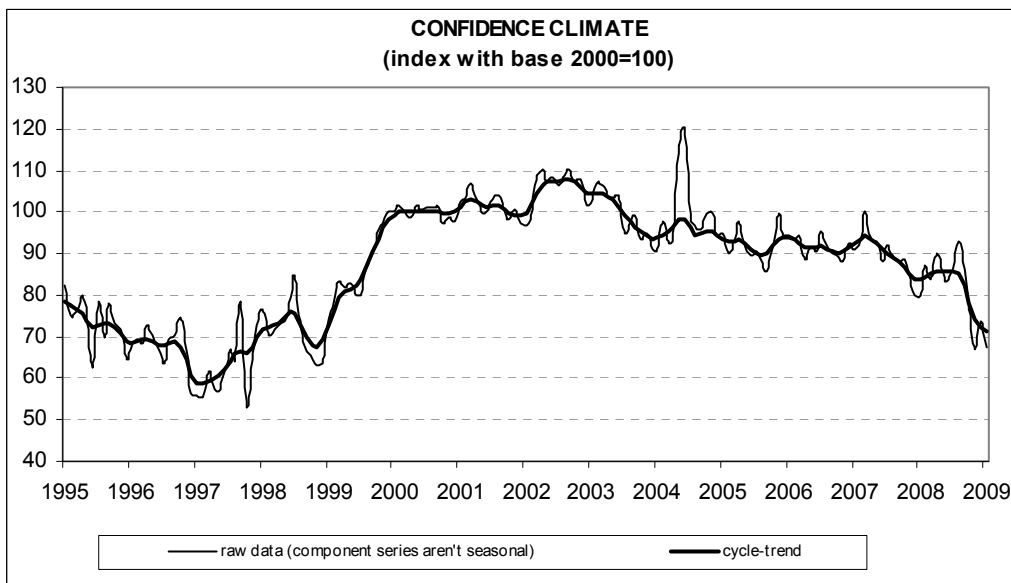




Date: February 27, 2009

IN JANUARY CONSTRUCTION FIRMS' CONFIDENCE RESUMES A WEAKENING TREND

- The index decreased from 73.9 to 67.2, hitting the low posted last November. Among the variables included in the calculation of the confidence indicator, both opinions on construction plans and employment prospects started to worsen once more
- Regarding the other surveyed variables, assessments on construction activity sharply deteriorated and predictions for construction plans were mainly pessimistic. The balance related to the trend in prices charged in the sector diminished, staying negative for the fourth month running
- The number of entrepreneurs stating they found obstacles limiting their construction activity started to increase once more. The related percentage reached the highest level since January 1995. Most entrepreneurs still considered insufficient demand the main constraint
- The worsening in the overall confidence index was homogenous across sectors. Deterioration characterized both civil engineering and, to a greater extent, residential and non-residential building



Data on February shall be released on March 27, 2009

The next ISAE surveys are scheduled as follows:

March 10: *ISAE International Comparison of Consumer and Business Surveys (reference period: February)*

The full text of ISAE Surveys (either hardcopy or electronic format) is available for sale (for further information see the web site www.isae.it)

General results

According to the ISAE Survey carried out on a panel of approximately 500 firms, in January the seasonally adjusted confidence index (2000=100) started to decline once more, moving from 73.9 to 67.2. Following the rebound recorded in December, the indicator hit the low level posted last November, highlighting the growing pessimism of surveyed entrepreneurs. Among the variables included in the calculation of the confidence indicator, both the opinions on construction plans and employment prospects resumed a downward path.

