

2024

## Italy in 10 selfies

A human-centered economy that helps build the future

PREPARED BY

# SYMBOLA

Fondazione per le qualità italiane

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UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF



  
Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE  
E DELLA SICUREZZA ENERGETICA



**Ministero delle Imprese  
e del Made in Italy**  


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IN COOPERATION WITH



**UNIONCAMERE**



**ASSOCAMERESTERO**  
ASSOCIAZIONE DELLE CAMERE DI  
COMMERCIO ITALIANE ALL'ESTERO  


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OUR GRATITUDE GOES TO

Confartigianato, Enel, Farindustria, Federacciai, Federlegnoarredo, Feralpi, Fondazione Qualivita, ISMEA

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*The color used for this year's cover of Italy in 10 Selfies 2024 is Pantone Peach Fuzz. The color chosen by the Pantone Color Institute for 2024 is meant to inspire kindness, a sense of belonging, sharing, a sense of community and collaboration.*

*“Since the Middle Ages, Italians have been accustomed to producing beautiful things that the world likes in the shadow of bell towers”.*

*Carlo M. Cipolla*

*"The most beautiful things are not perfect, they are special,"*

*Bob Marley*

“Italy in 10 Selfies” every year tells about some of the country's records, often little-known or underestimated ones, that determine the features of an economy that is more human-oriented and, therefore, more promising for the future. The work provides data that highlights how, thanks to the process of qualitative transformation of the national production system that is fueled by ties with communities and territories, innovation, sustainability, and beauty, the value of our productions and their competitiveness in exports has increased. This is the case of agribusiness, with Italy increasingly confirming its leadership in quality production, or pharmaceuticals, as exports from Italy are growing more than from other countries. As well as of the Italian steel industry, one of the first in the world in terms of decarbonization thanks to the production of green steel, supported by champions such as Arvedi - the first large steel mill in the world certified with zero net carbon dioxide emissions - and Feralpi, which has implemented a major investment plan in renewable energy. And Europe's largest double-sided photovoltaic module production plant is under construction in Sicily.

And made-in-Italy quality, efficiency and beauty are still the factors that make Italy first in the export of amusement park rides and equipment: many rides in the world's major amusement parks, from Coney Island to Singapore, are Italian. Beauty is also fueled by the great historical and cultural heritage spread throughout the country: Italy has the largest number of sites recognized as World Heritage by UNESCO.

Talents help us understand the resilience of the national economy, which is often better than that of other countries, talents with which we can deal not only with our ancient woes, but also with the challenges facing us today. Starting with the climate crisis. We must do this by strengthening the weakened path of cooperation and peace in the world. To build together, leaving no one behind, leaving no one alone, a safer, more civilized, kinder world. Behind these 10 records, we can see a country that forms exactly the Italy that Fondazione Symbola tells about in its researches conducted together with numerous companions who share with us the idea of the future.

