

Please note that this Information Paper only provides basic information and is not intended to serve as a substitute for personal consultations with a Legal Assistance Attorney.



Working in Italy: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I accept a job working for an Italian or American business off-post?

U.S. military members, government civilian employees, contractors, and their dependents in Italy live here pursuant to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). U.S. military members on orders do not need a passport or a visa to enter and remain in Italy. However, U.S. Government civilian employees and all dependents who are not European Union citizens are required to have a Missione Visa and Missione Soggiorno Permit. The Italian government gives these documents to those individuals who are here solely for the purpose of the U.S. military mission and, therefore, have “SOFA protected” status. With a Missione Visa and Missione Soggiorno Permit, you are eligible for employment on base with the U.S. Forces. The jobs available on base are divided between those offered to persons with a Missione Soggiorno Permit and Italian civilians, as stipulated in the SOFA and other applicable International agreements.

To be employed in Italy by someone other than the U.S. Forces (U.S. Forces would include GS, NAF, and U.S. Government contracted positions) requires an Italian Work Visa and Work Permit. This is true for both Italian businesses and American-based corporations as well. If you choose to obtain an Italian Work Visa and Work Permit, you are declaring to the Italian government that you desire to be considered an ordinary resident of Italy. You cannot have both ordinary resident and “SOFA protected” status at the same time, regardless of whether you are a military member, civilian employee, or a dependent.

If you get a job on the Italian economy as an ordinary resident, you will no longer be entitled to any “SOFA protected” privileges, including shopping in the PX and commissary, sending mail through the Military Postal System, driving SETAF registered vehicles, and purchasing gas coupons. You are also responsible for all of the additional expenses that ordinary Italian residents incur, such as Italian income taxes, contributions to the Italian social security system, and the Italian television tax – to name a few. Perhaps most importantly, ordinary residents cannot avail themselves of foreign criminal jurisdictional assertion or waiver rights under Article

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VII of the NATO SOFA – this means that if you are accused of committing a crime in Italy, you’re on your own within the Italian legal system.

2. I am an EU citizen married to a Servicemember. Where can I work?

If you are command sponsored and listed on your Servicemember-spouse’s orders, you are here under “SOFA protected status.” As such, you must follow the guidance above for becoming ordinary resident and give up your “SOFA protected” status (e.g., you will give up your entitlements to shopping in the PX and commissary, sending mail through the Military Postal System, driving SETAF registered vehicles, and purchasing gas coupons. You will also be responsible for the additional taxes, fees, and expenses that ordinary Italian residents incur).

3. Can I maintain skills by providing my service for free but be reimbursed for supplies - like baking cakes or coloring hair?

Activities such as baking cakes or coloring hair would not be considered a “profitable enterprise” so long as any reimbursement is limited to the cost of supplies. It is important to note, though, that any payment for your time, labor, or expertise would be considered profit and would require a valid work visa and permit.

4. Can I operate a home-based business (e.g., MaryKay, Scentsy, etc)?

If you are generating profit by work performed while living in Italy, even on your computer, Italian law mandates that you have a valid work visa and permit. Furthermore, using the APO for home-based businesses is not allowed.

For more information or for specific advice, contact the Vicenza Legal Assistance Office in Building 241 on Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy at DSN 634-7041 or Civilian 0444-71-7041.