

5th
EDITION

Living and Working in

Italy



The best-selling, most accurate and most frequently updated book about living in Italy

Edited by David Hampshire

Living & Working in *Italy*

● A Survival Handbook ●



Edited by David Hampshire



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Survival Books Limited, Office 169, 3 Edgar Buildings, George St, Bath,
BA1 2FJ, United Kingdom

+44 (0)1305-246283, info@survivalbooks.net

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The Editor

David Hampshire's career has taken him around the world and he has lived and worked in many countries, including Australia, France, Germany, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Panama, Singapore, Spain and Switzerland.

David is an authority on living and working abroad, and is the author or co-author of over 30 titles, including *Living and Working in Australia*, *Living and Working in Britain* and *Living and Working in France*. He is also the author of many books about London including *London for Foodies, Gourmets & Gluttons*, *London's Secrets: Museums & Galleries* and *London's Peaceful Places*.

David now lives in Dorchester, England with his partner Alexandra.

About Survival Books

From the outset Survival Books' philosophy has been to provide the most accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information available – our titles routinely contain up to twice as much information as some similar books and are updated more frequently. They are written by experts in the field assisted by local researchers and contain invaluable insights, tips, warnings and advice that cannot easily be obtained from official publications or websites.

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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

"A must for all future expats. I invested in several books but this is the only one you need.

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

A diverse country with many faces, Italy has a variety of ethnic groups, religions and customs, as well as continuously changing rules, regulations, exchange rates and prices. 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 websites and references to other sources of information have been included in all chapters and in **Appendix A** to help you obtain further information and verify details with official sources. Important points have been emphasised, in bold print and boxes, some of which it would be expensive, or even dangerous, to disregard. Ignore them at your peril or cost!

Note

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

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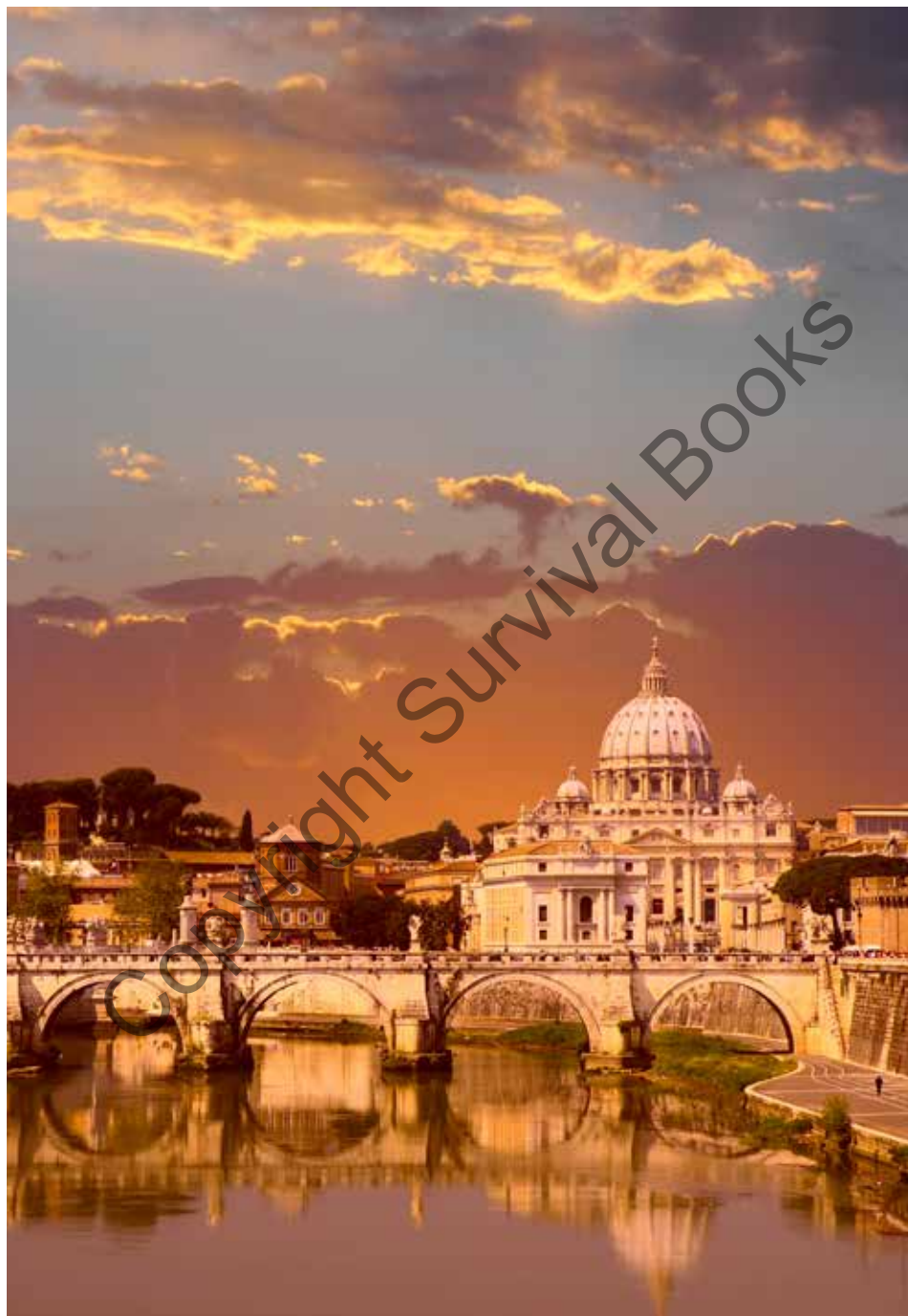
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Author's Notes

