

Living and Working in

Italy

4th
EDITION

11
NOW IN ITS 11TH YEAR

The best-selling and most comprehensive book about living in Italy,
with up to twice as much information as some similar books

Caroline Prosser

Living & Working in ITALY

● A Survival Handbook ●



Edited by Caroline Prosser



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What Readers and Reviewers Have Said About Survival Books:

"If I were to move to France, I would like David Hampshire to be with me, holding my hand every step of the way. This being impractical, I would have to settle for second best and take his books with me instead!"

Living France

"We would like to congratulate you on this work: it is really super! We hand it out to our expatriates and they read it with great interest and pleasure."

ICI (Switzerland) AG

"I found this a wonderful book crammed with facts and figures, with a straightforward approach to the problems and pitfalls you are likely to encounter. The whole laced with humour and a thorough understanding of what's involved. Gets my vote!"

Reader (Amazon)

"Get hold of David Hampshire's book for its sheer knowledge, straightforwardness and insights to the Spanish character and do yourself a favour!"

Living Spain

"Rarely has a 'survival guide' contained such useful advice – This book dispels doubts for first time travellers, yet is also useful for seasoned globetrotters – In a word, if you're planning to move to the US or go there for a long term stay, then buy this book both for general reading and as a ready reference."

American Citizens Abroad

"It's everything you always wanted to ask but didn't for fear of the contemptuous put down – The best English language guide – Its pages are stuffed with practical information on everyday subjects and are designed to complement the traditional guidebook."

Swiss News

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Every issue and concern is covered, every daft question you have but are frightened to ask is answered honestly without pulling any punches.

Highly recommended."

Reader (Amazon)

"Let's say it at once. David Hampshire's Living and Working in France is the best handbook ever produced for visitors and foreign residents in this country; indeed, my discussion with locals showed that it has much to teach even those born and bred in l'Hexagone. It is Hampshire's meticulous detail which lifts his work way beyond the range of other books with similar titles. This book is absolutely indispensable."

The Riviera Reporter

"Covers every conceivable question that might be asked concerning everyday life – I know of no other book that could take the place of this one."

France in Print

"It was definitely money well spent."

Reader (Amazon)

"The ultimate reference book – Every conceivable subject imaginable is exhaustively explained in simple terms – An excellent introduction to fully enjoy all that this fine country has to offer and save time and money in the process."

American Club of Zurich

Important Note

Italy is a diverse country with many faces, a variety of ethnic groups, languages, religions and customs, and continuously changing rules, regulations (particularly regarding business, social security and taxes), interest rates and prices. Note that a change of government in Italy, which happens frequently, can have an influence on many important aspects of life. We cannot recommend too strongly that you check with an official and reliable source (not always the same) before making any major decisions or taking an irreversible course of action. However, don't believe everything you're told or read – even, dare we say it, herein!

Useful addresses and references to other sources of information have been included in all chapters and in **Appendices A to C** to help you obtain further information and verify details with official sources. Important points have been emphasised, in **bold print**, some of which it would be expensive, or even dangerous, to disregard. **Ignore them at your peril or cost!**

NOTE

Unless specifically stated, a reference to a company, organisation or product in this book doesn't constitute an endorsement or recommendation. None of the businesses, products or individuals listed have paid to be mentioned.

