March 14th, 2025

Note ON THE ITALIAN ECONOMY

- International trade recovered at the end of 2024, but the outlook for global trade is negative, since trade and geopolitical tensions heighten uncertainty.
- The GDP growth in the euro area was revised up for the last quarter of the year. However, economic performance in Europe was significantly lower than in other areas, such as the United States and Asian countries.
- In 2024, Italy's GDP grew by 0.7 percent in volume, showing a gradual deceleration during the year.
- The seasonally adjusted index of industrial production rebounded strongly in January, showing a cyclical increase of 3.2 percent and offsetting the significant decline registered in December (-2.7 percent).
- The business confidence index deteriorated in all sectors except for manufacturing. On the other hand, the consumer confidence index showed an improvement, driven mainly by the assessments of the individual economic situation.
- In January employment grew, involving men, women and individuals of all ages, except for people aged 35-49. Employment by occupation rose both for dependent and self-employed workers.
- In 2024, while prices rose moderately, there was a strong increase in contractual wages in nominal terms (+3.1 percent). The growth was higher in the private sector (+4.0%).
- At the beginning of this year, inflation in Italy, although slightly rising, was lower than the average for the euro area. The harmonized consumer price index showed an increasing trend by 1.7 percent in both January and February.

***Focus**:* In 2024, Italy's exports to outside the EU amounted to over 48%, a share higher than that of Germany, France, and Spain. In 2024, in particular, Italian exports to USA accounted for 10% and more than one-fifth of Italian products were exported to non-EU markets. Our analysis suggests that if USA's government applied actually duties to European export, their impact could be significant for Italy.

TABLE 1. MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR ITALY AND THE EURO AREA - q-o-q and m-o-m % variations.

INDICATORS	ITALY	EURO AREA	PERIOD	ITALY PREVIOUS PERIOD	EURO AREA PREVIOUS PERIOD
GDP	**0.1**	**0.2**	**Q4 2024**	**0.0**	**0.4**
Industrial Production	3.2	0.8	Jan. 2025	-2.7	-0.4
Production in the construction sector	-1.7	0.0	Dec. 2024	2.3	0.6
Retail sales (volume) Vendite al dettaglio (volume)	-0.6	-0.3	Jan. 2025	0.8	0.0
Producer prices in the industry – domestic market	2.0	0.8	Jan. 2025	0.8	0.5
Consumer prices (HICP)*	1.7	2.4	Feb. 2025	1.7	2.5
Unemployment rate	6.3	6.2	Jan. 2025	6.4	6.2
Economic Sentiment Indicator**	-0.4	1.0	Feb. 2025	1.8	1.5

Year-on-year variations **Absolute differences compared to the previous month

Source: Eurostat, European Commission, Istat

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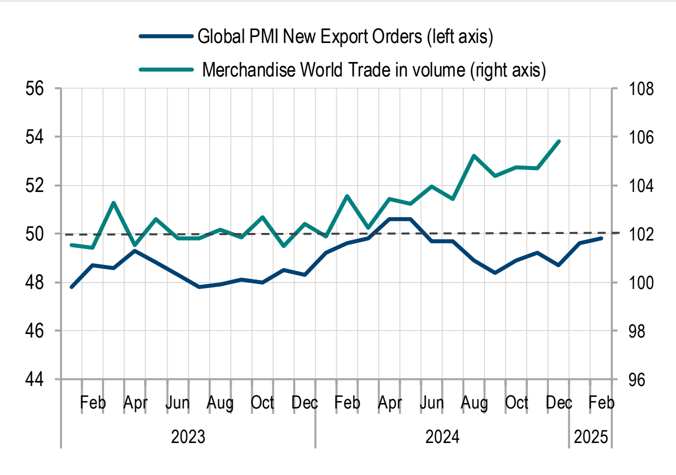
THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The international framework is characterised by high uncertainty. The partial enforcement of U.S. duties (25%) on imports from Canada and Mexico and an additional 10% on China suggests an increasing likelihood of trade tensions. These tensions add to the pre-existing geopolitical crises, adversely affecting global trade, prices and value chains.

By the end of 2024, international trade in goods showed signs of recovery. Merchandise world trade increased by 1.1% in December compared to the previous month (-0.1% in November). Specifically, as for imports, the United States (+3.8%), China (+3.0%), and Japan (+3.1%) recorded increases, while the United Kingdom showed a decline (-3.4%). As for export, Japan (+7.6%) registered a significant increase after two consecutive months of decline, while the United States (-4.3%) and Latin America (-6.3%) experienced contractions.

