

Country Check (3): **Italian**

# One boot – two faces

A lot of tradition - and a currently rapidly growing market. That's one way to describe Italy as an equestrian (sports) country. After all, it was an Italian cavalry captain who revolutionised the equestrian sport with an entirely new method of riding. And it is Italy where the most traditional horse race of the world has been held since the 12th century. The presence has a lot to offer as well, though. The Italian FEI association reports "continuous growth". In part 3 of our "Country Check" series we are drawing a portrait of Italy and its equestrian trade sector.

**M**any Italian regions such as Tuscany, Sardinia or the suburbs of Rome have a centuries-old tradition of horse breeding," says Luca Rinco, one of the owners of the company Rinco Impianti Ippici, market leader in the riding facilities construction sector in his home country. Another legendary Italian feature are the cowboys, the Butteri in Tuscany and Latium. "The breeding history of many horse breeds is deeply rooted in the specific characteristics of the respective region," the co-owner of Rinco, Roberto Rinco, adds.

Currently, Italy celebrates its 150th anniversary as a nation. On 17 March 1861, Viktor Emanuel II had proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy in Turin. One horse was significantly involved in the creation

of Italy, so much so that it was honoured with a monument in 1876, which is still paid tribute to today. The grey mare "Marsala" was buried on the Mediterranean island of Caprera. Her master, the freedom fighter Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882), had a slogan engraved on the horse's gravestone: "Here lies Marsala, who carried Garibaldi to Palermo in 1860."

Rome, which was proclaimed the capital of Italy in 1871, is home to approximately 2.9 of the 61 million inhabitants. Apart from the eternal city, there is only one further city with more than one million inhabitants - Milan (1.3 million). Other large cities include Naples (980,000), Turin (908,000), Palermo (680,000) and Genoa (590,000 inhabitants). Italy is divided into 20 political regions (regioni) with their own government structure. Five of these regions - Sicily, Sardinia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trentino South Tyrol and the Aosta Valley - have a special statute (statuto speciale) with far-reaching financial autonomy.

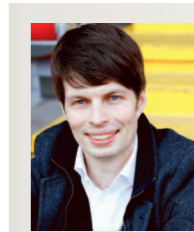
## PROSPERITY VERSUS UNEMPLOYMENT

Most of Italy's state territory is located on the Apennine peninsula, which is enclosed by the Mediterranean. Apart from 2000 kilometres of borders (Germany: 3600 kilometres), Italy also has 7600 kilometres of coast (Germany: 2400). In between, Italy is a divided country. While the north is relatively rich, the south suffers from low economic growth, high unemployment rates, hardly any infrastructure and corruption everywhere. The Mezzogiorno - the south of Italy - is struggling with a variety of issues. According to a current study of the economic institute Svimez, the economy in the south grew by only about 13 per cent from 2000 to 2014. This is less than half as much as in Greece.

## INEQUALITIES ON THE INCREASE

According to the figures published by Svimez, the economic inequalities within Italy continue to increase. Obviously, they are at the highest level since 2000. While the per capita income in the south dropped to below 17,000 euros per year, the average income in South Tyrol is 20,000 euros higher. In the south, about 60 per cent of the young people are unemployed. Some areas of the tip of the Italian boot are regarded as lawless country reigned by the mafia. The most powerful criminal organisation is the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta.

The shadow economy plays a relatively large role in the country. For the legal economy, on the other hand, Germany has a huge importance. Both with regard to exports and imports, Germany is the most important trading partner of the fourth largest EU economy. In 2014, Italy exported goods worth 398.9 billion euros and imported goods worth 356.9 billion euros. 2.4 per cent of the gross domestic product of 1636.4 billion euros were generated by the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector.



## OUR AUTHOR

Sebastian Reichert, qualified journalist, head of the Reitsport BRANCHE office in Leipzig, is in charge of the Country Check section.