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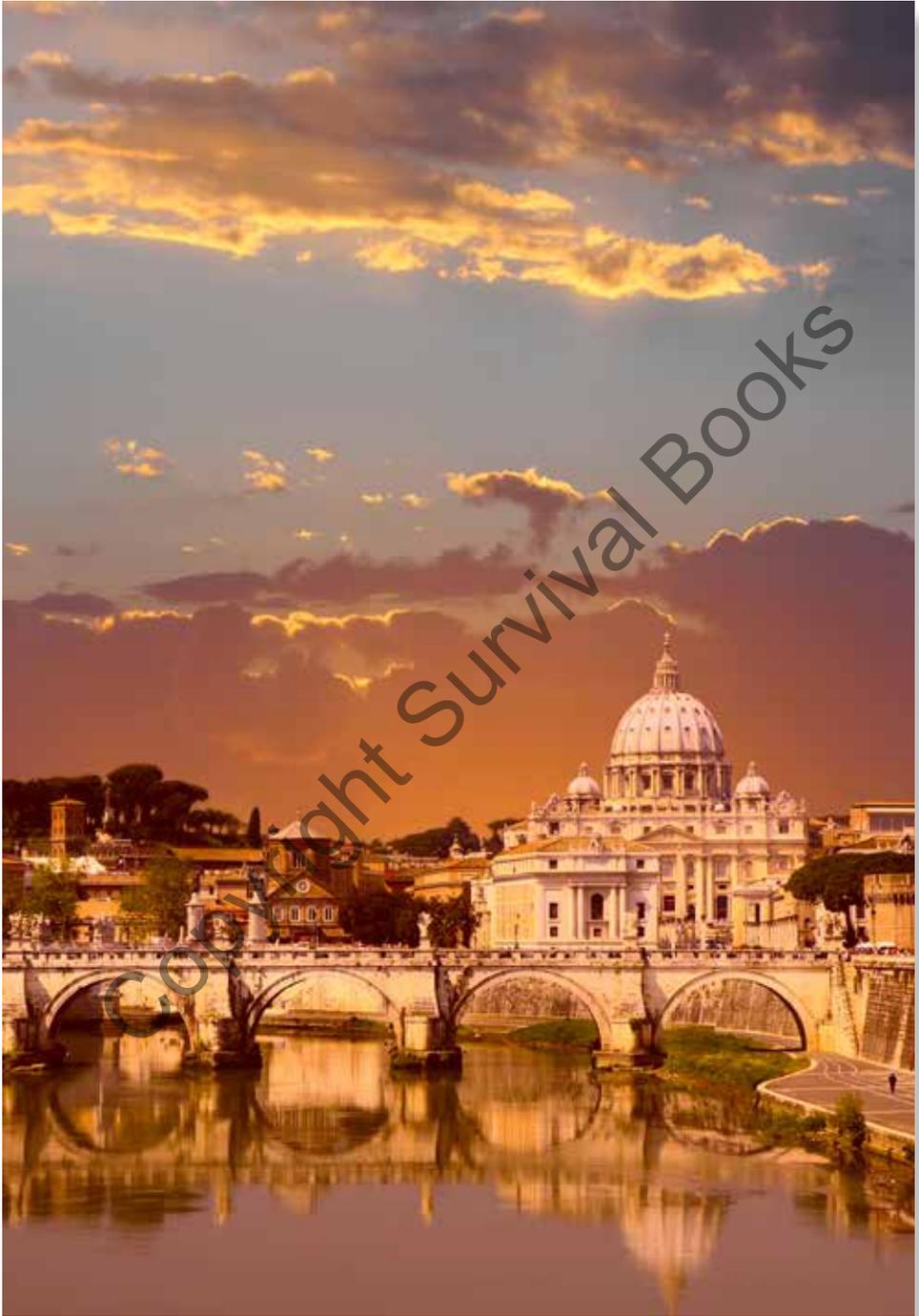
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Publisher's Notes

- ◆ Frequent references are made in this book to the European Union (EU), which comprises Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The European Economic Area (EEA) includes the EU countries plus the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is also included in the EEA agreement but isn't a member.
- ◆ Names of the major Italian cities are written in English, which include Florence (Firenze in Italian), Milan (Milano), Naples (Napoli), Padua (Padova), Rome (Roma), Turin (Torino) and Venice (Venezia).
- ◆ Times are usually shown in Italy using the 24-hour system, where 11am is 1100 and 11pm is 2300. In Italian, am (ante meridiem) is indicated as *di mattina* and pm (post meridiem) as *del pomeriggio* (from around 1pm to 4pm) or *di sera* (from around 5pm to late pm). See also **Time Difference** on page 298.
- ◆ Prices should be taken as guides only, although they were mostly correct at the time of publication. Unless otherwise stated, all prices quoted usually include value added tax (*imposta sul valore aggiunto/IVA*) at 4, 10 or 20 per cent (see page 220). To convert from other currencies to euros or vice versa, see  www.xe.com.
- ◆ His/he/him also means her/she/her (please forgive us ladies). This is done to make life easier for both the reader and the editor, and isn't intended to be sexist.
- ◆ The Italian translation of many key words and phrases is shown in brackets in *italics*.
- ◆ All spelling is (or should be) British and not American English.
- ◆ Warnings and important points are printed in **bold** type.
- ◆ The following symbols are used in this book:  (telephone),  (fax),  (Internet) and  (email).
- ◆ Lists of **Useful Addresses**, **Further Reading** and **Useful Websites** are contained in **Appendices A, B and C** respectively.
- ◆ For those unfamiliar with the metric system of **Weights & Measures**, conversion tables are included in **Appendix D**.
- ◆ A physical map of Italy and maps showing the regions and communications (rail, roads, airports and ports) are included in **Appendix E**.



