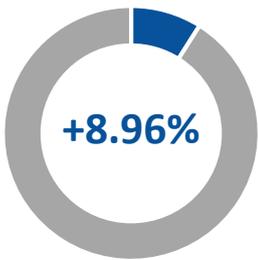


Italy: There's Life in the Old Dog Yet

Italy is among the most surprising countries of the 2015/17 phase: For the first time, Rome has not lost but actually gained power internationally over a two-year period of time. Since 2005, the Bonn Power Shift Monitor recorded an irregular, but on average negative development of the Italian Power Score. With this nine percent increase of power, Italy has recovered to its 2011-level now. The Power Shift Rate for the 2015/2017 period is as much as 0.16, which makes Italy the third biggest power winner of the period, and lets it climb up our Power Score ranking by one position, now being on place 10 out of 19, ahead of Canada. This striking development is even more apparent if you take a look at the absolute figures: Italy receives a Country Change Rate of 40.99 for the latest phase, meaning it is by far the biggest winner of the period in absolute terms.

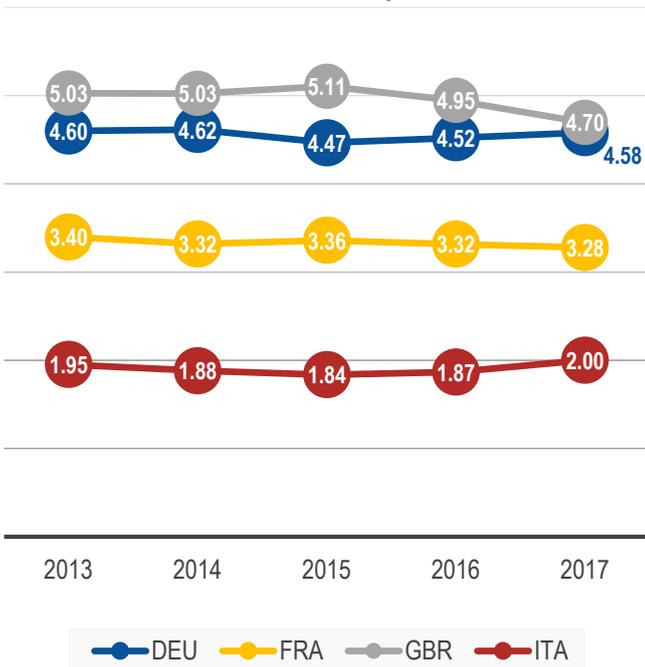
Power Shift 2015-2017



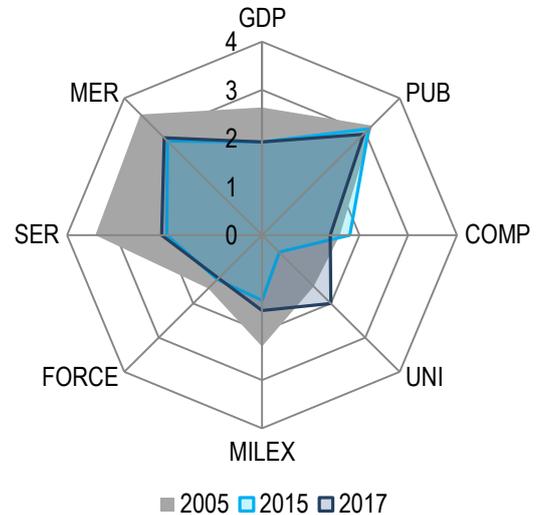
But what are the main drivers of this immense comeback? Having a look at the development of the categories, one area stands out the most: the indicator of top universities. While in 2014 Italy had only one university among the top-rated, it now hosts four, which is an absolute increase of 300 percent, and a relative increase of 1.50 (Market Change).

Since the other categories with a positive figure grew only moderately in comparison to that, it can be said that Italy's comeback is mainly due to this success in the world of science.

Power Scores of the European G20 States



Italy's Global Shares



Nevertheless, increases in military spending and higher numbers in merchandise and service exports contributed to this upswing as well. Especially the positive development of military spending is remarkable since Italy had been losing power, both absolutely and relatively, in this category since the period of 2009/11. Together with a substantial absolute growth of the GDP (Indicator Change Rate: +10.90), this indicates that Italy's economy and finances slowly leave a phase of losses, budget cuts, and stagnation.

So is Italy on its way to compete for the power ranks of other European G20 countries? Two facts should be considered concerning this question: First, Italy's top-ranked universities are all to be found at the lower end of the ranking, with the highest-ranking one being on place 156 out of 200. Keeping in mind that the factor of universities was the main reason for Italy's surprising success and that there is usually much dynamic at the lower end of this ranking, it is all but uncertain whether Italy can uphold its power boost. Second, the rise of two parties, the Five Star Movement and especially the Lega with its prominent leader Matteo Salvini, caused much political dynamic in the country, making the future course of Rome and the country hard to predict. So even though Italy achieved an impressive success during the latest period under examination, it remains to be seen whether Rome will continue to win power in the years to come.

Please cite as:

Center for Global Studies (CGS) (2019). "Bonn Power Shift Monitor: Italy: There's Life in the Old Dog Yet", University of Bonn, Bonn.