**ERMETE REALACCI**  
*President of Fondazione Symbola*

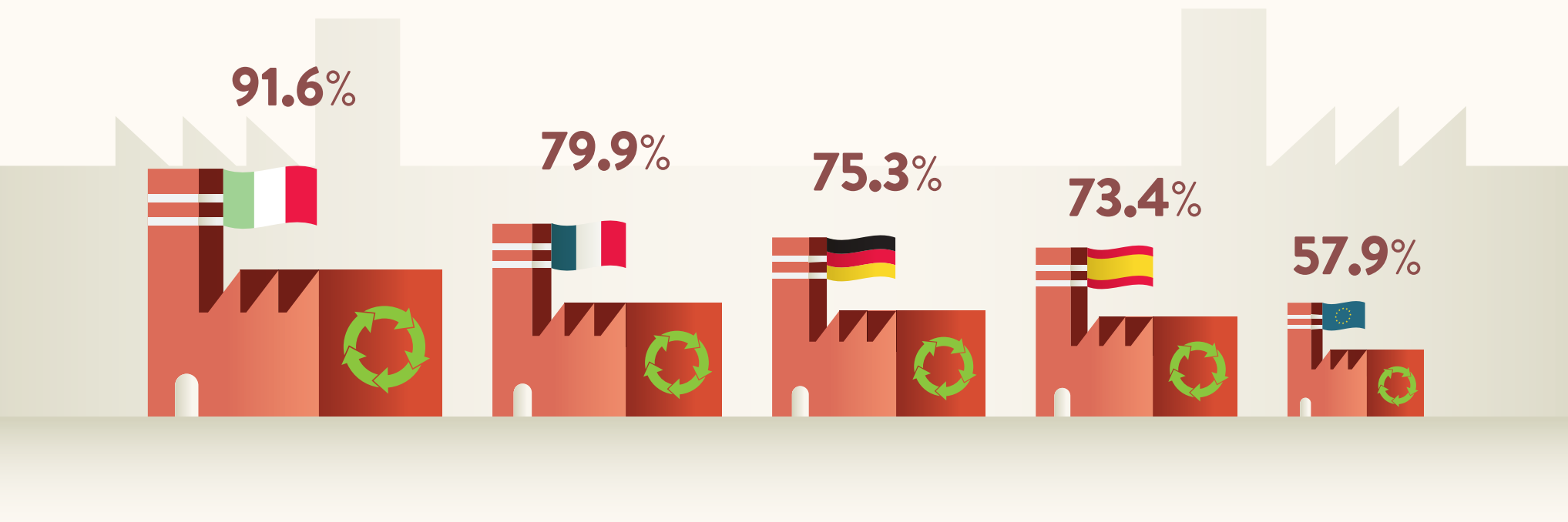
# 2024

## Italy in 10 selfies

A human-centered economy that helps build the future

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01. LEADER IN CIRCULAR ECONOMY
  02. THE WORLD'S LARGEST SUPPLIER IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR IS ITALIAN
  03. FIRST AMONG G7 COUNTRIES IN GREEN STEEL PRODUCTION
  04. ITALY IS FIRST IN EUROPE IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE
  05. ITALIAN RIDES ARE THE BEST-SELLING IN THE WORLD THANKS TO THEIR BEAUTY, SAFETY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY
  06. FURNITURE INDUSTRY: THIRD COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF TRADE BALANCE, FIRST IN EUROPE TO PRODUCE 100% RECYCLED PANELS
  07. CONGRESS TOURISM: ITALY IS SECOND IN THE WORLD, FIRST IN EUROPE
  08. WORLD LEADER IN PASTA PRODUCTION
  09. PHARMACEUTICALS: ITALY IS FIRST IN THE WORLD IN EXPORT GROWTH
  10. FIRST IN THE WORLD IN THE NUMBER OF UNESCO SITES AND A EUROPEAN LEADER IN DESIGN
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## LEADER IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Italy is the European country with the highest recycling rate out of the total amount of special and municipal waste generated (91.6 %), which is higher than the European average (57.9 %) and that of Germany (75.3 %), France (79.9 %) and Spain (73.4 %).<sup>1</sup> Italy ranks first in the Eco-Innovation Index for resource efficiency (along with Luxembourg) with a score of 274 compared to the EU average of 147. In this aspect, Italy is ahead of France, Germany, and Spain in both productivity of raw material use (GDP/domestic material consumption) and energy consumption productivity (GDP/gross energy consumption), second instead for productivity of GHG emissions (GDP/CO<sub>2</sub>eq).<sup>2</sup> Italy confirms the supremacy in Europe in the collection and recovery of used mineral oils with a rate of 98% compared to 61% in Europe. Thanks to the use of recycled materials, 16.4 million tons of oil equivalent and 55 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent are avoided each year in Italy.<sup>1</sup>

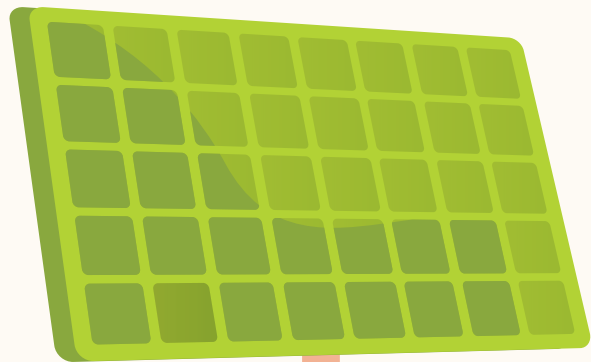
01.

Recycling rate of total waste (municipal and special waste) in major EU countries, 2022, latest available data (percentages)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere, Greenitaly 2024; <sup>2</sup> Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere, Greenitaly 2023

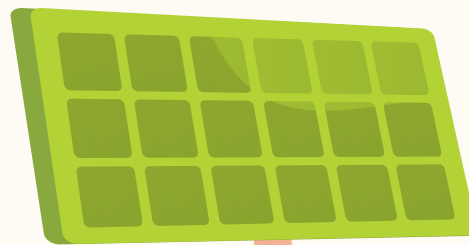


63.3GW



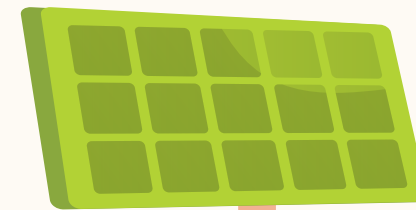
ENEL

45.4GW



ENGIE

42.2 GW



IBERDROLA

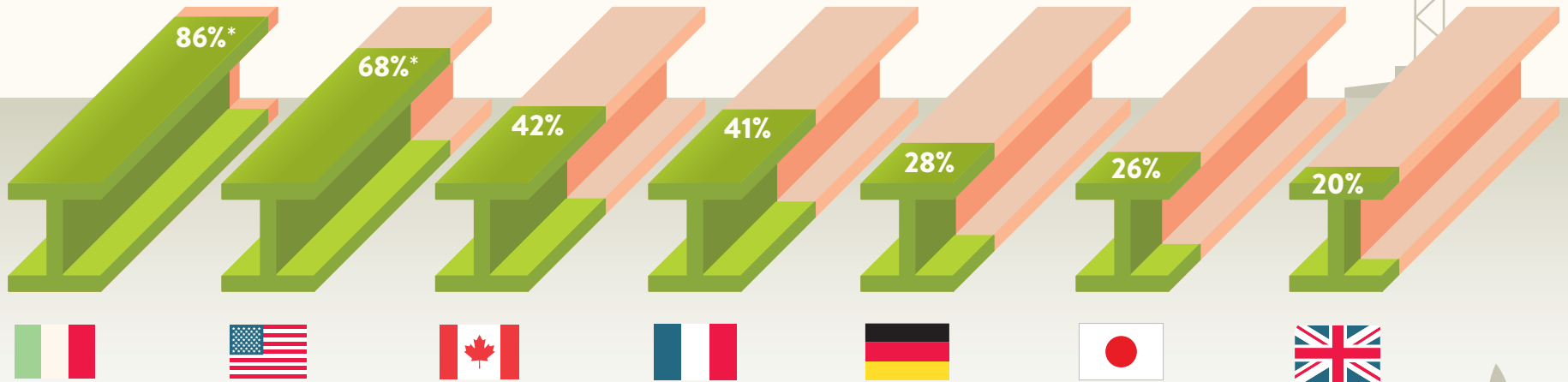
## THE WORLD'S **LARGEST SUPPLIER** IN THE **RENEWABLE** ENERGY SECTOR IS ITALIAN

