

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCIS, Kolkata. India-Italy Bilateral Relations

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 24.12.2025 depicting the Embassy of Italy.
2. India and Italy are ancient civilizations with rich cultural heritage. Italian port cities were important trading posts on the ancient spice route. The Venetian merchant Marco Polo, during his travels to the east, travelled to India in the 13th century and wrote about his experiences. Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore visited Italy in May-June 1926. Mahatma Gandhi visited Rome in December 1931 on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference in London. Indian troops, serving with the British Indian Army, were deployed in Italy during World War-II, fighting against the Germans and Mussolini's forces.
3. Diplomatic relations between India and Italy were established in 1947. The two countries enjoy strong people-to-people connect propelled by a large Indian diaspora and long standing Indological Studies tradition in Italy. In 2023, both countries celebrated the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations.

B. POLITICAL RELATIONS

4. In October 2021, Prime Minister visited Italy to attend the G20 Summit in Rome. He met then Italian Prime Minister Draghi. Both sides announced a Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition and a Statement of Intent on Textiles Cooperation.
5. PM Meloni's first state visit to India after election was in March 2023. She was Chief Guest at Raisina Dialogue. During her visit, India-Italy relations were elevated to a Strategic Partnership. Both sides agreed to collaborate in cyber security, innovation, defence, outer space, green economy, energy security and transition, defence co- production and co-innovation and blue economy.
6. PM Meloni participated in the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September, 2023. In the bilateral meeting, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in defence & new and emerging technologies.
7. PM Modi held a telephone conversation with PM Meloni on 25th April, 2024 and conveyed his whole hearted support to Italy's G7 Presidency. Italian PM Meloni was the first G7 leader to congratulate our PM on 04 June 2024 upon his re-election.
8. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Italy, to participate in the G7 Summit in Puglia on 14th June 2024. This was Prime Minister's second visit to Italy (he had earlier travelled to Italy for the G20 Summit in Rome in October 2021) and his first after election to a third term.

9. Prime Minister met PM Meloni on 18th November 2024 on the sidelines of G20 Summit in Brazil and announced the Joint Strategic Plan of Action 2025-29 which envisages concrete outcomes from India-Italy strategic partnership.

10. In recent years, Italy joined several India-led plurilateral initiatives such as International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), Global Bio-fuels Alliance (GBA) and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

C. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

11. Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in the EU after Germany, Belgium and Netherlands. Bilateral trade in 2024-25 reached USD 13.85 billion with our exports at USD 7.73 billion. India's Export to Italy mainly are Iron & Steel, Telecom Instruments, Petroleum Products, Products of Iron & Steel and Auto Components etc. and India's Imports from Italy mainly are Indl. Machinery for Dairy, Electric machinery & equipments, Residual chemical & allied products and machine tools etc. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are as under:

(USD Billion)						
S. No		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1.	Export	4.74	8.18	8.69	8.76	7.73
2.	Import	3.86	5.05	5.59	5.80	6.12
3.	Total Trade	8.60	13.23	14.28	14.56	13.85

(Source: Doc, Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

12. Italy ranked 18th in terms of FDI inflows into India during April 2000 to June 2024 which stood at USD 3.50 bn (DGFT data). The top sectors attracting FDI are: Automobile (29.8%), Trading (17.1%), Industrial Machinery (5.6%), Services (5.1%), and Electrical Equipment (4.6%). The total Indian investments to Italy (as on 2023) amounted to Euro 360 million.

Services Trade – In 2023 Italy imported services from India for a total value of Euro 489.14 mn (+49.96% over 2022). In the same year Italy exported to India services for a total value of Euro 654.98 million (+52.75%) i.e. 0.48% of the global Italian exports of services. (Data: Central bank of Italy)

13. Indian companies in Italy are mainly in IT, electronics and engineering sectors. Major Indian companies in Italy are: Titagarh Industries, TCS, Mahindra, Ranbaxy, Zydus Cadila, Himatsingka Seide, Varroc Group, Endurance Technologies, Gammon, Aditya Birla, Sun Pharma etc. Around 600 Italian companies are present in India, representing sectors such as fashion and garments, textiles and textile machinery, automotive and automotive components, infrastructure, chemicals, energy, confectionery, insurance, etc. Around 600 Italian companies are present in India, representing sectors such as fashion and garments, textiles and textile machinery, automotive and automotive components, infrastructure, chemicals, energy, confectionery, insurance, etc.