- ◆ 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 (at the time of writing). The European Economic Area (EEA) comprises the EU countries plus the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, plus Switzerland (which is an EFTA member but not a member of the EEA).
- ◆ 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 285.
- ◆ 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 22 per cent (see page 205). 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 shown in boxes and printed in **bold** type.
- ◆ A list of **Useful Websites** is contained in **Appendix A**
- ◆ Maps are included in **Appendix B**, including a political map showing the regions, a physical map, and maps showing the airports and ports, motorways and other major roads, and the rail network.



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 guidebooks, excellent though they are for tourists; this amazing book was written particularly with you in mind and is worth its weight in pasta. Now in its 5th edition, *Living and Working in Italy* has been fully revised and updated and 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 provide the comprehensive practical information necessary for a trouble-free life. You may have visited Italy as a tourist but living and working there is a different matter altogether. Adjusting to a different environment and culture and making a home in any foreign country can be a traumatic and stressful experience – and Italy is no exception.

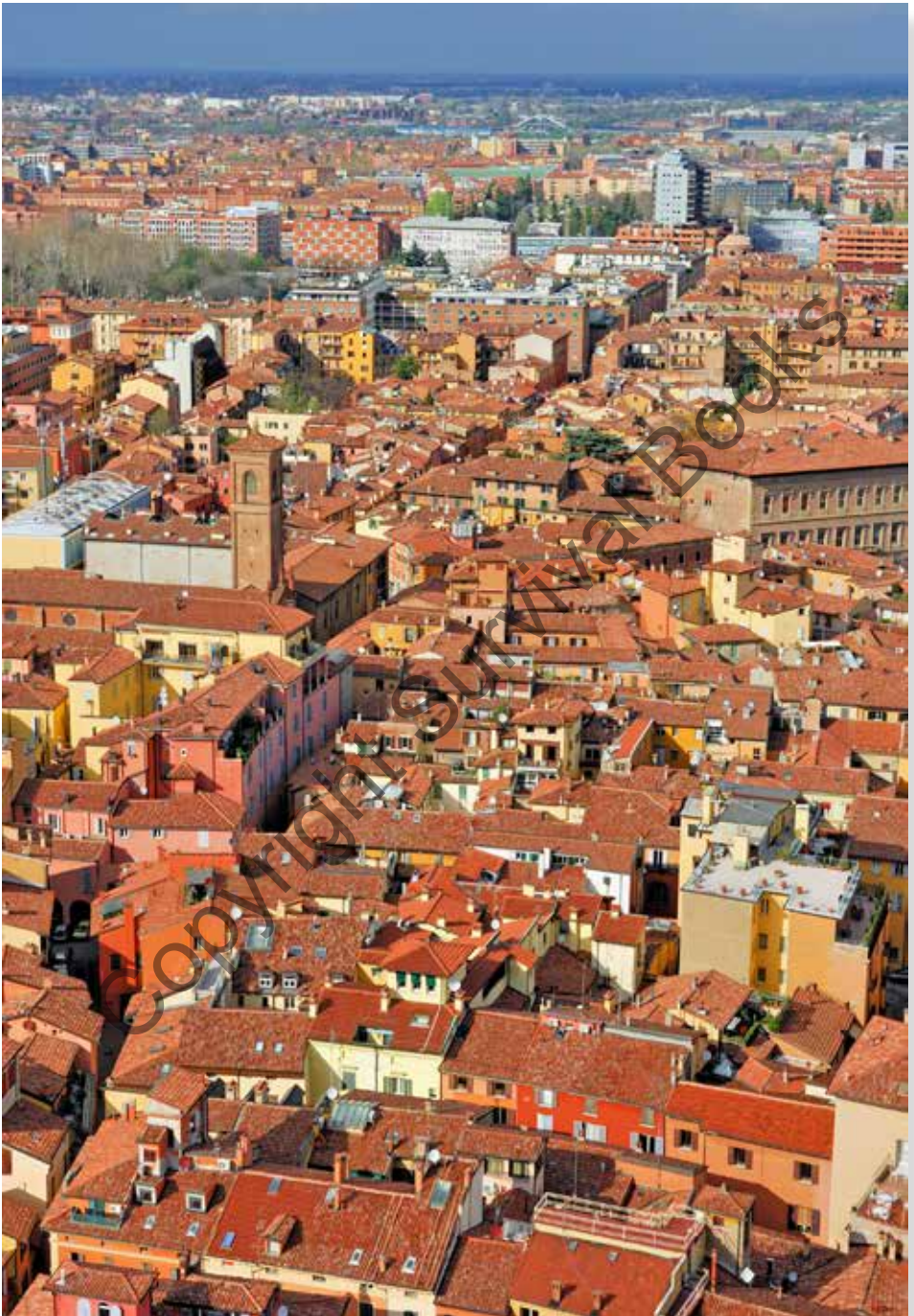
Living and Working in Italy is a comprehensive handbook on a wide range of everyday subjects, and represents the most up to date source of general information available to foreigners in Italy. It isn't simply a monologue of dry facts and figures, but a practical and entertaining look at Italian life.

