



# GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

## National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

### Country Profile

#### *Italy*

<b>Capital:</b>	Rome
<b>Geographical Size:</b>	301 336 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population:</b>	60 782 668 (2014)
<b>Population as % of total EU population:</b>	12% (2014)
<b>GDP:</b>	€ 1.560 billion (2013)
<b>Defense Expenditure:</b>	€ 20.078 million (2013)
<b>Official EU language(s):</b>	Italian
<b>Political System:</b>	Parliamentary republic
<b>EU member country since:</b>	1 January 1958
<b>Seats in European Parliament:</b>	73
<b>Currency:</b>	Eurozone member since 1 January 1999
<b>Schengen area member?</b>	Schengen Area member since 26 October 1997
<b>Presidency of the Council:</b>	12 times between 1959 and 2014

Source: Europa.eu

## GGI National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy 2015

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Peace & Security Section

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### a. Political System

The Republic of Italy is based on a constitution established in 1948. Italy is atypical of Europe, as it has had the same political party in power for many years (Christian Democrats). It has only recently been facing shifts in the political parties' design. The national electoral system has also undergone significant development, and consequently gained in complexity. Finally, it is important to note that the country's politics are continually the subject of corruption and scandals, which surprisingly did not affect its economic system's strength, until the 2011 Eurozone crisis. The national judicial system, headed by the Constitutional Court and the Court of Cassation, is usually involved in the regular political issues of the country, and thus played an important role in the Italian political system's restructuration in the 1990s.

Italy's head of state is the President of the Republic (currently Sergio Mattarella), elected by an electoral college – Deputies, Senators and Regional Delegates – for a renewable seven years-term. He holds no executive powers but heads the armed forces, can veto legislation, dissolve the Parliament, and call elections. Italy's executive branch is comprised of the national government, led by the President of the Council (currently Matteo Renzi, Democratic Party), who is nominated by the Head of State and appointed by the Parliament. The President of the Council suggests the composition of the government, which is later appointed by the Head of State and approved by the Parliament by a motion of confidence. Despite the long-standing success of the Christian Democrats, Italian Governments have been rather unstable. Since 1945, only one has served a full five year-term. The current majority coalition is made of ministers from the Democratic Party (center-left), the New Centre-Right (center-right), the Union of the Centre (centrist), the Civic Choice (centrist), and the Italian Socialist Party (center-left).

Its legislative powers lie in a parliamentary democracy, in which the lower house (*Camera dei Deputati*) and the upper house (*Senato della Repubblica*) have equal rights and powers ('perfect bicameralism'). They are currently both led by an unstable Democratic Party majority. The lower house is made of 630 deputies elected for five years, mostly by proportional representation. Among them, 17 represent nationals permanently living abroad and elected in foreign districts. The upper house is composed of 315 members elected by proportional representation for five years, including six senators elected in foreign districts to represent Italians living abroad.

After the Second World War, the Christian Democrats dominated Italian politics, with the Italian Communist Party leading the opposition. In the early 1990s, a major political scandal and electoral development transformed Italian politics. Today, there are three broad coalitions: the Center-Left led by Matteo Renzi of the Democratic Party, Center-Right led by the business leader Silvio Berlusconi from the People of Freedom, and Centrist led by Mario Monti from the Civic Choice. There is also one isolated Eurosceptic and anti-austerity party, the Five Star Movement led by the comedian Enrico Grillo.<sup>1</sup>

### b. Foreign Policy

Italy's foreign policy is traditionally characterized by connections with European integration and transatlantic partnership. Since 2013, the country's strong figures (e.g. former foreign ministers Bonino and Mogherini, and prime ministers Letta and Renzi) engendered a boost in Italian foreign policy. The country has recently been **precursory and strongly active** in

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<sup>1</sup> Darlington, R., "A short guide to the Italian Political System", *Roger Darlington's World*, February 6, 2015. Web. September 14, 2015. <http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Italianpoliticalsystem.html>

problematic and neighboring areas such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East. Despite the economic difficulties it faced, Italy took strong stances on international crises: it expressed its opposition to military intervention in Syria, asserted interest in Iran, finalized the agreement over the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline going from Azerbaijan to Europe, and managed to remain vocal regarding European integration. The country has been especially concerned about migration in the Mediterranean area, in which it was one of the first and still principal stakeholders, as demonstrated by its rescue mission *Mare Nostrum* launched in October 2013. In addition, Italy was particularly forerunner of warnings about the Libyan crisis and the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

