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Italian exports and  
foreign direct  
investments

The Italian support to national  
companies' business  
internationalisation

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## ***List of abbreviations***

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### *- Italian abbreviations*

<b>ICE</b>	Istituto per il Commercio Estero
<b>SACE</b>	Sezione Speciale per l'Assicurazione dei Crediti All'estero
<b>SIMES</b>	Società Italiana per le Imprese all'Estero
<b>PMI</b>	Piccola e Media Impresa
<b>D. Lg.</b>	Decreto Legislativo
<b>L.</b>	Legge

### *- English abbreviations*

<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investments
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation
<b>OPT</b>	Outward Processing Traffic (Regime)
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>CEE</b>	Central and Eastern Europe
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East Northern Africa
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OPEC</b>	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>CC</b>	Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture
<b>CC</b>	Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad

### *- French abbreviations*

<b>IDE</b>	Investissement direct à l'étranger
<b>PACA</b>	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
<b>CCIT</b>	Chambre de Commerce Italienne
<b>COTRAO</b>	Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentales
<b>FEDER</b>	Fond Européen de Développement Régional
<b>ALCOTRA</b>	Alpes Latines Coopération Transfrontalière
<b>PME</b>	Petites et Moyennes Entreprises

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## ***Prefazione***

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L'esperienza di stage che ho svolto presso la *Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur*, è una delle principali ragioni che hanno ispirato questo studio. Durante i mesi passati in Francia, molte tematiche relative all'economia politica e all'internazionalizzazione dei sistemi produttivi, hanno finalmente trovato un'applicazione concreta nel lavoro svolto presso l'ente camerale.

Scopo di questo elaborato è quello di restituire una presentazione esaustiva dei principali enti italiani che danno vita ad una vera e propria rete di supporto all'internazionalizzazione del tessuto imprenditoriale nazionale. Tale analisi diventa ancora più rilevante nel particolare contesto di crisi economica in cui il nostro paese, e buona parte dell'Eurozona, versano ormai da quasi 6 anni. Di fronte al calo dei consumi, all'ingente carico fiscale imposto alle imprese e alla concorrenza dei mercati emergenti, lo spostamento dei flussi commerciali e produttivi all'estero si presenta come una delle soluzioni più praticabili. Da qui emerge l'importanza della citata rete di supporto, in particolare per un contesto imprenditoriale come quello italiano, fortemente sfavorito dalle sue stesse caratteristiche strutturali.

Per perseguire questi obiettivi il lavoro di tesi è organizzato come segue:

- Capitolo uno: analisi delle tecniche di funzionamento dei suddetti processi di internazionalizzazione;
- Capitolo due: vengono portate alla luce le difficoltà strutturali che impediscono il completo successo dell'internazionalizzazione imprenditoriale italiana;
- Capitolo tre: analisi dei supporti finanziari e assistenziali sopracitati. Vengono inoltre presentati enti quali in Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e l'ICE Agenzia, ed i relativi servizi assistenziali, promozionale ed informativi;
- Capitolo quattro: analisi della rete italiana delle Camere di Commercio. Vengono presi in considerazione tutti gli istituti camerali italiani che dall'Italia e dall'estero erogano servizi e programmi a sostegno delle attività di internazionalizzazione;

- Capitolo cinque: caso studio. Il capitolo analizza il contesto economico e commerciale della Costa Azzurra francese mettendo in luce l'operato svolto dalla *Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice*. L'ente camerale infatti, supporta lo sviluppo produttivo e commerciale italiano all'interno del territorio transfrontaliero delle Alpi del Mare.

Ad una prima occhiata, la differenza fra i servizi erogati da un ente, piuttosto che da un altro, sembra labile. In realtà, ogni istituzione presenta una sua peculiarità distintiva. Al di là dell'importanza strategica degli aiuti forniti da questi enti, occorre quindi portarne alla luce le caratteristiche. Solo così sarà possibile comprendere l'essenzialità di questa rete, la quale è stata più volte messa in discussione perché eccessivamente ampia e costosa nella sua articolazione nodale.

## CHAPTER 1

# WORLD EXPORT AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS

### *1.1. An historical overview*

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According to Mankiw's 5<sup>th</sup> principle of economics, trade can make everyone better off by allowing each person to specialise in the activity he or she does best.<sup>1</sup> In order to specialise, each producer has to manufacture more of a good or a service by using the smaller amount of factors of production he owns. Such an ability is usually defined absolute advantage, and it is essential to discover which production an individual, a company or a country should specialise in by owning resources and technologies that differ from those of competitors.<sup>2</sup> However, the decision to trade products with others does not depend on absolute advantage, as trade becomes favourable thanks to comparative advantage, which is the ability to produce a good or a service at a lower opportunity cost than that of competitors.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, having a limited amount of resources, opportunity cost is the value of the alternative good the individual has renounced to produce, and it is expressed by the price of the final product he has eventually manufactured. However, producers can buy alternative goods through trade, by paying them less than the costs they would bear to sustain their production.<sup>4</sup> By and large, buying less expensive goods of quality from abroad drives commercial relations between states, alongside with the chance to have access to a wider range of products. Economy of scale and access to foreign know-how are additional advantages

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<sup>1</sup> N. G. Mankiw, *Principi di economia*, ZANICHELLI, Quarta Edizione, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem p. 43, R. C. Feenstra, A. M. Taylor, *Economia Internazionale, teoria e politica degli scambi internazionali*, HOEPLI, Milano, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> N. G. Mankiw, *Principi di economia*, cit., p. 44, A. M. Taylor, *Economia Internazionale*, cit., p.37.

<sup>4</sup> N. G. Mankiw, *Principi di economia*, cit. pp. 44-45.

related to international commerce. The former entails a large scale production to decrease its costs, and international trade allows it to find additional foreign end-markets where to sell out domestic outputs. On the other hand, know-how spread through international trade as foreign knowledge and innovations can be acquired by states through the import of technological goods.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of its long-time origins, it is difficult to clearly establish when the international trade practice first appeared. What is widely known is that it rapidly grew from the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the outbreak of World War One. Indeed, innovations in the way goods were transported incredibly increased trade flows and such a period is usually defined by history books as the “golden age” of international trade. Nevertheless, the war outbreak and the previous 1929 American Great Depression nullified such developments, as they mainly resulted in economic protectionist policies: both the United States and European countries increased custom fees, and tariffs on imported goods, so that international trade volume was considerably restrained.<sup>6</sup> However, trade relationships between states resumed in the post-war period, particularly from the 1950s to the 1970s, as economic protectionism ended and the world economy recovered its previous integration.

Alongside with post-war trade improvements, the introduction of free trade policies, technological innovations in production and the new division of labour led to important developments in world trade practices.<sup>7</sup> Right after the end of World War II, States firstly needed an established free trade policy. They consequently created a free trade system allowing them to specialise in their own competitive productions without discriminating imports from other countries. Custom fees, as well as tariffs and non-tariffs barriers to trade, had to be removed to avoid world trade reduction. Furthermore, many international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, better known as the World Bank, were created to achieve this goal. The General Agreement on

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p.150.

<sup>6</sup> R. C. Feenstra, A. M. Taylor, *Economia Internazionale*, cit. pp. 14-16.

<sup>7</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo, territori e reti nello scenario globale*, UTET Università, Aprile 2010.

Tariffs and Trade was equally signed, whose purpose was to ensure free trades. It later led to the creation of the World Trade Organisation, which still oversees the observance of free trade rules.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, changes in post-war world trade were related to innovative technologies. Not only did these latter ones speed ship, rail and road transports by diminishing their costs, but they also increased industrial production.<sup>9</sup> Finally, trade developments also depended on changes in the old division of labour, whose traditional structure started to transform. Before the two World War, such a division mainly consisted of a contrast between Northern industrialised nations and Southern underdeveloped ones. Northern countries used to import a wide range of raw materials and agricultural products from their Southern counterparts. They produced manufactured goods that were mostly exported to other industrialised countries. Few of such products were secondly exported to the above southern countries in return for low-cost primary goods.<sup>10</sup> Changes in this structure firstly occurred because of the 1950s *Green Revolution*: many southern unskilled workers were released from the local agricultural system that was renewed through the use of chemical substances and new irrigation techniques. In order to exploit these workers, many Northern enterprises redeployed their business there and improved their competitiveness by taking advantage of low-priced labour and direct access to raw materials.<sup>11</sup> Southern countries equally benefited from these changes, as they could start their industrial revolution by acquiring Northern technologies which were essential in order to produce manufactured goods. Basically, changes in the traditional division of labour resulted in the emergence of a new internationalisation tool spreading among Northern industrialised states. Northern investors and enterprises started using foreign direct investments (FDI) to redeploy their business abroad instead of exporting their goods.

Being sustained by commercial and economic evolution, the FDI practice kept growing after the 1950s Green Revolution. It particularly

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<sup>8</sup> C. Focarelli, *Diritto internazionale*, CEDAM, 2 ed., Padova, 2012, p. 420..

<sup>9</sup> R. C. Feenstra, A. M. Taylor, *Economia Internazionale*, cit. p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione, i mercati internazionali, i fattori di successo dell'export, modalità e strutture dell'esportazione e dell'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa, tecnica mercantile e valutaria*, BUFFETTI EDITORE, II Edizione, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*, cit.

increased during the 1980s as a consequence of the world economic downturn due to the still ongoing effects of the 1973 oil crisis.<sup>12</sup> World economic growth was sharply below average, and the volumes of international trade shrank because of industrialised countries' economic recession. This latter one inevitably reduced the amount of raw materials previously imported from Southern countries, while increasing FDI flows directed towards the South. As Northern States could no longer bear raw material costs and import fees, they directly had access to them through foreign direct investments. Alongside with economic recession, industrialised countries also had to face challenges coming from developing and emerging ones. Not only did Southern States remain the main raw materials world producers, but they had also specialised in finished goods business. In addition to that, Northern countries had to adapt their production to an increasing globalized market.<sup>13</sup> All these economic dynamics resulted in Northern countries business redeployments through foreign direct investments, whose main aim was to recover business competitiveness against Southern countries development and markets globalisation. In sum, business redeployment is essential in order to safeguard countries' shares in foreign importing markets, as well as to benefit from business efficiency.<sup>14</sup> The 1980s economic and trade background particularly fostered such a new internationalisation practice.

During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, international trade and world economic integration mostly depended on the spread of regional trade agreements, whose aim was to reduce, or completely remove, tariffs and non-tariffs restrictions to import and export flows among signatories.<sup>15</sup> This latter ones were usually two or just few more states. Thanks to such agreements regional trade increased within the main trade path (United States-Canada-Mexico, African countries and Asian regions), and particularly within the European Union. There, advantages related to political and economic integration gave impulse to regional trade by involving Eastern Europe

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<sup>12</sup> A. Zampieri, *La dinamica del commercio estero e le strategie di globalizzazione*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti, storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, G. Sapelli, RUBETTINO EDITORE, 2000, p. 198.