Ponte Saint'Angelo & St Peter's Basilica, Rome

Introduction

Whether you're already living or working in Italy or just thinking about it, this is **THE BOOK** for you. Forget about all those glossy guide books, excellent though they are for tourists; this amazing book was written particularly with you in mind and is worth its weight in truffles. Furthermore, this fully revised and completely re-designed 4th edition is printed in colour. *Living and Working in Italy* is intended to meet the needs of anyone wishing to know the essentials of Italian life – however long your intended stay in Italy, you'll find the information contained in this book invaluable.

General information isn't difficult to find in Italy (provided you speak Italian) and a multitude of books is published on every conceivable subject. However, reliable and up-to-date information in English specifically intended for foreigners living and working in Italy isn't so easy to find, least of all in one volume. This book was written to fill this void and to provide the comprehensive practical information necessary for a trouble-free life. You may have visited Italy as a tourist, but living and working there's a different matter altogether. Adjusting to a different environment and culture and making a home in any country can be a traumatic and stressful experience – and Italy is no exception.

Living and Working in Italy is a comprehensive handbook on a wide range of everyday subjects and represents the most up-to-date source of general information available to foreigners in Italy. It isn't, however, simply a monologue of dry facts and figures, but a practical and entertaining look at life.

Adapting to life in a new country is a continuous process and, although this book will help reduce your beginner's phase and minimise the frustrations, it doesn't contain all the answers. (Most of us don't even know the right questions to ask!) What it will do, however, is help you make informed decisions and calculated judgements, instead of uneducated guesses. **Most importantly, it will help save you time, trouble and money, and repay your investment many times over.**

Although you may find some of the information in this book a bit daunting, don't be discouraged. Most problems occur only once and fade into insignificance after a short time (as you face the next half a dozen!). The majority of foreigners in Italy would agree that, all things considered, they love living there. A period spent in Italy is a wonderful way to enrich your life and hopefully please your bank manager. We trust this book will help you avoid the pitfalls of life in Italy and smooth your way to a happy and rewarding future in your new home.

Buona fortuna!

**Survival Books
January 2011**



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan

1.

FINDING A JOB

Finding a job in Italy isn't always as difficult as the unemployment figures may suggest, particularly in Rome, Milan and other large cities, depending of course on your qualifications and Italian language ability. However, if you don't qualify to live and work in Italy by birthright or as a national of a European Union (EU) country, obtaining a work permit (*permesso di soggiorno per motivi di lavoro* – see page 59) may be more difficult than finding a job. Americans and other nationalities without the automatic right to work in Italy must have their employment approved by the Italian Ministry of Labour and need an employment visa before arriving in Italy.

The hiring of non-EU workers is a sensitive and emotive issue in some regions. Restrictions on the employment of non-EU nationals have been strengthened in recent years due to the high unemployment rate (around 8.4 per cent in July 2010). The government has imposed a quota system since 2002, restricting the number of non-EU workers allowed into the country with the quota being decided each year. Non-EU workers are admitted into Italy only if they have an employment contract (*contratto di soggiorno*), with an employer paying for accommodation, travel and other expenses. There are no restrictions as yet for skilled workers.

The regulations have been criticised by both trade unions and employers' associations, particularly those in the north, where thousands of non-EU nationals are employed due to a severe shortage of semi-skilled and skilled workers (in the northeast in particular). Employers are putting pressure on the government for immigration quotas to be handled by the regions, according to local employment needs, while the politicians would prefer to create jobs for southern Italians. The employment of non-EU nationals must be approved by the Italian labour authorities, who can propose the employment of an EU national in place of a foreigner (although this is rare).

Despite the difficulties, foreigners are found in large numbers in almost every walk of life,

particularly in the major cities. Italy has a long tradition of welcoming immigrants, particularly political refugees. In 1972, for the first time, it registered more people entering the country than leaving, although many of these were Italians returning home from northern Europe and the US. Italy has received an increasing number of migrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America in the last few decades and its recent rapid economic growth has attracted further immigrants to the country, mainly from North and sub-Saharan Africa, but also from the Philippines, China, South America and, most recently, from Eastern European countries newly admitted to the European Union. In 2010, the foreign population was estimated to be 4.3m (around 7 per cent of the population), most from outside the EU, including some living there illegally (*clandestini*).

The majority of foreigners settle in the centre and north, in the major conurbations of Milan, Rome, Turin and Genoa, although Florence and Palermo are also popular, particularly among African immigrants.

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Being attracted to Italy by its weather, cuisine, wine and lifestyle is laudable but doesn't rate highly as an employment qualification.