Adapting to life in a new country is a continuous process; this book is designed to help reduce your 'rookie' phase and minimise the frustrations, although it doesn't contain all the answers. 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 that 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! (good luck!)

David Hampshire
July 2017



Bologna, Emilia-Romagna

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 fluency. 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 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 (almost 12 per cent in summer 2017). The government has a quota system for non-EU workers (see Chapter 3), but 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.

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 new EU countries in Eastern Europe. In 2017, the foreign population was estimated to be around 5 million (some 8 per cent of the population), most from outside the EU, including many living there illegally (*clandestini*). About a million Romanians (around 10 per cent of whom are Roma or 'gypsies') are registered as living in Italy.

In the last three years Italy has been in the forefront of the mass illegal immigration of over half a million people (and counting), most of whom arrived by boat from North Africa. Although some are genuine refugees, most are economic migrants, which has led Italy to introduce tough new rules; there are plans for migrant detention centres where detainees will be held until deportation can be arranged.

BREXIT

The most important consideration for British citizens planning to live or work in Italy is Britain's historic decision to leave the European Union (EU) – termed Brexit (British Exit) – in a referendum held on 23rd June 2016. The actual mechanism to leave the EU began with the invoking of Article 50, which took place on 29th March 2017, leading to a two-year 'negotiation' period after which the UK will no longer be a member of the EU (unless a transitional period is agreed).

