



# EXPONews

## Culture, Institutions and Business: Italy Makes Its Mark in Osaka

The Italian Pavilion captivates visitors and stands out as a major economic showcase

Eight hundred events, agreements announced worth €1.76 billion, and over 1,300 official delegations in attendance — these figures alone would be enough to certify Italy's success at Expo Osaka. Beyond the remarkable public turnout and strong media response, the Italy Pavilion has achieved a key goal set from the start: serving as a strategic outpost for economic and growth diplomacy, offering institutions and companies not a mere showcase, but a concrete platform for opportunities — a place to build long-term relationships and projects.

The economic dimension has been the Pavilion's main focus, with 210 events dedicated to internationalization and economic diplomacy and around 7,500 business representatives involved. Inside the Pavilion, contracts and investments worth €1.766 billion were announced or signed, spanning the industrial, technological, and manufacturing sectors. Among the most significant operations were those involving Danieli, Ebara Corporation,

NSG Group, DR Automobiles, Procos, and especially NTT Italia, which confirmed a major expansion investment in a Milan data center valued at €1.28 billion.

But the Italy Pavilion was not just about business. In line with high expectations, it delivered an extensive cultural program featuring 410 events, including shows, exhibitions, and performances. Particularly noteworthy is the continuation of the exhibition dedicated to the Farnese Atlas and the Pavilion's treasures at the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, running until January 2026 — the only official post-Expo extension among participating countries.

On the institutional front, more than 1,300 official delegations visited the Pavilion, involving the Italian Government, Regions, universities, and the diplomatic and consular network.

A total of 19 agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed among universities, research centers, and chambers of

commerce, focusing on science, education, technology, and industry.

In the field of sustainability, the Pavilion obtained UNI ISO 20121:2024 certification for sustainable event management. It also received the BIE Innovation Award for the Docodemo Expo project, which allowed hospitalized children to visit the Pavilion virtually via robots.

From a communication perspective, the Pavilion's activities generated over 61 million social media views and more than 11,000 media mentions across Italy, Japan, and other countries, supported by continuous coverage from accredited press outlets. These results confirm trends identified by specialized media surveys: recently, Nikkei Trendy ranked the Italy Pavilion as "the most desirable."

Since April, over 1,180 journalists have participated in the Pavilion's activities, representing an average of six media outlets per day.



Expo 2025 marked the 37th edition of the Universal Exposition organized by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Held in Osaka, on the artificial island of Yumeshima, it ran from April 13 to October 13. The theme chosen for this year's global showcase was "Designing Future Society for Our Lives."

The next events on the calendar are the 2027 Specialized Expo in Belgrade and the 2030 World Expo in Riyadh.



## SIX MONTHS OF THE ITALIAN PAVILION BY NUMBERS

**800**

Total events organized over six months by the Italian Pavilion, including economic, cultural, and B2B initiatives

**8,000**

Business representatives involved in the events

**€1.76 billion**

Value of the investments announced and finalized

## “The Country System Has Truly Worked as a Team The Presence of the Regions Was a Fundamental Driver”

The assessment of Ambassador Mario Vattani, Italy’s Commissioner General at Expo Osaka: “A public and media success: we showcased the timeless Italy the world continues to seek.”

**Ambassador, let us take stock of the Italian Pavilion’s experience at Expo Osaka. Looking at the figures, can we speak of a success?**

It was undoubtedly a public success — an element that naturally drives media attention as well. We were followed by Japanese and international media from the very start, even before the Pavilion opened. But the success was not only due to the content of the Pavilion, which featured works of inestimable value — the Farnese Atlas, to name just one. Its appeal is unquestionable, yet we designed a visitor experience that used these masterpieces to tell the story of Italy’s innovation, research, and advanced technology. And this resonated strongly with our audience, predominantly Japanese — around 80% — but also with visitors from across Asia.

Our activity calendar was another extraordinary driver of visibility. In six months, we organized 800 events, 414 of which were cultural. At the same time, the Pavilion served as a platform for economic promotion: 215 economic events and an additional 171 B2B meetings. Participation from business representatives was extremely high—around 8,000 people.

### **Which actors proved decisive?**

A truly fundamental force was the strong participation of the Italian Regions. Never before — in any previous Expo — had we seen engagement on this scale: 18 out of 20 regions. There was an almost virtuous competition to showcase cultural assets, territorial identities, and tourism opportunities. Universities were involved as well, along with Italian companies.



**“The success of the Italian Pavilion did not rely solely on the extraordinary works on display — although these masterpieces certainly drew crowds. What truly set the experience apart was how these artworks were used as the narrative core of a broader journey through Italy’s innovation, research excellence, and advanced technologies. The result was a visitor experience that blended heritage and future, capturing international attention**

We also tested a format we intend to replicate. Together with the Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy (Mimit), we organized something unprecedented: bringing to the Pavilion Japanese companies already investing in Italy, region by region. Each region was able to meet exceptional Japanese “testimonials” — major companies such as Hitachi, NTT, and the food giant Kagome. Initially, we wondered whether this high-level participation would materialize — whether Japanese companies would truly believe in this Italian promotional initiative. Not only did it work, but many used the opportunity to announce major investments. One example stands above all: NTT Data announced a €1.28 billion investment for a data center in Milan. These figures alone measure the success of our Expo operation.