You should have a positive reason for living and working in Italy; simply being fed up with your boss or the weather isn't the best motive (although thoroughly understandable). It's extremely difficult to find work in rural areas and isn't easy in cities (even Rome or Milan), especially if your Italian isn't fluent. You shouldn't count on being able to obtain employment in Italy unless you have a firm job offer or special qualifications or experience for which there's a strong demand. If you want a good job, you must usually be well qualified and speak fluent Italian. If you intend to arrive in Italy without a job, it's wise to have a plan for finding employment on arrival and to try to make some contacts before you arrive.

There's a huge difference between northern and southern Italy in terms of wealth and job opportunities. The *Mezzogiorno* (the name given to the southern area of the country, comprising the regions of Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Calabria, Puglia and Basilicata and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia), which constitutes some 40 per cent of Italy's total land area and 35 per cent of its population, creates only around 25 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). Unemployment in the south is around three times the northern rate and wages are some 40 per cent below the national average.

Many people turn to self-employment or starting a business to make a living, although this path is strewn with pitfalls for the newcomer. If you're planning to start a business in Italy, you must also do battle with the notoriously obstructive Italian bureaucracy – *buona fortuna!*

▲ Caution

Most foreigners don't do sufficient homework before moving to Italy. While hoping for the best, you should plan for the worst and have a contingency plan and sufficient funds to last until you're established.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Italy's unemployment rate was officially running around 8.5 per cent in mid-2010; having slowly

reduced during the 21st century down to just over 6 per cent in 2008, it climbed again in the wake of the recent economic crisis. Unemployment varies according to the region, and in the impoverished south it's as high as 50 per cent in some areas, where young people have traditionally migrated to the north or abroad in search of work. Unemployment is endemic among Italy's youth; some 30 per cent of people under 25 are unemployed, many of whom have little prospect of finding a job. It's difficult for young Italians to get a foothold on the employment ladder due to lack of experience and many young people, even university graduates, attend vocational schools or special programmes to gain work experience.

Although unemployment has hit manufacturing industries the hardest, no sector has been unaffected, including the flourishing service industries. Some of the hardest-hit industries have been construction, electronics, communications, the media and banking – all traditionally strong sectors. Many companies have periodic bans on recruitment and expect many employees to accept short-term contracts rather than life-long security (Italian job security had traditionally been among the best in Europe). Over a quarter of Italy's working population has short-term contracts.

Unemployment benefits are very limited in Italy; less than 25 per cent of the country's unemployed are eligible for any form of unemployment compensation, and families have traditionally been expected to support their unemployed members. There's no national scheme or assistance for the long-term unemployed in Italy, although there's a limited degree of support for low-income families in the south.

ECONOMY

Italy has Europe's fourth-largest economy (after the UK, Germany and France) and is around 4th out of the 27 EU countries in terms of GDP per head. The country had an estimated per capita GDP in 2009 of US\$35,435 (projected to be US\$35,623 in 2011), compared with US\$35,334 in the UK, US\$40,875 in Germany and US\$42,747 in France. However, Italy has huge extremes of wealth and poverty, and

there's a vast difference in incomes between the rich northern region and the poor southern *Mezzogiorno* – an imbalance that vast injections of central government and EU cash have done little to correct.

Not surprisingly, given Italy's woeful fiscal 'management', the rules to allow Italy entry to the euro in 1999 were fudged (Italy had a public debt well above the level specified in the Maastricht Treaty) and it remains one of the weaker links in the Eurozone.

Italy was badly hit by the recession in the post-2007 credit crunch and, although the economy is slowly recovering, unemployment remains relatively high, the cost of living has increased in recent years and per capita personal debt has risen considerably.

The percentage of the working population engaged in agriculture is around 5 per cent, compared to some 30 per cent in industry and around 65 per cent in the service sector. The fast-growing service industry is the most important and includes tourism, the hotel industry, restaurants, transport and communications, domestic workers, financial services, and public administration. Factors that have contributed to the growth of the service sector in recent years include the rise in the standard of living in Italy (and Europe in general), leading to an increase in mobility, financial transactions, business, demand for leisure activities and tourism.

Industrial production in Italy is typified by the many small and medium-size companies engaged in sectors such as the clothing, mechanical engineering and textile industries.

However, there are also many multi-national companies, a number of which are still family-dominated, such as Benetton, Fiat and Pirelli. Italy is also at the forefront of many hi-tech industries such as aviation, computing, electronics and telecommunications. Olivetti is one of the world's leading suppliers of computers and software products. Other prominent Italian industries include ceramics, glass, furniture, household goods and leather articles, which are world renowned for their design and quality. The country's most significant industries are based in the northern cities of Milan and Turin and in the Veneto Region.

