

11th World Administrators Summit COUNTRY REPORT

COUNTRY: ITALY

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The global pandemic has deeply affected the economy and consequently the labour market. Italy has been one of the first countries to be struck and against many odds, the country is slightly on the way to recovery. Work from home or remote work has been imposed and has abruptly changed the way of working for many people, including Assistants.

Big organisations and tech companies had already integrated remote working/working from home policies (the law was introduced in 2017) but small and medium size companies, the backbone of our economy, had to adapt quickly and not always in the best way. Vpn, laptops and any kind of equipment were very difficult to provide any employee with, sometimes because of the severe mobility restrictions in March 2020.

We can say this is due to the delay of our country in digital innovation and IT facilities. But also, in the mindset of leaders and entrepreneurs' who are still in need of control.

In 2020 to contain labour reduction and unemployment, the Government has issued consistent public subsidies aimed at all working population and imposed a stop to layoffs until October 2021. This caused a great discontinuity, sense of loneliness and lack of motivation especially among Admins. Companies are actually involved in re-organisation processes and EAs have been suffering from this situation since many of them feel that their position is insecure at the moment.

Despite the above situation and in order to help EA's in this rapid and sometimes difficult scenario, Italy has been supporting the profession with more than 150 webinars, trainings, coaching, legal, career and psychological counselling, to support and to help EAs. On this occasion many corporations required special in-house training programs for Assistant' teams.

Working from home has probably given more flexibility in time schedule and creativity so EAs could easily adapt to attend trainings. We have also evidence that many EA's have been able to improve collaboration, establishing a climate of unity with their teams. Long-life learning and human personal development are no longer a taboo.

We have also gathered that the role has been evolved more from only "boss assistant" to "project management assistant". Thanks to the organizational abilities some EAs were also asked to support the company security teams on covid protocols or support the management to find new locations for companies that after the pandemic will need smaller plants/locations due to the increase of working from home or remote working. This was the best time to transform problems into opportunities with commitment and resilience.



On the other side the Virtual Assistant scenario is conquering more interest and we believe this will give place to new businesses and force to the profession.

Major involvement of EAs on sustainability projects have been one of the changes the pandemic has brought about into the required EAs skills and tasks. Concluding we might say that they had the occasion to be set as an example, to act proactively and to see the big picture. A better future will come, and AI will not steal their deep expertise and job.