Leaving the EU won't just affect the UK's relationship and trade with the EU and the 27 other member countries, but it will also influence the relationship between England and the other countries that make up the United

Kingdom (not least Scotland, which voted to remain in the EU, and Northern Ireland, which has a land border with the Republic of Ireland, an EU member). It will also have far-reaching consequences for Britain's future European and world trade relations, exchange rates, cost of living, laws, and – not least – the ability of Britons to live, work and study in Italy and other EU countries (and Italian citizens to live and work in Britain).

The ramifications of the UK leaving the EU will no doubt take many years to become apparent, but a certain amount of turmoil is expected in the short to medium term. However, the immediate Armageddon forecast by the remain campaign didn't materialise (although the pound predictably fell sharply in value against the Euro and the \$US), but the uncertainty regarding future trading arrangements with the EU has caused anxiety among many businesses. However, although the jury is still out, many experts and analysts believe that the UK could eventually be better off economically as an independent nation able to make its own trade deals worldwide.

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 28. The EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway also make up the European Economic Area (EEA). Nationals of EU and EEA countries (along with Switzerland) 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** on page 21). 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.

ECONOMY

Italy has Europe's fourth-largest economy (after Germany, the UK and France) and the world's ninth-largest, with a per capita GDP of US\$37,255 (OECD) in 2015. 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 improve.

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. The country was badly hit by the recession in the post-2007 credit crunch and, although the economy is

slowly recovering, unemployment remains high, the cost of living has increased in recent years and per capita personal debt has risen considerably.

Economic growth has been below 1 per cent for most of the last decade (in 2009, the economy suffered a hefty 5.5 per cent contraction), although it grew by 0.2 per cent in 2014, 0.7 per cent in 2015 and 1 per cent in 2016 (growth is forecast by the OECD to rise to around 2 per cent from 2018). In 2013, Italy was the second-largest debtor in the Eurozone (after Greece) and the fifth-largest worldwide, and despite the economic improvement in the last few years, many analysts believe that the country's debt is unsustainable and will eventually lead to default and bailouts.

The percentage of the working population engaged in agriculture is around 4 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.

Many small and medium-size companies produce high-quality goods in the clothing, mechanical engineering and textile industries, and typify industrial production in Italy. However, there are also many vast multinational 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 in fields such as aviation, computing, electronics and telecommunications. Other prominent Italian industries include ceramics, glass, furniture, household goods and leather products, which are world-renowned for their superior 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 and there's even a 'Strike Commission' (Commissione di Garanzia Sciopero, www.cgsse.it); the website contains a calendar of upcoming strikes, the majority of which are in the public sector and transportation industries.

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 wanting to live and/or



work 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've 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 Italy's gross domestic product (GDP). Unemployment in the south is around three times the northern rate and wages are around a third 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!*

UNEMPLOYMENT

Italy's unemployment rate was officially around 11.5 per cent in April 2017. Unemployment averaged 9.39 per cent from 1983 until 2017, reaching an all time high of 13 per cent in November of 2014 and a record low of 5.7 per cent in April 2007. Unemployment varies by

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.

region – 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; over 35 per cent of those aged under 25 are unemployed (it reached an all-time high of 44 per cent in March 2014), 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 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 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.

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 specific 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 and 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. 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.

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 53) and a national identity document, and are informed within 30 days if further documentation is required.

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.

All EU member states publish information about the qualifications required for most trades and professions. 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 (06-8632 1281) or the Presidenza Consiglio Ministri, Ministero Coordinamento Politiche Comunitarie (06-6779 5322).

In the UK, information about academic qualifications can be obtained from UK NARIC (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).

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 51). 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 that 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.

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

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 Circostrizionale 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 employment agency (*agenzia di lavoro*) 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 that 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 prospective employers. 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 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), Cambio Lavoro (www.cambiolavoro.com), Eurointerim (www.eurointerimservizi.it), Euro Placements (<http://europlacements.it>), Kelly (www.kellyservices.it), Manpower (www.manpower.it) and Sinterim (www.sinterim.it).