14. Some major Italian companies which invested in India are:

Sector	Italian companies
Textile Clothing	Benetton, Zucchi, Emenegildo Zegna, La Perla, Tessitura Monti, Coin Group, Liberti, Tod's, Cavalli
Automotive	FCA, Iveco, Piaggio, Carraro, MagnetiMarelli, Graziano Trasmissioni, New Holland, Verlicchi Frames, Brembo, Ducati, Pirelli Tires, Atos, Benelli, FIAT (invested USD 150 mn to create a global technological hub in Hyderabad).
Engineering	Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (Italian Railways) (invested Euro 207 mn for the upgradation of Delhi – Jaipur Railway line), Leonardo Group, Maire Tecnimont (invested USD 255 mn for plastic recycling project in Gujarat), Technip Italy, Impreglio, Interpumps Group, Fomas Group, FG Tecnopolo, Maccaferri, Todini, Officine Meccaniche Piemontesi, Valvitalia
Energy	ENI Spa, ENEL Green (invested USD 65 mn and plans to invest further USD 585mn) SNAM Spa (signed an)
	MoU with Indian Oil for possible joint initiatives in the energy transition and in the natural gas infrastructure value chain), CPL Concordia, Ansaldo, Saipem SpA
Electrodomestic Appliances	Merloni Termosanitari, De Longhi
Telecommunications	Telecom Italia, Sparkle
Leather Shoes	Nico Nerini, Calzaturificio Pucci
Food and Food Processing	Perfect Van Melle, Ferrero, Bauli, Bertuzzi Spa, Lavazza, Illy Cafe, Segafredo, Ilva di Saronno, Barilla
Banking	BNP-Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Unicredit, Intesa San Paolo, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Banco Popolare di Verona and Novara, UBI Banca, Banca Popolare di Vicenza, Banca Sella
Insurance	Generali Group, Quest Global.

15. In April 2024, Minister for Commerce and Industry (CIM), Shri Piyush Goyal visited Italy to participate in the G7 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting on 16-17 July, 2024 at Reggio Calabria. CIM met Mr. Antonio Tajani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Italy and proposed collaboration to reinforce global supply chains, advocated public-private partnerships and investments in critical infrastructure and innovation.

16. Minister of State for Textiles and Railways (MoSTR), Smt Darshana Jardosh, visited Italy in June 2023 to participate in Integrated Textile and Garment Manufacturing Value Chain (ITMA) 2023 along with a business delegation.

17. The defence relationship was initially focused on import of defence equipments to India. However, cooperation has now expanded to include training, industry cooperation including export of defence equipment, sharing of information, Port Calls, Maritime Exercises, maritime security, etc.

18. Italy has a well-established defence industry. Fincantieri has signed an MoU with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in the field of shipbuilding. Collaborative projects are being executed with Italian defense companies such as Leonardo, Elettronica, Finconteri, Simmel Difesa, Ferrino, Wartsila, Beretta, etc. Indian defense MSMEs are exporting small arms components to Beretta.

19. Our Raksha Mantri visited Italy in October, 2023 and held bilateral discussions with his Italian counterpart H.E. Mr. Guido Crosetto. Both sides signed an MoU on defence cooperation. RM interacted with CEOs from leading Italian companies and paid tributes at Naik Yashwant Ghadge Memorial in Montone. MoD approved funding for upgradation of Yashwant Naik Ghadge Memorial in Montone. Lt Gen Luciano Portolano, Secretary General of Defence visited India from 11-15 March 2024 to co-chair with Defence Secretary the 10th Joint Defence Committee (JDC) & MCG meetings in New Delhi.

20. Italian Aircraft Carrier ITS Cavour made a Port Call in Goa in October, 2024. A Defence Industry Forum was held on the occasion, and the Italian and Indian navies held joint exercises. Italian Offshore Patrol Vessel ITS Vespucci visited Mumbai from 28 November-02 December, 2024 as part of its tour to the Indo-Pacific and strengthening maritime relations with India.

D. Tourism & Connectivity

21. ITA Airways has direct flights from Rome to New Delhi everyday. Spice Jet (Milan - Amritsar) and Air India operate flights between Delhi and Milan. Recently, Italian low - cost airline Neos Air began direct flight operations from Bergamo to Amritsar thrice a week and Rome to Amritsar once a week. Mission is regularly interacting with local tour operators and Italian tourism promoters like ENIT, Federtourismo to promote in bound tourism to India.

