

WARM UP

1 What goods and services do you think Italy exports and imports? What are the country's main trading partners?

Made in Italy

Italian exports have played an important role during this economic crisis for the growth of the Italian economy. As internal demand dropped, leading to a fall in imports, the role of exports was fundamental in both 2011 and 2012. 2012 export trends reflected the global economic situation, with a drop in exports to the euro area, continued growth, even if at a slower rate than the previous year, to non-EU and emerging markets, and a slightly more dynamic growth in exports to the USA. In 2012, the top two export performances came from machinery and metallurgy products. Coke and petroleum derivatives showed the biggest increase, while

foodstuffs, cars and clothing also showed an increase. The worst performing sectors were means of transport, furniture and textiles.

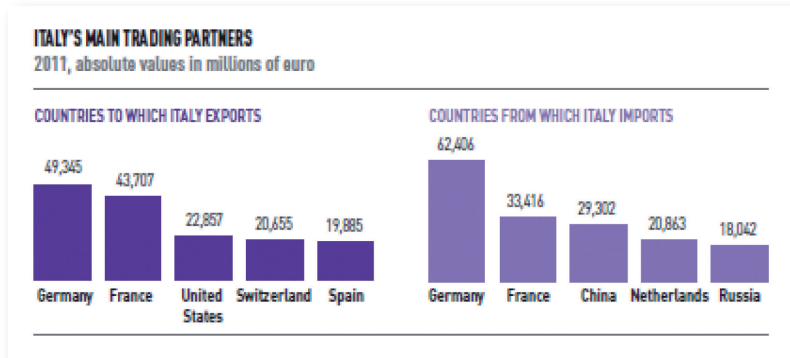
The majority of Italian exports continue to come from the north of the country, with Lombardy in the lead position. Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Emilia-Romagna are also very active in international markets. The south and the Islands perform less well in selling products in international markets. Molise, Campania and Calabria have a low export tendency, while energy products contribute significantly to the exports of Sicily and Sardinia.

During 2012, the importance of trading with partners outside the EU became more and more apparent. 'Global' companies operating in at least five areas outside the EU were able to maintain and increase their productivity and turnover while not having to undertake a radical restructure of the company and its characteristics.

In fact, most of these businesses are small- or medium-sized enterprises, with a high level of specialisation. The

continuing safeguarding of the strong brand reputation of Italian products against fakes and imitations, as well as the development of further trade agreements with emerging markets and the removal of non-tariff barriers, particularly for the food sector, will help to ensure that Italian exports continue grow in the future.

Source: Istat



ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text and answer these questions.

- 1 What happened to exports to the euro area and to emerging markets in 2012?
- 2 Which sectors showed an increase in exports?
- 3 Which sectors showed a decrease in exports?
- 4 What differences are there between the north and south of Italy?
- 5 What kind of company was more successful in terms of exports in 2012?
- 6 What other factors can also help Italian exports to increase?

SPEAKING

3 Discuss this question in small groups.

Do you agree that *Made in Italy* is synonymous with great design and quality? Think of companies and products to support your point of view.

INTERNET RESEARCH

4 Prepare a short written presentation on Italian exports. Go to www.istat.it for some up-to-date information. Include the following points:

- the top five export sectors;
- the most important trading partners;
- the top and bottom regions for exports;
- significant changes over the last quarter/six months/year.

For many, the expression *Made in Italy* conjures up the image of the most exclusive products, the best quality and the most innovative design. It brings to mind Italian classics, from the Vespa and the Pininfarina Cisitalia car (one is on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York) to modern kitchen gadgets and furniture. It also evokes the taste and smell of typical Italian food products, like Parma ham, Parmesan cheese, buffalo mozzarella and extra virgin olive oil.