

# Public Relations in Italy

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## Part 1: Background information

### Official Names:

Long Form: Italian Republic

Short Form: Italy

Local Long Form: Repubblica Italiana

Local Short Form: Italia

Former: Kingdom of Italy



**Capital City:** Rome

**Major Cities:** Milan, Naples, Turin, Palermo, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Venice

**Official Language:** Italian (official), German (Parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking.), French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area)

**Type of Government:** Republic

**Location:** Southern Europe; a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia

**Currency:** Euro (EUR)

### Culture:

Most of Italy's culture revolves around its art and architecture, most of which hails from the Gothic, Medieval and Italian Renaissance periods.

Roman Catholicism is the major religion of Italy, with the head of the Roman Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome known as the pope, residing in Vatican City, a part of Rome.

Theater, music and sports are also a major part of Italian culture. But one of the most recognizable parts of modern Italian culture is fashion. Fashion is an important part of Italian society, with Italian designers such as Armani, Prada, Gucci, Versace and Valentino being considered some of the finest in the world. The city of Milan is among the most prestigious and important centers of fashion in the world.

## Part 2: Overview of the public relations industry

Public relations arrived in Italy in the summer of 1943 in the wake of the Allied troops landing in Sicily.

A recent estimate by FERPI (Italian Federation of Public Relations), based on a census by the government's Ministry of Public Function, indicates that approximately 70,000 individuals operate professionally in public relations in the public, private and non-profit sectors of Italian society. In 2002 the estimated annual investment in public relations activities in Italy was in excess of 10 billion Euro and in 2003 the earnings range was in excess of 11.5 billion euro.

Types of work undertaken include media relations (93 percent), corporate communications (81 percent), and events communication (78 percent). Growing fields include strategic advice, ecology and social communication.

The population of public relations professionals is divided into the following categories: 15,000 in-house, 15,000 in consultancy, more than 50,000 in the public sector, and 5,000 in charity. (Source: Italian Federation of Public Relations)

Italian public relations membership groups include:

- Federazione Italiana Relazioni Pubbliche (FERPI), Italian Federation of Public Relations: <http://www.ferpi.it/>
- Associazione Italiana delle Agenzie di Relazioni Pubbliche (ASSOREL), Italian Association of Public Relations Agencies: <http://www.assorel.it/>
- Associazione delle Agenzie di Comunicazione (ASSOCOMUNICAZIONE), Association of Communication Agencies: <http://www.assocomunicazione.it/>
- Associazione Italiana Comunicatori di Università (AICUN), Association of Italian University Communication Practitioners: <http://www.aicun.it/>
- Associazione Italiana Pubblicitari Professionisti (TP), Italian Association of Advertising Practitioners: <http://www.associazione-tp.it/>
- Associazione della Comunicazione Pubblica e Istituzionale (ASSOCOM), Italian Association of Public and Institutional Communication: <http://www.compubblica.it/>

The association of public sector communicators, in cooperation with FERPI, embarked on the development of an ad hoc code for public sector professionals in relation to ethical practice. The consideration of this issue, which covers most of the various aspects of the profession's responsibility to societal demands, is likely to last for some time, as the Global Alliance protocol demands that each national association needs to review its own code of ethics in order to make sure that it is consistent with the global protocol. Italian professionals, although agreeing on the relevance of continued education, do not agree that, as in the United States, enforcement of the ethics code should be abandoned.

### **Part 3: Overview of public relations as it relates to students**

Beginning in the early 1960s, the IPR (Institute for Public Relations) and IPSOA (Postgraduate Institute for the Study of Corporate Public Relations) ran courses in public relations mainly for practitioners. Today, however, Italy has no consolidated tradition in public relations education.

In 1993, IULM University in Milan was the first university in Italy to have formally recognized undergraduate courses in public relations. Since then, three more undergraduate courses have been opened at the University of Udine, the University of Catania and at the ITC branch of the IULM University. There are approximately 40,000 students who take public relations as either their main studies or as a subsidiary course.

In the curriculum there are four major trends concerning public relations education. They are classic corporate curriculum, small- and medium-size business curriculum, institutional/public sector curriculum, and European-international curriculum. Despite these issues, many Italian universities question the true essence of public relations and its basic disciplines. The education finds its roots in sociological, psychological, historic-geographic, legal and economic disciplines.

The levels of education for those working in public relations include 23.2 percent with a high school degree, 56.3 percent with a bachelor's degree and 20.4 percent with a master's degree.

A membership group of Italian students has been established called the Associazione Studenti Scienze dell Comunicazione (AISCOM), Association of Communication Sciences Students.

#### **Resources Used:**

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