22. Mr. Suresh Gopi, MoS (Tourism) visited Italy to participate in G7 Tourism Ministers Meeting in Florence from Nov 12-15, 2024. He also held a bilateral meeting with Italian Tourism Minister Ms. Daniela Santanche to discuss possible collaboration in tourism and hospitality sectors.

E. Counter Terrorism, Cyber space and Space Cooperation:

23. Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri. Nityanand Rai, participated in the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crimes (UNTOC) in Palermo in September, 2023.

24. Dr. S. Somanath, Secretary (Space) & Chairman ISRO visited Milan in October 2024 to attend International Astronomical Congress. He met H. E. Mr. Adolfo Urso, Italy's Minister for Enterprises & Made in Italy. They agreed to strengthen on going collaboration between ISRO & the Italian Space Agency ASI and also industrial collaboration between the space companies. During the visit, three MoUs were signed between Indian and Italian space companies in the areas of satellite services and ground station solutions.

25. The inaugural Cyber Dialogue between India and Italy took place on 25 October 2024 in New Delhi.

Both sides exchanged views on cyber threat landscape, national cyber strategies/policies, protection of critical information infrastructure, mechanisms for capacity building initiatives and collaborative opportunities in multilateral forums.

26. India and Italy are collaborating to deal with Counter-Terrorism through various measures both bilaterally (MoU on police cooperation; Capacity Building through Training and Exercises) and multilaterally including at United Nations, Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and Financial Action Task force (FATF).

F. CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

27. Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation for the term 2023-27 was signed in 2023.

28. The 10th edition of IDY was celebrated in the iconic Castel Sant Angelo in Rome with the participation of around 200 Yoga enthusiasts and professionals. IDY celebrations were also organized in eight locations across Italy.

29. A 8-member ICCR cultural troupe, “Panihari Lok Sangeet” performed Rajasthani folk dances in Terranova, Aprilia, Bologna and Anzio cities for the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in July, 2023.

30. Diwali was celebrated in the Senate in 2024 by the Italian Hinduist Union. The River to River Film Festival which showcases Indian films was held in Dec 2024.

31. A Mahatma Gandhi Bust in Brindisi gifted by ICCR was inaugurated by Ambassador Vani Rao and Mayor of Brindisi Mr. Giuseppe Marchionna on 7th August 2024.

32. Shri Arunish Chawla, Secretary (Culture) visited Naples, Italy from 19 to 22 September to participate in the G7 Culture Ministers Meeting as Leader of the Indian delegation. He met Italy’s Minister of Culture Mr. Alessandro Giuli & Director General, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property).

33. Currently, more than 6,709 Indian students are pursuing higher education in Italy. Embassy has been regularly interacting with the Indian student community in Italy by organizing Indian Students Annual Day event in Rome.

34. There is a long standing tradition of Indology in Italy with several scholars taking keen interest in studying Indian languages like Hindi, Tamil, Sanskrit, etc.

35. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Government of India and the University of Milan in Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 13 September 2024, for setting up the first Chair of India in the University of Milan. Establishing First Chair of India in the Luiss University in Rome is being considered.

G. Indian Diaspora:

36. The Indian community in Italy is estimated at 2 lakhs including PIOs. According to official Italian data (2019), there are 1.62 lakhs legal Indian migrants accounting 4.4% of the non-EU citizens and 5th largest foreign community in Italy. They reside mainly in Lombardy (31.4%), Lazio (20.3%), Emilia Romagna (10.8%). Most of the diaspora are employed in dairy farming and agriculture, followed by nurses, caregivers and in restaurants. A significant amount of NRI remittances were also recorded from Italy to India in recent years.

37. There are many religious institutions, including Temples and Gurdwaras (around 80). Sikh community is the largest Indian diaspora followed by Kerala community. The Kerala community members are largely employed in service sector at hotels, restaurants, and as care-takers for elderly people. Many are engaged in theological studies in the Vatican.

38. The Migration and Mobility Agreement (MMA) was signed during EAM's visit to Italy in November 2023 to facilitate safe and legal migration of seasonal and non-seasonal workers, researchers, professionals and academicians. Both sides are working to implement the Agreement.

39. The 2nd India-Italy Consular Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 29 February, 2024. 1st JWG on Migration and Mobility Agreement was held in Rome on 26-27 June, 2024, co-chaired by Secretary (CPV&OIA) and Director General for Migration and Italians Abroad from the Italian side.

Source: www.mea.gov.in