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

Executive Positions

Executive recruitment and head-hunters 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 were hard hit by the worldwide recession in 2008, 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 a few degrees, are multi-lingual 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.

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 (see also above):

www.altamira.it
www.easy-job.it
www.executivenetwork.it
www.fionline.it (for jobs in Florence)
www.informagiovani.it
www.joblitz.com
www.job-net.it
www.lavorare.net
www.mondolavoro.it
www.monster.it
www.stepstone.it
www.wantedinrome.com/classified

Note that Italian sites (those ending in .it) don't usually include an English-language version unless a major organisation is involved. However, if your Italian skills are still rudimentary you may be able to obtain a rough-and-ready translation using the 'Translate this page' feature on Google.co.uk or Google.com. You'll then be presented with an instant translation of the web page in question –

although you shouldn't expect it to be idiomatic or even very accurate!



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. 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 114).

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; 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.

TEMPORARY & CASUAL WORK

Temporary work (*lavoro temporaneo*) and casual work (*lavoro occasionale*) is usually for a limited or fixed period, ranging from a few hours to a few months, or intermittent. It differs from part-time work (*lavoro a tempo parziale* or *lavoro part-time*), which may be a temporary or permanent job but with reduced working hours, e.g. up to 20 hours per week. Casual workers are often employed on a daily, first-come first-served basis. Anyone looking for casual unskilled work in Italy must usually compete with Albanians, North Africans and other unemployed foreigners, who are usually prepared to work for less money than anyone else, although nobody should be paid less than the minimum wage for a particular sector. Many employers illegally pay temporary staff in cash without making deductions for social security (see **Illegal Working** on page 28).

Temporary jobs are advertised in employment offices, on notice boards in expatriate clubs, churches and organisations, and in expatriate newsletters and newspapers. See also **Private Recruitment Agencies** on page 23.

ENGLISH TEACHING & TRANSLATING

There's a high demand for English teachers, translators and interpreters in the major cities, particularly in Rome and the north of the country. There's a high turnover of teachers in language schools and a steady demand for translators and interpreters (and sometimes English technical writers) from Italian companies. There are literally hundreds of language schools (*scuole di lingua*) teaching English, the best of which are members of the Italian Association of English Language Schools (Associazione Italiana Scuole di Lingua Inglese/AISLI, www.aislu.it).

A useful resource for English teachers is the monthly *El Gazette* published in the UK (www.elgazette.com). The British Council (www.britishcouncil.org) also recruits English teachers and supervisory staff for placements in its language centres.

SALARY

It isn't usually difficult to determine the salary you should command in Italy, where salaries in most industries are decided by collective bargaining between employers and unions. Agreements specify minimum wage levels for each position in each main employment category in a particular industry or company. When there's a collective agreement, employers must offer at least the minimum wage agreed, although these are exceeded by most companies. Note that salaries vary considerably for the same job in different regions of the country and there's no national legal minimum wage.

Those working in Milan and other northern cities are generally the highest paid, primarily due to the high cost of living, particularly accommodation. Women are generally paid

less than men, even when they're doing the same job.

In 2016, Italy ranked 50 (one of the lowest among European countries) in the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Index (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings>), which assesses how countries divide their resources and opportunities among their male and female populations.

Most employees in Italy receive an extra month's salary at Christmas, known as the 13th month's salary (*tredicesima mensilità*) or Christmas bonus (*gratifica natalizia*), and many employees also receive a 14th month's salary (*quattordicesima mensilità*) before the summer holiday period. Some employees, such as those in the banking and petroleum industries, even receive a 15th and 16th months' salary.

If you're able to negotiate your own salary you should ensure that you receive the salary and benefits commensurate with your qualifications and experience, i.e. as much as you can get! When comparing salaries you must take into account compulsory deductions such as tax and social security, and also the cost of living (see page 198). Italian salaries for executives and managers compare favourably with those in other developed countries and are among the highest in Europe, although wages are below average for many other workers. Salaries are generally similar to those in France or Spain, for



example, but lower than those in the UK or the USA. In recent years, university graduates and school-leavers have had to accept almost any wage in order to get a foot on the career ladder.