Industrial Relations

There has been a reduction in strikes (*scioperi*) in recent years, as the power of the trade unions has lessened, although Italy still has the worst industrial relations in the EU (a day's holiday is jokingly referred to as *un giorno di sciopero*). At one time, strikes were so frequent that a space was reserved in newspapers for announcements about public services that wouldn't be operating (nowadays you can obtain the latest information via the TV televideo service or online at www.televideo.rai.it). The majority of strikes are in the public sector and the transportation industries.

ITALY & THE EUROPEAN UNION

Italy was one of the six founding members of the EU in 1957 along with Belgium, France,

Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, and the original Common Market agreement was signed in Italy and dubbed the 'Treaty of Rome'. Since then a host of other countries have joined, increasing the number of members to 27. The EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway also make up the European Economic Area (EEA). Nationals of EU (and EEA) countries have the right to work in Italy or any other member state without a work permit, provided they



have a valid passport or national identity card and comply with the member state's laws and regulations on employment. EU nationals are entitled to the same treatment as Italian citizens in matters of pay, working conditions, access to housing, vocational training, social security and trade union rights, and their families and immediate dependants are entitled to join them and enjoy the same rights.

The Single European Act in 1993 created a single market, and made it easier for EU nationals to work in other EU countries. Nevertheless, there are still barriers to full freedom of movement and the right to work within the EU; for example some jobs require applicants to have specific skills or vocational qualifications. In most trades and professions, member states are required to recognise qualifications and experience obtained elsewhere in the EU, although this isn't always the case in Italy (see **Qualifications** below). There are also restrictions on employment in the civil service, where the right to work may be limited in individual cases on the grounds of public policy, security or public health.

QUALIFICATIONS

If you aren't experienced, Italian employers expect you to have studied a relevant subject and to have undertaken work experience. Professional or trade qualifications are necessary to work in most fields, and qualifications are also often needed to be self-employed or start a business. It isn't just a matter of hanging up a sign and waiting for the stampede of customers to your door.

The most important qualification for working in Italy is the ability to speak Italian. Once you've overcome this hurdle, you should establish whether your trade or professional qualifications and experience are recognised in Italy.

Under EU regulations, when a qualified professional from another European member state wishes to pursue his career in Italy, all qualifications and professional experience are to be taken into consideration. If the diplomas held are equivalent to those required under national legislation for working in a specified field, a qualified professional is authorised to set up a practice. Italy defines the rules and

regulations to be followed when setting up a practice, and rights concerning trade unions, working conditions and employee contracts are the same as for Italian nationals. You must apply to the relevant professional body for permission to set up a practice and to have your qualifications recognised.

Theoretically, qualifications recognised by professional and trade bodies in one EU country should be recognised in Italy. However, recognition varies from country to country and in some cases foreign qualifications aren't recognised by Italian employers or professional and trade associations. All academic qualifications should also be recognised, although they may be given less prominence than equivalent Italian qualifications, depending on the country and the educational establishment. A ruling by the European Court in 1992 declared that where EU examinations are of a similar standard with just certain areas of difference, individuals should be required to take exams only in those particular areas. In some trades and professions, you must prove that you've been practising as a self-employed person for a certain period, generally five or six years.



In order to set up and operate a professional practice, you must produce (in Italian) a certificate of equivalence (*certificato di equipollenza*) document from the relevant government ministry in your home country, stating that your qualifications are equivalent to Italian qualifications. You must provide evidence that you satisfy the requirements regarding character and repute, and haven't been declared bankrupt. You need a residence permit (*certificato di residenza* – see page 63) and a national identity document, and are informed within 30 days if further documents are required. In certain cases, you may be required to take an aptitude test or in exceptional cases undergo a period of training.

The recognition of your qualifications entitles you to register in the professional rolls and to practise your profession according to the requirements of the Italian state. If your profession isn't regulated in Italy, you don't need to apply for recognition of your qualifications and can begin practising under the same conditions as Italian nationals.

Italy (and other EU states) may reserve certain posts for their nationals if the jobs involve the exercise of powers conferred by public law and the safeguarding of the general interests of the state or local authorities, for example in the diplomatic service, police, judiciary and the armed forces. However, most public sector jobs in the areas of health, education, the provision of commercial services and research for civil purposes are open to all EU nationals and aren't subject to any restrictions on the grounds of nationality. Access to public sector jobs varies from one country to another and you should contact the Italian authorities for information regarding specific jobs.