If you are interested, please get in touch with Sebastian Reichert ([sebastian-reichert@gmx.de](mailto:sebastian-reichert@gmx.de)) or the RB editorial team ([info@meenen-presseservice.de](mailto:info@meenen-presseservice.de))

Your criticism and suggestions are most welcome.

## HORSE MEAT IS NO TABOO

With around 49 million hectolitres, Italy is the largest wine producer in the world and the second largest producer of olive oil with 442,000 tons. Other economically significant sectors are the production of cheese (Parmesan, mozzarella, Pecorino, ricotta) as well as the cultivation and export of oranges, lemons, tomatoes, aubergines, courgettes and melons. Overall, Italy is the world's ninth largest agricultural exporter. And perhaps another interesting value from the economic data: compared to other European countries, Italians eat quite a lot of horse meat - according to the figures of the EU statistical agency Eurostat one kilo per head and year; for comparison: Germans eat about 40 grams.





## EQUESTRIANISM IN THE TOP TEN

The umbrella association for all riders, drivers, vaulters etc. is the Federazione Italiana Sport Equestri (FISE), founded in 1926, with approximately 130,000 members and rising. According to their own data, the association had no more than 22,000 members in 1998. In the year 2000, there were already more than twice as many, and 2009 saw the 100,000 limit cracked. The biggest sports federation is the national football association, though - the Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (FIGC) with 1.5 million registered players. Officially, 4.9 million Italians play football. With regard to the number of members, the FISE is the eight largest sports association of the country. In Italy, there are 350,000 horses, 20,000 of which are competition horses.

The national horse industry occupies around 50,000 Italians. There are 5000 breeding farms in the country. At the Fieracavalli in November 2015 there were 3000 horses of 60 different breeds. The international four-day fair for equestrian sports and riding equipment attracted around 160,000 visitors to Verona. At the trade fair, which has a tradition reaching back to the year 1898, 35 breeding organisations and more than 750 exhibitors were represented, and there were hundreds of demonstrations and competitions.



The most traditional horse race of the world - the Palio in Siena

## RETAIL TRADE WITHOUT MANY BRANCHES

On the other hand, there is no trade fair for the approximately 250 equestrian retailers in Italy. Italy has no counterparts to Krämer, Equiva and Loesdau, by the way. Most of Italy's specialist trade consists of rather small shops. As far as the number of square metres is concerned, the shops are significantly smaller than most equestrian retail stores in Germany, the traditional company Tattini explains. The company, which goes back to the year 1860 and is based in Spoleto near Perugia, is a specialist for leather riding boots made in Italy.

There are no large chains with lots of branches. A powerful player in the Italian equestrian trade sector is the French company Decathlon with 112 retail stores, however. The Decathlon sports shops also sell clothing, equipment and accessories for horse and rider.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE: FEMALE AND RICH

"While in Germany the equestrian sport is also a thing of the Mittelstand, in Italy it is rather the wealthier people who ride", says insider Heike Schmidt, HS Events & Communication, who used to work for the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Frankfurt for a number of years. In Italy, the typical rider is still not only female but also rich. For Monika Grasso from Verona-based riding boots manufacturer Sergio Grasso the fact that equestrianism is still not anchored in the middle of society is a question of money as well as mentality. "The children would like to ride, but the parents are often afraid. It's the same with swimming. If you're not able to swim yourself, you're not going to take your children to the swimming pool."



Monica Grasso, Sergio Grasso

*"The children would like to ride, but the parents are often afraid."*

In one town in Tuscany, it is a different thing, though: the most traditional horse race of the world - the Palio of Siena - is kind of a world cultural heritage there. The districts of Siena have been competing against each other in a 90-second-race twice a year (on 2 July and 16 August) since the 12th century. 60,000 spectators squeeze together on the main square of the Tuscan town to watch the break-neck race on unsaddled horses. The Piazza di Siena (CSIO Rome), on the other hand, is a traditional event of the modern era. It is an international five-star show jumping tournament that is held in Rome every year in May. The first jumping tournament was held in 1922.