Enel, through its subsidiary Enel Green Power, is the world's largest private supplier in the renewable energy sector with 63.3 GW of Gross Installed Capacity in 2023 (values including Energy Storage System values) from wind, solar, geothermal and hydro plants located in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania. It is followed by France's Engie (45.4 GW) and Spain's Iberdrola (42.2 GW).<sup>1</sup> Enel is building Europe's largest high-performance bifacial PV cell and module production plant in Catania, which at full capacity will have a production capacity of 3 GW per year, a plant that will be fully operational at the end of 2025. In 2023, Italy ranked among the top 10 PV markets in the world with 5.2 GW of new solar power plants installed.<sup>2</sup>

02.

Installed gross operating capacity, 2023  
(values in GW)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> Supplier Publications 2023. Suppliers with predominant state control are not included; <sup>2</sup> Solar Power Europe (2024)



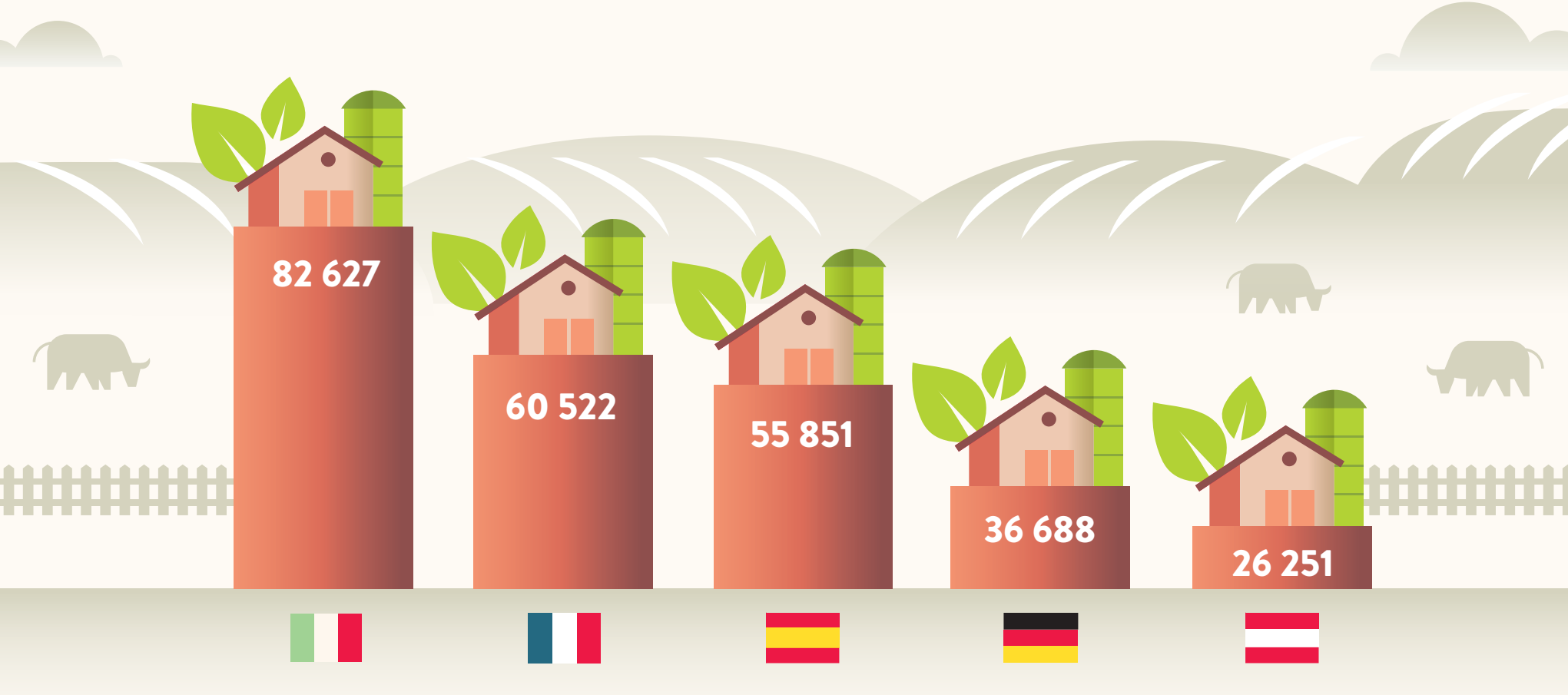
## FIRST AMONG G7 COUNTRIES IN GREEN STEEL PRODUCTION

The Italian steel industry is a leader in the decarbonization process. It ranks first among the G7 countries in the share of steel produced using the electric furnace cycle, with an estimated 86%, followed by the USA (68%) and Canada (42%) (2023).<sup>1</sup> A leader in energy efficiency, with consumption per unit well below the average for Europe and the large EU countries (Germany, France and Spain), thanks to the growing share of renewable energy in the energy mix. In addition, around 76% of raw materials for production are represented by recycled steel (+17% in six years).<sup>2</sup> Italy is home to a steel mill that was the first in the world to be certified zero-carbon. This position makes the sector - second in the EU in terms of production after Germany - more competitive on European and international markets.

03.

