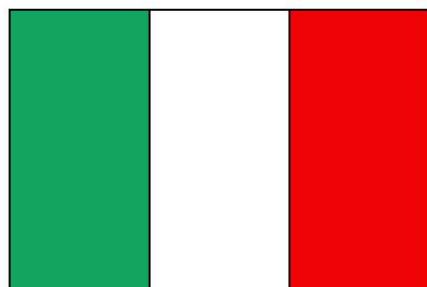


# Export to Italy



## Table des matières

1. General information .....	3
2. Additional indicators .....	5
Economic indicators .....	5
Social and environmental indicators .....	5
Free trade agreements.....	5
3. On site: a step-by-step guide .....	5
Market access and first contacts .....	5
Exporting .....	6
Interesting markets for a first export .....	7
4. Business culture.....	8
5. What can we do for you? .....	9
Local contact points.....	9
Key addresses.....	9
Useful websites to delve into .....	9



# 1. General information

- The tourism sector was able to zero, at least nominally, the losses incurred in 2020-2021 by recording 164.6 billion euros in tourism consumption. There is an almost complete recovery of foreigners' spending, which has returned above the 55 billion thresholds; more difficult has been the recovery of domestic spending on tourism, which although exceeding 70 billion has failed to exceed pre-Covid levels (-2 percent). The government has arranged many facilities to help the tourism sector post-Covid by increasing government spending.
- A carbon tax has never been introduced in Italy, although an environmental tax reform based on a reshaping of excise taxes on the transportation sector and the introduction of a consumption tax on coal and raw materials has been in place since early 1999. In Italy the Grid Parity has been achieved because the price of solar energy in the commercial sector is in balance with retail electricity prices. This is due to competitive photovoltaic system installation costs, high irradiation levels and relatively expensive grid energy prices.
- Within the audiovisual market, television remains the leading medium by revenue in 2022 with a total of €7.9bn, 73% of the total. However, it is set to grow moderately, and its share of the total market is set to slip below 70 percent between 2024 and 2025. In 2022, the total revenues of the Italian audiovisual market will be worth about €10.8bn, thus approaching the pre-pandemic Covid-19 values, but only thanks to the strong growth of the online component. After the 2020 downturn due to the pandemic and the consequent postponement of many production projects, the revenues of the top 50 companies in the sector resume growth with considerable strength recording in 2022 a value around €1,440m - €1480m, in a decade (2013-2022) the revenues of the leading companies grew by 100%. In 2023, the resources of the fund for the development of investment in film and audiovisual amount to more than €746m. The 2022/2023 season is characterized by the growth of entertainment on hours. There are 16,855 total hours of unscripted first run content on linear networks, a figure that signals a recovery of +7% compared to the 2021/2022 season.
- Since Italian industry is strongly export-oriented, transportation and logistics represent real levers of competitiveness. For several years now, this system has been growing at rates well above those of GDP. The total value of logistics activities in Italy in 2023 is 135.4 billion euros, or 8.2 percent of Italy's GDP and about 1.4 million people working in the sector. Logistics accounts for 45.3 percent or 61.3 billion euros. As mentioned earlier, the growing weight of exports makes the issue of medium- and long-term investment and planning in the transport and infrastructure sectors increasingly important. Since more than 60 percent of Italy's trade is with other European countries, the Alpine passes play a crucial role in both rail and road transport. Therefore, it is necessary to move away from the viewpoint in which logistics and transport are considered only as a cost and not as a competitive asset to be leveraged. In Italy, the need emerges for efficient regulation of public contracts, a well-functioning port system and the definition of an effective national airport plan. Bureaucratic procedures need to be simplified and digitized.
- The e-Commerce sector in Italy continues to grow. During 2023, e-Commerce purchases by Italians were worth more than 54.2 billion euros, registering a growth of more than 6 billion compared to the previous year, albeit not comparable to those recorded during the pandemic years 2020-2021. Indeed, 2023 was a year of resumption of normalcy after the lockdown boost and subsequent market realignment that occurred during 2022. However, the economic crisis has begun to affect some more volatile sectors such as Electronics, which has seen a decline in sales.

Although there has been an inflection for eCommerce in beauty, fashion and food, forecasts for the first half of 2024 estimate that pharma (+19.7 percent) and pet (+38.5 percent) will drive the sector. Generation Z has established itself as a major driving force in online



shopping, representing the majority of the world's population and thus becoming the leading online consumers. An expected trend for 2024 in e-commerce will be the response to the specific needs of this generation, with a focus on personalized shopping experiences, sustainability and social responsibility by brands. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been radically transforming the eCommerce industry over the past year through a range of services dedicated to analyzing consumer behavior. The goal is to optimize the online shopping experience by engaging users and incentivizing them through targeted marketing strategies.