For many employees, particularly executives and senior managers, their remuneration is much more than what they receive in their monthly pay packets. Many companies offer a range of benefits for executives and managers that may include a company car (although rare in Italy), private health insurance and health screening, expense-paid holidays, private school fees, inexpensive or interest-free home and other loans, rent-free accommodation, free or subsidised public transport tickets, a free or subsidised company restaurant, sports or country club membership, a non-contributory company pension scheme, stock options, bonuses and profit-sharing schemes, tickets for sports events and shows, and 'business' conferences in exotic places.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

If you're an EU national or a permanent resident with a *certificato di residenza*, you can work as self-employed (*lavoro autonomo* or *lavoro in proprio*), freelance (*lavoro indipendente* or *libero professionista*) or a sole trader (*commerciante in proprio*, *imprenditore* or *ditta individuale*) in Italy.

If you wish to be self-employed in a profession or start a freelance business in Italy, you must meet certain legal requirements and register with the appropriate organisations. For example, you must be included on the Register of Enterprises (*Registro delle Imprese*) maintained by the local chamber of commerce (*camera di commercio*) and obtain a certificate of registration (*certificato di iscrizione*). Before starting work you must also register with the local tax office (*intendenza di finanza*) and be registered for VAT (*imposta sul valore aggiunto*/

IVA – see page 205). Furthermore, many foreign artisans and traders are required to undergo a business course before they can start work in Italy.

☑ SURVIVAL TIP

Don't be seduced by the apparently laid-back way of life in Italy – if you want to be a success in business you cannot play at it. Bear in mind that some two-thirds of all new businesses fail within three to five years and that the self-employed enjoy far fewer social security benefits than employees.

Under Italian law a self-employed person must have an official status and it's illegal to simply hang up a sign and start trading. Members of some professions and trades must have certain qualifications and certificates recognised in Italy. You should never be tempted to start work before you're registered, for which there are stiff penalties which may include a large fine, confiscation of machinery or tools, deportation and even a ban from entering Italy for a number of years.

If you operate as a sole trader, you must register with the local tax office and are taxed in the same way as any other individual. The liabilities of a sole trader aren't deemed to be separate from his personal debts, and should you become insolvent you would be declared bankrupt. Therefore you may find it advantageous to operate as a limited company, e.g. a *società a responsabilità limitata (Srl)* or *società per azioni (SpA)*. Always obtain professional advice before deciding whether to operate as a sole trader or form a company, as it has far-reaching social security, tax and other consequences.

Self-employed people may wish to join the Camere di Commercio (www.unioncamere.gov.it) which provides a range of information

and assistance for the self-employed and those running their own businesses, including supplementary health insurance and help in dealing with Italian bureaucracy, taxation and social security.

Whatever people may tell you, working for yourself isn't easy and requires a lot of hard work – self-employed people generally work much longer hours than employees – a sizeable investment and sufficient operating funds (most new businesses fail due to a lack of capital); good organisation (e.g. bookkeeping and planning); excellent customer relations; and a measure of luck – although generally the harder you work, the more luck you'll have.

ILLEGAL WORKING

Illegal working (*lavoro in nero*) thrives in Italy, particularly in the south of the country and among expatriate and immigrant communities. It has been estimated that the black economy (*economia sommersa/nera*) is equal to around a third of the country's official GDP, and that up to 50 per cent of all incomes in the south of the country are hidden from the taxman! An employer may even ask you whether you want to be paid officially, with tax and social security deducted (*in regola*) or unofficially, i.e. in cash! This is most common in industries that employ itinerant workers, such as catering, construction, farming, tourism and textile manufacture, and in jobs such as carers, domestic, gardeners and private tutors.