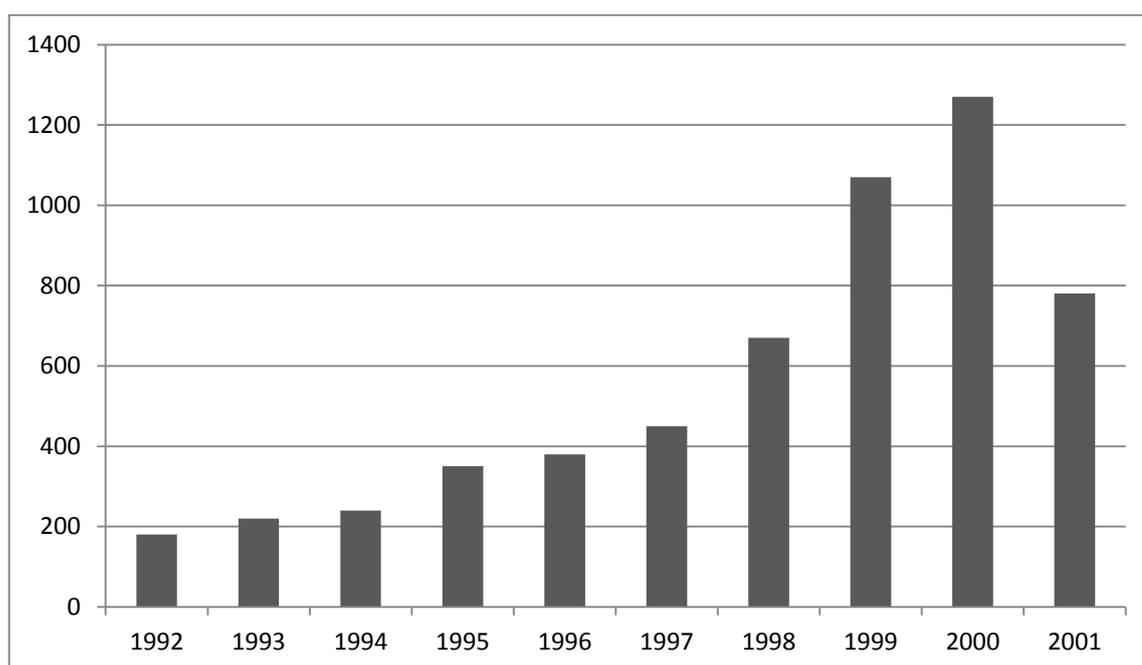
<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200.

<sup>14</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p.25.

<sup>15</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*, cit.

countries too, although they still had not adhered to this new supranational Union. In addition to regional trade agreements, the spread of technological developments in telecommunications and computer science sustained the world trade expansion up to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> As to foreign direct investments, mergers and take-overs between developed countries' enterprises kept increasing during this period.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1.1.- World FDI flows**



**Source:** UNCTAD datas,  
*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale 2001-2002*, ICE – Istituto nazionale per il commercio con l'estero.

Despite these trends, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century opened with another economic downturn leading to the sharp decrease of world trade volumes (see Table 1.1.). Although world production did not stop growing, world trade declined as countries reduced import and export flows, as well as direct investments to foreign countries. This situation was mainly caused by September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, which had spread political and financial instability. Accordingly, having seen the great damages terrorism could

<sup>16</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, pp. 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem* p. 14.

cause, states feared it as a threat to their national peace and security, and adopted old protectionist practices to further defend against foreign threats.<sup>18</sup>

After the crisis, positive economic trends appeared in 2003 and lasted up to 2008. It was a period of economic growth and global trade development led by the Asian region dynamisms, whose economies grew fast and became the main buyers of industrialised countries' manufactured goods. On the other hand, additional developing countries such as those of Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, as well as the main developed ones, like the United States and the European Region just partially contributed to the world economic growth.<sup>19</sup> During this period, foreign direct investments equally grew, involving an increasing number of developing countries. FDI kept flowing from developed States to the main raw material producing countries, in order to circumvent the rise in their price, which would never stop during these years.<sup>20</sup>

Positive economic trends suddenly stopped in 2008 as the world production halted causing the complete collapse of international trade. Such a new economic crisis mainly occurred because of the fall in the world demand for goods and services, which collapsed everywhere, particularly in developed countries. In addition to that, obstacles to access to credit and other financial services, as well as the unrelenting rise in raw materials prices, worsened the situation. Inflows and outflows of foreign direct investments fell too, and kept being mostly absorbed by raw materials producing countries. Nevertheless, residual FDI flows witnessed the international evolution of emerging countries, whose companies invested abroad both in developed countries and in nearest emerging ones.<sup>21</sup> During the crisis, developing countries also sustained international trade, and did not stop to develop by recording the highest growth rates. China and others BRICs countries, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, firstly strengthened their economies, while the MENA region recovered its economic growth after the events of the Arab Spring. Developing countries' growth mainly depended on

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<sup>18</sup> Ibidem pp. 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2003-2004*, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2006-2007*, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, pp. 8-11.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

the rise in raw material prices, as gains coming from their exports allowed them to become both the main importers of Northern finished goods, as well as the main protagonists of international trade. On the contrary, developed economies recorded lower growth rates and they never recovered the amount of production that they used to have before the crisis. The rise in oil prices, austerity policies that were adopted to reduce governments' budget deficit, and the contraction in their domestic demands led Northern developed states to economic decline.<sup>22</sup>

Today's global economy is still unstable. Although international trade has opposed to economic negative trends, its growth rates keep declining (from +5,3% in 2011 to +3,1% in 2012), falling far below their last twenty years average (+6%).<sup>23</sup> Broadly speaking, developed countries' trade flows have been weakened by austerity measures which reduced their ability to import goods from abroad. The foreign direct investments scenario is equally uncertain: apparently, from 2009 to 2011, foreign investments have been recovering in spite of negative economic trends. Nonetheless, developed countries' hesitating economic recovery, which has still not started yet, led foreign direct investments to drastically plunge in 2012. Once again, FDI were mainly absorbed by Southern emerging countries, while industrialised States' FDI fell down.<sup>24</sup>

To sum up, foreign direct investment trends display the growing role that emerging countries have been recently playing. These States took part in the world economic integration and converted from passive actors to the main leaders of international trade. Despite their reluctance to become involved with world trade flows, they started showing economic and trade interests that they wanted to protect and consequently opened to the world trade practice.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, foreign direct investments also witness the causality between economic dynamics, determining international trade growth or decline, and the emergence of new internationalisation tools. To begin with, the FDI practice first appeared because of challenges coming

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<sup>22</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2011-2012*, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, pp. 8-10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013*, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale 2001-2002*, cit. p. 8.

from developing countries and markets globalisation. The recent FDI slowdown was by and large caused by economic instability and world trade crises, while economic growth resulted in increasing flows between developed countries, as well as in the birth of FDI flows within emerging ones.<sup>26</sup> Considering that, foreign direct investments are as essential as exports to international trade, as they allow goods and services to reach foreign end-markets without exporting them.

## ***1.2. World export: aims, geographies and strategies***

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Export is: “the process of sending goods to another country for sale”<sup>27</sup>. The export practice can be considered as the first internationalisation strategy whose traditional causes have been discovered and explained by economic theorists. Having studied the economic situation of a nation before and after it has opened to international trade, economists affirmed that export depended on comparative advantage and competitive prices of goods. Before international trade, prices are balanced at their equilibrium as the amount of demanded goods is equal to the amount of supplied ones.<sup>28</sup> By opening to the world trade, domestic prices need to be compared with their equivalent world ones, which are nationally introduced. World price is the price of a certain good within other countries. If it is higher than national prices then countries usually export. After the opening to international trade, countries’ economic equilibrium is lost, and the amount of demanded goods is lower than that of supplied ones.<sup>29</sup> Such a surplus is consequently exported to other countries. In sum, according to economic theories, export mainly depends on lower domestic prices that are linked to the above comparative advantage and opportunity cost. This latter one is expressed by the final price of a certain good. If opportunity cost is lower than that of other countries, then its related price is lower too, and the country becomes an international exporter of such a good.

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<sup>26</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale...2008-2009*, cit. p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Oxford advanced learner's dictionary, new 8<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford University Press.

<sup>28</sup> N. G. Mankiw, *Principi di economia*, cit. p. 142.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem* p. 143.

Countries' overproduction does not occur only because of rising prices. It can also be brought about by innovation, which increases the amount of goods produced by reducing the main costs of production.<sup>30</sup> This is usually the case of small and medium enterprises within the main industrialised countries, which look for foreign markets in order to sell out their overproduction. By and large, export too does not exclusively depend on comparative advantage and competitive prices of goods. First of all, it can be involved by enterprises' strategic planning, as they voluntarily sell goods and services abroad aiming at fulfilling an international development.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, enterprises might only focus on domestic markets, leaving out foreign ones. If it is the case, then export depends on foreign buyers, whose requirements can make enterprises occasionally turn to export.<sup>32</sup>

Once export has been entailed by the strategic planning of a certain business, then it needs to be adequately planned. Companies can hardly successfully export their goods and services to whatever market.<sup>33</sup> The most suitable export methods and strategies consequently need to be defined through market researches in order to decide if and where to export. Before such researches are carried out, enterprises also need to assess their own technological, productive, business and financial capabilities. They evaluate the innovation of their goods, as well as that of their production, and verify their economic efficiency and human resources competences to work and product for foreign markets. As HR and production technologies have to adapt final goods to foreign consumers' requirements, which change from one country's end-market to another, then they must be proportionately flexible to better satisfy them.<sup>34</sup>

After the above structural evaluations, enterprises define their key factors in every area. They consider as many end-markets as possible in order to pinpoint those areas that are mainly inclined to import their products.<sup>35</sup> During this step, collecting information is essential in order to avoid risks

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<sup>30</sup> V. Bottadini, *Aspetti Economici delle facilitazione per le esportazioni*, Padova 1960, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione, organizzare l'azienda*, II Edizione, BUFFETTI EDITORE, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem* p. 57.

<sup>33</sup> *Aspetti Economici delle facilitazione per le esportazioni*, cit. p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, Il Sole 24 ore libri, p. 27; *Marketing per l'esportazione, organizzare l'azienda*, cit. p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, cit. p. 29.

connected with internationalisation. Thanks to information, domestic goods are mainly directed towards those countries where exportation can truly be developed.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, countries presenting no prospect of success are usually left out from international business strategies. However, collecting information is a long and accurate process, starting with a study of global macroeconomic trends. Some of the areas that have been previously considered are expected to show some potential for success which consequently justifies more detailed researches.<sup>37</sup> During this stage, companies look for socio-political, demographic and economic detailed information about the smaller group of countries they have selected. They examine economic indicators, such as per capita incomes, as well as private and public consumptions and investments to later define each country's main economic trends.<sup>38</sup> By looking at countries' net exports, they discover the main local importers and exporters. Once the formers have been located, then companies examine which products are mainly brought from abroad, who the main suppliers are, and which tariffs and non tariffs barriers are mainly adopted.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, other foreign suppliers are competitors, while trade barriers might hinder companies' commercial penetration.