Italy is overall synchronized with its Transatlantic and European partners' approaches, as in the case of 2011 military intervention in Libya (despite previous support to Gaddafi's regime). **Libya** nonetheless remains one of Italy's top priorities due to the long-established trade and diplomatic links between the two countries. Some issues are differently viewed by Italy in comparison to the majority of Western states, for instance concerning **Syria, Ukraine, and Iran**, which might be explained by Italian economic, energy and political important ties with Russia.<sup>3</sup> Italy notably opposed to EU sanctions on Syria in 2014<sup>4</sup>, was initially opposed to EU actions on the Ukrainian crisis<sup>5</sup>, and asserted its readiness to cooperate with Iran in political, trade, economic and commercial fields (in contrast with the EU). Together with Hungary, Cyprus and Greece, Italy is part of the small group of EU countries that aim at maintaining friendly relations with Russia. With current Western-Russian tensions, Italy focuses on promoting its **role of mediator**. Ukrainian President Poroshenko recognized this role after former Prime Minister Renzi visited Ukraine and Russia in March 2015.<sup>6</sup>

#### *European Union (EU)*

Italy is one of the six founding members of the EU. It is committed to **European integration**, especially in the field of finance and trade. It firmly supports the projects of a banking union and of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)<sup>7</sup>. In 2010, the former European Commissioner Mario Monti drafted a report for the European Commission named "A new strategy for a single market". This report constitutes the basis of European laws that enhance the potential for the single market in terms of sustainable growth. Moreover, former Governor of the Bank of Italy Mario Draghi is currently President of the European Central Bank (until 2019).<sup>8</sup> During the 2014 Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the country emphasized specific priorities: employment and economic growth; solidarity, democracy,

<sup>2</sup> Tocci, N. "Italy's Foreign Policy Activism: The Quest for Sustainability", *Transatlantic Academy*, January 20, 2015. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015. <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/node/763>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Gardner, A. "Italy blocks sanctions on Syria", *Politico*, October 17, 2014. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/italy-blocks-sanctions-on-syria/>

<sup>5</sup> Cristiani, D. "Getting the Balance Right: Italy and the Ukrainian Crisis", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 12, Issue 48, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015.

[http://www.jamestown.org/regions/europe/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=43661&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=5e2be1d7b7b83f67d6322b2bafb79b1e#.Vfp963gRnq0](http://www.jamestown.org/regions/europe/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43661&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=5e2be1d7b7b83f67d6322b2bafb79b1e#.Vfp963gRnq0)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; Wilkin, S. and Scherer S. "Iran's President Rouhani to visit Rome: Italian ministry", *Reuters*, August 5, 2015. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015. [http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/05/us-iran-italy-invitation-idUSKCN0QA00A20150805http://www.jamestown.org/regions/europe/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=43661&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=5e2be1d7b7b83f67d6322b2bafb79b1e#.Vfp963gRnq0](http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/05/us-iran-italy-invitation-idUSKCN0QA00A20150805http://www.jamestown.org/regions/europe/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43661&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=5e2be1d7b7b83f67d6322b2bafb79b1e#.Vfp963gRnq0)

<sup>7</sup> Tocci, N. "Italy's Foreign Policy Activism: The Quest for Sustainability", *Transatlantic Academy*, January 20, 2015. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015. <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/node/763>

<sup>8</sup> "Italy's role in the Construction of a United Europe", *Farnesina: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*, 2015. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. [http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica\\_europea/italia\\_in\\_ue](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_europea/italia_in_ue)

rights and freedom; and the EU's common foreign policy. It is in this year that former Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini was appointed High Representative of the EU's foreign affairs and defense policy/Vice President of the European Commission.<sup>9</sup>

Recently, the Italian government has voiced particular concern over the **refugee crisis** affecting Europe, and especially Mediterranean countries such as Italy. With this regard, Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni called for a strong European response, together with France and Germany, which he believes will be determinant for the Union's future. Gentiloni principally mentioned the objectives of common European asylum and repatriation law and equal distribution of refugees across Europe.<sup>10</sup> Italy also encourages accession negotiations with the **Western Balkans** and new impetus to the negotiations with Turkey. Gentiloni notably argued for stronger European cooperation in the fields of economics, migration and education, including European assistance to the Balkan countries during the Western Balkans Summit of August 2015<sup>11</sup>.