In many areas, officials turn a blind eye, as the black economy keeps many small businesses alive and the unemployed in 'pocket money'. (The government doesn't pay unemployment benefits to the long-term unemployed and any other benefits paid are usually too low to live on.) Moonlighting by employees (i.e. taking second or third jobs) is also widespread, particularly among those in the public sector, who are generally low

paid. However, unscrupulous employers take advantage of those who are prepared to work illegally in order to pay low wages for long hours and poor working conditions.

It's strictly illegal for non-EU nationals to work in Italy without a work permit. If you work illegally you've no entitlement to social security benefits such as insurance against work injuries, public health care and a state pension.

A foreigner who works illegally in Italy is liable to a heavy fine and deportation, while businesses employing people illegally can be fined or closed down and the owners imprisoned.

LANGUAGE

Although English is the *lingua franca* of international commerce and may help you secure a job in Italy, the most important qualification for anyone seeking employment is the ability to speak fluent Italian. English is the second language of young Italians and the ability to speak English confers prestige, and it's widely spoken in the major cities such as Florence, Milan, Rome and Venice, which attract millions of foreign visitors each year; however, it's unlikely to be spoken in the far south of the country or rural areas, and most Italians expect anyone living or working in Italy to speak Italian.

Italian is one of the romance languages and is a beautiful tongue that's relatively easy to learn, particularly if you already know some French or Spanish (or Latin) – and are good with your hands! Modern Italian is a descendant of 'vulgar' spoken Latin and

Those interested in the Italian language may like to check the Italian Language website (www.italianlang.org) and the About.com guide (<http://italian.about.com>). See also **Learning Italian** on page 127.



was standardised in the 14th century by the literary triumvirate of Boccaccio, Dante and Petrarch, who wrote mainly in the Florentine dialect, which subsequently became the basis for today's standard Italian (*italiano standard*). This is the language taught in schools and used in the media, although it's often mixed with dialects. Standard Italian has been in widespread use only since the unification of Italy in the 1860s and Italians were slow to adopt the language of the new nation-state, identifying much more strongly with their regional dialects.

If you don't already speak good Italian, don't expect to learn it quickly even if you already have a basic knowledge and take intensive lessons. It's common for foreigners still not to be fluent after a year or more of intensive lessons in Italy. It takes a long time to reach the level of fluency needed to be able to work in Italian and understand the various accents – let alone dialects (see below). If you don't speak Italian fluently, you should begin Italian lessons on arrival and consider taking a menial or even an unpaid voluntary job, as this is one of the quickest ways of improving your Italian.

If possible you should have Italian lessons before arriving. A sound knowledge of Italian will not only help you find a job and perform your job better, but will also make everyday life much simpler and more enjoyable. If you come to Italy without being able to speak Italian you'll be excluded from local life and will

feel uncomfortable and alienated. The most common reason for negative experiences among foreigners in Italy, both visitors and residents, is because they cannot or won't speak the language. However terrible your Italian, your bad grammar, limited vocabulary and excruciating accent will be much more appreciated than your fluent English. Italians will usually encourage you and greet your butchered attempts with appreciation and good humour. You must generally learn Italian if you wish to have Italian friends.

When doing business in Italy, communications should always be in Italian. Many Italians have a phobia about writing letters (most are unable to write grammatically correct Italian) and postpone replying to letters for as long as possible. But if you write a letter to an Italian company applying for a job you should ensure that it's grammatically correct, even if it means employing a professional translator. When stating your Italian-language ability, it's important not to exaggerate as it's easy to confirm the truth. If you state that your Italian is very good or fluent you'll almost certainly be interviewed in Italian (which is also possible even if you've only a little knowledge). Overstating your fluency is a waste of your and a prospective employer's time.

Foreign Languages & Dialects

Foreign languages are spoken exclusively by around 15 per cent of the population. Italy is home to a number of linguistic minorities, some of which have been granted special privileges in autonomous or semi-autonomous regions, and their language given equal status with Italian; these include French (Valle d'Aosta), German (Alto Adige) and Slovene (Friuli-Venezia Giulia), which are all official languages taught in state schools in these regions. Most German-speaking minorities (some 300,000 speak the Bavarian-Austrian dialect) live in