Post-shipment marketing takes on a key role, allowing sellers to create personalized communications based on recipient data, and the integration of a chatbot and support links help shoppers feel accompanied during the delivery process by maintaining direct contact with the seller rather than the courier.



## 2. Additional indicators

### Economic indicators

Find the main socio-economic indicators for this country, as well as its trade with Brussels and Belgium, in the publication "Brussels and the world – Country statistics" on analytics.brussels, hub.brussels' online data library.

The "Brussels and the world - General statistics" publication also provides data on trade between the Brussels-Capital Region and the rest of the world, by continent and by major world region. The same type of data is also available for the various regions of Belgium, as well as for Belgium as a whole.

### Social and environmental indicators

If you'd like to know where your country stands in terms of social, environmental and economic issues, access a series of composite indicators from the European Commission, structured according to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> and the European Commission's 6 priority policy areas<sup>2</sup>.

### Free trade agreements

European agreements have a major impact on market accessibility and trade with certain countries. The links below, published by the European Commission, will provide you with all the information you need on free trade agreements and trade barriers. Existing agreements, those that have not yet been ratified and those that are expected to be ratified, can be consulted here:

- Free trade agreements
- Trade barriers

## 3. On site: a step-by-step guide

### Market access and first contacts

- It is strongly recommended to check the financial state and situation of Italian companies before concluding any agreement through the Italian Trade Register ([www.registroimprese.it](http://www.registroimprese.it); <https://italianbusinessregister.it/en/home>)
- In Italy, the commercial agent is still an extremely important element in



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<sup>1</sup>No poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Clean water and sanitation, Clean and affordable energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities, Sustainable consumption and production, Measures to combat climate change, Water life, Land life, Peace, justice and effective institutions, Partnerships to achieve the goals.

<sup>2</sup> A green pact for Europe, An economy serving people, A Europe fit for the digital age, A stronger Europe on the world stage, Promoting our European way of life, A new impetus for European democracy.

introducing themselves to the market. An Italian commercial agent must, according to Italian law, be registered in the Commercial Agents Register. For more information: <https://fnaarc.it/>; [www.forumagenti.it/fr](http://www.forumagenti.it/fr)

- Especially for the consumer goods sector, the distributor can be an alternative method of introduction to the market
- Once you prospected deeply the Italian market and you are convinced of the business opportunities for your products/services, local consultants skilled in your sector, can facilitate the entrance into it, helping you with a tailor-made business plan.

## Exporting

### Payments

- Italy is bringing its electronic invoicing system with public authorities into line with the framework set out in Directive 2014/55/EC. The invoice with the government is called Fattura Elettronica PA. For more information: [Services - Electronic invoicing - Agenzia delle Entrate \(agenziaentrate.gov.it\)](#)
- A common form of payment in Italy is payment by letter of credit - L/C (a documentary credit). With an L/C, the bank of the company you are trading with, guarantees the payment.
- Payment terms in Italy are longer than in most Western European countries. The average is around 50 days.

### Company types

The main types of companies in Italy are:

1. With legal personality (società di capitali)
  - a. Società a responsabilità limitata (S.R.L.; the private limited liability company)
  - b. Società per Azioni ( S.p.A; cfr Public Limited Company)
2. Without legal personality (Società di persone); these are the most common forms:
  - a. S.n.c. - Società in nome collettivo
  - b. S.a.s. - Società in accomandita semplice ( cfr. a limited partnership)

For more information: [Starting a business in Italy | Italian Trade Agency \(ice.it\)](#)

### Support and subsidies

Discover all subsidies for Brussels businesses on the Brussels Economy and Employment website.



## Interesting markets for a first export

- **Digital market**

Italy ranks 18th in the European DESI Index (Digital Economy and Society Index), out of a total of 27 EU member states. However, the 2023 report from the Digital Innovation Observatory notes notable progress due to the development of new digital skills and the presence of incentives for research and development. It reveals significant disparities in technology between Italian regions. Lombardy ranks at the top with a score of 72/100, while Calabria is the least technological with a score of 18.8.

- **Software-industrie**

The software market in Italy is worth almost 3.5 billion euros and employs more than 23,000 people. Lombardy is the first region in the country for the presence of local software houses (36.6% of the total), for their turnover (41.7%) and for the number of employees (35%). Encouraging numbers also for Italian software start-ups, which reach a total turnover of 172 million euros, employing 1,652 people. The progress made in recent years in digitalisation have leveraged software as a tool to make companies resilient to contextual shocks.