### c. Peace & Security Policy

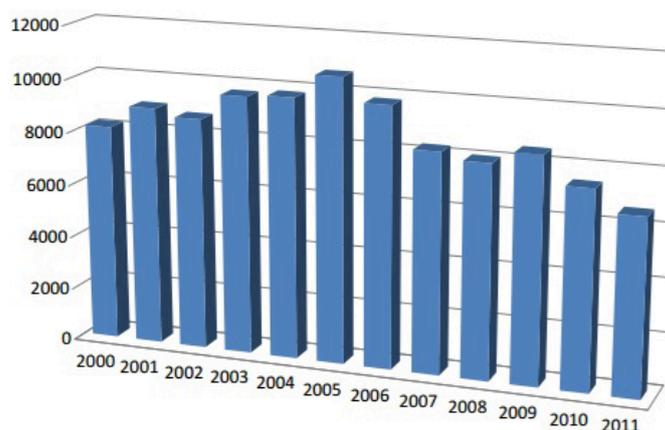
Italy's main objective in the field of security and defense is to remain influential in the international and European fora, because of its rather unstable geopolitical position, added to its inability to influence developments in those areas. Italy thus aims to keep close links with the United States through NATO and with the EU through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), mainly by **continued involvement in international operations** (e.g. 1999 Allied Force Operation in Kosovo, 2002-2014 International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, 2004-2015 EUFOR Althea in Bosnia & Herzegovina). Until the economic crisis that affected the country in 2011, national interests were in accordance with Italy's foreign and security policy. However, public opinion recently regarded the national defense expenses (€20.078 – 1,29% of GDP) and commitment in international missions as superfluous, compared to domestic issues. In addition, the growing euro-skepticism in the country, as promoted by the Five Star Movement, does not help in strengthening public opinion's positive judgment of Italy's foreign and security strategic choices. As a result, Italy's national defense budget and involvement in operations abroad have been declining in the past years.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Programme of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union", *2014 Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, June 16, 2014. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. <http://italia2014.eu/en/presidency-and-eu/programme-and-priorities/programme-of-the-italian-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union/>

<sup>10</sup> "The unending migration tragedy – Gentiloni: 'Now Europe knows' ", Press releases, *Farnesina: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*, August 29, 2015. Web. [http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala\\_stampa/archivionotizie/interviste/2015/08/la-strage-senza-fine-dei-migranti.html](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/interviste/2015/08/la-strage-senza-fine-dei-migranti.html) ; "Gentiloni: 'Too much pressure on Italy and Germany, either Europe acts or we're over the cliff' (la Repubblica)", Press releases, *Farnesina: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*, September 14, 2015. Web. [http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala\\_stampa/archivionotizie/interviste/2015/09/gentiloni-troppo-pressione-su-italia.html](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/interviste/2015/09/gentiloni-troppo-pressione-su-italia.html) ; "Gentiloni: Italy, Germany and France jointly address immigration", Press releases, *Farnesina: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*, February 9, 2015. Web. [http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala\\_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2015/09/gentiloni-impegno-comune-di-italia.html](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2015/09/gentiloni-impegno-comune-di-italia.html)

<sup>11</sup> " 'Berlin Process' – Gentiloni attends the Western Balkans Summit 2015", Press releases, *Farnesina: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*, August 27, 2015. Web. [http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala\\_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2015/08/processo-di-berlino-gentiloni-al.html](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2015/08/processo-di-berlino-gentiloni-al.html)

<sup>12</sup> Marrone, A., Tessari, P., and De Simone, C. "Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches", *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, No. 12E, December 2014. Web. Accessed September 14, 2015. <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/italian-interests-and-nato>

**Italian Armed Forces participation in operations abroad in the last decade**

Source: Stefania Forte and Alessandro Marrone (eds.), "L'Italia e le missioni internazionali", cit., p. 49.