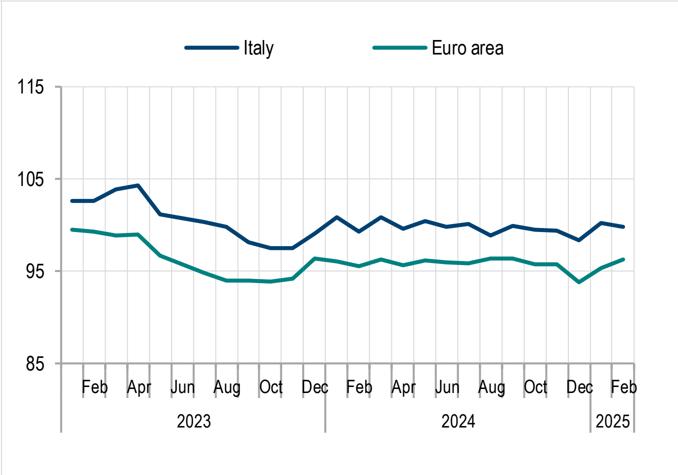
Global trade prospects are negative but show slight improvement: the global composite purchasing managers' index (PMI) for new export orders, which anticipates global trade trends, increased in February, though it is still below the expansion threshold of 50 points (49.8 from 49.6, Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. MERCHANDISE WORLD TRADE IN VOLUME AND PMI GLOBAL COMPOSITE NEW EXPORT ORDERS.
Index 2021=100, >50 = growth



Source: CPB and IHS

FIGURE 2. ECONOMIC SENTIMENT INDICATOR (ESI).
Seasonally adjusted values.



Source: World Bank

The rising trend of gas prices persists. The prices of primary raw materials have shown ongoing volatility and differentiated trends over recent weeks. The natural gas index was equal to 133.1 in February (128.4 in the previous month and on average 87.4, in 2024). This trend is linked primarily to the ongoing war in Ukraine and uncertainty about its future developments. Unlike gas prices, Brent crude oil has generally showed a downward trend since last April, reaching an average price of $75.2 per barrel in February ($79.2 in January; $80.7 in 2024).

In early 2025, the euro is stable against the dollar. The European currency stabilised at $1.04 per euro in January and February, depreciating from the 2024 average ($1.08). However, in early March, statements from the new U.S. administration created some volatility in financial and currency markets, with the euro showing a new appreciation trend that could prove temporary.

Inflation is no longer the main economic concern in the international context but continues to be a major risk. At this stage, upward pressures on prices are limited but not negligible, and new inflationary risks, related to the economic and geopolitical scenario, are emerging. Against this backdrop, the ECB in March announced a cut of the interest rate cut for the sixth consecutive time. The choices concerning the future monetary policy in Europe, as well as in the United States, are affected by the uncertainty associated with the international context, which reduces the likelihood of further cuts in the coming months on both sides of the Atlantic.

The U.S. economy is showing slight but widespread dynamism. The Beige Book, published by the Federal Reserve and dealing with the latest trends in the U.S. economy (in concomitance with the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee meetings), highlights a moderate but widespread increase in economic activity. Consumer spending grew, and employment increased slightly, especially in the services and construction sectors. Low increases are registered in both selling prices and input costs. Business sentiment is moderately optimistic, although several operators fear that duties increases could trigger further cost upturns and squeeze profit margins. The Consumer Confidence Index, measured by the Conference Board, fell by 7 points in February, reaching its lowest level since June 2024 (98.3), due to deteriorating expectations, which fell below the threshold of 80, signalling a possible recession.

In the euro area, GDP in the fourth quarter of 2024 was revised upward, estimating a quarterly growth rate of +0.2%. Domestic demand is stable but slowed down compared to the previous three months (consumption decelerated from +0.6% to +0.4%, and investments from +1.8% to +0.6%), while exports showed a marginal decline after a sharp drop in the previous quarter (-0.1%, from -1.4%).

Euro area outlook shows moderate improvement, The European Commission’s Economic Sentiment Index (ESI), which summarises household and business confidence, rose slightly in February, reaching its highest level in the last five months (96.3 from 95.3, Figure 2). The increase was driven by the improved confidence in the industrial sector and among consumers, only partially offset by a decline in the construction sector. Confidence in the retail trade and services sectors did not change. Among the major economies, the ESI rose significantly in France (+2.3 points) and Germany (+1.2), whereas Italy (-0.4) and Spain (-2.0) showed a decline.