- **Fintech**

Despite the slow start-up phase of Fintech in Italy, the country has successfully attracted many international Fintechs who are now based in Milan and who have decided to collaborate with the Fintech District to have a unique entry point into the local ecosystem and a Fintech lobby was founded in 2018. The future of Fintech in Italy appears very promising, offering numerous possibilities for development and success for new entrepreneurial realities in the sector.

- **Sustainable construction and architecture**

Italy ranks ninth in the ranking published by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) of the ten best countries in the world for LEED certified buildings in 2022. This is a highly prestigious result, which concretely demonstrates the enormous effort put in place at country system level by all the stakeholders involved to accelerate the transition path towards fully sustainable development in the construction and real estate sector

- **Green technologies, including energy & environment, circular economy**

The circular economy is underway in Italy and is expected to grow further in the coming years. The regulatory framework for the circular economy is becoming clearer and regional and local governments are supporting the adoption of the circular economy with financial incentives. This will encourage greater participation from Italian companies, especially small and medium-sized ones (SMEs).

**Calendar of all trade shows here: <https://www.aefi.it/en/>**



## 4. Business culture

- For a first presentation of the company or product, it is advisable to make first a telephone contact, followed by a written request. Transparency about the composition of the company is not always easy. Patience and a polite approach are recommended.

After a close business relationship has been established, personal contact is fundamental in Italy. Italians are used to expressing themselves emotionally in an open manner.



- The Italian hospitality exceeds the Belgian standards (personal guidance, picking up people, invitation to local restaurants, small gifts, etc.). Flowers as gifts should be avoided (if one chooses to give flowers as a gift, avoid pairs, purple color and chrysanthemums); rather go for a typical Belgian specialty. It is customary to send to the close contacts a business gift for Christmas, for example.
- In general, punctuality is not always a priority but is regionally related. 10 minutes of delay is rather accepted also in the north of Italy.
- Presentation is expected to be formal and polished.
- Inquire about the title of your conversation partner and use his/her academic title. Hierarchy still plays an important role within companies and important decisions are often only made by senior managers.
- Classical business cards are still exchanged at the first meeting. The digital version is on the rise.
- Dress code: The concept of “fare bella figura” is part of being Italian; It's about the balance of being well dressed (but neither overdressed), a well-groomed appearance and impeccable behavior. In business and institutional fields, open shoes/sandals are not well seen.
- In general, within the team and in case of a close business relationship has been created, there is a habit of treating each other in a less formal way.
- Local partners can be interesting and useful intermediaries, not only because of their language knowledge, but even more because of their market knowledge and their knowledge of the often complicated and slow administrative procedures and bureaucracy. Take into account long credit terms and a tradition of discounts in price negotiations, as well as long payment terms and long delivery times.
- The Italian working week has 40 hours with flexible hours. Usually from 09:00 to 13:00 and from 14:30 to 18:00. Smartworking is well introduced in the Italian work culture.
- Summer vacations are usually taken in August. Many companies are closed during two full weeks. The period between Christmas, New Year and the Epiphany is also characterized by reduced activity.



## 5. What can we do for you?

### Local contact points

The General Delegates and Local Representatives of the Region employed by hub.brussels are official representatives of the Brussels Government abroad, they support Brussels companies that want to export, and search and prospect for new investors.

They have the information, expertise and in-depth knowledge about the specifics of different foreign markets. Based on that knowledge, they help to refine and fine-tune your export plans, with advice on regulations, competition, market entry conditions, permits, etc. Furthermore, they can support you with your questions regarding exports, certain sectors within the jurisdiction, contacts with intermediaries, business culture, and much more.



### Guglielmo Pisana

Italy (Milan - Malta - San Marino)

Embassy of Belgium  
Via Gaetano de Castillia 23;  
20124 Milano  
Italy

[milan@hub.brussels](mailto:milan@hub.brussels)

### Key addresses

Our office is located in the Brussels House of Milan. Don't hesitate to fix an appointment by mail in order to visit the space and discover all the possibilities and services offered to the Brussels based companies. <https://hub.brussels/en/brussels-house-milan/>.

### Useful websites to delve into

Add any important links for websites here, these can be interesting databases, governmental websites for companies, trade agencies, data websites for economic analysis, ....

Belgian-Italian Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.ccitabel.com/>

Italian Trade & Investment Agency (ICE): <https://www.ice.it/en/>

Association of the Italian Chambers of Commerce: <https://www.unioncamere.gov.it/>

Italian Association of Franchising: [www.assofranchising.it](http://www.assofranchising.it)

Database for requesting financial data from Italian companies:  
<https://italianbusinessregister.it/en/home>

Business Association of the District of Milano, Lodi, Monza and Brianza: [www.assolombarda.it](http://www.assolombarda.it)

Centre of statistics on the Italian economy: <https://www.istat.it/en/>