### **Did the Italian Pavilion manage to fulfill its initial mission as a strategic outpost for Made in Italy in the Far East?**

The Japanese market is a benchmark for many Asian countries where Italy is still underrepresented — particularly ASEAN, with its 600 million inhabitants and rapidly expanding middle class seeking high-quality products. For these markets, Japan is a reference point. Expo offered Italy a unique opportunity to strengthen its presence in a region that consistently looks to the future.

Given current disputes with the United States on tariffs, expanding and diversifying exports is no longer optional.

**Considering trade tensions and tariffs with the United States, diversifying exports is increasingly essential. What**





# 1,300

Official delegations visiting the Italian Pavilion

# 18

Italian regions represented in Osaka an unprecedented number

# 61 millions

views of Italian Pavilion content on social media during the Expo period

### **impact could the Pavilion's experience have on Italy's growth margins in Japan and ASEAN?**

Exporting excellent products is important — but even more crucial is building industrial partnerships. This aligns with the Italy-Japan Plan of Action, focusing on sectors such as aerospace, life sciences, energy, mobility, and infrastructure. We should also mention underwater technology, an Italian field of excellence that few talk about, yet where we've invested heavily in recent years.

Before Expo began, we commissioned a study from the Politecnico di Milano to assess the economic impact of our presence — it projected an increase of €700 million in Italian exports.

### **You highlighted how Expo Osaka succeeded in bringing together the Regions and the highest levels of Italian institutions. Did Italy truly act as a system? And can this institutional format be replicated in the future?**

The Italian system performed admirably. We are naturally good at teamwork, but this time we projected — both to other participants and to the organizers — an image of an Italy that is determined, capable of introducing new themes and doing so in an innovative, creative way.

Consider this: we have not yet even left Osaka, and at the request — and expense — of the Japanese, a significant portion of our visitor experience will remain on display until January: the Farnese Atlas, the Leonardo pages, and a remarkable painting by Perugino. One might say this is expected for ancient or Renaissance works, but we did not leave only those. We also ensured that our sponsors kept our installations in place: alongside the Farnese Atlas, Japanese visitors will continue to see our narratives on aerospace, life sciences, and underwater technology. In other words, Japanese institutions are now promoting Italian innovation on our behalf — at zero cost to us. Only Italy could achieve something like this.

### **Beyond the numbers, the Pavilion also received an important international recognition.**

Indeed — we won the Gold Award for best interpretation and development of Expo's main theme, Designing Future Society



**“ The recognition awarded to the Italian Pavilion by the BIE honored not merely an exhibition, but an idea — Italy's vision of the society of the future. It is an undeniable success, one that Italy intends to build on in the years ahead**

for Our Lives. It's the first time Italy has received this honor, and it confirms the global relevance of our vision of the future — an undeniable success that will continue to bear fruit in the years ahead.

### **Finally, is there an image that, in your view, best captures the essence of the Italian Pavilion's experience?**

The symbolic image is that of a timeless Italy — the Italy the world consistently seeks. An Italy that is neither past nor future, but that blends its immense cultural heritage with its capacity for creativity

and originality. These qualities translate into excellent products, cutting-edge systems, and mechanical innovation admired worldwide.

We wanted to emphasize this contrast: from hyper-modern sectors such as fusion and hydrogen research, to ancestral traditions like the Mamuthones — elements we rarely present abroad but that reveal a deep-rooted sense of design. Speaking of design, we could not overlook the Compasso d'Oro award or the Salone del Mobile.

I believe we have left an image of Italy of which we can be genuinely proud.

The video version of Ambassador Mario Vattani's interview is available on the [Il Sole 24 Ore website](#) in the section dedicated to Expo Osaka. The same area hosts [all multimedia and editorial coverage of the Japanese Universal Exposition](#) produced by Il Sole 24Ore Radiocor.



## LIGABUE CAPTIVATES OSAKA: MUSIC TRULY UNITES

A full house, more than 13,000 people, and an international stage with an attentive, emotional audience. "The curiosity of those who don't speak your language, yet know your songs by heart," said Italian rock icon Luciano Ligabue, describing the atmosphere in Osaka.



# Italian Pop Stars Sell Out: Matsuri Arena Turns Into a "San Siro of the Expo"

August brought a string of full-house concerts at Osaka's Matsuri Arena, the Expo's main concert venue. Achille Lauro, Elisa, Negramaro, and Ligabue all drew massive crowds — over 43,000 spectators in just a few days — placing the arena on par with major summer concerts in Italy's top stadiums. "Performing in Osaka means representing Italy, surrounded by the best our country has to offer," said Giuliano Sangiorgi, lead singer of Negramaro. "Beauty, ingenuity and poetry — that is Italy. Being here amplifies all of that," added Achille Lauro. The emotion was shared by Elisa: "Singing in Osaka was not incredible — it was more than that. It was a dream to perform in front of 10,000 people."

## ITALY WINS BIE GOLD — A HISTORIC FIRST

For the first time in history, Italy has won the BIE Gold Award, the highest recognition granted by the intergovernmental body overseeing World Expos. The Italian Pavilion received the Theme Development Award, outperforming all previous results achieved by Italy in past Expos. A landmark achievement, and a point of national pride.



## ITALY HANDS OVER THE BATON TO MILAN-CORTINA 2026

October 13 marked the final day of Expo 2025. The Italian Pavilion closed its journey with a symbolic and evocative ceremony that formed a bridge toward the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics and Paralympics.

Center stage were the official Olympic and Paralympic torches — one blue, one gold — entrusted to torchbearers Carolina Kostner and Martina Caironi, setting them on both a literal and symbolic path toward the global sporting event taking place next February.