Steel production using electric furnace in G7 countries, 2023 (percentages)  
\*estimate

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024  
SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> Worldsteel Association (2024); <sup>2</sup> Federacciai, Sustainability Report 2023



## ITALY IS **FIRST** IN EUROPE IN TERMS OF **QUALITY** AND **SUSTAINABILITY** IN **AGRICULTURE**

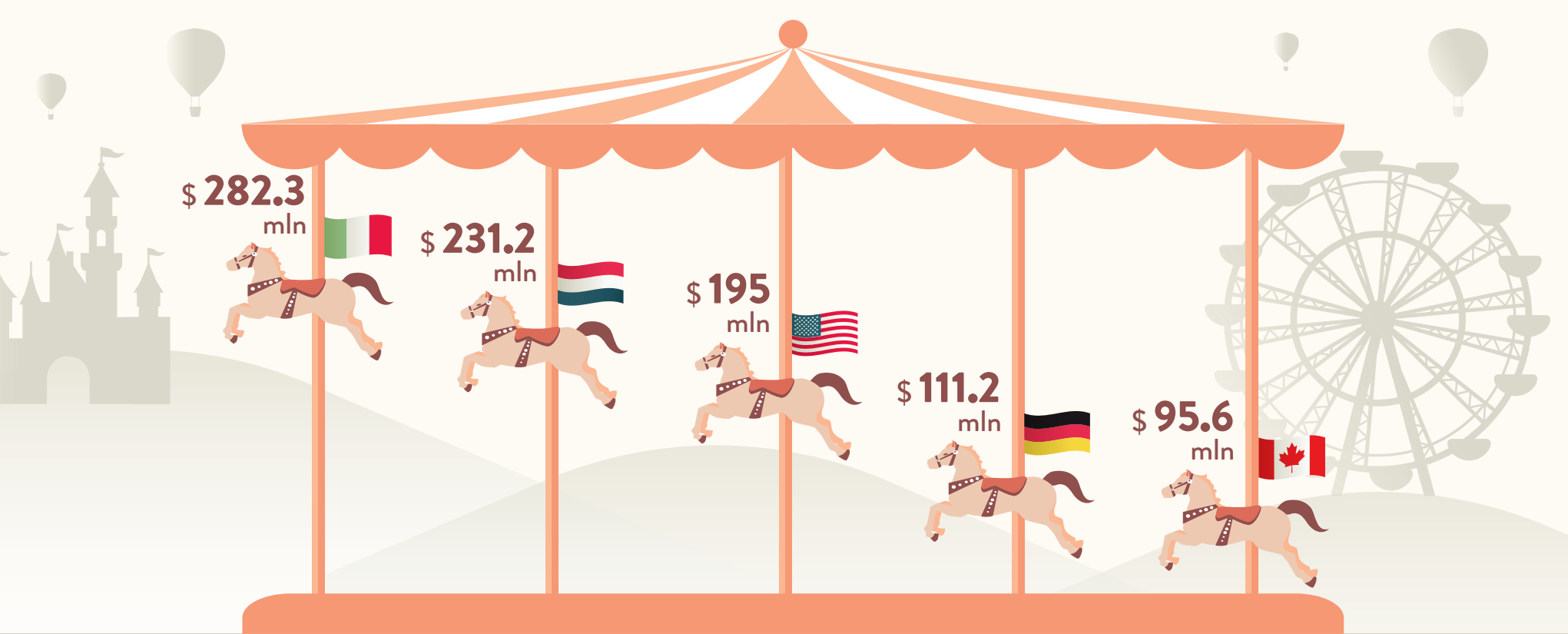
Italy ranks first in Europe for the number of organic farms with 82,627 workers, ahead of France (60,522), Spain (55,851), Germany (36,688) and Austria (26,251).<sup>1</sup> Italy, with 856 designations, also ranks first in Europe for the number of registered and protected food and wine products: 584 PDOs, 268 PGIs and 4 TSGs. It is followed by France (715), Spain (361), Greece (264) and Portugal (194).<sup>2</sup> In Italy, the share of food products with chemical compounds that exceed legal limits is 0.98% of the total amount of products, making it second in Europe and first among the continent's major countries (2022).<sup>3</sup> Italian agriculture has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions over the last 20 years by a percentage greater than other large EU countries (France, Germany and Spain and the EU-27 average (2021)).<sup>4</sup>

04.

Organic farms in major European countries, 2022 (absolute values)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> ISMEA (2024); <sup>2</sup> Fondazione Qualivita Observatory, July 2024; <sup>3</sup> EFSA (2024); <sup>4</sup> Fondazione Symbola studies based on European Commission data





