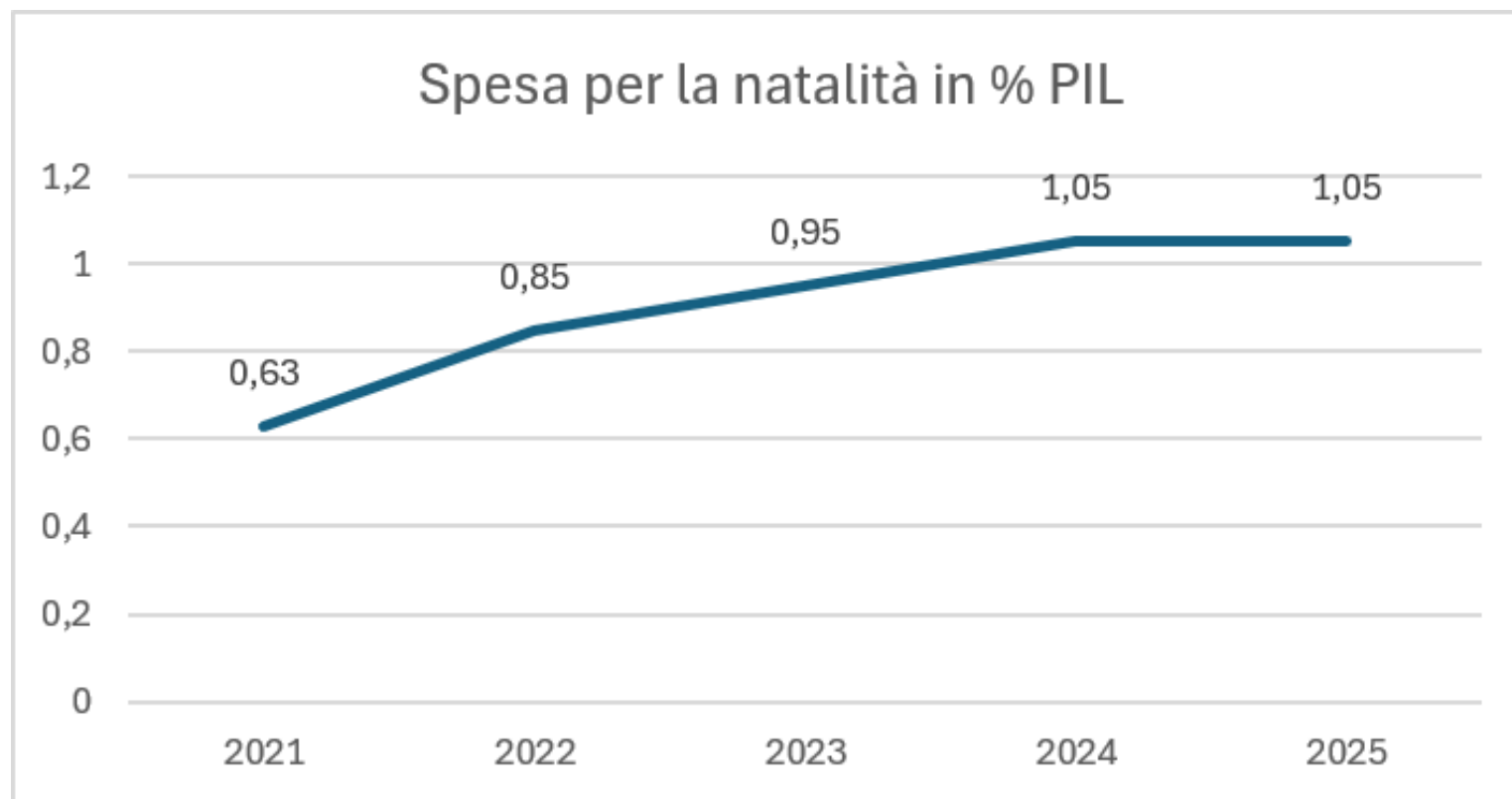
EU-27 per capita

**The Mediterranean welfare model
depends heavily on family-based care—
under demographic pressure**

Source: Eurostat ESSPROS data as reported by the Osservatorio sui Conti Pubblici Italiani (2021).