This second stage allows companies to select a more restricted number of countries that will be further examined to finally select the eventual target markets. During this final stage, enterprises firstly search for the reasons driving foreign countries to buy their products. They also study how to change goods and adapt them to foreign requirements, and then look at places where goods will be bought in order to define the most suitable channels of distributions. What is mostly central at this stage is the relationship between goods and markets in every country. Nevertheless, it is equally useful to carefully study other companies' activities and strategies, particularly those of local producers as they better know how to be competitive within their own national market.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, ETAS LIBRI, p. 51.

<sup>38</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 61.

<sup>39</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit., p. 69; G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale* cit. pp. 68-69.

Thanks to markets researches, enterprises have eventually found a group of countries where export is not risky. They now need to choose whether concentrate or diversify their business into many or just few of the above selected markets.<sup>41</sup> If few bigger markets stand out among those selected, then concentration is usually preferred. Bigger markets mainly correspond to Northern industrialised countries whose firmer domestic demand and stronger economies appeal to foreign companies' interests. Thanks to the concentration strategy companies define their strategic planning and adapt their final products to foreign requirements coming from these few markets.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, if no bigger markets appear, then diversification is mostly preferred as export strategy. As the potential demand is spread out among many countries, then enterprises strategic planning, as well as changes on the final product, barely differ from one country to another. Companies can easily sell their goods as much as possible in every country in order to pursue their sales targets.<sup>43</sup>

Whether concentration or diversification is preferred as export strategy, companies must classify all of the above selected countries in order to establish their primary aims. As being economically homogeneous and geographically closer usually eases the overall export practice, then market similarities and geographical proximities are essential in order to find out companies' primary targets.<sup>44</sup> Alongside with similarities and geographical closeness, higher incomes and firmer domestic demands for foreign goods usually drive companies' priorities. Finally, enterprises mainly look for countries where local competition is too weak to stop their exports.<sup>45</sup>

In sum, the export geography mainly depends on comparative advantage and specialisation, as well as on market researches that find and classify the most receptive foreign markets. As it would be impossible to detail the complete evolution of the export geography, the following lines will examine the main geographical and comparative advantage trends characterizing the first decade of the 21<sup>th</sup> century. To begin with, from 2001 to 2012, the European Union has been consolidating its lead in mechanical

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<sup>41</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 116.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 221.

<sup>45</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 77.

productions, which were mainly sold to Asia and the Eastern Europe. Chemical productions, as well as in the transportation industry, whose products were exported to the Northern American market, have been equally developed. The European Union has also begun specialising in the pharmaceutical industry and in manufacturing wood products, while showing a comparative disadvantage in the energy, agricultural and textile production.<sup>46</sup> Nowadays, the area keeps ruling the world export of services and still places among the main world exporters of goods (see Table 1.4.). Despite its competitiveness has been strengthened by the unrelenting depreciation of the European currency , the Union has gradually lost its share in world export markets, as well as its top position in the exporters' world ranking. It also had to change its export geography in order to oppose to the Chinese and Eastern Europe economic rise. Although the United States still remains the main end-market of European exports, China and Eastern Europe have been strengthening their roles as importers of European goods. Alongside with its shares within the European export market, China also increased its shares in the world export one.<sup>47</sup> The country, which showed no interest in taking part to world trade at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has now become the main world supplier of the Asian region, as well as of the European Union. It has now outdone both the United States and Germany, reaching the top position of the exporters' world ranking and still acquires new markets shares.<sup>48</sup> Finally, as to the main world producers of raw materials, the African region and the Middle East still rule such a specialisation, whose products keep being exported to developed countries despite having been slowed by the rise in their prices. On the whole, emerging countries shares in world export markets have been increasing from 1994 to 2003 (see Table 1.4.), and keep growing faster than developed countries' ones as they take advantage of trade relationships with countries that have escaped to the global economic crisis.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2003-2004, cit. p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2006-2007, cit. p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 20010-2011, cit. p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2003-2004, cit. p. 10.

Table 1.2. – **2001 Main world exporters of goods**

<b>2001 Rankings</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Export Values (billions of dollars)</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2000</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2001</b>
<b>1</b>	United States	731	12,2	11,9
<b>2</b>	Germany	570	8,6	9,2
<b>3</b>	Japan	405	7,5	6,6
<b>4</b>	China	370	5,6	6
<b>5</b>	France	320	5,1	5,2
<b>6</b>	United Kingdom	274	4,4	4,4
<b>7</b>	Canada	262	4,3	4,3
<b>8</b>	Italy	241	3,7	3,9
<b>9</b>	Netherlands	230	3,6	3,7
<b>10</b>	Belgium	180	2,9	2,9
<b>11</b>	Mexico	159	2,6	2,6
<b>12</b>	South Korea	151	2,7	2,4
<b>13</b>	Taiwan	123	2,3	2
<b>14</b>	Singapore	122	2,2	2
<b>15</b>	Spain	111	1,8	1,8
<b>16</b>	Russia	103	1,6	1,7
<b>17</b>	Malaysia	89	1,5	1,4
<b>18</b>	Hong Kong	87	1,5	1,4
<b>19</b>	Ireland	83	1,2	1,4
<b>20</b>	Switzerland	82	1,3	1,3
	Total of 20 countries	4690	76,6	76,1
	<b>World</b>	<b>6.162</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: WTO statistics,

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2001-2002, ICE – Istituto nazionale per il commercio estero.

Table 1.3. – **2003 Main world exporters of goods**

<b>2003 Rankings</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Export values billions of dollars</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2002</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2003</b>
<b>1</b>	Germany	748	9,5	10
<b>2</b>	United States	742	10,7	9,7
<b>3</b>	China	529	6,2	7,1
<b>4</b>	Japan	472	6,4	6,3
<b>5</b>	France	385	5,1	5,1
<b>6</b>	United Kingdom	304	4,3	4,1
<b>7</b>	Netherlands	293	3,8	3,9
<b>8</b>	Italy	290	3,9	3,9
<b>9</b>	Canada	272	3,9	3,6
<b>10</b>	Belgium	255	3,3	3,4
<b>11</b>	South Korea	194	2,5	2,6
<b>12</b>	Mexico	165	2,5	2,2
<b>13</b>	Spain	152	1,9	2
<b>14</b>	Taiwan	151	2,1	2
<b>15</b>	Singapore	144	1,9	1,9
<b>16</b>	Hong Kong	138	2,0	1,8
<b>17</b>	Russia	135	1,7	1,8
<b>18</b>	Sweden	101	1,3	1,3
<b>19</b>	Malaysia	101	1,4	1,3
<b>20</b>	Switzerland	101	1,4	1,3
	Total	5.182	75,8	69,3
	<b>World</b>	<b>7.482</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** WTO, EUROSTAT and ISTAT statistics,  
*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2003-2004, Istituto nazionale per il commercio estero.

Table 1.4. – **Regions' shares in world export**

	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>European Union</b>	41,3	38	39,9	40,6	41,6	41	39,1	38,2	38,6	36,9
<i><b>Euro zone</b></i>	32,3	29,4	32,1	31,7	32,6	32,1	30,3	29,3	29,8	28,3
<i><b>Other EU countries</b></i>	9	8,6	8,7	8,9	9	8,9	8,8	8,9	8,9	8,6
<b>European countries (not EU)</b>	4,4	4,7	4,7	5,2	5,3	5,5	6	6,1	6,3	6,7
<b>Africa</b>	1,9	2,4	2,2	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,8	2,9	2,9	3,3
<b>Northern America</b>	16,4	16,4	16,2	14,7	13,2	12,4	12,2	11,9	11,4	11
<b>South America</b>	5,4	5,7	5,7	5,5	5,1	5,3	5,6	5,8	5,7	5,7
<b>Middle East</b>	3,1	3,9	3,8	3,6	3,7	4,2	4,6	4,9	4,8	5,7
<b>Central Asia</b>	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,9
<b>East Asia</b>	25	26,3	24,8	25,6	26	26,5	26,8	27,1	27,1	27,1
<b>Oceania and other territories</b>	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,5
<b>WORLD</b>	<b>100</b>									

Source: FMI-DOTS (Direction of Trade Statistics),

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, 208-2009*, Istituto nazionale per il commercio estero.

Table 1.5. – **2010 Main world exporters of goods**

<b>2010 Rankings</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Export values (billions of dollars)</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2009</b>	<b>Shares (%) 2010</b>
<b>1</b>	China	1.578	9,6	10,4
<b>2</b>	United States	1.278	8,4	8,4
<b>3</b>	Germany	1.269	8,9	8,3
<b>4</b>	Japan	770	4,6	5,1
<b>5</b>	Netherlands	572	4,0	3,8
<b>6</b>	France	521	3,9	3,4
<b>7</b>	South Korea	466	2,9	3,1
<b>8</b>	Italy	448	3,2	2,9
<b>9</b>	Belgium	411	3,0	2,7
<b>10</b>	United Kingdom	405	2,8	2,7
<b>11</b>	Hong Kong	401	2,6	2,6
<b>12</b>	Russia	400	2,4	2,6
<b>13</b>	Canada	387	2,5	2,5
<b>14</b>	Singapore	352	2,2	2,3
<b>15</b>	Mexico	298	1,8	2
<b>16</b>	Taiwan	275	1,6	1,8
<b>17</b>	Saudi Arabia	254	1,5	1,7
<b>18</b>	Spain	245	1,8	1,6
<b>19</b>	United Arab Emirates	235	1,5	1,5
<b>20</b>	India	216	1,3	1,4
	Total	10.780	70,7	70,7
	<b>World</b>	<b>15.238</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: WTO statistics,

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2010-2011, Istituto nazionale per il commercio estero.

Thanks to market researches, enterprises have eventually collected all of the required information that they needed to know where to export and which markets to prefer and put first. They can now define their export strategy by choosing the most suitable marketing mix, which consists of the product itself, pricing, promotion and distribution.

