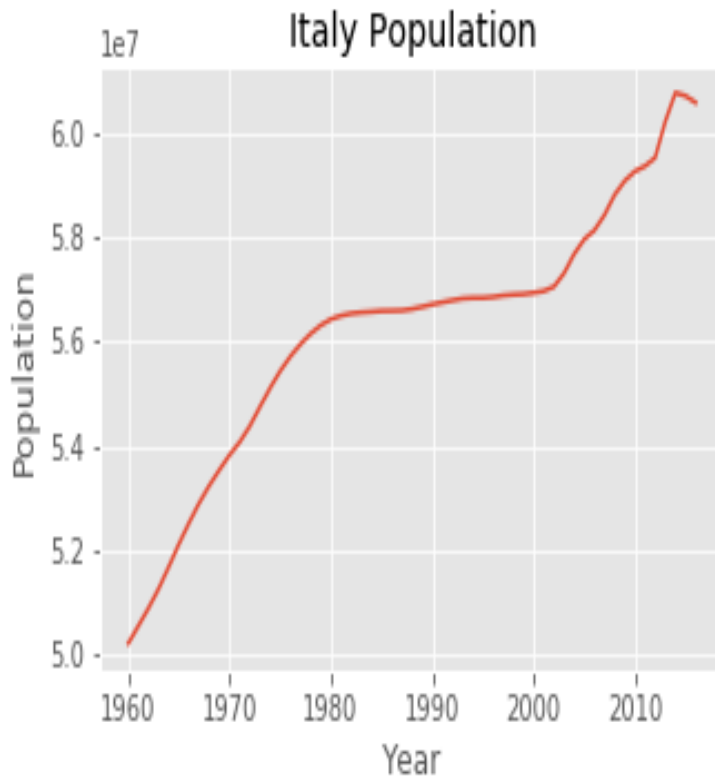


# Italy



Coordinates: 43°N 12°E﻿•﻿43°N 12°E﻿ / ﻿43°N 12°E﻿•﻿43°﻿•﻿12° – in Europe (light green & dark grey) – in the European Union (light green) – [Legend]Italy (/ˈɪtəˈli/ IT-lee; Italian: Italia, [iˈtaːlja] Listen (help·info)), officially the Italian Republic (Italian: Repubblica italiana, [reˈpubˌblika itaˈliːjana]), is a unitary parliamentary republic in Europe.[<sup>note 1</sup>] Located in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, Italy shares open land borders with France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, San Marino and Vatican City. Italy covers an area of 301,338 km<sup>2</sup> (116,347 sq mi) and has a largely temperate seasonal and Mediterranean climate. With around 61 million inhabitants it is the fourth most populous EU member state. Since classical times, ancient Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Greeks established settlements in the south of Italy, with Etruscans and Celts inhabiting the centre and the north of Italy respectively and various ancient Italian tribes and Italic peoples dispersed throughout the Italian peninsula and insular Italy. The Italic tribe known as the Latins formed the Roman Kingdom, which eventually became a republic that conquered and assimilated its neighbors. Ultimately the Roman Empire emerged as the dominant power in the Mediterranean basin and became the leading cultural, political and religious centre of Western civilisation.