In Italy, NATO plays the role of an “insurance policy” for national peace and security, as for many European countries. Moreover, it maintains Italy’s good relations with the US and boosts its international influence. This is however currently threatened by the Western crisis with Russia, another important Italian ally in energy and commercial enterprise. Moreover, the recent US pivot in military commitment towards the Asia Pacific region engineered a limitation in European and Italian military interventions. Therefore, the country’s security priorities have been challenged by its strategic partners’ decisions, which put the country in an uncomfortable situation as a result of Italy’s **multilateral strategic approach**<sup>13</sup>.

In order to remain stable and influent in the region, Italy should turn more towards the European Union itself. Indeed, as a medium power, Italy must continue to see the EU’s CSDP and NATO as complementary tools of military cooperation. It should maintain a working **balance between European and Transatlantic** means of foreign policy, despite its declining defense budget and domestic political reforms, which is not going to be easy. Also, the country should manage to deal with four **simultaneous sources of pressure** (migrants from the South, gas from Russia, cash from China, and US military footprint) by means of consistent policies, which is difficult with the rather unstable character of Italian politics.<sup>14</sup>

### *European Union (EU)*

Italy is a supporter of European Integration, in particular in the field of foreign, security, and defense affairs, and thus in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP. The country is in fact the second largest contributor to CSDP civilian and military missions, and notably proposed the “More Europe on Defence” agenda in 2013. It has been involved in many civilian and military missions, including: EUFOR Althea (Bosnia & Herzegovina, since 2004), Concordia (FYROM, 2003), Artemis (DRC, 2003), EUFOR DRC (2006) and EUFOR Tchad/RCA (2008-2009).

<sup>13</sup> Marrone, A., Tessari, P., and De Simone, C. “Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches”, *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, No. 12E, December 2014. Web. Accessed September 14, 2015. <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/italian-interests-and-nato>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; Dassu, M. “Letter From Rome”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 12, 2015. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60380>

According to Alessandro Marrone from the *Instituto Affari Internazionali*, the CSDP is important for Italy because it is a framework for collective action that is more effective than unilateral action in many cases. It also fits the Italian strategic culture based on multilateralism, international law and civil-military cooperation. The link is strengthened by the fact that the former Italian Foreign Minister (Federica Mogherini) was appointed HR/VP in 2014.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, in her “Letter from Rome”, Marta Dassù from the *Aspen Institute* argues that even though Italy clearly believes that its national interests in the Mediterranean coincide with European interests, it might be playing the card of European solidarity simply because it is interested in sharing the pressures of migration, by means of “moral suasion” with EU partners.<sup>16</sup>

The Italian military operation *Mare Nostrum* launched in 2013 in order to manage migration in the Mediterranean Sea paved the way for the establishment of its European successor *Triton* in November 2014, put in place by the EU Frontex Agency. In opposition to the Italian Operation, *Triton* is not aimed at saving migrants at Sea, but rather to control European borders within the limits of European territorial waters.<sup>17</sup> More recently, in May 2015, a EU naval operational force named *EUNAVFOR Med* was established in order to prevent human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean. One of the four naval units engaged include the Italian flagship, and the five air assets also count two Italian helicopters. Its Operation Headquarters are notably strategically located in Rome under the lead of Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino.<sup>18</sup>

#### *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*

As mentioned previously, Italy relies on NATO as complementary to the EU’s CSDP, according to its multilateral approach to security. It has an “**insurance policy**” role for the country. Following the recent evolution of the international system, NATO has become a collective tool for crisis management rather than a purely defensive alliance, which suits Italy’s aspiration to remain influent on the global scene through involvement in civilian and military missions (e.g. in Kosovo and Afghanistan). For the period 2014-2015, Italy was participating in almost 9% of NATO’s common-funded budgets and programmes, which is the fourth largest contribution among EU countries<sup>19</sup>.