To begin with, export is often presumed to exclusively depend on the ability to satisfy foreign consumers' requirements.<sup>50</sup> Companies consequently adapt their goods in order to ensure their sales abroad. Required changes are mostly found out by collecting information on potential foreign end-markets and consumers' types whose expectations drive them to buy foreign products. Changes may equally depend on countries' different cultures and traditions, and might be imposed by foreign regulations.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, alongside with adapting exported goods to the main foreign requirements, enterprises may also resort to some different product strategies, such as selling their goods without modifying them, or creating new products for foreign markets. The former strategy aims at exporting those products that have been successfully sold to domestic markets. As enterprises already earn big profits from their domestic market, they turn abroad just to increase their sales volumes. Foreign markets are consequently expected to successfully absorb domestic products just as they are.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, enterprises may also directly create new products to sell them abroad to more than just one foreign end-market. New products standard characteristics are supposed to better meet the main needs of the global market.<sup>53</sup> Finally, as to custom-made goods, their characteristics are directly defined by foreign customers.<sup>54</sup>

Alongside with products strategies, pricing ones set the right price that enterprises' products should display abroad in order to be successfully sold. Such a price depends on many factors, like manufacturing and distribution costs, as well as foreign markets' current prices and competitors' ones. It leads enterprises to choose whether to set lower or higher prices for goods they aim at exporting.<sup>55</sup> Enterprises usually set lower prices to benefit from

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<sup>50</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 167.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 168-170, *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, cit. p.40.

<sup>52</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 75.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>54</sup> Ivi.

<sup>55</sup> *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, cit. p. 46.

foreign markets perfect competitiveness. Foreign competitors are expected not to prevent new exporters from entering the market and increase their sales volumes. Nonetheless, foreign competitors might equally leave no room of manoeuvre, and new exported goods are hardly sold. By setting lower prices, enterprises consequently manage to cover at least manufacturing and distribution costs. On the contrary, if higher prices are settled anyway, then companies' products are so innovative that their higher costs will not hinder profit margins.<sup>56</sup>

Promotion consists of many communicative actions aiming at informing foreign consumers about the availability of new products. As, it equally evokes customers' interest in buying them, it is essential both to strengthen already existing exports, and to launch new sales abroad. As an element of enterprises' marketing mix, promotion firstly relies on paying recurring visits abroad to nurture contacts with foreign customers and study foreign competitors. It also consists of trade fairs which showcase domestic products to a foreign selected public.<sup>57</sup> Alongside with the above promotional tools, advertising campaigns and few additional operations will be better presented within chapter three.

Finally distribution, which brings companies' products out from domestic markets to foreign ones, may be direct or involve intermediaries.<sup>58</sup> If distribution is indirect, then intermediaries take the companies' place in selling goods abroad. Intermediaries might be both foreign importers and national exporters. The formers mainly consist of big foreign companies residing within the exporters' domestic countries, as well as of distributors located abroad into foreign end-markets. On the contrary, national exporters mainly involve companies dealing with selling domestic goods abroad, and consortia. Thanks to these latter ones, domestic producers ally in order to strengthen their foreign businesses. Essentially, consortia buy companies' products and deal with selling them to foreign distributors.<sup>59</sup> Finally, trading companies are intermediaries as well. As buying and selling goods abroad is their only strategic purpose, they can belong both to foreign importers when

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<sup>56</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem p. 82, *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, cit. p. 52.

<sup>58</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 231.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, pp. 233, 234, 238; L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 87.

residing abroad, and to national exporters, when they are located within the exporters' countries.<sup>60</sup> Indirect distribution strategies are usually preferred when export is not envisaged by enterprises' strategic planning. As some companies mainly focus on domestic markets and sporadically turn to foreign ones, they have no interest in arranging distribution and consequently commit it to intermediaries.<sup>61</sup> Although such a strategy allows them to reduce higher costs and risks connected with the export practice, it may also hinder them from collecting useful information on foreign markets trends and consumers' requirements.<sup>62</sup>

Direct distribution entails companies' voluntary engagement in selling their products abroad by resorting to sales agents, seller brokers and their own salesmen. The formers are external intermediaries selling companies' goods abroad, while the latter consist of companies' own salesmen which are sent abroad to nurture contacts with old and new buyers.<sup>63</sup> Despite agents and brokers are external intermediaries, they differ from indirect distribution ones as they do not buy goods and services to distribute them abroad. On the contrary, they simply sell goods on the enterprise's behalf.<sup>64</sup> Domestic goods can be equally directly sold abroad through companies' foreign branches. These latter ones are strategically settled abroad to better organize distribution and take advantage of the geographical proximity to foreign consumers. Nevertheless, foreign branches rely on foreign direct investment whose costs inevitably increase the eventual amount of export fees.<sup>65</sup> Despite such an handicap, direct distribution undoubtedly allows enterprises to better know their foreign markets as well as foreign competition.<sup>66</sup>

Companies' distribution strategies finally involve business agreements between companies and organizations. Such agreements lead to the creation of joint-ventures, piggybacks, export consortia, and franchising practices. As mixed entities that are usually composed by two enterprises residing within two different countries, joint-ventures mainly aim at selling the former's

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<sup>60</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 236,

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, p. 232; L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 87.

<sup>62</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 239.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, p. 245.

<sup>64</sup> *Guida pratica al Commercio Internazionale*, cit. p. 36.

<sup>65</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale* cit. p. 247, L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 101 .

<sup>66</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 248.

products within the latter's domestic end-market.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, piggy-back agreements allow exporter to sell their goods to foreign companies that will later distribute them alongside their own ones.<sup>68</sup> Although export consortia are equally created in order to strengthen companies' sales abroad, they differ from the above consortia which are involved by companies' indirect distribution strategies. Simple consortia consist of national sellers settled which are settles within the exporter's domestic country, while export consortia act as importers and settle within the main foreign end-markets.<sup>69</sup> Finally, the franchising practice allows enterprises to sell their firms, technologies and know-how to foreign economic operators that will produce and distribute the former's products within their own domestic markets.<sup>70</sup>

Companies deciding to sell their goods making use of intermediaries are usually small and middle ones. In order to avoid risks connected with the export practice, they agree to sell their goods abroad only if they are more competitive than those of foreign producers.<sup>71</sup> On the contrary, if companies are directly engaged in distributing their products, then they adopt direct export as the main strategy to pursue their international development. Bigger companies usually do that, as export is often envisaged by their strategic planning.<sup>72</sup> Alongside with direct and indirect export, companies might adopt other alternative exchange tools, like transferring their production abroad instead of selling it to foreign countries. As such a strategy relies on foreign direct investments in order to open new foreign branches, it may be part of a direct distribution strategy. By depending on foreign investments, such a strategy represents an alternative way to internationalise. Multinational corporations often resort to it as they structurally consist of many foreign branches having become more and more independent from their head office, which is located in the company's country of origin. Multinational corporations display the most complete internationalisation strategy: at this stage, companies have developed a global view and want to sell their goods wherever potential end-markets are located.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 87.

<sup>68</sup> Ivi.

<sup>69</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 254.

<sup>70</sup> L. Ballerini, R. Bertone, *Marketing per l'esportazione*, cit. p. 87.

<sup>71</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale*, cit. p. 92.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, p. 96.

<sup>73</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 59.

### ***1.3. FDI: strategic and geographical aims***

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Essentially, foreign direct investments allow producers to redeploy their business activities abroad. Such investments mainly consist in transferring money from a company located in one country to one or more based abroad in order to buy plants and equipments and to directly carry out a business there.<sup>74</sup> More and more companies have been investing abroad during the last two centuries. Accordingly, an official definition of foreign direct investments has become essential to recognize whether enterprises are truly investing or whether they are simply fulfilling some business operations abroad. Today's FDI official definition is provided by two international organizations, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. According to this latter one, foreign direct investments are:

“[...] a category of investments that reflects the objective of establishing a lasting interest by a resident enterprise in one economy (direct investor) in an enterprise (direct investment enterprise) that is resident in an economy other than that of the direct investor”.<sup>75</sup>

As stated by the above definition, foreign direct investment entail long-lasting interests linking national investors to foreign enterprises. Such a long-term relationship takes place only if the former owns “10% or more of the voting power [...]” of the latter”.<sup>76</sup> Essentially, the share of voting power owned by direct investors results in different types of foreign investments. If the investor's share goes from 10% up to 50%, then the foreign enterprise is classified as an associated one. On the contrary, it is classified as a subsidiary if the investor's share is higher than 50%.<sup>77</sup> Finally, national investors may also completely own the foreign enterprise.

Differences in the way that foreign direct investment are classified do not exclusively depend on the share of voting power owned by direct investors. Economic theorists further distinguish between *Greenfield* and

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<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>75</sup> OECD, *FDI in figures*, April 2013, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> Ivi.

<sup>77</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*.

*Brownfield* foreign investments, as the formers allow investors to create new plants or branches abroad, while the latter lead to the merger or takeover of already existing foreign plants and branches. Direct investments can also result in the privatization of plants, branches and infrastructures that were previously owned by foreign countries' local governments.<sup>78</sup>

FDI appeared for the first time at the beginning of the Twentieth century. They used to be exploited by American enterprises which firstly possessed plants and infrastructures abroad. American investments flows prevailed during the post-war period as well, and mainly aimed at finding new foreign end-markets where to sell out the American domestic overproduction. Such a strategy allowed American enterprises to transfer their goods abroad without paying customs fees each time they crossed countries' frontiers. Transportation fees and difficulties connected with coordinating overseas flows of goods were avoided, as well.<sup>79</sup> As American foreign investments represented a strategic tool to enter new foreign markets, they are usually classified as *market seeking* investments.

Other purposes equally drive companies towards such an internationalisation strategy. First of all foreign investors redeploy their business abroad to take advantage of local raw materials. Historically, and today as well, raw materials were essential to industrialised countries. As their prices never stopped raising, Northern enterprises found it convenient to directly own them through *resource seeking* FDI. Thanks to these latter ones, Northern industrialised states could avoid higher costs connected with buying and importing raw materials from other countries.<sup>80</sup> Secondly, foreign direct investments also provide access to low cost factors of production, particularly low cost labour. This is the reason driving *efficiency seeking* FDI, which also allow enterprises to recover their business and economic efficiency<sup>81</sup> Finally, investors move their business abroad searching for more dynamics and competitive economies. They can consequently recover their business competitiveness through *strategic asset seeking* FDI.<sup>82</sup> Nowadays, investors particularly search for more stable economies that have escaped to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibidem

<sup>79</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 30.

<sup>80</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*.

<sup>81</sup> T. Dudas, *Main theories on FDI*, p. 28.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.

the global economic crisis which has severely disadvantaged developed countries' economies and business. Essentially, austerity measures have drastically weakened developed countries' purchasing power, as well as economic benefits and subsidies that enterprises could count on when internationalising. Today's unstable economies consequently look for foreign areas providing external users with more competitive services, incentives, as well as material and non-material resources. Material resources mainly consist of infrastructures, properties and services offered by the area, as well as its geographical position and morphology.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, socioeconomic wealth, human resources and production expertise are the main non-material resources that foreign enterprises consider when looking for new opportunities.<sup>84</sup> Before establishing any long-lasting interest abroad, companies need services in order to collect useful information about the area and its competitiveness. Information are equally useful in order to know how to deal with bureaucratic and technical problems connected with the redeployment of a business within that country. In sum, investors mainly consider foreign assistance and communication services in order to search for the best country where to invest.<sup>85</sup> Thanks to foreign higher-quality inputs and strategic asset seeking FDI investors can easily recover their business competitiveness.

