



**Inauguration Ceremony of the 2024-2025 Academic Year  
Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the University of Foggia**

**Address by the General Director  
Sandro Spataro**

Distinguished Minister of Healthcare, Professor Orazio Schillaci, Father Paolo Benanti, Distinguished Rector, Honored Guests and Authorities, Esteemed Faculty, Technical-Administrative and Library Staff, Foreign Language Instructors, and Students.

It is a great honour for me to address the inauguration of the new academic year, in a city - Foggia - that regards the University as a fundamental entity in shaping the future of its young people and in fostering the development of both social well-being and the economic fabric of the region.

I am particularly proud of the responsibility that has been entrusted to me. Therefore, I would like to renew my sincere gratitude to Professor Lorenzo Lo Muzio, the Esteemed Rector of this prestigious University, and to the entire University Community. I also wish to express my hope and commitment that, together, with confidence - and if I may add - with the responsible contribution of the technical, administrative, library staff, and Foreign Language Instructors, we may consolidate and further strengthen the direction already undertaken, toward the improvement of services for students, citizens, and institutions.

This historical moment, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the University of Foggia, presents a significant opportunity for collective reflection. It invites us to consider not only the central role our institution plays in education, research, and its ongoing dialogue with society, but also the notable achievements it has attained and the ambitious goals we strive to accomplish.

Our commitment is built on solid foundations. Thanks to favourable economic and financial sustainability indicators, the University of Foggia demonstrates a turnover rate exceeding 100%. The personnel expenditure indicator, which directly impacts the hiring capacity of Universities, has shown consistent improvement in recent years. In 2023, this indicator stood at 59.44%, well below the critical threshold of 80% and notably lower than the system average of 64.45%. As a result, this performance facilitated the allocation of 14.08 points for staff hiring funding during that year.

We remain confident that the allocation of points for staff hiring funding for 2024, which has not yet been announced by the Ministry, will further consolidate this positive trend. The strong performance of the University's indicators in recent years, combined with the implementation of targeted recruitment plans for both academic and administrative personnel, has facilitated significant investments in human resources.

Between 2022 and 2024, it was possible to recruit 133 Full and Associate Professors, including Professors from abroad, as well as 43 fixed-term Senior Researchers ("Type B Researchers") and tenure-track Researchers. During the same period, 133 technical, administrative, and library staff members were recruited (79 on permanent contracts and 54 on fixed-term contracts), along with 5 Foreign Language Instructors (4 on permanent contracts and 1 on a fixed-term contract). This recruitment effort reversed a trend of gradual staff reductions, which in recent years had been undermining the administrative and managerial apparatus's ability to maintain an adequate standard of services.

The number of Junior researchers ("Type A Researchers") recruited through measures funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, as well as through the extraordinary project management skills demonstrated by our researchers, amounted to 57.

Thanks to the opportunities provided by the Special Recruitment Plan for university staff, outlined in the 2022 Budget Law and its implementing decrees, it was possible to strengthen the fund for the supplementary economic compensation for managerial staff. This allowed, by the end of 2023, the hiring of three permanent managers who will contribute to supporting the Director General in the overall management of the organizational apparatus.

It should also be noted that the investment in tenured faculty has, in recent years, been made possible through the essential contribution of the Puglia Region. With the aim of supporting specialized medical training and meeting the accreditation requirements for postgraduate medical schools (currently numbering 37), the Puglia Region has allocated a total funding of approximately 42 million euros to the University of Foggia.

The recent establishment of a University-managed Heart Surgery department, supported by an additional regional contribution of 10 million euros, serves as a further concrete example of the successful integration of regional healthcare service development policies with university functions, to the benefit of public health. In order to address the challenges that lie ahead, it will be crucial to identify and promote the professional development aspirations of the University's staff, as well as to strengthen a comprehensive recruitment strategy.