THE ITALIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION

Italy’s GDP showed a marginal growth at the end of 2024. In the fourth quarter, after the stagnation in the previous three months, chain-linked Gross domestic product (GDP) (reference year 2020), adjusted for calendar effects and seasonality, recorded a quarter-on-quarter growth equal to 0.1%. Italy performed better than Germany and France (where quarterly growth in the fourth quarter stood at -0.1% and -0.2%, respectively) but worse than Spain’s (+0.8%, Figure 3).

Among GDP components, net external demand contributed slightly to the quarterly growth (+0.1 percentage points), given the lower decline in the exports of goods and services than in imports (-0.2% and -0.4%, respectively). Conversely, inventory changes subtracted 0.4 percentage points from GDP growth.

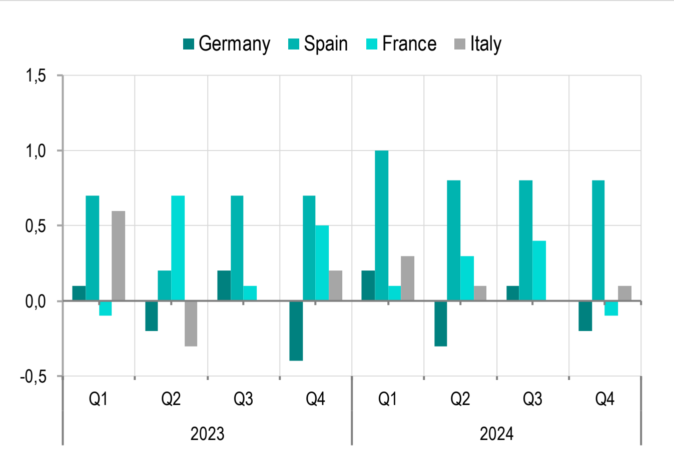
Domestic demand, excluding inventories, contributed positively (+0.5 percentage points), supported by the growth across all primary aggregates. In detail, final national consumption increased by 0.2% compared to the previous quarter; public administration (PA), resident households and NPISHs spending rose by the same rate (+0.2%). Domestic household spending showed a slowdown in non-durable goods (-0.1%; +0.9% in the previous quarter) and a sharper decline in semi-durable goods (-0.4%). Conversely, spending on durable goods and services increased (+0.2% and +0.4%, respectively).

Gross fixed investments recorded a significant increase (+1.6%), driven by spending on plants, machinery, and weaponry (+3.2%) and non-residential buildings and other structures (+4.1%). In contrast, investments in residential buildings declined (-1.4%), while those in intellectual property products grew by 0.3%. On the supply side, the fourth quarter saw a positive quarter-on-quarter growth in the value added of manufacturing (+0.8%) and construction (+1.2%) sectors.

In the services sector, a slight decline in value added (-0.1%) was recorded, with sharp contractions in arts, entertainment, and other services (-0.5%), information and communication services (-0.7%), and financial and insurance activities (-0.8%). The trade sector, including vehicle repair, transport, warehousing, accommodation, and food services, was stable, while real estate activities and professional services slightly increased (+0.1% and +0.4%, respectively).

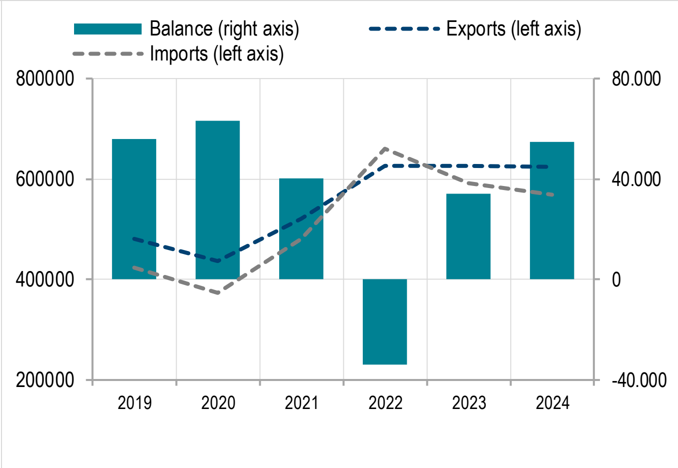
Industrial production showed a strong recovery. In January, the [seasonally adjusted industrial production index] recorded a sharp rebound, with a month-on-month growth equal to 3.2%, offsetting the steep decline recorded in December (-2.7%). As a result, on average, for the November-January quarter, the index is stable compared to the previous three months. During the same period, a general slowdown was observed across all industrial sectors, except for the energy sector, which grew by 3.7%. The decline was higher for capital goods (-0.9%), while lower for consumer and intermediate goods (-0.1% and -0.2%, respectively).