Economic theorists too have studied the main reasons driving investors towards the use of foreign direct investments. The primary aim of such studies was to free such an internationalisation tool from macroeconomic causes, as the boost in raw material prices and the global economy negative background.<sup>86</sup> According to the Canadian economist Stephen Hymer, taking advantage of foreign higher-quality inputs and economic incentives are the main purposes driving foreign direct investments.<sup>87</sup> Apparently there is no difference between the goals of Hymer's investments and the principle inspiring strategic-asset seeking FDI. However, while the latter are strictly related to the negative effects of the global

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<sup>83</sup> M. G. Caroli, *Il marketing territoriale, strategie per la competitività sostenibile del territorio*, Franco Angeli, MILANO, p. 127.

<sup>84</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 180.

<sup>86</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*.

<sup>87</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 40.

economic evolution, the formers depend on the implementation of companies' strategic planning. Accordingly, investors already consider resorting to FDI when defining their business mission. Another theory that it is worth considering is that of Raymond Vernon's, who linked the main cause of foreign direct investments to the product lifecycle analysis that he had previously developed. According to Vernon, the lifecycle of a certain product consists of four different stages. At stage one, which is called "introduction", production and its technologies are mainly owned by few producers needing high-quality resources and trained manpower in order to adjust their final goods and improve them. Such resources and manpower are still located within Northern industrialised countries holding the complete control of goods manufacturing. Stage two is called "growth" and entails producers' business expansion into additional end-markets that differ from domestic ones. Such an expansion mainly depends on foreign demands for goods and services that were previously satisfied through exports. Nevertheless, foreign demands have been strengthening since stage one and they have consequently brought to light the chance of redeploying production within foreign boundaries. At this stage, foreign direct investments appear as the most suitable alternative tool to export. Then, thanks to foreign investments, production reaches its third stage, that of "maturity". Direct investments have reinforced foreign end-markets and created the proper conditions to launch economies of scale. At this stage, production doesn't need high-quality inputs any more. Foreign direct investments are strategically used to internationalise production on the one hand, and to reduce its costs on the other.<sup>88</sup> In sum, according to the Verson's model, foreign direct investments improve companies' economic efficiency, like the above efficiency seeking FDI does too. Nevertheless, they are not caused by external macroeconomic causes, as they are part of product's lifecycle and depend on the stabilisation of foreign consumption, as well as on goods standardisation.

Whether or not foreign direct investments are mainly caused by macroeconomic dynamics, market, resource, efficiency and strategic asset seeking FDI might be gathered together into two bigger categories: horizontal and vertical FDI. Such a further distinction relies on the geographical

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<sup>88</sup> Ibidem, pp. 42-43.

trajectory that is followed by foreign investments. Horizontal investments go from some developed countries to other developed ones, and group market seeking and strategic asset seeking FDI.<sup>89</sup> They only concern developed countries as the latter's domestic demand and consumption rates make them more attractive to foreign investors looking for new end-markets. Northern countries inputs of quality equally appeal to foreign investors that are trying to recover their business competitiveness. On the contrary, vertical investments gather resource and efficiency seeking FDI and go from developed countries to developing and emerging ones.<sup>90</sup> As the latter used to own raw materials, as well as low-cost inputs and labour, they mainly absorbed developed countries FDI aiming at benefiting from such resources. Raw materials exploitation is one of the most ancient aims of trade practices, and vertical investments, flowing from Northern to Southern countries, trace the oldest geographical trajectory of business redeployment. Accordingly, Northern countries were the first world investors. Nevertheless, business redeployment has been modifying its trajectories from the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. First of all, during the 1990s, vertical investments were replaced by horizontal ones as Northern investments started to leave their Southern destination to flow towards other developed countries in the North. The creation of the European Union through regional trade agreements further increased the region's attractiveness to foreign users. The Union also promoted direct investments between European countries, as they were sustained by the relentless economic and political integration. Within the Union, the most developed countries, such as Great Britain and Germany, were the main investors whose investments were mostly absorbed by Eastern Europe emerging countries.<sup>91</sup> Despite that, the United States still acted as the main world investors and they increased their investment flows to Canada and Latin America thanks to the NAFTA Agreement. A second change in the geographical trajectories of direct investments occurred at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which started what came out to be complete a revolution in FDI flows. Southern countries' multinationals started to invest abroad. Such investments mainly directed towards the nearest countries within the same

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<sup>89</sup> Vanolo A. *Geografia Economica del Sistema Mondo*.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

regions, in order to take advantage of cultural and economic similarities, as well as of regional integration agreements.<sup>92</sup> Few Southern investments equally reached countries in the North in order to acquire high-quality inputs and technologies, which were essential to bring up to date Southern productions and to improve their technological competitiveness.<sup>93</sup> Southern investments within Northern countries witness a complete change in the traditional trajectories of foreign investments: emerging and developing countries have been replacing industrialised ones as the world main investors. Nowadays Asian countries such as Japan, China and Hong Kong immediately follow the United States in the top positions in the global ranking of FDI outflows (see Table 1.6.).<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, as the global economic crisis has hit developed countries, particularly the Euro zone, developing Southern states still absorb Northern foreign investments. As a consequence, Southern countries rule the top list in the global rankings of FDI inflows (see Table 1.7.).<sup>95</sup> Although Southern countries have been developing their roles as both investors and beneficiaries of foreign investments, the United States still remains the main world investors as well as the world beneficiary of foreign direct investments.

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<sup>92</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, 2006-2007*, cit., p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, 2008-2009*, cit., p. 11.

<sup>94</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 28.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.

Table 1.6. - FDI outflows: main investors

Rankings (2012 flows)	Countries	Flows				
		Values (billions of dollars)			Composition (%)	
		2010	2011	2012	2011	2012
1	United States	304	397	329	23,6	23,6
2	Japan	56	108	123	6,4	8,8
3	China	69	75	84	4,4	6,1
4	Hong Kong	98	96	84	5,7	6
5	United Kingdom	40	107	71	6,4	5,1
6	Germany	122	52	67	3,1	4,8
7	Canada	35	50	54	3	3,9
8	Russia	53	67	51	4	3,7
9	Switzerland	79	47	44	2,8	3,2
10	British Virgin Islands	59	52	42	3,1	3
11	France	65	60	37	3,5	2,7
12	Sweden	20	28	33	1,7	2,4
13	South Korea	28	29	33	1,7	2,4
14	Italy	33	54	30	3,2	2,2
15	Mexico	15	12	26	0,7	1,8
16	Singapore	25	26	23	1,6	1,7
17	Chile	9	20	21	1,2	1,5
18	Norway	23	25	21	1,5	1,5
19	Ireland	22	-4	19	-0,3	1,4
20	Luxembourg	21	9	17	0,5	1,2
	<b>WORLD</b>	1,505	1,678	1,391	100	100

Source: UNCTAD statistics,

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2012-2013, ICE – Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana.

Table 1.7. - **FDI inflows: main beneficiaries**

Rankings (2012 flows)	Countries	Flows				
		Values (billions of dollars)			Composition (%)	
		2010	2011	2012	2011	2012
1	United States	198	227	168	13,7	12,4
2	China	115	124	121	7,5	9
3	Hong Kong	83	96	75	5,8	5,5
4	Brazil	49	67	65	4	4,8
5	British Virgin Islands	49	63	65	3,8	4,8
6	United Kingdom	51	51	62	3,1	4,6
7	Australia	35	65	57	4	4,2
8	Singapore	54	56	57	3,4	4,2
9	Russia	43	55	51	3,3	3,8
10	Canada	29	41	45	2,5	3,4
11	Chile	15	23	30	1,4	2,2
12	Ireland	43	11	29	0,7	2,2
13	Luxemburg	35	22	28	1,3	2,1
14	Spain	40	27	28	1,6	2,1
15	India	21	36	26	2,2	1,9
16	France	34	39	25	2,3	1,9
17	Indonesia	14	19	20	1,2	1,5
18	Colombia	7	13	16	0,8	1,2
19	Kazakhstan	12	14	14	0,8	1
20	Sweden	-6	9	14	0,6	1
	<b>WORLD</b>	<b>1.409</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>1,351</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: UNCTAD statistics,

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2012-2013, ICE – Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **ITALIAN EXPORT AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS**

Further to the previous analysis concerning the world trade and the main changes in world exports and foreign direct investments over the last 30 years, Chapter Two will firstly specifically focus on Italian exports, as well as on the main geographical trajectories they follow, in order to find out which countries mostly buy Italian products. The chapter will secondly concern our country's flows of capital, their main characteristics and geographical trends, to locate where foreign Italian investments mainly direct. Furthermore, the final part of such a geographical focus will also briefly detail which foreign countries mostly invest in Italy.

### ***2.1. Italian exports***

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#### ***2.1.1. The Italian specialisation***

Before specifically analyzing Italian exports and their trends, it is essential to focus on our country's comparative advantage as it brings to the light which goods can be domestically produced at a lower opportunity cost if compared to the one borne elsewhere. Once Italy has opened to world trade, such goods will be mostly sold abroad as their trade price is lower than their international one. However, our country's comparative advantage also results to be the main actor causing both a constant deficit in the Italian balance of payments, as well as an unrelenting loss of shares in the imports of Italian main foreign partners.

To begin with, as Italy has always lacked raw materials, national production constantly relied on the imports of foreign ones, that were converted into final products to be sold both in the domestic and foreign end-markets.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, Italy can basically be considered an input-transformer country, whose competitiveness is inevitably linked to fluctuations in foreign raw material prices, so that they result to be a dangerous external factor out of the control of Italian economic authorities. A sudden rise in their costs will inevitably increase the price of Italian exports, and threaten the country's commercial performance, even though nothing has changed in national production or in the domestic economic system. Furthermore, such a reliance on foreign raw materials has also caused the constant deficit in the Italian balance of payments, since Italy is essentially an importer country, whose foreign imports always exceed national exports abroad.

Secondly, the sector-based analysis of Italian comparative advantage also brings to light its typical inclination towards traditional productions, as well as its "stability" and "isolation". As these characteristics are interconnected, they will be further analyzed in the following lines (see Table 2.1. as a reference).