Significant progress remains to be made, particularly in light of the new regulations governing career progression, which have been expanded as per the National Collective Agreement signed on January 18, 2024. We will also be able to assess the possibility of increasing the funds of the supplementary economic compensation for staff in the categories of operators, collaborators, and officials, as well as for highly specialized professionals, by an amount up to 10% of the value of these funds from the year 2016, as outlined in Article 1, paragraph 832 of the 2025 Budget Law.

In response to the reduction of 173 million euros in funding for 2024, a measure that has sparked considerable debate among Italian universities, our institution has secured the Ordinary Funding for 2024, which amounts to approximately 57 million euros. This has positioned us among the only six Italian universities that have not experienced these funding cuts, despite an average reduction of 2.12% and a significant number of universities facing resource losses exceeding 3%. This achievement can be attributed to the steady increase in student enrollment, which runs counter to the national trend, as well as to the subsequent growth in the allocation linked to the standard cost per student within the regular study period.

However, we must remain vigilant. The failure to provide the additional financial resources of line b) of the Extra Recruitment Plan, as outlined in Ministerial Decree 445 of May 6, 2022, and the absorption, within the non-restricted portion of the allocation of the FFO (Ordinary Funding), of items previously allocated separately - such as those related to the recognition of salary increments for faculty and the enhancement of technical and administrative staff - are factors that require attention. Additionally, the automatic dynamics of progressively increasing salary burdens for both faculty and technical-administrative staff, entirely borne by university budgets, are also factors that require attention. If these issues are not adequately addressed, they may, in the future, create challenges in developing budget strategies and forecasts that align with the period of significant investment expansion seen in recent years.

The degree courses offered by the University of Foggia have progressively expanded to effectively meet the evolving demands of the labour market, and to promote innovation by introducing new professional profiles. As previously highlighted, this expansion has been accompanied by a significant increase in the number of students choosing to enroll at our University.

The strategy of expanding our degree courses, which, according to the CENSIS rankings, has facilitated the transformation of the University of Foggia from a small institution to a medium-sized one, fills us with pride. However, it must be supported by consistent investments in the renewal of our building and technological infrastructure, particularly with regard to classrooms, study areas, and laboratories. Such investments will ensure the realization of the right to education, improve the comfort and accessibility of our spaces, and foster the inclusion and support of all forms of diversity.

The availability of a significant share of net equity reserves, derived from previous favourable management results, combined with the University's ability to strategically position itself in rankings for ministerial funding of university infrastructure programs, will facilitate the pursuit of this strategy.

Among the ongoing or planned projects, the construction of a new building within the Biomedical Campus, intended for new teaching spaces, stands out. Other notable initiatives include the renovation of the "Conventino", to create a residence hall with 64 beds, and the acquisition of the former "Caserma Miale" ("Miale" barracks), a key element of the University's development plan. This plan focuses on the restoration of historic buildings in Foggia that are either abandoned or underutilized. These properties will be reintegrated into the community through their revitalization, which will not only enhance the University's facilities, but also contribute to creating significant economic and social benefits for the region.

The property, acquired through a regional grant of 6.5 million euros, will undergo a repurposing intervention, financed by the Ministry with approximately 12.6 million euros, as part of the "Line E" of the university building program outlined in Ministerial Decree No. 1274 of December 10, 2021. The proposed project ranked tenth out of 42 submissions. Additionally, the project will be supported by resources from the funding program entitled "Territorial Agreements of Higher Education for Enterprises".

Allow me, in conclusion, to express my confidence in the technical and administrative staff, librarians, and CEL (Foreign Language Instructors) personnel. During this phase

of profound change in the university system (where the need for international openness, global relationships, and the adoption of increasingly innovative digital solutions play a pivotal role), they will demonstrate the maturity and stability required to meet the challenges of modern administrative management. The latter, as is well known, remains vigilant regarding cost efficiency and is aligned with strategic planning.

In expressing my sense of belonging to this University, where I am honoured to carry out the prestigious role of Director General, it is my intention and desire to become closely acquainted with the places and people where ideas, projects, and the commitment to carrying out institutional functions are brought to life.

I will find the opportunity to meet with everyone and initiate, through continuous dialogue, the desirable sharing of programs and activities.

Thank you.