

Embassy of India
ITALY
India- ITALY Bilateral Relations

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India and Italy are ancient civilizations with rich cultural heritage. The classical languages, Sanskrit and Latin both belong to the Indo-European language family. People of these two ancient civilizations have known, interacted and traded with each other for over 2000 years. Italian port cities were important trading posts on the spice route. The Venetian merchant Marco Polo, during his travels to the east, also traveled to India in the 13th century and wrote about his experiences.

Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore visited Italy in May-June 1926, a visit arranged by Carlo Formichi, a Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Rome. Mahatma Gandhi visited Rome in December 1931 on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference in London. Leaders of the Indian freedom struggle read the works of the Italian revolutionary Mazzini of early 19th century, who worked for a Democratic Republic of Italy.

Indian troops, serving with the British Indian Army, were deployed in Italy during World War II, fighting against the Germans and Mussolini's forces. These included the Rajputana Rifles and Gurkha Rifles. The 10th Indian Division took part in the East African Allied campaign against the Italians in Somaliland and Abyssinia.

Political Relations:

Political relations between India and Italy were established in 1947. There has been a regular exchange of visits at political and official levels between both countries. Over the past few years there have been several visits at the Prime Ministerial level, EAM level, Commerce Minister, Agriculture Minister, Health and so on, with several MoUs being signed during these visits. From the Indian side, at the level of Head of State/Government, the visit(s) date back to 1953 & 1955 when Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Italy, Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in November 1981; President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma in October 1996; Prime Minister Shri H.D. Deve Gowda in November 1996; Prime Minister Shri I.K. Gujral in September 1997; Prime Minister Shri A.B. Vajpayee in June 2000; Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in July 2009 and Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi in October 2021 to participate in the G20 Leaders Summit in Rome. From the Italian side, the first visit at the level of Head of State/Government took place in 1988 when Prime Minister Mr. Giovanni Goria visited India, followed by President Dr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro in Feb 1995; Prime Minister Prof. Romano Prodi in Jan 1998; President Mr. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in Feb 2005; Prime Minister Mr. Romano Prodi in Feb 2007; Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni in October 2017 and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in October 2018. Both countries regularly hold an institutionalized Senior Officials Dialogue (Foreign Office Consultations) which was recently held in Rome on 14 February, 2022.

Year 2011 was marked by visit of then EAM Shri SM Krishna to Italy to participate in the 150th anniversary celebrations of Italy's unification. The same year MOS (External Affairs) also visited Italy to meet Indian Business community and had Bilateral Talks with Italian counterpart. In 2012, Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi visited India and held bilateral discussions with EAM and CIM. Home Minister, Shri Sushil kumar Shinde visited Rome from 4-5 November 2012 to participate in the triennial Interpol Ministerial Meeting. The then EAM, Smt. Sushma Swaraj led an official delegation for the Canonization ceremony of Mother Teresa at the Vatican from 2-5 Sept 2016. During her visit, she met then Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni. In 2018, both countries celebrated

the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic relations through a series of cultural events. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Rome on 06-08 December 2019 to attend MED Conference and met Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on the margins of the Conference. EAM also attended the MED 2020 on 04 Dec 2020 in virtual format. EAM also participated in the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Matera in June, 2021.

An Italy-India Parliamentary Friendship Association under the IPU Italy Chapter was established in 2004 with Senator Maria Claudia Lannucci as President. The reconstituted Italy-India Parliamentary Friendship Association, under Mr. Sandro Gozi, MP, visited India in December 2011. In 2019, Italian Parliament constituted an Italy-India Parliamentary Friendship Group. Presided by former Defence Minister Senator Roberta Pinotti, Group was a cross-party grouping of 17 Senators and Deputies. On 02 October 2019, 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated in the Senate with the participation of Speaker Elisabetta Casellati, Senator Pinotti and other MPs and guests. The second India-Italy Parliamentary Interaction was held on March 22, 2021, which was the first ever virtual interaction for Indian Parliamentarians.