FIGURE 3. GDP TREND IN MAJOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES quarter-on-quarter % variations



Source: Istat and Eurostat

FIGURE 4. ITALY'S TRADE OF GOODS. Values in millions of euros, seasonally adjusted data



Source: Istat

2024 construction output grew by 5.0%, adjusted for calendar effects, showing a moderate slowdown compared to 2023 (+6.9%). In the fourth quarter, despite a decline in December (-1.7%), the seasonally adjusted production index recorded a strong recovery (+1.5% quarter-on-quarter), reversing the trend of the previous quarters, which showed slowdowns in the second (-1.1%) and third quarters (-0.1%).

In 2024, the annual growth of the services turnover index in volume, adjusted for calendar effects, was +0.3%, showing a slowdown compared to 2023 (+1.3%). Specifically, the seasonally adjusted quarterly turnover index for services in volume was positive (+0.7%) in the fourth quarter, despite the deceleration recorded in November and December; while in Q2 and Q3 (-0.4% and -0.8%, respectively) it had decreased. Growth was widespread across most sectors except for transport and warehousing (-0.5%) and real estate activities (-0.1%). The most significant increases were recorded for professional, scientific, and technical activities (+1.8%), information and communication services (+1.4%), and travel agencies & business support services (+1.2%). Growth was slightly lower but still positive for other services (+0.9%) and accommodation & food services (+0.8%). Instead, the wholesale trade, trade & repair index of motor vehicles and motorcycles is stable compared to the previous quarter.

Business confidence deteriorated in February. The index declined in construction and market services (with all components showing a negative trend) and more sharply in retail trade. However, manufacturing showed a slight increase, thanks to the improved order assessments, with stable inventories and declining production expectations.

In 2024, foreign trade in value terms declined compared to the previous year, confirming the slowdown observed since 2023. Exports fell by 0.4% (while thetrend was flat in 2023), and imports dropped by 3.9% (compared to +10.3% in the previous year). Despite this slowdown, both import and export flows are above pre-crisis levels.

These dynamics led to a further improvement in the trade balance, which exceeded €54 billion last year (compared to over €34 billion in 2023, Figure 4). The performance of exports showed a worse trend in real terms: export volumes declined by over 2.0%, with significant contractions in both EU and non-EU markets (-3.0% and -2.0%, respectively), while export prices, measured in terms of unit values, increased in both areas (+1.1% and +3.3%).

Weaker sales to key trading partners in the EU and non-EU markets impacted Italy's export performance. Indeed, exports to France and Germany, which together account for over 20% of Italy's foreign sales, declined (-2.1% and -5% respectively), as did exports to the United States (-3.6%), Russia (-7.2%), and China (-20%). However, exports increased to the Netherlands (+4.5%), Spain (+4.3%), Turkey (+23.9%), Japan (+2.5%), as well as to Latin America, and the Middle East.

The decline in sales has affected almost all major product categories, including traditional sectors such as textiles, clothing, leather, and accessories (-4.5%), machinery (-1.3%), and transport equipment (-12.2%). However, food products, beverages, and tobacco (+7,9%), pharmaceutical products (+9.5%), and other manufactured goods (+12.4%) showed a positive growth.

Retail sales declined at the beginning of the year. After the recovery registered in the previous month, in January they showed a negative monthly change in value (-0.4%) and volume (-0.6%). In the November 2024 – January 2025 quarter, retail sales decreased by 0.1% in value and 0.5% in volume. Specifically, food sales increased in value (+0.4%) but declined in volume (-0.6%), while non-food sales registered a decrease both in value (-0.2%) and in volume (-0.3%).

In January a widespread increase in employment was recorded, with the number of employed people reaching 24.222 million. Growth involved men, women, and individuals in all age groups except for the 35-49 group. Regarding employment status, both dependent and self-employed workers showed an increase. The employment rate rose by 62.8% (+0.4 percentage points since December). Compared to the previous month, unemployment declined for men and all the age groups except for those aged 25-34. On a monthly basis, the overall unemployment rate, which was stable at 6.2% in the euro area, fell by 6.3% (-0.1 points), while the youth unemployment rate dropped by 18.7% (-0.3 points). Finally, compared to December 2024, the inactivity rate also decreased by 32.9% (-0.4 points).