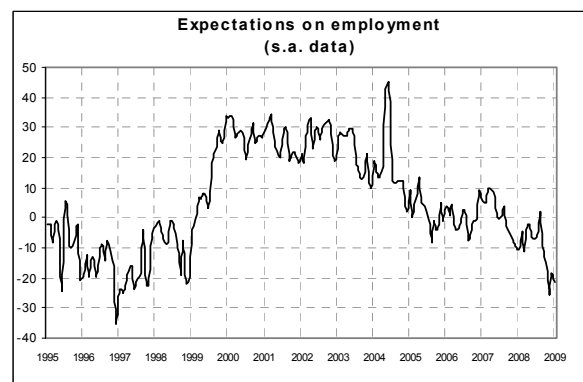
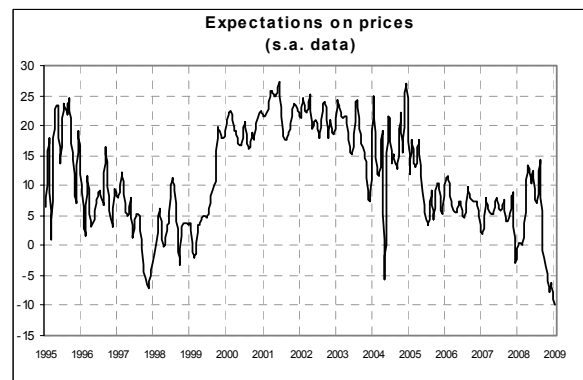
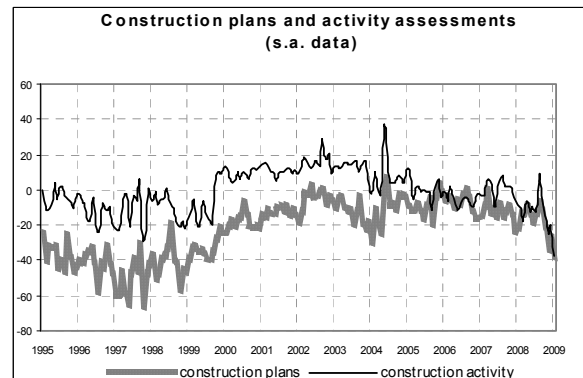
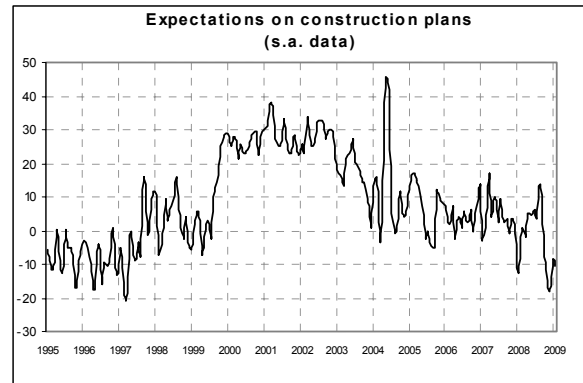
Regarding the other surveyed variables, assessments on construction activity sharply deteriorated and prospects for construction plans were mostly pessimistic. The balance related to forecasts for prices charged in the sector diminished, staying negative for the fourth month running.

The number of entrepreneurs who found obstacles limiting their construction activity started to increase once more. Among declared obstacles, insufficient demand was again considered the main constraint.

The worsening in the overall confidence index was homogenous across sectors. Deterioration characterized both civil engineering and, to a greater extent, residential and non-residential building.

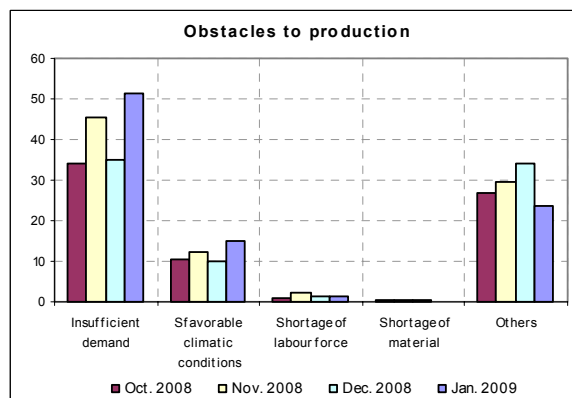
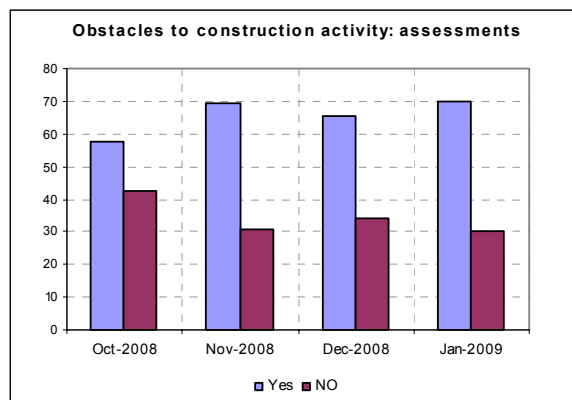
Situation in the reference period (January 2009)

In January, entrepreneurs' opinions gave decidedly negative indications. Deterioration distinguished assessments on both construction plans (the balance fell from -27 to -38, reaching a minimum since August 1999) and construction activity (from -20 to -38, the lowest level since January 1995). Most surveyed entrepreneurs stated they found obstacles limiting their construction activity. The related percentage rose from 66% to 70% in January, a high last hit, also in this case, at the start of 1995. As for declared obstacles, insufficient demand was again the major constraint.



Forecasts for the following three months

Entrepreneurs' prospects for main company variables confirmed the negative assessments on the current situation. Indeed deterioration distinguished expectations for construction plans (the balance moved from -8 to -10, staying in negative territory for the fifth straight month), as well as employment prospects (the balance decreased from -18 to -21, a low last reached in November 1998). Lastly, also the balance related to prospects for prices charged in the sector diminished, dropping from -6 to -10, the lowest level since 1995.



Confidence climate and balances of the component series index (s.a. data)

	Confidence climate (index base 2000=100)	Assessments on construction plans	Expectations on employment
Oct. 2008	77.8	-22	-15
Nov. 2008	67.0	-34	-26
Dec. 2008	73.9	-27	-18
Jan. 2009	67.2	-38	-21