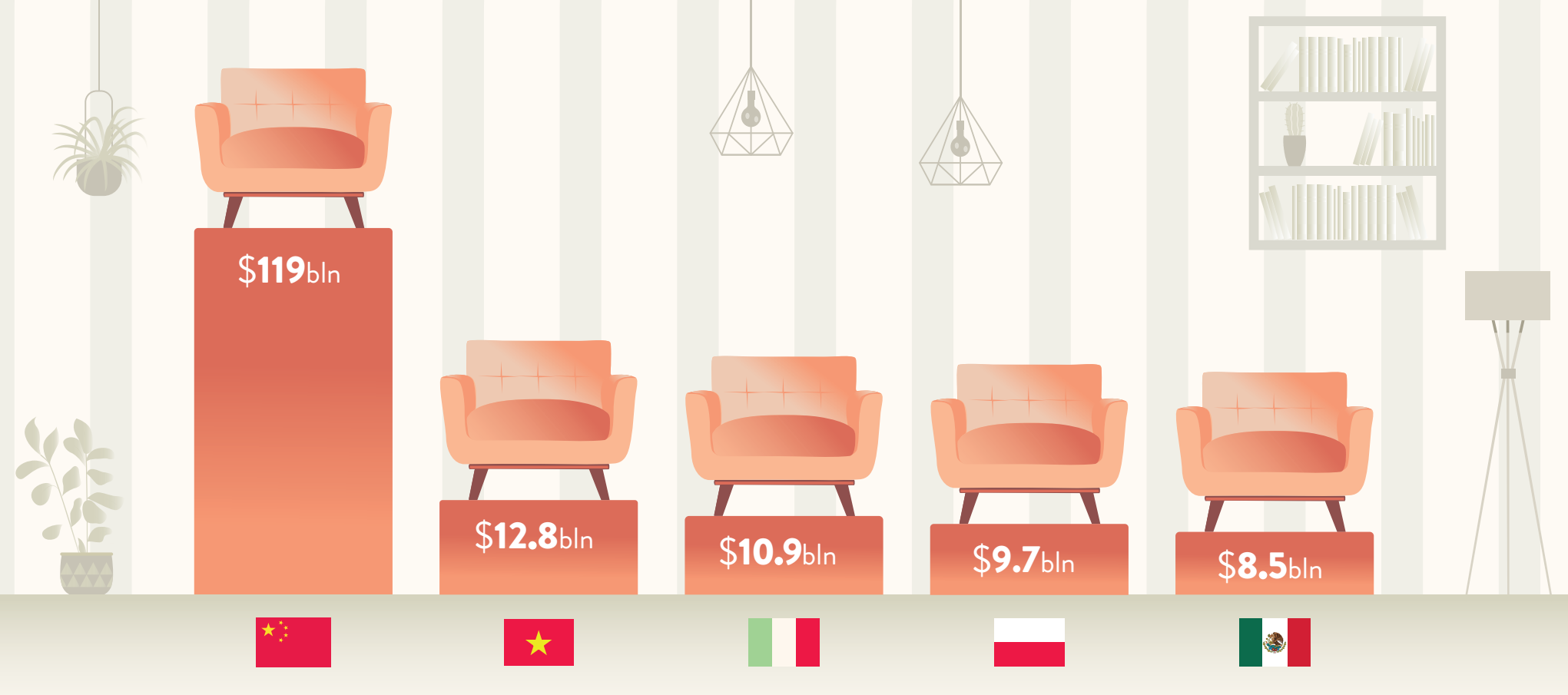
## ITALIAN RIDES ARE THE **BEST-SELLING IN THE WORLD** THANKS TO THEIR BEAUTY, SAFETY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The quality of Italian rides is recognized all over the world. The highest Italian craftsmanship, energy efficiency, safety and reliability are appreciated by the most popular amusement parks in the world: from Coney Island to Disneyland, from Singapore to the UAE. Italy with \$282.3 million is actually the leader in amusement park rides and equipment exports, followed by the Netherlands (\$231.2 mln), the United States (\$195 mln), Germany (\$111.2 mln) and Canada (\$95.6 mln) (2023).<sup>1</sup> 60.9% of sales are made in non-EU markets. Amusement ride manufacturing in Italy engages 137 companies, 67.2% of which operate in the Veneto-Emilia-Romagna-Lombardy triangle (2023).<sup>2</sup>

# 05.

Export value of major countries exporting amusement rides and amusement park equipment, 2023 (millions of USD)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> Fondazione Symbola studies based on UN Comtrade data; <sup>2</sup> Research Unit of Confortigianato (Confederation of Craftsmen) (2024)



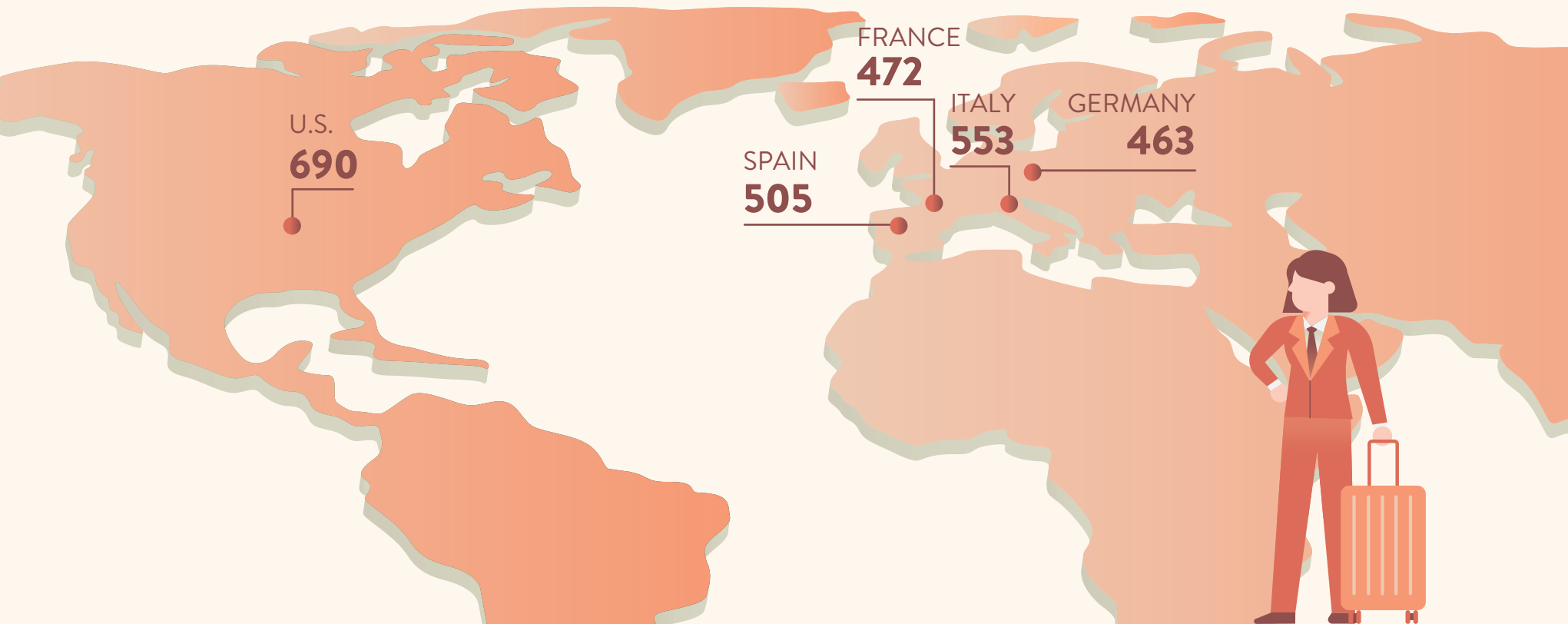
## FURNITURE INDUSTRY: THIRD COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF TRADE BALANCE, FIRST IN EUROPE TO PRODUCE 100% RECYCLED PANELS