Quarterly data confirm the growth of employment: comparing the November 2024 – January 2025 quarter with the previous one (August – October 2024), a 0.4% increase in employment was recorded, equivalent to 85,000 new employed persons. This growth mainly concerned men, permanent employees, and individuals over 50. The increase in employment observed in the quarterly comparison was accompanied by a rise in job seekers (+1.4%; +22,000 people) and a decline in inactive individuals (-0.8%; -99,000 people). On a year-on-year basis, the number of employed people increased by 513,000 (+2.2%) and the employment rate rose by 1.0 percentage points compared to January 2024 (Figure 5). The annual balance for the unemployed was negative, showing a decrease equal to 194,000 units (-10.7%) over the past year. Compared to the previous year, overall the unemployment rate fell by 0.8 points and by 3.1 points for young people. Additionally, the inactive individuals decreased annually (-1.3%, or -158,000 people), along with the inactivity rate (-0.5 points).

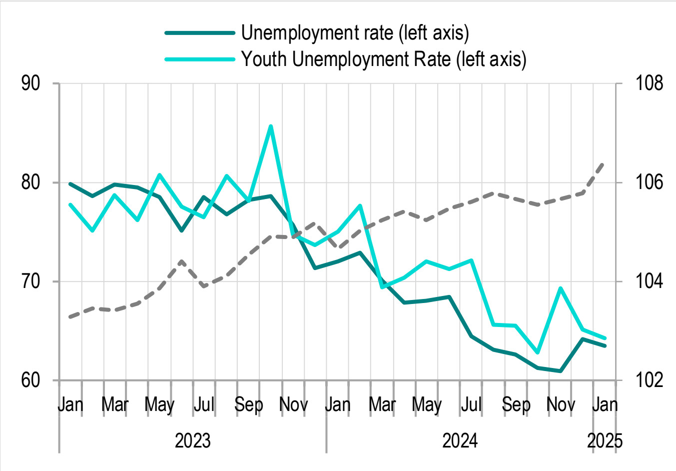
In December 2024, the monthly index of hourly contractual wages increased by 0.1% compared to November but fell by 0.6% compared to December 2023. Specifically, the year-on-year change was equal to +4.8% for industrial workers and +3.6% for private service workers. Instead, a sharp decline in the wages of civil servants (14.1%) was observed, reflecting the early disbursement of the 2024 contractual salary increase in December 2023. Over the year, with only a slight price increase, a notable improvement in contractual wages (+3.1%) was observed. Growth was more significant in the private sector (+4.0%), particularly in industry (+4.6%).

The seasonally adjusted job vacancy rate increased in the fourth quarter of 2024 by 0.1 percentage points compared to the previous quarter, reaching 2.1% for all firms with employees. Among firms with at least 10 employees, the job vacancy rate was stable in industry and services sectors.

Consumer confidence index improved… in February, driven primarily by the positive assessments of the personal economic conditions.

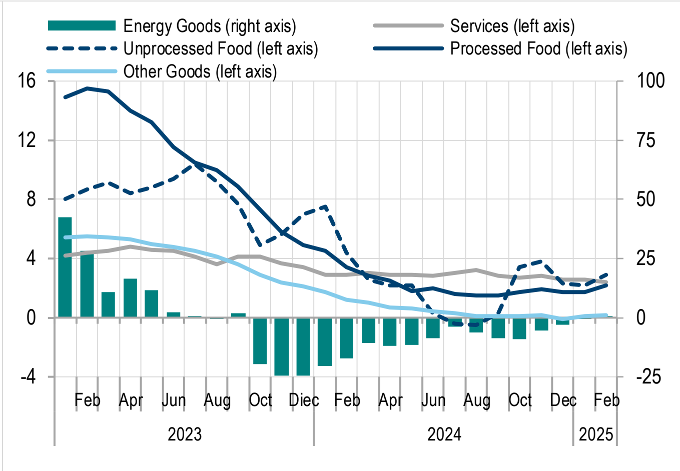
…however, expectations regarding employment trends worsened compared to the previous month in the construction, retail trade, and, more significantly, market services sectors. In contrast, employment expectations did not change in the manufacturing sector.

