

Italy - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Italy, commanding a long Mediterranean coastline, has left a powerful mark on Western culture and cuisine. Its capital, Rome, is home to the Vatican as well as landmark art and ancient ruins. Other major cities include Florence, with a rich Renaissance history; Venice, a historically important city; and Milan, Italy's fashion capital.²

Official language: Italian

Ethnic groups: 92% Italian; 1.81% Romanian, 1.07% North African; 0.77% Albanian; 0.28% Chinese; 0.31% Ukrainian; 3.13% Other

Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic

- President: Sergio Mattarella
- Prime Minister: Matteo Renzi
- President of the Senate of the Republic: Pietro Grasso
- President of the Chamber of Deputies: Laura Boldrini

Death penalty: Abolitionist for all crimes

Population: 59.83 million

Life expectancy: 82.94 years

Under-5 mortality: 4 per 1000

Adult literacy: 99 percent



Section 1: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Partially respected³

There were some reports security forces committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected⁴

There are no reports of politically-motivated disappearances.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Largely disrespected⁵

There is no law criminalizing torture, leaving a legal loophole open in the judicial system. There have been reports of torture against protestors and immigrants.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Respected⁶

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest, and the government generally respects these provisions.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Respected⁷

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary. The government respects judicial independence.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected⁸

The law outlaws actions of arbitrary interference into personal or private matters. There are no reports that the government failed to respect these provisions.

Section 2: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)⁹



Score: 28.93, Rank: 77 / 179 – Partially free, diverse and independent¹⁰

The level of violence against reporters is surprising. In most cases, reporters who are investigating corruption and organized crime are the ones who are targeted. However, in Vatican City, the judicial system targets the media in wake of reports concerning corruption within the Holy See.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹¹

There are no government restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Respected¹²

The government generally respects the constitution's provisions to freedom of assembly and association.

Freedom of religion



Partially respected¹³

The constitution protects freedom of religion. However, Muslims in some locations were refused permits from local governments to construct mosques. In addition, the presence of Catholic symbols in public institutions has continued to draw some criticism.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially respected¹⁴

2015 saw a dramatic wave of migrants arriving in Italy. The government has generally attempted to integrate and resettle refugees. However, in migrant hotspots like Sicily, there are concerns about expulsion orders, detention, and forced-finger printing.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{15 16}



1 / 7 – Free¹⁷

Freedom of expression and press are constitutionally guaranteed. Italian citizens are furthermore able to organize demonstrations and establish political and social organizations.

Section 3: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc..

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)¹⁸



1 / 7 – Free¹⁹

The political system has a high level of pluralism and competition. In 2014, Italy experienced multiple high-level corruption scandals. The Prime Minister responded by increasing the powers of the National Anticorruption Authority.

Section 4: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²⁰



Score: 44%, Rank: 61 / 175 – Some corruption²¹

Many Italian citizens feel that corruption has increased in recent years. Italians generally blame political parties for being most involved in corruption.

Section 5: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Respected²²

Various domestic and international human rights organizations operate within Italy without governmental restriction. Government officials have not only been cooperative, but also responsive to these organizations.

Section 6: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Rights of women (World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index)²³



Score: 72.6%, Rank: 41 / 142 – Somewhat unequal rights²⁴

Women have the same legal status as men, however they continue to suffer discrimination with respect to employment. Women are unrepresented in management and have fewer entrepreneurial opportunities.

Rights of Children (KidsRights Index Overall Score)²⁵



Score: 76.9%, Rank: 81 / 165 - Protected²⁶

The rights of children are relatively protected in Italy.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Partially respected²⁷

The law prohibits discrimination against any persons with disabilities. While these provisions are enforced, societal and employment discrimination often goes overlooked. In addition, many cities lack the infrastructure to accommodate disabled persons.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Partially respected²⁸

Societal violence and discrimination against ethnic minorities remains a problem. Anti-Semitic attitudes persist among many Italians. Thousands of Romani families live in poor conditions due to the government's failure to implement the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Partially respected^{29 30}

While gay marriage is legal in Italy, discrimination still exists throughout society; discrimination is strongest in employment.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Respected³¹

The government respects the law, which allows for workers to establish unions, bargain collectively, and engage in legal strikes. Employers who violate the law are subject to stiff fines and/or imprisonment.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Partially respected³²

Since forced labour is illegal, the government conducts routine inspections. However, there are many undocumented migrants working without formal contracts. In addition, workers are subject to debt bondage in construction, domestic services, hotels, and agriculture.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Partially respected³³

Children under 16 are not allowed to work. Violations of this law carry heavy fines. However, in the extensive informal economy, enforcement is ineffective. There are reports of child labour, particularly among migrants. Romani children are also often subject to exploitation.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Partially respected³⁴

There is no minimum wage for workers in Italy. Collective bargaining sets wage levels for different sectors. The law prohibits compulsory overtime and provides paid holidays. The government effectively enforced these laws in the formal sector, but not the informal sector of the economy.

Right to employment



12.2% - High unemployment³⁵

The past ten years has seen a significant rise in unemployment, as the rate of unemployed persons has nearly doubled.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² Commonly-known information on the country is drawn from various Internet sources, including Google country pages, and Amnesty International. For death penalty see: "Death sentences and executions in 2013." Amnesty International. Accessed July 5, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/001/2014/en/>.

³ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁹ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹⁰ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. Accessed July 5, 2016. <https://rsf.org/en/italy>.

¹¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

¹² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹³ "Italy." International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238606.pdf>.

¹⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

¹⁵ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁶ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed July 5, 2016 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

¹⁷ "Italy." Freedom in the World 2015: Italy. Accessed July 5, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/italy>.

¹⁸ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed July 5, 2016. <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

¹⁹ "Italy." Freedom in the World 2015: Italy. Accessed July 5, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/italy>.

²⁰ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial

secret. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²¹ "Italy." Corruption by Country. Accessed July 5, 2016. https://www.transparency.org/country/#ITA_PublicOpinion.

²² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

²³ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²⁴ "Italy." World Economic Forum. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=ITA>.

²⁵ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

²⁶ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

²⁷ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

²⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

²⁹ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁰ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Italy." U.S Department of State. Accessed July 5, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253073.pdf>.

³² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³³ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

³⁵ "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. Accessed July 5, 2016. http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_233936/lang-en/index.htm.