The enlargement of NATO in Eastern Europe that took place since the 2000s is thus a good omen for Italy, which seeks to normalize its relation with the Western Balkans for strategic purposes. It is also providing a crucial framework for the country’s foreign and defense policy as regards both the US and European powers, because it allows Italy to remain influent in

<sup>15</sup> Marrone, A. “Italy and the CSDP” in Fiott, D. (ed.) “The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives”, *Egmont Institute*, No. 79, May 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Dassu, M. “Letter From Rome”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 12, 2015. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60380>

<sup>17</sup> Pouchard, A. “Migrants en Méditerranée: après ‘Mare Nostrum’, qu’est-ce que l’opération ‘Triton’?”, *Les Décodeurs*, Le Monde, April 20, 2015. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. [http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/04/20/migrants-en-mediteranee-qu-est-ce-que-l-operation-triton\\_4619129\\_4355770.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/04/20/migrants-en-mediteranee-qu-est-ce-que-l-operation-triton_4619129_4355770.html)

<sup>18</sup> “EUNAVFOR MED FORCE fully operational”, Press Releases, *The European External Action Service*, July 28, 2015. Web. Accessed September 21, 2015. [http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/press-releases/20150728\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/press-releases/20150728_en.htm)

<sup>19</sup> “NATO Common-Funded Budgets & Programmes”, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Web. Accessed September 22, 2015. [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2014\\_06/20140611\\_20140601\\_NATO\\_common\\_funded\\_budgets\\_2014-2015.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf)

these circles without being excessively ambitious or expensive. According to Marrone et al. in *Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches*, keeping NATO strong and mobile is indispensable for Italy's national security. However, the **deterioration of NATO-Russia relations** is problematic for the country's foreign policy, divided between political and economic interests.<sup>20</sup>

#### *United Nations (UN)*

Italy joined the United Nations in 1955, and has been one of the **top contributing countries** to UN peacekeeping in the past years (in 7<sup>th</sup> position for 2013-2015, contributing to 4,45% of the budget<sup>21</sup>). In August 2015, it had more than 1.100 troops engaged in peacekeeping operations<sup>22</sup> (including in UNIFIL in Lebanon, UNMIK in Kosovo and MINUSMA in Mali<sup>23</sup>). Considering the current transition of the international system toward a multipolar equilibrium, Marrone et al. argue in *Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches* that Western hegemony is challenged and thus the United Nations somewhat paralyzed<sup>24</sup>. This is not satisfying the Italian defense policy of activism through participation in international missions.

#### *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*

Italy was one of the founding members of the OSCE (created in 1973 as the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*) and is a major donor to this organization, as it contributed to 10,4% of its unified budget (€ 14.828.603) and had 51 nationals involved in its staff in 2014<sup>25</sup>. Recently, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media pointed out the necessary improvement of members of the media's protection in Italy, following recent attacks against journalists in the country, which "impairs freedom of expression and the public's access to information"<sup>26</sup>.

#### *Council of Europe (CoE)*

Italy joined the Council of Europe at its foundation in 1949. In 2015, Italy contributed to 8,37% of the organization's budget (€ 34 900 364). The Italian Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni was also re-elected to the post of Deputy Secretary General of the CoE, which is her second mandate<sup>27</sup>. Italy was recently pointed out by the European Court of Human Rights, following its ruling in the case *Oliari and Others v. Italy* on July 21, 2015 where male applicants were

<sup>20</sup> Marrone, A., Tessari, P., and De Simone, C. "Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches", *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, No. 12E, December 2014. Web. Accessed September 14, 2015.

<http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/italian-interests-and-nato>

<sup>21</sup> "Financing Peacekeeping", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2015. Web. Accessed June 29, 2015.

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml>

<sup>22</sup> "Contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, August 31, 2015.

Web. Accessed September 22. [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/aug15\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/aug15_1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> "UN Mission's Contributions by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, August 31, 2015. Web. Accessed September 22, 2015. [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/aug15\\_5.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/aug15_5.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Marrone, A., Tessari, P., and De Simone, C. "Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches", *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, No. 12E, December 2014. Web. Accessed September 14, 2015.

<http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/italian-interests-and-nato>

<sup>25</sup> The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015. Web. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

<sup>26</sup> Vrang, G. "Trend of intimidation and threats to journalists in Italy must be reversed, OSCE Representative says", *The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, August 31, 2015. Web. Accessed September 22, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/fom/179151>

<sup>27</sup> "Italy", *The Council of Europe*, 2015. Web. Accessed September 22, 2015.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/italy>

unjustly denied the right to marry or to enter into any type of civil union. The applicants were found in favor because of the obligations of CoE member states to offer legal alternatives to gay couples, if it is not possible for them to get married<sup>28</sup>.