MEASURES TO SUPPORT CHILDBEARING - ITALY



Measures to support childbearing

- Universal child benefit
- Parental leave
- Childcare benefits
- Birth allowance
- Contribution reliefs and tax deductions

Source: Cignarella, Cottarelli 2025 - Osservatorio sui Conti Pubblici Italiani



THE EUROPEAN UNION AND FAMILY POLICIES: AN «IMPLICIT» POLICY?

European Social Charter (rev. 1996)
Protection of the family

**Work–Life Balance Directive
(2019)**

**European Pillar of Social
Rights (2017; rev. 2026)**

Standards Rights and access

Social investment package (2013)

**European strategy for gender equality
(2020)**

**European Child Guarantee
(2021)**
Prevent child poverty

**Barcelona Targets 2030 (rev.
2022)**
Childcare participation

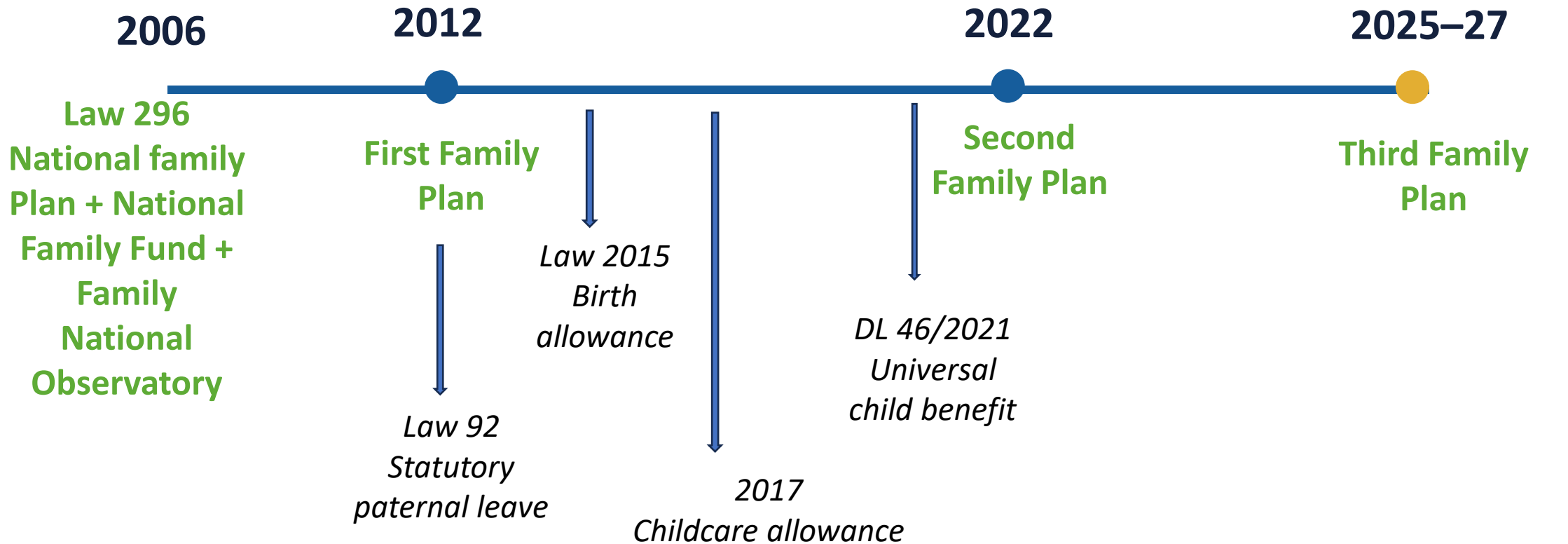


FIVE GUIDELINES IN EUROPEAN FAMILY-POLICY MODEL

- 1 Families as social resources**
- 2 Work–life balance**
- 3 Gender equality & shared care**
- 4 Child protection & poverty prevention**
- 5 Integrated income support & services**