FIGURE 5. EMPLOYMENT RATE (AGES 15-64) AND TOTAL AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (AGES 15-24). Index numbers, 2019 average base, seasonally adjusted data



Source: Istat

FIGURE 6. CONSUMER INFLATION IN ITALY. Consumer Price Index for the entire population (NIC), year-on-year variations.



Source: Istat

Consumer inflation in Italy is not high but it is expected to grow. The year-on-year change in the consumer price index for the entire population (NIC) was equal to 1.7% in February (preliminary data), slightly higher than in January (1.5%), while on a monthly basis, the index increased by 0.2% (+0.6% in the previous month). This data confirms the upward trend in inflation that began in the last quarter of 2024 (rising from +0.7% in September to +1.3% in December). It was driven by the acceleration in goods prices (from -0.9% in September to +0.7% in January 2025 and +1.2% in February), which offset the moderate slowdown in service prices (+2.8% in September, +2.6% in January 2025, and +2.4% in February). Therefore, the general inflation rate registered in 2025 is equal to 1.2% while the underlying component is equal to 0.7%.

… due to rising energy prices.. The upward trend in inflation was primarily driven by the month-on-month increase in energy prices, which rose by nearly 4.0% between October and January, with an additional 0.8 percentage point increase in February. This initially resulted in a slowdown in the year-on-year decline (from -9.0% in October to -0.7% in January 2025), then leading to the first positive figure since October 2023 (+0.6% in February).

… and rising food prices. Another inflationary push came from food prices, which grew by 2.2% from October 2024 to January 2025 and by 0.2% in February. This resulted in a sharp acceleration in month-on-month terms (+1.9% in January and +2.5% in February) for both processed goods (+1.7% and +2.2%) and unprocessed goods (+2.2% and +2.9%). Inflation for other goods was low at 0.2% in February (+0.1% on average from August 2024 to January 2025). However, prices in this sector also showed an upward trend on a monthly basis (+0.6% from December to February). Considering the "shopping basket" (food and household and personal care products), inflation showed a significant acceleration in February, reaching 2.2% (up from +1.7% recorded in the previous two months).

Service inflation slows slightly. It accelerated during the summer, but declined in the last quarter of 2024 (from +2.8% in September to +2.6% in December). Finally, it was stable in January 2025, and then slowed further at 2.4% in February, bringing prices back to June 2024 levels.

Price trend in Italy was below the euro area average. Harmonised consumer price inflation (HICP) in Italy continued to rise, reaching 1.7% in January and February. After a 0.8% decline in January due to the effects of winter sales (not included in the NIC index), the month-on-month variation was equal to 0.1% in February. Price dynamics in Italy was, in February, below the euro area average (+2.4%) Germany (+2.8%), and Spain (+2.9%), while France recorded a sharp slowdown (+0.9%), driven by a government-imposed reduction in the energy prices of the regulated market.

Moderate inflation in import prices. In December 2024, the year-on-year change in the prices of imported goods and services, after have registered a value equal to -1.4% in November, amounted to 0.1%, continuing to grow on a monthly basis (+0.3% in December and +0.2% in November). This trend reflects the increase in imported energy prices and the slight decrease in prices for other goods.

Acceleration in the energy production prices and stability in the construction sector. In January, industrial producer prices recorded a significant acceleration both on a monthly basis (+1.6%, following +0.6% in December) and on a year-on-year basis (+4.4%, up from +1.1% in January), ending the streak of negative recorded since April 2023. This trend mainly reflects the sharp increase in energy sector prices, which rose by 15% (compared to +2.6% in January), while the non-energy sector showed a more moderate upturn accounting for 0.8% (+0.4% in January).

In January, residential building construction prices were stable compared to the previous month but declined on year-on-year basis (-0.5%). On the contrary, non-residential building construction prices increased by 0.7% (both monthly and yearly), and prices for road and railway construction rose by 0.6% and 0.1%, respectively.

Consumers expect rising inflation. In the first two months of 2025, for the first time since November 2022, consumer expectations of rising inflation over the next twelve months outweighed expectations of a decline. In February, 42.1% of consumers anticipated higher inflation, compared to 38.8% who expected lower inflation.