### *Strategic Culture*

According to Paolo Rosa's article *The accommodationist state: Strategic culture and Italy's military behavior*, the country's strategic culture has been consistently combining elements of *realpolitik* and pacifist tendencies. Despite the changing international environment, Italy's attitude toward the use of force has been that "military power should be used very circumspectly, that is, only defensively and within a multilateral framework"<sup>29</sup>. The author thus characterizes Italy as **acomodationist**: a country that considers the state of war to be exceptional rather than normal, believes interstate relations should be primarily cooperative, and rejects the use of military force as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. In practice, these characteristics are illustrated by a diplomatic inclination to negotiate and reach compromise through international institutions and instruments, in order to settle conflicts.

Italy's striking defeat in the Second World War influenced the national opposition to solve international disputes by making use of force, as the **pacifist penchant** of Article 11 of the Italian Constitution illustrates ("Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes"). In addition to various others internal factors (e.g. leading Catholic and left-wing political factions in the post-Cold War era), the military clauses of the Peace Treaty and the inclusion of Italy in the Western Bloc participated in the establishment of an accommodationist Italian strategic culture.

Paolo Rosa argues that, after the Cold War, Italy's foreign and security policy mainly showed elements of continuity (same cultural practice), even though the country started to be willing to play a **more independent international role** (more assertiveness). He explains that Italy's preference for a defensive stance prevailed, but its quiet character gave way to increased projection of military power appearing in peacekeeping and peacebuilding mission. The country thus still uses force with reluctance, greatly supports multilateral organizations, and frames its interventions as peace missions. Despite this, Italy deepened its defense budget and increased its support for international security organizations, as well as slowly turned towards unilateral action.<sup>30</sup>

### **d. Economic Policy**

#### *European Union (EU)*

Italy has the **third largest economy in the Euro zone**, mostly based on industrial activity, especially manufacturing of high-quality consumer goods. In the first forty years of EU membership, the country experienced high GDP growth rates, which went below the Union's average after 1992. Italy initially tackled the situation by increasing public spending (expansionary fiscal policy), however the public debt and budget deficit reached

<sup>28</sup> Papademetriou, T. "European Court of Human Rights: Decision on Gay Marriage in Italy", *The Library of Congress*, September 14, 2015. Web. Accessed September 22, 2015.

[http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc\\_news?disp3\\_l205404606\\_text](http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_l205404606_text)

<sup>29</sup> Rosa, P. "The accommodationist state: Strategic Culture and Italy's military behavior", *International Relations*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, 2014, p. 89. Web. Accessed September 22, 2015.

<http://ire.sagepub.com/content/28/1/88.full.pdf+html>

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

unsustainable levels. Since 2012, the country has imposed austerity measures (contractionary fiscal policy) that have led to a slow economic recovery.<sup>31</sup>

According to the OECD, Italy's economy is now recovering due to comprehensive reforms aimed at boosting GDP growth. The Organization however states that two key challenges remain. First, the **rigid labor market** is to be reformed in order to increase competition. Second, the **high public debt** must be reduced by means of public expenditures restraint and tax increases, together with renewed growth and low interest rates.<sup>32</sup> Italy improved its GDP growth rate since 2012 (July 2012: -0,5%; July 2013: 0,1%; July 2014: -0,2%; July 2015: 0,3%), mostly as a result of increased domestic demand, which contributes to about sixty percent of the country's GDP<sup>33</sup>. Italy's GDP rose for two consecutive quarters in 2015 (January-March and April-June), which illustrates clear economic growth<sup>34</sup>.

The European Commission points out in its *2015 country report* that Italy's growth is still well below the EU average (1,4% rate in 2014<sup>35</sup>) and that its public debt-to-GDP ratio is likely to increase further to reach 133% in the Winter of 2015. It projects that the government deficit will decrease in 2015 and 2016 (after a historical peak at €2218234 million in May 2015, it decreased from €2203640 million in June 2015 to €2199178.90 million in July 2015<sup>36</sup>). Besides the need to address the weak external competitiveness and high public debt already mentioned by the OECD, the European Commission emphasizes the necessary focus on Italian productive investment, which was strongly affected by the crisis (it declined and deteriorated in quality), and on the potential source of spillovers Italy represents for other EU member states.<sup>37</sup>