FAMILY POLICIES IN ITALY AND THE NATIONAL FAMILY PLAN

NFP: Strategic planning and policy framework



THE ITALIAN NATIONAL FAMILY PLAN 2025-2027



4 Macro-areas and 14 Actions



Corporate welfare & work–life balance

Gender equality · shared parenting



Local authorities & territories

Family Centres · local networks



Third sector & solidarity networks

«First 1,000 days" · home support

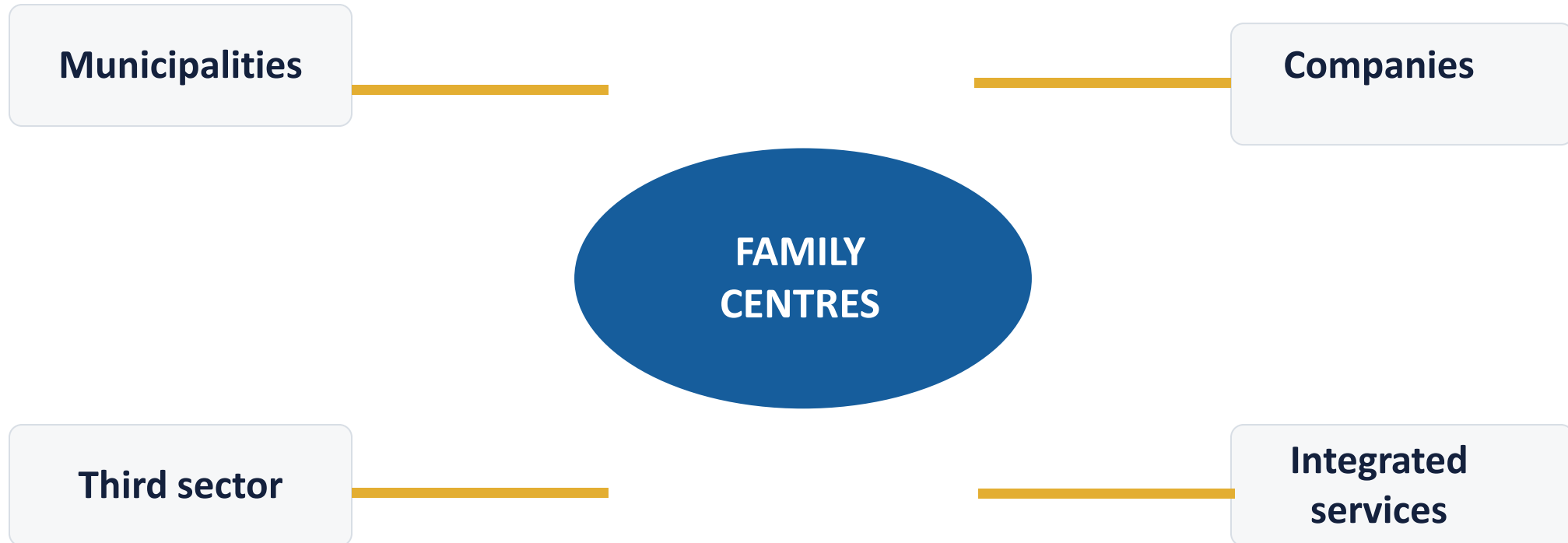


System-level enabling actions

Needs mapping · evaluation ·
information communication



FAMILY CENTRES AS TERRITORIAL HUBS



Family Centers as «HUB and SPOKE»: guidance · coordination · social innovation

Professional skills are the enabling infrastructure



FAMILY CENTRES AS TERRITORIAL HUBS

**Reframes family:
from passive beneficiaries
to active social actors**

**National
Family Plan**

**Connects different
level: EU guideline,
national strategy,
territorial delivery**

**Makes learning
structural: needs
mapping,
information, M&E**



CONVERGENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

EU policy areas

Italian NFP

Result

Work–life balance

Corporate welfare + shared parenting

Convergent

Child wellbeing

First 1,000 days + local support

Convergent

Social investment

Family as active social actor

Convergent

Soft coordination

Territorial hub-and-spoke delivery

Complementary



2026 European Semester Spring Package (3 June 2026)

The European Semester is increasingly adopting a life-course and family-oriented perspective: the recommendations integrate family concerns into labour market participation, social inclusion, education, health, housing, and long-term care policies.

Three main objectives:

- 1. Care is becoming a strategic policy issue:** childcare and long-term care (social and economic infrastructure)
- 2. Child poverty and social inclusion:** particularly for vulnerable families and disadvantaged children.
- 3. Family policy is increasingly linked to economic performance:** employment, skills development, demographic resilience, and social cohesion.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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