With \$10.9 billion, Italy has the world's third largest trade balance in the furniture industry; it is preceded by China (\$119 billion) and Vietnam (\$12.8 billion), and ahead of Poland (\$9.7 billion) and Mexico (\$8.5 billion). It ranks third in export value with \$15.8 billion after China (\$121.5 billion) and Germany (\$18.7 billion) (2023).<sup>1</sup> It ranks first in the EU for turnover with €27.2 billion in 2022, overtaking Germany (€26.5 billion), followed by Poland (€15.4 billion), France (€8.7 billion) and Spain (€7.9 billion).<sup>2</sup> By the end of 2023, the entire wood and furniture sector in Italy has 216,000 employees and 54,000 registered companies, with 57% operating in the furniture sector.<sup>3</sup> About 93% of chipboard produced in Italy is made from 100% recycled wood,<sup>4</sup> and 60% of companies in the sector use energy from renewable sources.<sup>5</sup>

06.

Furniture industry trade balance, 2023 (billions of dollars)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES, 2024*  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> FederlegnoArredo studies based on UN Comtrade data; <sup>2</sup> Fondazione Symbola studies based on Eurostat data; <sup>3</sup> Research Unit of Confartigianato (Confederation of Craftsmen) (2024); <sup>4</sup> EFP-European Panel Federation, 2018 (latest available); <sup>5</sup> Survey FLA Plus 2023



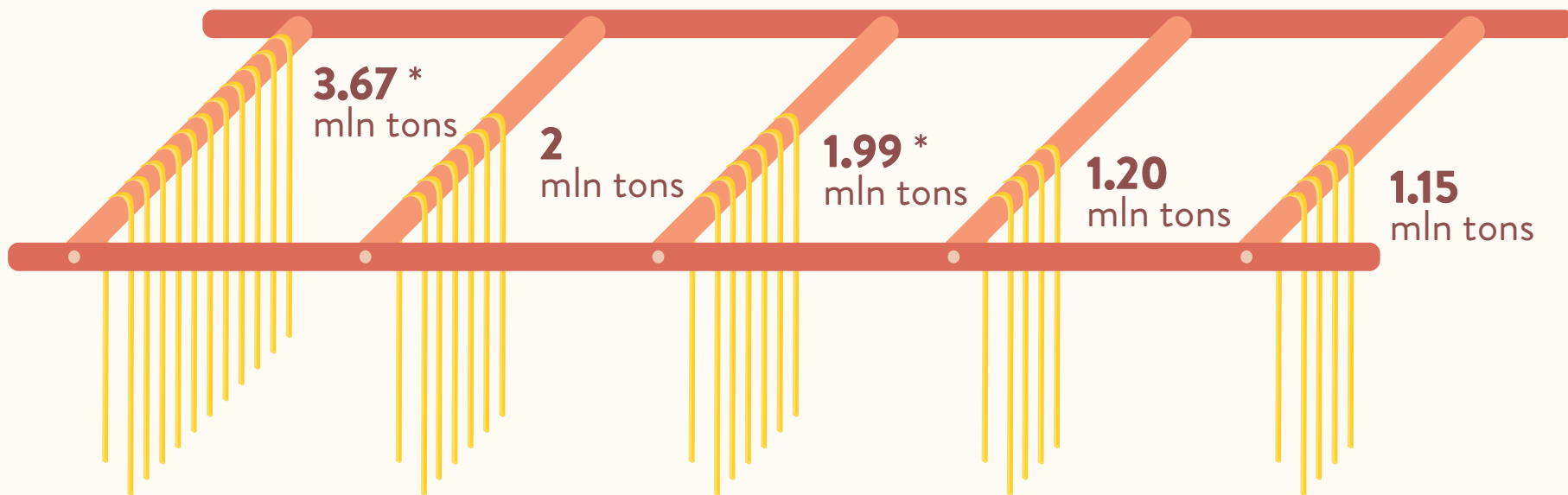
## CONGRESS TOURISM: ITALY IS SECOND IN THE WORLD, FIRST IN EUROPE

Italy ranks first in Europe and second in the world for congress tourism, hosting 553 congresses in 2023, surpassing Spain (505), France (472), and Germany (463), and coming second worldwide only to the United States (690). In 5 years, the country has risen from sixth place to first in Europe, the only one to show growth among the leaders in the ranking for the number of congresses hosted from 2022 to 2023. Many Italian cities in the world's top 100 are top destinations for congress tourism: Rome (7th place), Milan (29th place), Bologna (47th place), Florence (60th place), Naples (66th place), Turin (78th place) and Venice (84th place).<sup>1</sup> Italy also ranks first in Europe for the number of employees in accommodation and catering sectors, with about 320,000 businesses, followed by Spain (291,000), France (285,000), and Germany (231,000) (2022).<sup>2</sup>

07.