A slight increase in the share of businesses planning price hikes. Among businesses, the intention to keep prices stable over the next three months was prevalent across the manufacturing, construction, and market services sectors and, to a lesser extent, in retail trade. The balance between expectations of price increases and decreases rose in the manufacturing, construction, and retail trade sectors, while it declined in the services sector.

focus

ITALIAN EXPORTS TO KEY NON-EU MARKETS*

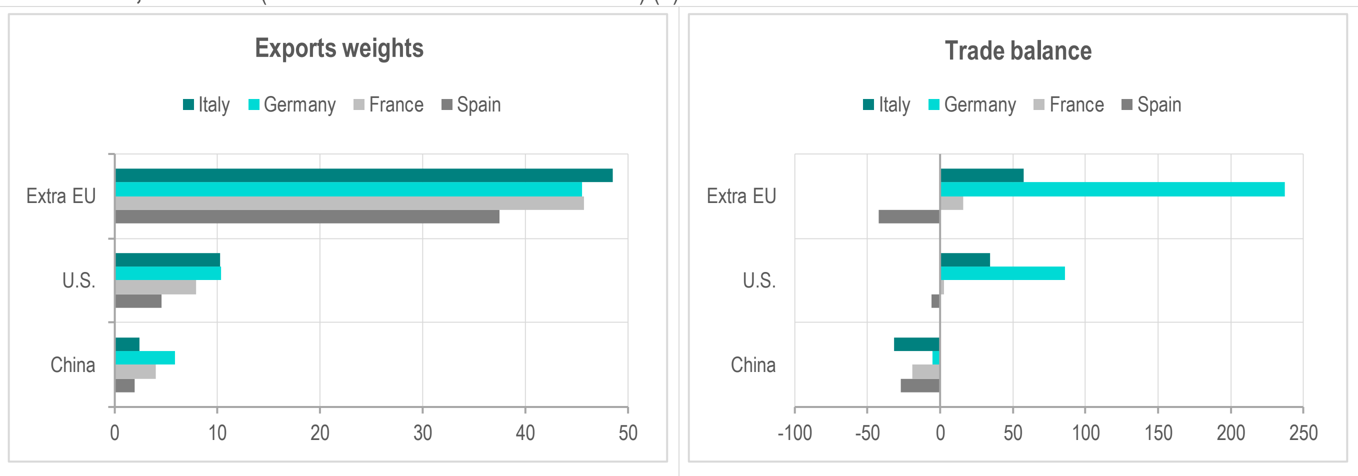
In 2024, Europe contributed negatively to the growth of the international trade, affected by the war between Russia and Ukraine and the weakness of the German economy. European exports recorded particularly negative results in the automotive sector and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, which, after experiencing a significant surge during the COVID-19 pandemic, have now returned to expected trends. However, according to WTO estimates, this negative trend will likely reverse in 2025, with Europe again contributing positively to the global trade flows of goods in volume1.

Despite this outlook, European trade still faces multiple downside risks, including international trade tensions and the possible escalation of geopolitical conflicts, which could create new disruptions in global supply chains. Furthermore, the growing adoption of inward-looking industrial policies in many countries and the increasing protectionist stance in trade policy, particularly in the United States, could negatively influence trade growth in the short and medium run.

In this context, examining Italy's trade exposure in terms of products and geography is crucial to understand how the duty measures announced by the new U.S. administration may affect Italian exports in the coming months. Therefore, this focus aims at analysing the composition of Italian goods exports to the two major non-EU markets most affected by trade tensions: The United States and China.

In 2024, Italy’s exports to outside the EU amounted to over 48%, a share higher than that of Germany, France (both at 45%), and Spain (over 37%). In 2024, in particular, Italian exports to USA accounted for 10% (a value similar to that of Germany but higher than that of France and Spain); in addition, more than one-fifth of Italian products were exported to non-European markets (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. WEIGHT OF EXPORTS AND TRADE BALANCE OF MAJOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES—UNITED STATES AND CHINA, Year 2024 (% values and data in billions of euros) (a)



Source: Istat elaboration on Comext – Eurostat data.

(a) Preliminary data January -November

In 2024, Italy—like Germany and, to a lesser extent, France—recorded a trade surplus with the United States, making a significant contribution to the European Union’s overall surplus. The manufacturing sectors, including mechanical engineering, food-beverages-tobacco, textiles-clothing-leather, and transportation equipment[2], primarily drove Italy’s surplus.

* The Focus was prepared by Francesca Luchetti. The analyses presented here anticipate those contained in the 2025 edition of the Report on the Competitiveness of Productive Sectors, which will be released on March 20.

1 WTO, (November 20th, 2024) Overview of developments in the international trading environment. Annual report by the director-general. For the details of countries included in the attachment Europe of WTO see https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/technotes_e.htm.

