

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Italian Industrial Hemp Overview 2023

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Report Highlights:

In January 2017, hemp cultivation became legal pursuant to Italian law No. 242/2016 promoting hemp cultivation and its industrial uses, leading to a sector revival, with more than 800 farms cultivating 4,000 hectares (ha). The law allows growers to plant only hemp varieties registered in the EU’s “Common Catalogue of Varieties of Agricultural Plant Species”. On February 14, 2023, the Regional Administrative Court of Lazio (TAR) annulled a national decree of January 21, 2022 that limited hemp production to the use of seeds and seeds derivatives. TAR's ruling authorized the use of the whole hemp plant in Italy (including leaves and inflorescences), bringing the country in line with EU regulations.

Italian Industrial Hemp Overview 2023

Hemp Production

Italy's hemp (*cannabis sativa L.*) cultivation and industrial use dates back to 1940, when the country was the second largest hemp producer in the world (after Russia), with approximately 100,000 hectares (ha) cultivated to produce textiles and ropes for the naval industry. However, the introduction of cheaper synthetic fibers (e.g. nylon) in 1950 and Italy's ratification of international conventions on narcotics led to a gradual decline of the hemp growing area (400 ha in 2013).

In January 2017, hemp cultivation became legal pursuant to Italian law No. 242/2016 promoting hemp cultivation and its industrial uses, leading to a sector revival, with more than 800 farms cultivating 4,000 ha, mainly in the regions of Toscana, Piemonte, Veneto, Puglia, Sicilia, Emilia-Romagna, Basilicata, Abruzzo, and Sardegna. Main hemp varieties cultivated in Italy include *Antal*, *Carmagnola*, *Carmagnola Selezionata*, *Dioica 88*, *Eletta Campana*, *Fedora 17*, *Felina 32*, *Fibranova*, *Finola*, *Futura 75*, *Kompolti*, *Tiborszallasi*, *Tisza*, and *Uso 31*. Hemp seed yield ranges from 350 to 650 kg/ha.

Hemp/Cannabinoid Regulations

Law No. 242/2016 promotes hemp cultivation as a way to preserve biodiversity and reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. The law allows growers to plant only hemp varieties registered in the EU's "Common [Catalogue](#) of Varieties of Agricultural Plant Species", as per art.17 of the European Council Directive [No. 2002/53](#). The Italian Ministry of Health does not require any authorization to cultivate hemp plants containing a maximum tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content ranging from 0.2 to 0.6 percent (while the EU THC limit is 0.3 as of January 1, 2023 through [EU Regulation No. 2021/2115](#)). Growers are required to keep the seed tags and related invoices for at least twelve months. The State Forestry Department is in charge of checking compliance with the current legal framework.

As of September 2021, the Italian Ministry of Health clarified that, upon [authorization](#) (in Italian), industrial hemp from EU authorized seeds may be grown for the purpose of supplying pharmaceutical companies authorized to manufacture active pharmaceutical ingredients (API).

On February 14, 2023, the Regional Administrative Court of Lazio (TAR) annulled a national [decree](#) (in Italian) of January 21, 2022 that limited hemp production to the use of seeds and seeds derivatives. Specifically, the January 2022 decree sought to place the cultivation, processing, and marketing of 'non-narcotic' hemp leaves and inflorescences under the umbrella of narcotics, meaning operators would be required to seek authorization from the Ministry of Health, or face penalties. TAR's ruling authorized the use of the whole hemp plant in Italy (including leaves and inflorescences), bringing the country in line with EU regulations.

Hemp-derived products include food, cosmetics, semi-finished products (such as fibers, powders, wood chips, oils or fuels), organic material for bioengineering and green building works, green manure, ornamental plants, and crops used for research and educational activities.

EU Commission Regulation [No. 2022/1393](#) (amending EU Regulation No. 2006/1881) set maximum levels of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9 -THC) in hemp seeds and products derived from hemp seeds:

Foodstuffs		Maximum level (mg/kg)
8.6.	Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9-THC) equivalents¹	
8.6.1.	Hemp seeds	3,0
8.6.2.	Ground hemp seeds, (partially) defatted hemp seed, and other hemp seed derived/processed products ² , with the exception of the products referred to in 8.6.3	3,0
8.6.3.	Hemp seed oil	7,5

Italy has approximately 2,000 ‘light cannabis’ shops, delivery services, and vending machines, selling hemp inflorescences and leaves as ‘collectors’ items’.

Sector Support

Through Ministerial Decree of December 24, 2021, former Minister of Agriculture Stefano Patuanelli allocated €3 million (\$3.2 million) to the national hemp sector, including support payments of €300/ha (\$319) up to 50 hectares (123 acres), granted to local hemp growers.

Cannabis for Medical Use

Since 2006, cannabis for medical use has been legal in Italy and is subject to medical prescription. Eligible conditions are primarily multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, Tourette’s syndrome, chronic pain, nausea from chemotherapy or HIV treatments, spinal cord injury, anorexia, and cachexia. Due to a lack of domestic cultivation, cannabis for medical use was initially available only via import from The Netherlands, and consequently, outrageously expensive for the majority of Italian patients.