Congresses hosted, 2023 (absolute values)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> International Congress and Convention Association - ICCA (2024); <sup>2</sup> Fondazione Symbola studies based on Eurostat data



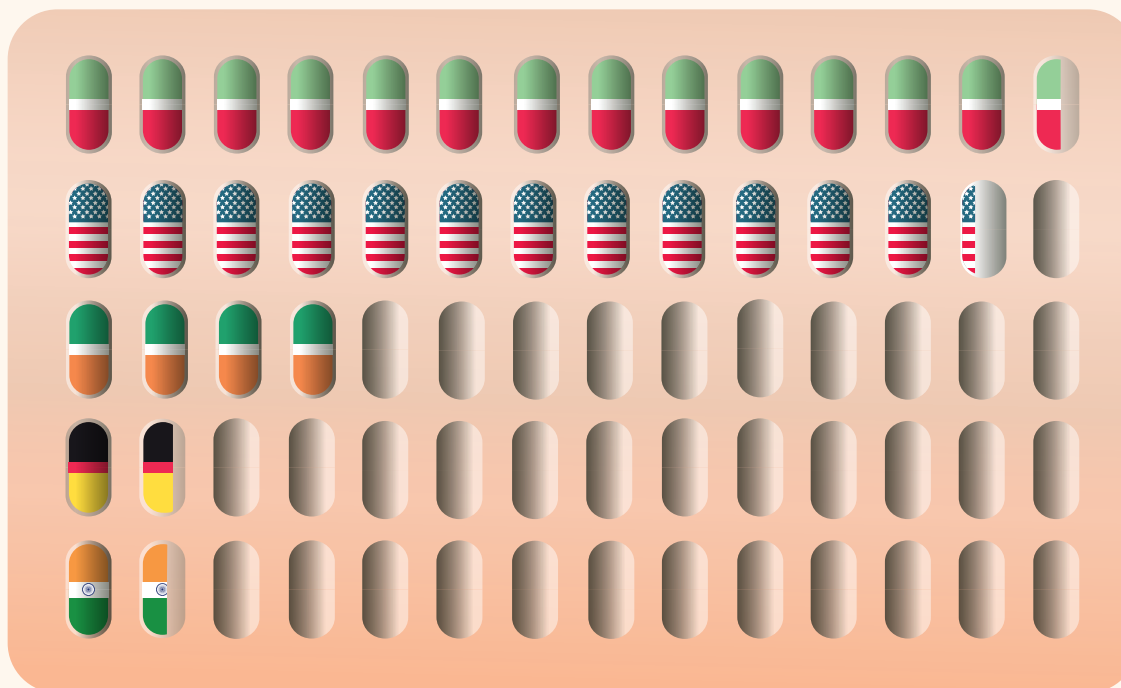
## WORLD LEADER IN PASTA PRODUCTION

Italy ranks first in the world in terms of pasta production, with nearly 4 million tons (3.67 mln t), followed by the United States (2 mln t), Turkey (1.99 mln t), Egypt (1.20 mln t) and Brazil (1.15 mln t),<sup>1</sup> for a turnover close to €7 billion (2022).<sup>2</sup> More than 60% of the pasta produced in our country is destined for foreign markets, with more than 2.2 million tons in 2023 (of which 1.5 million are destined for the EU).<sup>2</sup> Italy ranks first in the world for exports of all types and preparations of pasta—raw, cooked, or filled—with a value of \$4.4 billion, followed by China (\$1.2 billion), Turkey (\$0.9 billion), and Germany (\$0.5 billion) (2023).<sup>3</sup> The sector invests about 10% of turnover in research and development, has reduced water consumption by 20% and carbon emissions by 21% since 2013, and recycled waste accounts for about 95% of the total.<sup>4</sup>

08.

Pasta production, 2022 and 2023\* (millions of tons)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> I.P.O and UN.A.F.P.A; <sup>2</sup> Italian Food Union - Pasta Sector; <sup>3</sup> Fondazione Symbola studies based on UN Comtrade data; <sup>4</sup> Italian Food Union - Pasta Sector.