2 See Istat (2024) https://www.istat.it/en/press-release/foreign-trade-and-import-prices-december-2024/

Conversely, China is a relatively minor market for Italian export of goods. In 2024, direct exports to China accounted for about 2.4% of Italian exports, compared to almost 6.0% for Germany, 4.0% for France, and 2.0% for Spain. On the other hand, China's greater significance as a market for Italian imports resulted in a significant trade deficit (-34 billion euros), which was much larger than that of other major economies, notably Germany (-5 billion euros).

From a sectoral perspective, in 2024, Italian exports to the United States in value terms were primarily composed of pharmaceuticals (medicines and other pharmaceutical preparations), motor vehicles, ships and boats, and machinery. Among the key product categories[3], exports included beverages (wine), clothing, and traditional Italian products such as furniture. For pharmaceuticals, beverages, ships and boats, the share of exports to the U.S. accounted for approximately 20% of the total global Italian exports in these sectors, while for motor vehicles, the share was equal to around 15% (Table F1).

TABLE F1. MAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED TO THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA – YEAR 2024 (% values and % variations)

MAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED	% of total exports in the country (a)	% of total global exports of the product (a)	% variations 2024/2019	% variations 2024/2023
UNITED STATES				
Medicines and other pharmaceutical preparations	15.1	19.3	76.6	26.3
Other general-purpose machinery	6.8	13.0	110.2	15.1
Motor vehicles	5.5	14.7	-2.0	-29.4
General-purpose machinery	5.1	11.2	39.9	-1.0
Other special-purpose machinery	5.0	13.8	32.0	2.2
Beverages	4.4	22.7	33.6	11.1
Clothing - textiles-clothing-leather	3.2	9.1	40.5	3.1
Medical and dental practice activities	2.6	17.5	26.4	-12.9
Other transport equipment (ships and boats)	2.5	21.6	-19.5	-62.3
Furniture	2.5	14.0	47.2	1.1
Total products	52.8			
Total export in the U.S.			42.2	-3.6
CHINA				
Manufacture of wearing apparel, except fur apparel	11.3	7.5	97.7	17.2
General-purpose machinery	9.1	4.7	19.4	6.0
Other special-purpose machinery	6.2	4.0	-24.3	-18.4
Tanning and dressing of leather; manufacture of luggage, handbags, saddlery and harness; dressing and dyeing of fur	5.9	7.1	46.1	-18.8
Medicines and other pharmaceutical preparations	5.5	1.7	-11.9	-80.8
Other general-purpose machinery	5.1	2.3	-14.0	5.4
Footwear	4.2	5.4	102.2	-2.7
Basic chemicals, fertilisers and nitrogen compounds, plastics and synthetic rubber in primary forms	3.3	3.0	28.9	4.2
Motor vehicles	2.6	1.6	-14.3	-18.4
Medical and dental practice activities	2.3	3.7	155.6	1.1
Total products	55.5			
Total export in China			18.3	-20.0

Source: Elaborations on Comext-Eurostat data.

(a) January-November

[3] Reference to the three-digit classification of goods according to the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) adopted at the European level.

The product composition of Italian exports to the United States differs only partially from that of other major European economies. However, German exports are more concentrated in motor vehicles and pharmaceutical products, accounting for one-third of German U.S. sales. By contrast, France is more oriented towards the export of aircraft, spacecraft, and related equipment, as well as beverages. Motor vehicles are less significant for France, as over 70% of French automobile exports are to EU markets. Compared to 2019, Italian exports to the United States increased significantly in 2024 (+42.2%), particularly in pharmaceutical products and machinery. However, motor vehicle exports declined slightly (-2.0%). Over the past year, motor vehicles and other transport equipment experienced a sharp decline (-29.4% and -62.3%, respectively).

The most exported Italian products to China include machinery, clothing, and leather goods. In contrast, China is the primary export market for German motor vehicles and their parts. Between 2019 and 2024, Italian exports to China grew overall by +18.3%, though they have declined in the last year (-20%). As in the case of the United States, motor vehicle exports showed a significant drop, both compared to 2019 (-14.3%) and 2023 (-18.4%), along with special-purpose machinery (-24.3% and -18.4%, respectively). Conversely, exports of general-purpose machinery (+19.4% and +6.0%) and clothing (+97.7% and +17.2%) increased.

For technical and methodological clarifications

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