All EU member states publish occupation information sheets containing a common job description with a table of qualifications. These cover a large number of trades and are intended to help someone with the relevant qualifications look for a job in another EU country. You can obtain a direct comparison between any EU qualification and those recognised in Italy from the Italian branch of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC). For information about equivalent academic and

professional qualifications in Italy, contact CIMEA, Fondazione Rui, Viale Ventuno Aprile, 36, 00162 Rome (☎ 06-8632 1281) or the Presidenza Consiglio Ministri, Ministero Coordinamento Politiche Comunitarie, Via Giardino Theodoli, 66, 00186 Rome (☎ 06-6779 5322).

In the UK, information about academic qualifications can be obtained from UK NARIC, Oriel House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1XP (☎ 0871-330 7033, 🌐 www.naric.org.uk). NARIC can also issue a certificate of experience detailing your qualifications and experience in a particular profession which should be accepted in other EU countries; see their Certificate of Experience website for more details (🌐 www.certex.org.uk).

You can also check which trades and professions in Italy require specific qualifications on the European Commission's Regulated Professions database (🌐 http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/regprof/index.cfm).

STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Job seekers in Italy should register with an employment office (*ufficio di collocamento*) run by the government employment service, the Sezione Circostrizionate per l'Impiego. You can register without being a resident (and should be given the same help as Italian nationals and residents), but non-EU citizens require a permit to stay (see page 60). Employment offices provide information about registration, agricultural jobs, residence, apprenticeships, and benefit applications and payments. They organise seminars about job hunting and have trained counsellors to help you find an appropriate job. Many centres have internet access.

Regional employment agencies are operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (Ministero del Lavoro e Della Previdenza Sociale) and there are local employment centres (*centri di iniziativa locale per l'occupazione/CILO*) in cities and large towns, which provide help and advice about work-related problems and self-employment.



There are also information centres for the unemployed (*centro informazione disoccupati*) in major cities, run by the larger trade unions. Here you can obtain information about job vacancies, finding work and employment regulations; some offices also offer advice on job interviews, writing application letters, setting up a business, self-employment, income tax and social security.

Young people can obtain information about jobs and training at local information centres (*informagiovani*), found in most towns and cities. These centres have situations vacant boards for temporary jobs (*lavoro interinale*) and part-time jobs (*lavoro a tempo parziale* or *lavoro part-time*) such as baby-sitting, teaching children, gardening and domestic work. They maintain job listings (you can also place a 'work wanted' advertisement) and distribute leaflets, flyers and booklets about finding work in Italy. They provide help and advice on finding temporary work, information about courses and training, evening classes, scholarships, enrolment at university, cultural events and hobbies. You can lodge your curriculum vitae (CV) on the Informagiovani website (☞ www.informagiovani.it), check job offers, contact agencies offering part-time work and apply directly to companies offering employment. There's also a section listing employment laws, working conditions and employment contracts.

Another source of job services is the European Employment Services (EURES, ☞ <http://ec.europa.eu/eures>) network, members of which include all EU countries plus Norway and Iceland. Member states exchange

information regularly on job vacancies, and EURES offices have access to information on how to apply for a job, and living and working conditions in each country. The international department of your home country's employment service can put you in touch with a EURES Advisor who can provide advice on finding work in Italy. EURES Advisors have permanent links with EURES services in other member states and also have permanent access to two databases. One contains

details of job offers in all member states and the other provides information on living and working conditions, and a profile of the trends for regional labour markets.

EURES Advisors can also arrange to have your details forwarded to the Italian employment service (Sezione Circoscrizionale per l'Impiego) but given the high level of unemployment in Italy, this is rarely the fastest or the most efficient method for finding a job there, particularly from abroad. National employment services give priority to their own nationals, and jobs aren't generally referred to EURES or other national agencies until after prospective local candidates have been considered. For further information contact the Ministero del Lavoro e Della Previdenza Sociale (☞ www.lavoro.gov.it).

PRIVATE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

There are two main kinds of recruitment agency in Italy, temporary agencies (*lavori ad interim*) and executive search companies (*ricerca personale*).

Temporary Jobs

Under Italian law, a temporary agency can place workers with an employer only to satisfy a temporary demand. A temporary contract (*contratto per prestazioni di lavoro temporaneo*) is a fixed-term contract or an open-ended contract, where an agency must pay compensation to a worker for the periods when he isn't working. The agency must pay

workers' social security contributions and work accident insurance. Temporary workers have pro-rata rights to annual and public holidays, a 13th month's salary and any other payments which other workers employed by the same company are entitled to.