### *Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade*

The Italian energy firm ENI (*Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi*) founded in 1953 allowed Italy to lead the way in exploiting **oil resources in Libya** for more than 60 years and to maintain friendly relations with the country even after the international community's condemnation of Gaddafi's regime in the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, when US and British firms withdrew from Libya after the Pan Am jet bombing of 1988, Italy ignored the incident and was rewarded with more ENI oil contracts in Libya. Furthermore, the two countries entered cooperative arrangements in the 2000s, dealing with the prevention of illegal migration of Libyans towards Italian coasts.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Italy Economic Indicators", *Trading Economics*, September 2015. Web. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/italy/indicators>

<sup>32</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *OECD Economic Surveys: Italy 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, February 2015. Web. Accessed September 24, 2015. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco\\_surveys-ita-2015-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-ita-2015-en)

<sup>33</sup> "Italy Economic Indicators", *Trading Economics*, September 2015. Web. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/italy/indicators>

<sup>34</sup> Anna, "Italian Economy Expands Less Than Expected", *Trading Economics*, August 14, 2015. Web. Accessed September 28, 2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/articles/08142015090934.htm>

<sup>35</sup> "Real GDP growth rate – volume", *Eurostat*, 2015. Web. Accessed September 24, 2015.

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tec00115&plugin=1>

<sup>36</sup> "Italy Economic Indicators", *Trading Economics*, September 2015. Web. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/italy/indicators>

<sup>37</sup> European Commission, *Country Report Italy 2015 including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances*, Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels, March 18, 2015. Web. Accessed September 28, 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015\\_italy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_italy_en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Rosenberg, J. M. "Italy Could Bring Prosperity to the Mediterranean Nations", *Foreign Policy Journal*, June 26, 2015. Web. Accessed September 17, 2015. <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/06/26/italy-could-bring-prosperity-to-the-mediterranean-nations/>

Losing influence on Libya, Italy finally went to war against Gaddafi through NATO operations from March 2011, and restarted oil production in September that year, reflecting positive relations with the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC). Nonetheless, the growing tensions between the various Libyan militias led the NTC to leave the capital and Islamists to gain influence in the country. Today, according to Jerry M. Rosenberg, Libya's disintegration leaves Italy with no choice but to defend stability and cessation of violence in order to regain its influence, through its potential role as both arbiter and negotiator.<sup>39</sup>

#### e. Other Diplomatic Priorities

Italy has been one of the first European countries to face the repercussions of the political turmoil in the Middle East, specifically, countless smuggler boats of migrants and refugees arriving on its national coasts. The launch of *Mare Nostrum* illustrates the impact of the "Lampedusa disaster" of October 2013. According to Elif Cetin from the University of Cambridge, massive immigration to Europe has led to the development of multiple policy measures that externalized border controls and strongly affected relations between countries. Notably, under the center-left coalition, Italy has signed various bilateral agreements with countries of North Africa (e.g. Libya and Egypt in 2007) in order to prevent irregular immigration into its territory. This faced intense criticism because of the low level of human rights implementation in the concerned countries.

In her article *The Italian left and Italy's (evolving) foreign policy of immigration controls*, Elif Cetin explains that Italian policymakers pushed for illegal immigrants' rapid expulsion from the country and for the prevention of their entry into Europe, in spite of the Italian left-wing parties' emphasis on the protection of legal immigrants' human rights. The author argues that the center-right coalition's rhetoric on immigration, the socio-economic need for migrant workers, and the geographical position of Italy (next to major sending countries and regions) affected the stated immigration policy preferences of the left-wing parties. These factors contributed to "constraining the scope of populist immigration rhetoric in practice, marking the effect of different logics that guide the formulation of immigration discourse and practice"<sup>40</sup>. The author concludes by saying that the boundaries between the different Italian political factions blurred when they came to power, in terms of practical immigration policy. In fact, externalization of border controls gave Italy some immunity against legislative and judicial constraints. Therefore, "Italian immigration policies present a continuity in which governments from different sides of the political spectrum always pursued a necessary pragmatism in policy at the expense of political rhetoric"<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Cetin, E. "The Italian left and Italy's (evolving) foreign policy of immigration controls" *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 20, Issue 3, 2015 p. 392. Web. Accessed September 28, 2015.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

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