PM Modi and PM Conte co-chaired a Virtual Summit between India and Italy on 06 November 2020 and held extensive talks on bilateral, regional and global issues. 2020-2025 Action Plan was adopted that set an ambitious agenda for an enhanced Partnership between the countries. A total of 15 MoUs covering areas like energy, media, finance, ship building were signed.

PM Modi paid his first official visit to Italy in October 2021 to attend the G20 Summit at the invitation of PM Draghi. On the sidelines of the Summit, PM held bilateral meeting with PM Draghi. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations as well as international and regional issues of mutual interest. A Joint Statement announcing a Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition was issued and a Statement of Intent on Textiles cooperation was released.

As a prelude to the G20 Summit in Italy in 2021, there were several visits by Indian Cabinet Ministers for G20 ministerial meetings- two by External Affairs Minister (June and October 2021), two by Commerce and Industry Minister (Oct 2021), Finance Minister (Oct 2021), and Health Minister (Sept 2021). Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha visited Italy for P20 in October 2021. Many other ministers attended G20 Ministerial virtually.

The then Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio paid a bilateral visit to India from 4-6 May, 2022 and held bilateral meetings with EAM and CIM. Business round table was also held in which top Italian and Indian CEO participated. In September 2022, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri participated in the 50th edition of Gastech Conference in Milan.

Economic Relations:

With a bilateral trade of USD 13.229 bn in 2021-22, which is 53.86% increase over the previous financial year. Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in EU, after Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. India ranks 15th as country of origin of Italian imports, accounting for 1.5% of Italian imports. The top items of exports from India to Italy are: organic basic product, clothing, precious metals and other non precious metals, pharmaceuticals, dyes, pigments and yarns, Motor Vehicles & Parts, Refined petroleum Products etc.

Indian companies in Italy are mainly in IT, electronics and engineering sectors. Prominent ones are: Titagarh Industries, TCS, Mahindra, Ranbaxy, Bombay Rayon, Zydus Cadila, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Aurobindo Pharma Italia, Himatsingka Seide, Varroc Group, Endurance Technologies, Gammon, ABG Group, Aditya Birla, Raymond Zambaiti, Sun Pharma etc. Over 600 large Italian companies are active in India, covering varied sectors

such as fashion and garments, textiles and textile machinery, automotive and automotive components, infrastructure, chemicals, energy, confectionery, insurance, etc.

Four Italian banks have representation in India (namely Banco BPM, Intesa Sanpaolo, Monte dei Paschi di Siena – MPS, Unicredit Group). Banca Nazionale del Lavoro-BNL is now part of the French group BNP Paribas. Top sectors attracting FDI inflows from Italy are Automobile Industry/Transportation, Food Processing, Metallurgical Industry, Textiles, Electrical Equipment and Others.

Italy ranks 17th in FDI inflows in India during April 2000 to June 2022 with FDI inflow of US \$ 3.20 bn during this period. The top sectors attracting FDI - Automobile (29.8%), Trading (17.1%), Industrial Machinery (5.6%), Services (5.1 %), Electrical Equipment (4.6%). The stock of Overseas Direct Investment from India to Italy up to 2021 is at the level of US\$ 401 million.

(source: Italian National Institute of Statistics {ISTAT})

Indo-Italian Joint Economic Commission Cooperation (JCEC) has been in existence since 1976. The 21st JCEC, held in virtual mode on 9 July 2021, was co-chaired by CIM Shri. Piyush Goyal and FM Mr. Luigi Di Maio. Both sides held extensive discussions on bilateral trade and Investment and economic cooperation in the areas of Food Processing, Textiles, Leather, Railways, Start-ups and promotion of SMEs. Following the JCEC, a session on energy transition was organized which was attended by the CEOs of three major Italian and three major Indian companies operating in the sector.

On October 28, 2020 the first 'Indo-Italian High-Level Dialogue on Economical relations' an initiative promoted by AIICP (India-Italy Association for Cooperation and Partnership), in collaboration with Confindustria and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and with the support of the Embassy of Italy in India and the Embassy of India in Italy, was held. It witnessed the participation of 60 CEOs from India and Italy who represented different sectors.