**ITALY**  
+ \$ **13.6** billion

**U.S.**  
+ \$ **12.3** billion

**IRELAND**  
+ \$ **4** billion

**GERMANY**  
+ \$ **1.74** billion

**INDIA**  
+ \$ **1.66** billion

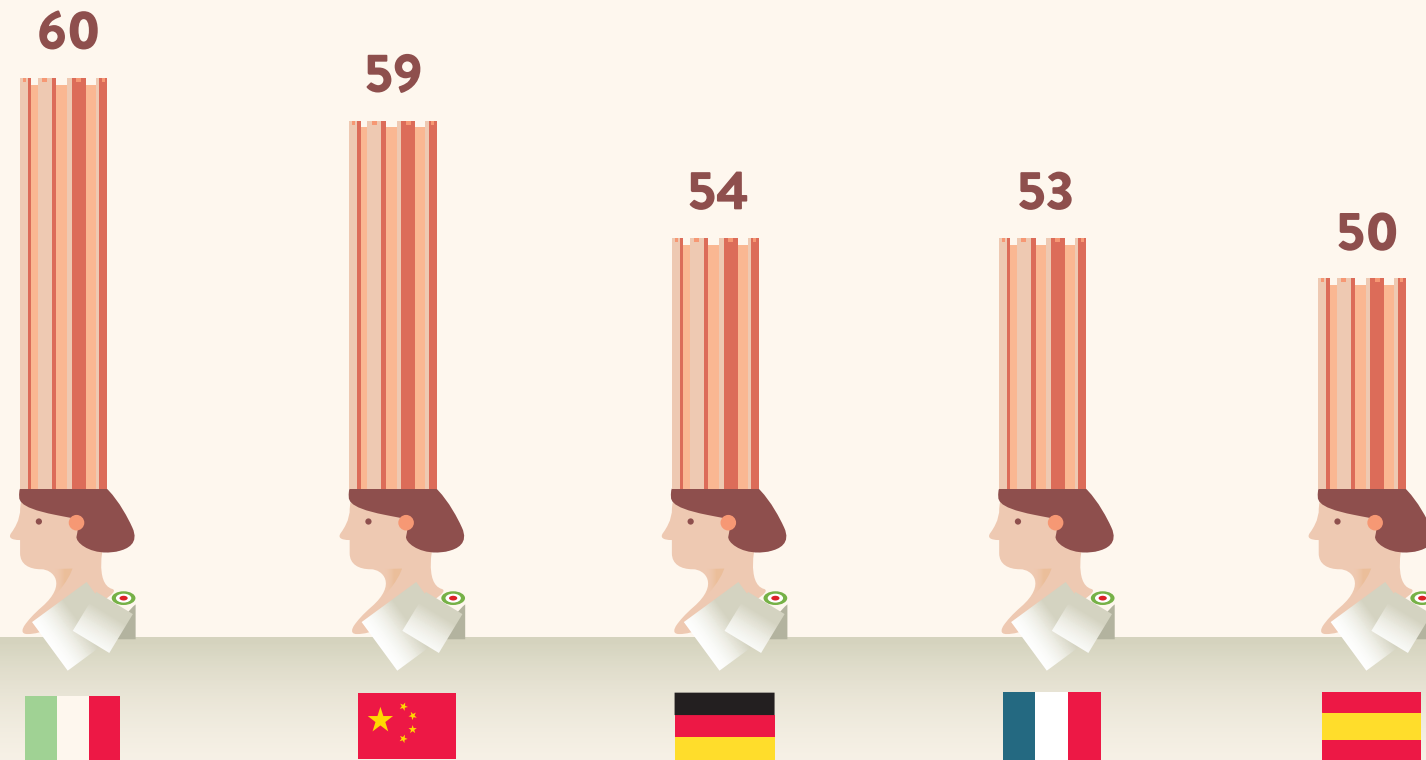
## PHARMACEUTICALS: ITALY IS FIRST IN THE WORLD IN EXPORT GROWTH

Italy is the first country in the world by value growth in pharmaceutical exports between 2021 and 2023, with a jump of \$13.6 billion. It is followed by the United States (+\$12.3 billion), Ireland (+\$4.0 billion), Germany (+\$1.74 billion) and India (+\$1.66 billion). Italy ranks second in Europe (+35%) for growth in pharmaceutical patent applications (five-year period 2019-2023 vs. 2014-2018), ahead of France (+20%) and Germany (+14%).<sup>1</sup> In life sciences, Italy ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in Europe in the number of publications (57 thousand), 4<sup>th</sup> in the number of patents obtained in the sector through EPO (European Patent Office) and 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of exports of the entire sector (2023).<sup>2</sup> The pharmaceutical sector has reduced its energy consumption by 32% in ten years (-19% on average for manufacturing) and quintupled its energy consumption from renewable sources (2011-2021).<sup>3</sup>

09.

Growth in value of pharmaceutical exports, 2021-2023 (billions of US dollars)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, *ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024*  
SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> Farmindustria studies based on EPO data;  
<sup>2</sup> The European House - Ambrosetti studies based on Scimago, EPO and UNCTADSTAT data (2023);  
<sup>3</sup> Farmindustria studies based on Istat data



## FIRST IN THE WORLD IN THE NUMBER OF UNESCO SITES AND A EUROPEAN LEADER IN DESIGN

Italy ranks first in the world in terms of the number of sites on the World Heritage List. To date, of the 1,223 sites recognized by UNESCO in 168 countries, 60 are located in Italy, which is followed by China (59), Germany (54), France (53) and Spain (50).<sup>1</sup>

Culture and creativity generate in Italy an added value of 104.3 billion euros (2023),<sup>2</sup> and in sectors such as design, Italy ranks first in Europe in terms of turnover and employees with a turnover growth of +27.1%, almost double the EU average (2021-2022). Around 75% of designers work with sustainability criteria in mind <sup>3</sup>

# 10.

UNESCO sites, 2024 (absolute values)

FONDAZIONE SYMBOLA, ITALY IN 10 SELFIES. 2024  
 SOURCE | <sup>1</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Center, July 2024;  
<sup>2</sup> Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere, Io sono Cultura 2024; <sup>3</sup> Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere, Design Economy 2024



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## **SYMBOLA - FONDAZIONE PER LE QUALITÀ ITALIANE**

"Symbola" – the word that in ancient Greek means “to unite” – was founded to unite and promote a quality-oriented development model: a soft economy that combines traditions, territory, technological innovation and research, that combines competitiveness and enhancement of human capital, economic development and respect for the environment and human rights. A development model focused on sustainability and based on the green economy, the role of culture and creativity, social cohesion and the circular economy. Symbola – Fondazione per le qualità italiane is a cultural movement that brings together personalities from the economic and business world, people with an active civic position, representatives of territorial and public organizations, cultural figures and representative offices. Symbola speaks to society, economics, institutions and politics, including through intensive analytical and research activities. All the published reports, the main of which are GreenItaly, lo sono Cultura, Coesione e Competizione, I.T.A.L.I.A. Geografie del nuovo Made in Italy are available online and can be downloaded for free from the website.

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