First of all, the most comparative advantaged sector of Italian production consists of manufacturing. No other productions used to flourish the same way elsewhere, and Italy have always been inclined to become one of the world exporters of manufactured goods.<sup>97</sup> Paradoxically, such a production has never lost its advantage and manufacturing still rules both the Italian production, as well as the composition of our country's exports. On the other hand, mechanical engineering is as much developed and competitive as manufacturing in Italian production, although its products never completely offset the former's supremacy.<sup>98</sup> Alongside with manufacturing and mechanical engineering, other productions alternatively obtained and lost importance depending on the main world macroeconomic

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<sup>96</sup> A. Zampieri, *La dinamica del commercio estero e le strategie di globalizzazione*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti, storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, G. Sapelli, RUBETTINO EDITORE, 2000, cit. p. 70.

<sup>97</sup> G. Speciale, *Annuario del commercio con l'estero, guida agli scambi internazionali per gli operatori e gli organismi economici*, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE, p. 117.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem* p. 112.

trends. Nowadays, the recent increase in the world demand for energy and steel has consequently boosted Italian metalworking and the electrical industry.<sup>99</sup> And finally, the constant import of foreign raw materials witnesses a certain degree of weakness in the Italian comparative advantage, while the constant deficit in the Italian technology balance of payments reveals our country's inability to develop technology-intensive productions.<sup>100</sup>

Table 2.1. – **Italian main productions**

Manufacturing	Mechanical engineering	Metalworking	Electrical devices	Vehicles	Foodstuff	Raw materials	Chemical products
Textile	Office equipment (Computer printers, photocopiers etc)  Equipments for textile and leather manufacturing  Heating systems and refrigerators  Construction equipments  Agricultural machinery	Machine tools for metals	Electrical appliances  Energy devices	Cars  Trains  Airplanes  Ships	Fruit and vegetables  Cereals  Dairy products  Wines  Different foods and drinks	Textile rough materials  Building materials	Plastic  Synthetic resins  Chemicals  Pharmaceuticals  Perfumes, detergents and pesticides  Paints
Clothing							
Leather goods							
Footwear							
Fur coats							
Jewellers							
Building materials (glass, concrete, etc)							
Wood products (furniture)							

**Source:** L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Sintesi dei rapporti ICE 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2006-2007, 2008-2009; G. Speciale, *Annuario del commercio con l'estero*, W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*.

In sum, referring to the above sector-based analysis, our country's inclination towards traditional productions lies both in the leading role of manufacturing, as well as in the almost total absence of technology-intensive productions. In the past, many scholars tried to denounce such an inclination. Few of them further examined its main causes, mainly due to the poor quality of Italian labour, as well as to the lack of research and development activities within our country's enterprises. Nowadays, there still is a great gap between the quality and accomplishment of Italian studies, and

<sup>99</sup> *Qualcosa è cambiato, le prospettive per le esportazioni italiane*, Rapporto Export 2010-2014, SACE, Dicembre 2010.

<sup>100</sup> G. Speciale, *Annuario del commercio con l'estero*, cit. p. 122.

the average of other industrialised countries.<sup>101</sup> Although such a gap doesn't witness the total absence of Italian skilled labour, it underlines the way Italian education train not as many qualified and skilled workers if compared to other industrialised countries, especially in high technologies. This absence of adequately skilled manpower inevitably fosters traditional productions and prevents the development of those needing R&D activities, quite scarce in Italy.<sup>102</sup>

Such a picture brings to the light what can be defined as a vicious circle preventing our production from abandoning its traditional nature. When describing our country's comparative advantage, scholars also talked about its "light and shadows" by referring to the hope for a greater development in mechanical engineering that could weaken the long lasting predominance of Italian traditional productions.<sup>103</sup> Despite few attempts, our country's production never structurally adapted to the main changes in the world demand for goods, and its strong stability prevented Italian goods to be traded abroad, while fostering the unrelenting loss of shares in the import markets of Italian trade partners.

Such a stability also left Italy out from an alignment in the production systems of the main European and industrialised countries that took place over the past twenty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>104</sup> During these years, Italy mainly competed against advanced countries, whose comparative advantage lied in traditional productions as well. However, the ongoing political, social and economic changes spurred advanced countries' productions and exports to specialise in technology-intensive goods to further satisfy the world demand for innovative productions. Italy did not take part in such a change as its traditional productions could not be completely removed. Our country's specialisation consequently became similar to the production system of emerging countries.

In sum, our country's production appears to be both antique and obsolete as it is unable to truly take advantage of its participation in world

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<sup>101</sup> R. Faini A. Sapir, *Un modello obsoleto? Crescita e specializzazione dell'economia italiana*, Maggio 2005, p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> G. Foresti, *Specializzazione produttiva e struttura dimensionale delle imprese: come spiegare la limitata attività di ricerca dell'industria italiana*, CSC Working Paper n. 32, Dicembre 2002, p. 9.

<sup>103</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 79; G. Speciale, *Annuario del commercio con l'estero*, cit. p. 130.

<sup>104</sup> R. Faini, A. Sapir, *Un modello obsoleto?*, cit. p. 18.

trade. Alongside with such an unfavourable comparative advantage, further structural characteristics contributed to the overall negative performance of Italian exports. Among them, the choice to promote the decentralisation of the Italian production through many small and medium industries, inevitably prevented them from internationalising both through exports, foreign direct investments and other processes. Selling abroad entails many structural changes, as well as higher costs and risks. Such an increase is obviously better faced by bigger companies and multinationals, as they own the adequate tools and resources to internationalise. On the contrary, Italian small and medium sized enterprises inevitably entailed, and still does, inappropriate logistic services. For this reasons, they are unable to reach the furthest end-markets, and a great volume of Italian exports used to be consequently absorbed by the closest European countries.<sup>105</sup> Alongside with adequate logistic services, Italian SMEs also lack the most strategic marketing and distribution competences, which are essential to successfully internationalise.<sup>106</sup>

Macroeconomic changes can equally hit the competitiveness of Italian goods and consequently prevented our country's exports from being fostered abroad. Macroeconomic events can be defined as both political, economic and social changes taking place both inside and outside our country's national boundaries. For instance, the 1960s collapse of Italian unemployment caused industrial actions that increased national wages and inevitably reduced the competitiveness of our exports.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, the 1970s and 1980s world oil crises certainly did not support input-transformer countries like Italy. Then, in the 1990s, the main threat to Italian exports relied on the rise of emerging countries whose leading role in the trade of manufactured goods incredibly grew from 1995 to 2001.<sup>108</sup> Both Italy and emerging countries pivot on traditional manufacturing, but because of the latter's lower labour cost, Italian prices are not competitive. Actually, nothing prevents two countries from focusing on the same domestic advantaged

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<sup>105</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori, le opportunità per le imprese italiane sui mercati esteri nel periodo 2013-2015*, ICE, PROMETEIA, n. 11, Giugno 2013.

<sup>106</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto Export 2012-2016, SACE, Dicembre 2012, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> A. Zampieri, *La dinamica del commercio estero e le strategie di globalizzazione*, cit. p. 192.

<sup>108</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio estero per aree e settori*, Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, PROMETEIA, Marzo 2011, p. 9.

productions without benefiting from the world trade practice.<sup>109</sup> However, this is not our country's case, as Italy is inevitably flooded by emerging countries' efficiency and competitiveness. Among emerging countries, China is the leading economy in taking away shares in the Italian export market, by threatening Italian clothing inside the whole European Market, and leaving almost no chance for trading Italian products in the Asian region. Furthermore, the African market too is now ruled by Chinese exports, despite its geographical closeness to Italy.<sup>110</sup> As far as the emerging countries' threat is concerned, it is worth describing the way Italy relied on the quality of its productions to hinder the spread of emerging countries' cheaper goods within the world market. Higher wages and production costs also guarantee a higher sector-based specialisation, as well as higher-quality finished products. This makes the Italian *Made In* "the third most known brand worldwide, after Coca-Cola and Visa".<sup>111</sup> Paradoxically, quality appeals to emerging countries' middle classes, and particularly those of Latin America, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, whose increasing domestic incomes direct their demands towards higher-quality goods. In sum, emerging countries result to be both a threat and chance for Italian goods and exports, as they offer them the most dynamic markets where to be sold.

Over the past decades the evolution of the European monetary policy, ending up with the substitution of some national currencies with the Euro, mostly affected the competitiveness of both European and Italian exports. As emerging countries were strengthening their role in world trade, the depreciation of national currencies used to be a strategic tool that any state could freely resort to. In the past, the depreciation of the Italian Lira resulted to be essential both to oppose the collapse of national exports after the first world oil crisis, and then to reach the maximum share in our commercial partners' imports in 1992.<sup>112</sup> The Italian integration into the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union inevitably caused the loss of such a strategic tool used to safeguard national exports in their most critical

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<sup>109</sup> P. Monti, *Caratteristiche e mutamenti della specializzazione delle esportazioni italiane*, Temi di discussione del Servizio Studi BANCA D'ITALIA, n. 559 – Settembre 2005, p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Giugno 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Intervento del Ministro Terzi – ASEAN AWARENESS FORUM (versione originale), Roma 22 Marzo 2012.

<sup>112</sup> A. Zampieri, *La dinamica del commercio estero e le strategie di globalizzazione*, cit. p. 202.

moments. Although the Euro cannot be freely appreciated or depreciated, its fluctuations can still positively affect both Italian and European exports. During the last few years indeed, since the world economic crisis weakened the Euro's intrinsic value, Italian exports managed to recover their competitiveness on foreign markets. Besides, thanks to the collapse of foreign imports, the first surplus ever in the national balance of payments was eventually reached in 2012.<sup>113</sup>

To a certain extent, such a current surplus witnesses how the Italian negative background has turned national export abroad from a chance into a necessity for Italian enterprises. Since austerity measures have almost completely erased our country's demand for goods, more and more Italian producers have been turning to foreign markets. Furthermore, they have been increasing their sales volumes by upgrading their productions in order to further take advantage of the well-known higher-quality of Italian goods, and to succeed in selling abroad.<sup>114</sup> In sum, right after the collapse of Italian foreign sales in 2009, the export practice, as well as the positive turn in our country's commercial transactions, were fostered by the Italian enterprises' increasing attempts at internationalising, alongside with the upgrade of the Italian production. However, such improvements did not structurally change the Italian production system, as its inclination towards manufacturing, as well as the loss of national shares in the world import markets, have not been removed yet.

### ***2.1.2. Main geographical trends***

Alongside with structural and macroeconomic causes, the geographical composition of Italian exports equally conditioned their overall performance as well, by directing almost exclusively to the advanced countries of the European region. However, as the world economic crisis has recently weakened European domestic demands, Italian exports have been redirecting elsewhere through what can be defined as a "relocation process". Many underrated countries became the main targets of Italian exports as their domestic economic growth and demand for foreign goods did not surrender

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<sup>113</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, cit. p. 85.