Defence:

The Chief of Army Staff, General M.M. Naravane, visited Italy from 7-9 July, 2021. The visit of COAS took place after 14 years and at the Service Chief Level the interaction occurred after more than a decade. The Italian Defence Minister conveyed Italy's desire to "reboot the defence relations with India". The COAS, in Cassino, dedicated the Indian Army Memorial to the 50,000 Indian soldiers who had fought for the liberalisation of Italy in the Second World War and declared renaming of an exiting World War II track as Roorkee road.

Cultural Exchange

The agreement for cultural cooperation, signed in 1976, was replaced by a new Agreement in July 2004. An Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation/Cultural Exchange Programme (EPCC/CEP) is signed periodically, under the bilateral cultural agreement. During the visit of the Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni to India on 30-31 October 2017, the CEP was renewed for the years 2017-2020.

There are around 10 Universities/higher education institutions in Italy with highly qualified faculties which conduct courses in Indian art, history and languages. Many of these institutions teach Hindi and Sanskrit to Italian students. An ICCR Chair on Modern Indian History was also established in September 2011 in 'La Sapienza' University in Rome. Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi and the University of Naples L'Orientale was signed on April 22, 2021. On the occasion of the

7th International Day of Yoga in 2021, the Embassy along with Italian MoFA officials participated in a first ever yoga session organized in the MoFA (Farnesina) premises. The 8th International Day of Yoga in 2022, was celebrated in the iconic Castel St. Angelo in Rome.

Science and Technology:

The 1978 Agreement on Science & Technology Co-operation was replaced by an Agreement signed in Nov 2003. The Agreement envisages three-yearly action plans under which up to thirty joint research projects can be undertaken. The implementation of the Agreement is monitored by India-Italy Joint Committee headed by DST and MOFA that meets regularly. Some of the prime areas of joint research are Electronics, Biotechnology, Design Engineering Automotive Technologies, Energy, etc. An Agreement for Audio-visual cooperation was signed between the two countries in 2005. An Executive Programme of Cooperation (EPOC) for three years from 2017-2019 was signed in New Delhi on 18 April 2017. 13 projects for exchange of researchers and 10 significant joint research projects were selected from the priority areas of ICT, renewable energy and health.

The first India-Italy Innovation Day was held virtually on 14th July 2021. The next Innovation Day would be held on 23 November, 2022.

Indian Community:

The Indian community in Italy (estimated at 180,000 including PIOs) is the third largest community of Indians in Europe after UK and the Netherlands. According to official Italian data, there are 1.62 lakhs legal Indian migrants as on Jan 2019 (of which 58.8% are male and 41.2% female), accounting 4.4% of the non-EU citizens and 5th largest foreign community in Italy. As first generation migrants, majority of them are engaged in economic sectors such as agriculture, dairy farming, leather industry, construction works and in service industry.

Multilateral:

Italy has extended support to India in crucial elections including in the International Court of Justice, UNESCO Executive Board, International Maritime Organization and FATF. They also supported our entry into the Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group. Italy warmly congratulated India's successful election for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC for 2021-2022 and has supported India's candidature in lieu of India's support to Italy's candidature to the Tribunal of the Law of the Seas (ITLOS) for 2020-29. Italy has reciprocally supported candidature of Mr Praveen Sinha for INTERPOL elections for the position of delegate for Asia and has agreed to support reciprocally of India's candidate for the election for the ITU council for the term 2023-2026 for Region B Western Europe. Italy has supported India's initiative for establishing a Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) announced by PM at the 74th UNGA in New York, and our candidature for Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). In the 3rd session of ICDRI, held from 17-19 March, 2021 in New Delhi, Italian PM sent a video message. Italy has joined International Solar Alliance (ISA) membership on 17 March 2021.

Source: Embassy of India, Italy Web site NOVEMBER 2022.