Therefore, in 2017, the Italian Ministries of Defense and Health signed an agreement granting exclusive cannabis production and distribution to the Italian military chemical and pharmaceutical plant based in Florence.

¹ The maximum level refers to the sum of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9 -THC) and delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinolic acid (Δ^9 -THCA), expressed as Δ^9 -THC. A factor of 0,877 is applied to the level of Δ^9 -THCA and the maximum level refers to the sum of Δ^9 -THC + 0,877 x Δ^9 -THCA (in case of a separate determination and quantification of Δ^9 -THC and Δ^9 -THCA).

² Hemp seed derived/processed products are products derived/processed exclusively from hemp seeds.

Since then, Italy’s Ministry of Health has set annual cannabis production quotas for medical use as shown in the table below:

Year	Cannabis for Medical Use Production Quota/Year
2017	150 kg
2018	250 kg
2019	350 kg
2020	500 kg
2021	500 kg
2022	400 kg
2023	400 kg

Italy’s goal is self-sufficiency. However, Italy continues to rely on imports from authorized suppliers in The Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark to serve the growing domestic demand for medical cannabis (approximately 1,500 kg/year).

Hemp Trade Regulation

In accordance with art.189 of the EU Regulation [No. 1308/2013](#), all hemp imports are subject to an import license requirement. In addition, as of January 1, 2023:

- hemp seeds for planting (HS code 12079920) must be accompanied by proof that the THC content of the variety concerned does not exceed 0.3 percent;
- hemp seeds other than for planting (HS code 12079991) may be imported only by authorized importers who must submit proof that the seeds have been placed in a condition that excludes use for planting;
- raw true hemp (HS code 53021000) must have a THC content not exceeding 0.3 percent.

Delegated Regulation [No. 2016/1237](#) requires that the release for free circulation of hemp products with HS codes 12079920, 53021000, and 12079991 shall be subject to an import license in accordance with the model set out in Annex I to Implementing Regulation [No. 2016/1239](#) (“import license AGRIM” format). For further import requirements, please consult the [TARIC](#) (Integrated Tariff of the European Union) database.

Hemp Trade

Italy's Leading Suppliers of Hemp Seeds for Planting (Metric Tons)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
Ethiopia	228	514	753
India	0	0	57
Netherlands	1	3	42
Germany	0	0	18
Poland	0	0	9
Hungary	0	0	8
Spain	0	0	7
France	0	1	5
Belgium	0	0	3
Portugal	0	0	2
Other countries	21	42	0
Total	250	560	904

Source: Trade Data Monitor, LLC

Italy's Leading Destinations for Hemp Seeds for Planting (MT)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
France	3	412	408
Germany	0	74	241
Austria	2	2	153
Hungary	0	3	52
Romania	3	30	21
Slovenia	0	13	11
Czech Republic	0	0	5
Uzbekistan	0	0	4
Spain	1	10	3
Bulgaria	0	16	2
Croatia	1	24	1
Other countries	6	228	1
World	16	812	902

Source: TDM, LLC

Italy's Leading Suppliers of Hemp Seeds Other Than for Planting (MT)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
France	31	17	270
Netherlands	47	74	149
Canada	225	200	120
Lebanon	0	72	115
Russia	0	0	44
Germany	20	53	44
Lithuania	20	31	27
Belarus	0	0	21
Denmark	7	16	20
Ukraine	0	0	10
Other countries	14	108	8
Total	364	571	828

Source: TDM, LLC

Italy's Leading Destinations for Hemp Seeds Other Than for Planting (MT)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
Spain	3	51	87
France	5	439	68
Hungary	15	253	48
Austria	38	22	35
Poland	13	15	34
Greece	1	16	25
Sweden	10	10	11
Belgium	7	37	8
Portugal	4	6	7
Malaysia	0	0	6
United States	1	1	0
Other countries	35	119	17
Total	132	969	346

Source: TDM, LLC

Italy's Leading Suppliers of Raw True Hemp (MT)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
Latvia	13	14	53
China	5	4	4
Lithuania	30	46	3
Estonia	0	0	2
Germany	0	1	0
Sweden	1	0	0
Total	49	65	62

Source: TDM, LLC

Italy's Leading Destinations for Raw True Hemp (MT)

Partner Country	January - December		
	2020	2021	2022
France	14	97	15
Germany	12	11	1
Spain	9	14	1
Luxembourg	0	2	1
Malta	1	1	0
Netherlands	5	6	0
Poland	2	7	0
Romania	3	11	0
Other countries	30	41	0
Total	76	190	18

Source: TDM, LLC

Leading Italian Industrial Hemp Associations

- [Federcanapa](#) (in Italian)
- [Assocanapa](#) (in Italian)
- [Canapa Filiera](#) (in Italian)

Abbreviations and definitions used in this report:

EU European Union

Ha hectare; 1 ha = 2.471 acres

MT Metric ton = 1000 kg

Harmonized System (HS) Codes:

Hemp seeds for planting: 12079920

Hemp seeds other than for planting: 12079991

Raw true hemp: 53021000

Attachments:

No Attachments.