<sup>114</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, cit. pp. 10-11.

to the crisis. Among them, the emerging countries' aggregate, where domestic development policies increased national incomes, and strengthened the demand for foreign goods, it became essential to Italian exports to reach them.<sup>115</sup> Further to such a relocation, Italian shares in developed countries' import markets, and particularly in the EU ones, have recently been reduced, while the Italian shares in emerging countries' import markets have increased.<sup>116</sup> On the whole, Germany and France still rule the top destinations for Italian exports, and emerging countries do not appear before the 7<sup>th</sup> position (see Table 2.2.).<sup>117</sup> Thus, such a relocation is far from witnessing a complete change in the geography of Italian exports. Table 2.2. also shows that Spain and Greece have considerably decreased their imports from Italy, and many emerging ones like Turkey, Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong, have gained positions from 2011 to 2012. So it can be asserted that Italian enterprises effectively attempted at better succeeding in reaching new markets.

The following study concerning the main geographical trends of Italian exports also aims at finding out which foreign countries mainly buy Italian goods, as well as which productions mostly succeed abroad, and where they do it. The geographical division proposed in the 2012-2013 Institute of Foreign Trade Report will be taken into consideration, as it lists 7 countries' aggregates corresponding to the biggest end-markets of Italian exports: Northern America, Latin America, the European Union, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), North Africa and the Middle East (MENAs' countries), South Africa, and Eastern Asia (see Table 2.3.).<sup>118</sup> The period of time considered starts from 2009, when the geographical relocation process began to be fostered by the world economic crisis, until 2013.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem p. 28.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, cit. p. 106.

<sup>118</sup> Ivi.

Table 2.2. – Main Italian end-markets abroad

2012 Rankings	Countries	2011 Rankings	Values of Italian Exports (billions of dollars)	Variations (%)
1	Germany	1	48.713	-1,1
2	France	2	43.169	-1
3	United States	3	26.656	16,8
4	Switzerland	4	22.878	10,8
5	United Kingdom	6	18.964	8,1
6	Spain	5	18.291	-8
7	Turkey	8	10.618	10,2
8	Bergium	9	10.300	6,9
9	Russia	11	9.993	7,4
10	Netherlands	12	9.269	1,6
11	Poland	10	9.213	-2,2
12	China	7	9.003	-9,9
13	Austria	13	8.630	-1,1
14	Rumenia	14	5.825	-5,1
15	Japan	17	6.637	19,1
16	United Arab Emirates	18	5.511	16,5
17	Brazil	16	4.997	4,5
18	Hong Kong	20	4.473	7,3
19	Czech Republic	19	4.201	0,7
20	Greece	15	4.163	-13
	Other countries		109.223	6,2
	World		389.725	3,7

Source: ICE and ISTAT statistics, *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2012-2013, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana.

Table 2.3. – **Main geographical shares of Italian exports**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>European Union</b>	62,4	61,9	61,2	61,2	60,9	58,9	57,6	57,3	56	53,7
<b>European countries (not EU)</b>	9,5	10,4	10,6	11	11,1	12	11,7	12	13,3	13,9
<b>Northern Africa</b>	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,7	3,6	4	4	2,9	3,5
<b>Central and South Africa</b>	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,6	1,3	1,4	1,4
<b>Northern America</b>	9,2	8,7	8,8	8,2	7,4	6,9	6,6	6,7	6,8	7,6
<b>Central and South America</b>	2,7	2,7	2,8	3	3,3	3,3	3,1	3,3	3,8	3,9
<b>Middle East</b>	3,6	3,7	3,9	4,1	4,6	5	5,2	4,8	4,9	4,9
<b>Central Asia</b>	0,7	0,8	1	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,7	1,7	1,6	1,4
<b>East Asia</b>	6,7	6,6	6,4	6,3	6,1	6	7	7,3	7,6	7,8
<b>Oceania</b>	1	1,1	1	0,9	0,9	1	1	0,9	1	1,1
<b>Other territories</b>	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,5	0,8	0,7	0,7	0,9	1
<b>WORLD</b>	<b>100</b>									

Source: ICE and ISTAT statistics

*L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, 2012-2013, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana.

- *North America*

Italian exports have always mainly directed towards the United States rather than Canada, since the former has always truly appreciated Italian goods and never surrendered to emerging countries' cheaper ones.<sup>119</sup> As Italian goods and their prices were cheaper, if compared with US ones, not only did they resist the negative effects of the world crisis, but they also strengthened their role in the country's import market over the last 5 years, by taking advantage of the US economic recovery.<sup>120</sup> In sum, the overall performance of Italian goods in the country appears to be positive. As far as its sector-based composition is concerned, Italian vehicles, and particularly cars, as well as mechanical engineering, fashion and foodstuff, were the main productions sold there.<sup>121</sup> Foodstuff also refers to Italian wines, and our country has become the first wine supplier of the area in 2010.

- *Central and Latin America*

Central and Latin America is more heterogeneous than its Northern counterpart as it gathers together all of the countries covering the southern part of the Americas. Furthermore, the region has become essential for Italian exports as it successfully opposed to the world economic crisis by strengthening its domestic incomes, and its middle class' demand for foreign goods, through policies for development.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, although its population has shown an increasing interest in purchasing Italian high-quality goods, our sales have recently been hindered by the introduction of trade barriers aiming at reducing national imports, fostered by many local governments. In 2012, despite few single areas, such as Venezuela and Peru, that have kept buying Italian products, on the whole, Latin America's protectionism has slowed down the overall growth of Italian exports.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the region's purchases in Italian mechanical engineering are still strong. These products vary from one country to another according to the strength of the main domestic needs, depending on political, social and

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<sup>119</sup> Ibidem, p. 112.

<sup>120</sup> *Qualcosa è cambiato, le prospettive per le esportazioni italiane*, Rapporto SACE 2010-2014.

<sup>121</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Giugno 2013.

<sup>122</sup> *Qualcosa è cambiato*, Rapporto SACE 2010-2014.

<sup>123</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto SACE 2012-2016.

economic changes in each area. For example, the increasing Brazilian and Mexican demands for industrial machineries have derived from a renewed attempt at upgrading such domestic productions.

- *The European Union*

As much heterogeneous as Latin America, the European Union gathers many countries that were once considered the most essential end-markets to Italian exports thanks to their geographical closeness. However, as far as Italian goods are specifically concerned, their sales volumes in the area decreased from 56% in 2011 to 53,7% in 2012.<sup>124</sup> In order to better study the reasons explaining such a downturn, it is worth dividing the European Union into two smaller areas, whose main macroeconomic trends will be separately analyzed to further explain the failure or success of the Italian exporting performance.

The first area consists of the so-called EU industrial countries, corresponding to both the leading economies in the Euro Zone, as well as few economies having maintained their national currencies such as Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Great Britain. Over the last few years, it was hard for countries in the Euro Zone to safeguard their domestic economies from the effects of the crisis, as national austerity measures further prevented the purchase of Italian goods in these areas. In 2013 our country's exporting performance still remains weak and has not recovered yet.<sup>125</sup> As to the remaining non-Euro EU industrialised countries, the crisis did not prevent the purchase of foreign products as strongly as it did in the Euro Zone, and Italian sales could increase in 2012. Many Italian products are successfully sold in the above area, particularly textile and clothing goods, as well as foodstuff and pharmaceuticals, furniture, appliances, industrial equipments and electrical devices.<sup>126</sup>

Emerging countries such as Croatia, Rumania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia and Hungary, represent the second smaller EU region to be analyzed through this geographical focus. Although Euro was introduced in just a few of them, fluctuations in its value

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<sup>124</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, cit. p. 109-110.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem*, *Qualcosa è cambiato*, Rapporto SACE 2010-2014.

<sup>126</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Giugno 2013.

did not affect their domestic economies as much as they did in the advanced counterpart. Nevertheless, negative economic trends have spread in the area, as commercial relations with countries in the Euro Zone have been fostered by the geographical and cultural closeness.<sup>127</sup> Such a closeness supported our country's exports into the area, and fostered EU emerging countries as the closest new potential end-market for Italian goods, right after the collapse of the Euro Zone's demand. At the same time, local protectionism aiming at stopping the import flows from the advanced neighbours had spread. Although our products are successfully sold in Poland, and increasing in Hungary, Slovakia and in the Czech Republic, Italian exports in the overall area have decreased in 2009, and still remains under average.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, many Italian shares in EU emerging countries' import markets were stolen by Asian countries, as the formers' underdeveloped economic background inevitably directed them towards cheaper products, and particularly the Chinese ones.<sup>129</sup>

- *Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)*

The big region of Central and Eastern Europe mainly gathers many countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States', as well as Turkey. Although the area extends over the central and eastern part of the European region, its countries have neither taken part to the European Union, nor to its Economic and Monetary Union. Despite their geographical distance, CEE countries have become essential to Italian exports thanks to their dynamic economic growth and strong domestic demand. Over the past few years, the region has become Italy's second foreign end-market (see Table 2.3.). The spread of Italian products in the region has been fostered by the economic dynamism of Turkey, which mainly buys Italian chemical products, and by the increasing purchase power of the Russian middle class.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, as Russia has recently become a member of the World Trade Organization,

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<sup>127</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto SACE 2012-2016.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 47.

<sup>129</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Marzo 2011, cit. p. 87.

<sup>130</sup> *Qualcosa è cambiato*, Rapporto SACE 2010-2014; *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto SACE 2012-2016.

the removal of its trade barriers has further improved the overall performance of Italian exports in the area.

- *Northern Africa and the Middle East (MENA)*

MENAs' countries, due to their geographical closeness and cultural and historical contacts, certainly contributed to strengthen both Italian commercial relations, as well as our country's export. Nevertheless, political and social clashes during the Arab Spring temporarily stopped MENAs' countries economic growth. As a consequence, the overall positive performance of Italian exports in the area was negatively affected, even if such a growth has slowly but constantly continued from 2009 until now.<sup>131</sup>

In the past, former Italian colonies in Northern Africa had strategically absorbed many Italian products. Nowadays, the region is the most affected by political and military clashes. Within this area, Tunisia and Egypt mainly buy Italian manufacturing and clothing products, respectively.<sup>132</sup> Libya has recently turned into a strong potential buyer for industrial machineries, fostered by infrastructural rebuilds.

Middle East countries have never been particularly inclined to foreign imports before the Arab Spring clash in 2009. However, as the Middle East's population is now interested in Italian fashion, cars and furniture, our country's sales have improved during the last 3 years.<sup>133</sup>

- *Southern Africa*

In Southern Africa, domestic macroeconomic changes affected the sector-based composition of Italian exports more than elsewhere. From 2009 until 2012, countries in the region opposed to the world economic crisis by exploiting the increasing need for raw materials coming from Asian emerging countries. These new incomes obviously increased national revenues and contributed to domestic development and infrastructure rebuilds. As a consequence, the sales of Italian energy devices and oil-mining machineries

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<sup>131</sup> L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, cit. p. 118-119.