To sign up with an agency you need a permit to stay which allows you to work, a fiscal (tax) code (*codice fiscale*) and a CV or work record (translated into Italian). You're required to complete a form in Italian and must supply a passport-size photograph. You'll be interviewed by the agency and probably again by a prospective employer. Temporary work is most common in the secretarial, computer and industrial fields, and work in other sectors is limited, although it may still be worth enquiring and registering with agencies. Always ensure that you know exactly how much, when and how you'll be paid. Because of the long annual holidays in Italy and generous maternity leave, companies often require temporary staff, and a temporary job can frequently be used as a stepping stone to a permanent position (companies often hire temporary workers for a 'trial' period before offering them a full-time contract).

Temporary agencies with offices in most Italian cities include Adecco (www.adecco.it), ALI (www.alispa.it), Eurointerim (www.eurointerimservizi.it), Kelly (www.kellyservices.it), Manpower (www.manpower.it), Sinterim (www.sinterim.it) and Vedior (www.cambiavoro.com/vedior/welcome.html).

You can also find local agencies in the *Yellow Pages* under *Lavoro Interinale e Temporaneo*.

Executive Positions

Executive recruitment and 'head-hunting' companies are common in the major cities and are mainly used by large Italian companies to recruit staff, particularly executives, managers and professionals. Agents place advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers and trade magazines, but don't usually mention the client's name, not least to prevent applicants from approaching a company directly, thus depriving the agency of its fat fee. Recruitment agencies have been hard hit by the recent recession, particularly those dealing with executives and senior

managers, and many Italian companies now do their own recruiting or promote in-house. Unless you're a particularly outstanding candidate with half a dozen degrees, are multilingual and have valuable experience, sending an unsolicited CV to an agent is usually a waste of time. There are also recruitment agencies in many countries that specialise in recruiting executives, managers and professionals for employers in Italy.

Working for the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) has its Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, and offers varied-term contracts, with general service and administrative positions in human resources, finance and information technology, plus expert and professional positions in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and related areas. Applicants are often required to have working knowledge of two of the following languages: English, Spanish, French, Chinese and Arabic. See the UN's FAO website (www.fao.org) and the UNJobs website (http://unjobs.org/duty_stations/italy) for vacancies in other UN programmes in Italy, e.g. UNICEF.

Online Agencies

The rapid development of the internet has led to a huge increase in the number of online recruitment agencies and job search websites. Some sites charge a fee to access their vacancy listings, but many allow job seekers to review and respond to listings free of charge. It's also possible to submit your CV online (usually free), but it's wise to consider the security implications of this move. By giving your home address or phone number, you could lay yourself open to nuisance phone calls or worse. A number of websites that list vacancies in Italy are listed below:

www.alispa.it
www.altamira.it
www.craigslist.com
www.easyjob.it
www.executivenetwork.it
www.fionline.it (for jobs in Florence)
www.informagiovani.it

www.insidersabroad.com/
[englishyellowpages](http://englishyellowpages.com/)
www.joblitz.com
www.job-net.it
www.kangaroo.it (for jobs in information technology)
www.lavorare.net
www.mondolavoro.it
www.monster.it
www.stepstone.it
www.wantedinrome.com

You may not find any information in English on Italian websites (those which end .it). But if your Italian skills are poor, you can obtain a rough translation using the (free) Babel Fish translator provided by the search engine company Alta Vista. Enter <http://babelfish.altavista.com> in your browser, and then enter the address of the website that you wish to visit in the Babel Fish dialogue box that appears. You will be presented with an instant translation of the web page in question into the language selected. Google has a similar translation tool.

SEASONAL JOBS

Seasonal jobs (*lavoro stagionale*) are available throughout the year in Italy, the vast majority in the tourist industry. Many jobs last for the duration of the summer or winter tourist season – May to September and December to April respectively – although some are simply casual or temporary jobs for a number of weeks. Italian fluency is required for all but the most menial and worst-paid jobs, and is as important as or more important than experience and qualifications (although fluency in Italian alone won't guarantee you a well-paid job). Seasonal jobs include most trades in hotels and restaurants, couriers and travel company representatives, a variety of jobs in ski resorts, sports instructors, jobs in bars and clubs, fruit and grape pickers, and various jobs in the construction industry.