At that time, the show jumping position as it is common today, started its triumph. The decisive pioneer of the so-called forward seat was a cavalry captain of the Italian army - Federico Caprilli (1868-1907). It is due to the teaching of this cavalry school trainer that the new seat could be established which allows the rider to follow the movements of the horse and relieves the horses back when jumping - the so-called Italian or natural riding method. Thanks to Caprilli - who also gave his name to the Caprilli test - show jumping became a special discipline that requires a special training.

The company Tattini in Spoleto. The company headquarters of the renowned Italian manufacturer is located between Perugia and Rome. The company owners, yDonatella and Enrico Tattini



## Country comparison:



	Italy	Germany
Square kilometres	301.340	357.340
Inhabitants	61 Millionen	82 Millionen
Largest population group	25 to 54 years (42,7 %)	25 to 54 years (41,4 %)
Number of births	8,7	8,5
Population growth	0,3 per cent	0,4 per cent
Gross domestic product	26.900 Euro	37.000 Euro
Unemployment rate	11,9 per cent	4,7 per cent
Utilised agricultural area	12,3 million hectares (46,3%)	16,7 million hectares (47,9%)
Largest city in terms of inhabitants	Rome (2,9 Millionen)	Berlin (3,5 Millionen)
Number of large cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants)	45	77
Umbrella association	Federazione Italiana Sport Equestri/FISE	Deutsche Reiterliche Vereinigung/FN
(members)	(128.209)	(697.126)
Number of riders	310.000	1,7 million
FEI tournaments	259	331
Number of competition horses	20.000	147.000
Total number of horses	350.000	1,1 million
Equestrian trade fairs	none	spoga horse, Köln
Main equestrian fair	Fieracavalli, Verona	Equitana, Essen
Number of equestrian magazines	5	more than 60
Number of equestrian specialist shops	approximately 250	more than 1.500

Sources: Information provided by FFE, FISE, Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI); estimates

## MORE RIDERS, MORE EXHIBITORS

"Caprilli was a revolutionary of equestrianism," said Monica Grasso from the Italian boots manufacturer. Her company was one of 36 exhibitors from Italy at the spoga horse in September 2016. Thus, Italy had the third largest number of exhibitors at the international trade fair for equestrian sports with a total of 410 exhibitors behind Germany (88 exhibitors), India

(88) and France (38), together with Great Britain (36). In the past few years, the number of companies from Italy exhibiting in Cologne had continually been rising, the fair management said. The number of equestrians in Italy is increasing. The Italian builder of equestrian yards and stables, Rinco, is entering the German market. All these examples show one thing: there is a lot going on in the Italian equestrian industry.

*"The breeding history of many horse breeds is deeply rooted in the specific characteristics of the respective region."*



Roberto Rinco (right, with brother Luca), owner of Rinco

westip

westip...  
For all things elastic



**Saddle girths** – made of high-quality, heavy-elastic polyamide strap (10 cm wide)

- in a Western, dressage or eventing design
- elastic or inelastic
- with stainless steel buckles
- length according to your wishes

### Elastic training bandages

- fastener with perforated tape and patent button (with Velcro strip on request)
- strong design offering good support, well-padded
- stretched length 4.5 m

**Stable bandages** - made of wool acrylic or pure new wool

- fastener with perforated tape and patent button (with Velcro strip on request)
- warm and protective with excellent cushioning effect
- 3, 4, 5 and 6 m in length

**Elastic surcingles** - made of high-quality, elastic polyamide strap (5 or 8 cm wide)

- adjusting slider and safety clasp made of brass
- non-extended length 2 m

**Lunges** – made of soft band material

- elastic or inelastic
- two different ways of buckling
- 7 m in length

### Elastic and inelastic straps

- for manufacturing and saddlery
- sold by the metre
- or cut to length by ultrasound

**Wilhelm Westip Textil-Elastic-GmbH**

Neuenbaumer Weg 90 • D-42111 Wuppertal

Email: westip@t-online.de

Phone +49 (0) 2 02/ 7 70 67 • Fax +49 (0) 2 02/ 70 66