If you aren't an EU national, it's essential to check whether you're eligible to work in Italy before making plans and you may also be required to obtain a visa (see page 57). Check with an Italian embassy or consulate in your home country well in advance of your visit. Foreign students in Italy can obtain a

temporary work permit (*autorizzazione di lavoro provvisoria*) for part-time work during the summer holiday period and school terms (see page 126). The main seasonal jobs available in Italy are mentioned below.

If you're a sports or ski instructor, tour guide or holiday representative or are involved in any job that gives you responsibility for groups of people or children, you should be extremely wary of accepting an illegal job without a contract, as you won't be insured for injuries to yourself, the public or accidents while travelling. Bear in mind that seasonal workers have few rights and little legal job protection in Italy, and can generally be fired without compensation at any time.

There are many books for those seeking holiday jobs, including *Summer Jobs Worldwide* and *Work Your Way Around the World* both published by Vacation Work (www.crimsonpublishing.co.uk) and *A Year Off, A Year On*, published by Hobsons PLC, Challenger House, 42 Adler Street, London E1 1EE, UK (www.hobsons.com).

Holiday Company Representatives

The duties of holiday representatives include ferrying tourist groups to and from airports, organising excursions and social events, arranging ski passes and equipment rental, and generally ensuring that holidaymakers enjoy themselves. A job as a representative is tough and demanding, and requires resilience and resourcefulness to deal with the chaos associated with the package holiday business.

SURVIVAL TIP

The majority of representative jobs in Italy are available during the winter ski season with British ski-tour companies and school ski-party organisers (see *Ski Resort Jobs* on page 26).

The necessary requirements include the ability to answer many questions simultaneously (sometimes in different languages), to remain calm and charming under extreme pressure and, above all, to resolve problems. Lost

passengers, tickets, passports and tempers are everyday occurrences. It's an excellent training ground for managerial and leadership skills, pays well and often offers opportunities to supplement your earnings with tips and commission.

Representatives are required by many local and foreign tour companies in both winter and summer resorts. Competition for jobs is fierce and local language ability is usually required, even for employment with British tour operators. Most companies have age requirements, the minimum usually being 21, although many companies prefer employees to be a few years older.

Many of the large tour operators have summer and/or winter programmes in Italy, and representatives are also required for summer camps organised for both adults and children. Employees are required to speak good Italian. Tour operators in Italy include Thomas Cook (www.thomascook.com/recruitment), TUI (www.tuitraveljobs.co.uk) and Club Med (www.clubmedjobs.com), while smaller companies include camping holiday specialist Canvas Holidays (www.canvasholidaysrecruitment.com), educational tour companies for high school students, e.g. NETC (National Educational Training Council, www.educationaltravel.com), and older travellers' tour companies, e.g. 50plus Expeditions (<http://50plusexpeditions.com>). It's advisable to apply to a company based in your home country well before the start of the season, as they generally arrange work permits and flights.

Hotel & Catering Staff

Hotels and restaurants are the largest employers of seasonal workers, from hotel managers to kitchen hands. Experience, relevant qualifications and fluent Italian are required for all the best and highest paid positions, although a variety of jobs is available for the untrained and inexperienced. Ensure that your salary is sufficient to pay for accommodation, food and other living expenses, and to hopefully save some money. If accommodation with cooking facilities or full board isn't provided with a job, it can be expensive and difficult to find. The best way to find work is to contact hotel chains directly (see **Hotels** on page 231), preferably at least six months before you wish to start work.

Tour Guides

There are plenty of mostly British or American-owned companies that employ English speakers to guide groups of tourists around city attractions or popular areas of archaeological importance in Italy. Prospective guides must be lively speakers and have a degree in art history, archaeology or a related subject to train with a reputable company. Be aware, though, that the only way to practice legally (and to be protected from fines) is to obtain a licence by passing the stiff exams (in Italian) set by city authorities. Some authorities will now make concessions and give licences to holders of relevant degrees. See city governmental websites: for example, Rome (☎ 060606, www.comune.roma.it), and the Rome Tourism Professions Association (Ufficio Professioni Turistiche della Provincia di Roma, ☎ 06-6766 7324, www.provincia.roma.it).



Fruit & Vegetable Pickers

To find a fruit or vegetable picking job, visit the local youth information centre (*informagiovani*) which will provide you with a list of farms in the area taking on temporary workers for the harvest season. Local employment offices (*uffici di collocamento*) and agricultural co-operatives (Sezione Circostrazionale per l'Impiego Collocamento in Agricola/SCICA) may also be helpful, although it's generally best to contact farms directly. You may not be provided with accommodation but workers usually camp. Pay is usually on a piece-work basis (*lavoro a cottimo*) where the more you pick, the more you earn.