<sup>132</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto SACE 2012-2016.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*.

increased in South Africa, Angola and Nigeria.<sup>134</sup> However, despite the dynamic role of South African markets, Italian exports have recently been threatened by the spread of Chinese cheaper goods.<sup>135</sup>

- *Eastern Asia*

Nowadays, Italian enterprises mainly redirect their export flows towards Eastern Asia, as its constant economic growth and strong demand for foreign goods turned the region into the most dynamic end-market in the world. From 2009 until now, Eastern Asia has become the third foreign end-market of Italian exports (see Table 2.3.). For practical reasons, the Eastern Asian region will be divided into two smaller areas as well, as it has already been done when analyzing the European Union.

In the first group of Asian emerging countries, the unrelenting growth of China, India and Indonesia, and their recent domestic development programs, have certainly fostered the economic growth of the area, and the need for foreign products. Italian exports, have been increasing since 2009, particularly in China and Malaysia where the local middle class' purchasing power spread the population's interest in Italian clothing, pieces of furniture, as well as electrical devices.<sup>136</sup> Textile, construction equipments, as well as metalworking machineries also rule Asian imports from Italy, although such purchases have been decreasing since 2010.<sup>137</sup>

As far as the Eastern Asia advanced region – consisting of Hong Kong, South and North Korea, Japan and Taiwan – is concerned, Italian exports have been prevented by the leading role of China which has taken charge of supplying the overall area. Nevertheless, Eastern Asia advanced countries still import from Italy industrial machineries, as well as clothing, pieces of furniture, appliances and Italian cars.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Giugno 2013.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>136</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto SACE 2012-2016.

<sup>137</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio con l'estero per aree e settori*, Marzo 2011.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibidem*.

## ***2.2 Italian foreign direct investments***

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As far as Italian attempts at internationalising domestic productions – through foreign direct investments – are concerned, their overall performance has been as unsatisfying as that of Italian exports. The second part of this chapter will retrace the main causes responsible for Italian FDI negative trends, and the main geographical flows they have been following since the 1980s, when the outsourcing practice firstly appeared. It is useful to remind that foreign direct investments consist in both active practices, when an investor actively establishes a lasting interest in one or more foreign companies, and passive ones, when companies act as the designated target for foreign investors lasting interests. As the aim of this study is to examine the ways Italian enterprises internationalise their production, Italian FDI outflows appear to be more pertinent to the discussed topic. Nonetheless, in order to better focus on the reasons why our country is so incompatible with internationalising, it is worth considering Italian FDI inflows as well.

From a historical point of view, Italian FDI main trends have been changing over the years, bringing to light our country's structural inability to actively invest abroad, and to bring foreign investments. Indeed, although the overall evolution of Italian investments used to follow the same peaks and downfalls of world investments flows, it always remained under average if compared to the main investing countries' performances.<sup>139</sup> First of all, during the 1950s and 1960s, right before outsourcing practices spread all over the world, our companies' ability to actively internationalise was already weaker than that of other European advanced countries.<sup>140</sup> During these years Italy just took a passive attitude towards United States investments, which aimed at creating new American companies and increase their shares in the Italian and European market. Consequently, when Italian FDI firstly appeared, they were just limited to foreign inflows, while national outflows didn't exist yet.<sup>141</sup> Other foreign investors showed no interest in creating or acquiring new, or already existing, enterprises in Italy, and they would keep

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<sup>139</sup> S. Mariotto, M. Multinelli, *Italia multinazionale 2012, le partecipazioni italiane all'estero ed estere in Italia*, RUBETTINO EDITORE, p. 37.

<sup>140</sup> *Effetti degli investimenti esteri in Italia*, a cura della SORIS, Studi Economici e Ricerche di Mercato, ETAS COMPASS, Milano, p. 40 .

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

ignoring our country for the following twenty years. Then, during the 1980s, Italian enterprises too began actively outsourcing abroad their productions to strengthen their economic competitiveness and benefiting from foreign raw materials and low-cost labour. Despite that, Italian small and medium enterprises still found more suitable to develop themselves within the national boundaries, and used to resort to undemanding internationalisation strategies. Essentially, the peculiar features of the Italian entrepreneurial network contributed to exclude it from the main world capital flows, as they usually took place within big enterprises and multinationals which were mostly almost absent in Italy.<sup>142</sup>

Despite that, since the 1980s, the overall number of Italian FDI inflows and outflows began growing, and it stopped at the beginning of the 21st century. After a two-year break from 2001 to 2002, Italian enterprises' ability to draw foreign investments was temporarily outdone by their increasing interests in investing abroad.<sup>143</sup> Foreign FDI inflows later triumphed again over national outflows from 2006 to 2007.<sup>144</sup> Despite all of the improvements that Italian FDI had gained over the previous 30 years, the 2009 world economic crisis further weakened our ability to draw foreign investments.

The historical focus carried out in the previous lines shows our country's general attempt at effectively using foreign direct investments as a strategic international tool. Italian companies were well aware of FDI related advantages, such as the potential inflows of foreign technologies and know-how, and the chance to cut production costs and to access new foreign end-markets. Nevertheless, such an attempt was inevitably prevented by the same structural problems that made it difficult for Italian exports to succeed abroad. Among them, our country's peculiar comparative advantage, and the predominance of small and medium enterprises within the entrepreneurial network, were the most important.

In order to further explain the way Italian comparative advantage has always dishearten Italian FDI inflows, it is essential to remind that foreign direct investments usually direct towards countries' most comparative

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<sup>142</sup> A. Perrucci, *Il processo di internazionalizzazione nei maggiori paesi OCSE, un'analisi congiunta di commercio estero e investimenti esteri*, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE, p. 46.

<sup>143</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2003-2004, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, ICE, p. 26.

<sup>144</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2006-2007, p. 15.

advantaged productions to benefit from their lower opportunity-costs.<sup>145</sup> As a consequence, it is possible to distinguish efficiency seeking FDI inflows, from market seeking ones, by simply looking at any country's comparative advantage. Cheapest and higher quality productions inevitably draw efficiency seeking FDI inflows, aiming at exploiting such a comparative advantage. On the contrary, disadvantaged productions draw market seeking FDI inflows, as foreign investors aim at gaining further control of foreign markets by spreading their higher quality and less expensive productions.

Further to this introduction, Italian comparative advantage has always prevented efficiency seeking inflows of foreign capitals in many different ways. First of all, as Italian comparative advantage almost exclusively lies in the secondary industry, foreign investors have been forced to limit their investments to mechanical engineering and manufacturing.<sup>146</sup> Since they could not diversify their efficiency seeking investments in Italy, they consequently directed elsewhere. Secondly, foreign investments aiming at exploiting national raw materials, or any comparative advantage in the tertiary industry, have always been prevented as well. Apart from almost completely lacking raw materials, Italy has scarcely developed its tertiary industry, as well.<sup>147</sup> Finally, our country's inclination towards traditional productions disheartened the transfer of foreign capitals, as now these ones aim at exploiting any comparative advantage in technology-intensive productions. As a consequence, Italian disadvantage in technologic productions prevented their development, as well as any foreign technologic contribution that could come through FDI, and foster an adequate industrialization for such productions.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, the rise of emerging countries in the world trade entailed the Italian loss of many efficiency investments concerning traditional productions.

As to our country's foreign investments outflows, the peculiar dimension of Italian enterprises prevented them from successfully investing abroad, as it happened for the export practice as well. First of all, Italian

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<sup>145</sup> F. Lemoine, *Integrating Central and Eastern Europe in the European trade and production network*, Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy, University of California, p. 5; *Effetti degli investimenti esteri in Italia*, cit. p. 89.

<sup>146</sup> *Il processo di internazionalizzazione nei maggiori paesi OCSE*, cit. p. 53.

<sup>147</sup> *Italia multinazionale 2012*, cit. p. 61.

<sup>148</sup> *Effetti degli investimenti esteri in Italia*, cit. p. 82.

SMEs wanting to internationalise usually opt for undemanding strategies, like cooperation agreements, licensing and the so-called Outward Processing Traffic regime (OPT).<sup>149</sup> This one will be further analyzed when talking about the role of Central and Eastern Europe in Italian outsourcing. To a certain extent, the practice of establishing long-lasting interests abroad used to be avoided in the past. Even now that Italian enterprises rely more on foreign direct investments, many of them still end up in new foreign subsidiaries and associates, while the creation of foreign branches totally controlled by Italian head-offices is mainly avoided.<sup>150</sup> Secondly, investing abroad entails many potential risks depending on macroeconomic changes that SMEs can hardly deal with. High costs and loans, which are essential to create, acquire and support the development of foreign branches are hardly born, as well. As a consequence, Italian investments are unlikely to survive, since our country's small and medium enterprises lack the proper resources that bigger companies and multinationals can usually count on when investing abroad. This lack also drastically reduces the overall number of Italian FDI potential destinations to the closest areas, like Europe, the Mediterranean region and, sometimes, the Balkans.<sup>151</sup>

Luckily, the structural smaller dimension of Italian enterprises did not particularly compromise their ability to draw foreign investments. The absence of bigger companies and multinationals can be easily filled up through foreign investments. Recent data has also shown that Italian SMEs have increased their inclination towards foreign investments thanks to a structural change that has been taking place over the last 13 years. In the year 2000, more than the half of Italian companies investing abroad were small and medium enterprises, and such number kept growing in the following years.<sup>152</sup> Among the main factors supporting this change, innovations in communication and transports abolished any geographical distance, and made it easier for national enterprises to outsource their productions abroad.<sup>153</sup> Since their production has been fragmented into many

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<sup>149</sup> G. Graziani, *Globalization of production in the textile and clothing industries: the case of Italian foreign direct investment and outward processing in Eastern Europe*, Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy, University of California, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> *Italia multinazionale 2012*, cit. p. 74.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 84.

<sup>152</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, p. 24.

<sup>153</sup> *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, cit. pp. 11-12.

interdependent industrial districts, Italian companies could easily outsource them abroad, wherever they could be carried out at a lower opportunity-cost than the one born within national boundaries.

Alongside with globalizing innovations, many macroeconomic changes, such as the rise of emerging countries, and the increase in the world price of raw materials, need to be studied. These changes particularly contributed to further foster Italian enterprises' structural transformation. The increasing competitiveness of emerging countries' productions, over the 1990s, promoted them as the world better outsourcing locations. Italian enterprises too consequently engaged in transferring their production. The resemblance to the emerging country's comparative advantage and the latter's abundant endowment in human capital, allowed Italian companies to reduce their production costs and recover their economic competitiveness. On the other hand, the constant rise in raw material prices during the 21<sup>st</sup> century further pushed Italy towards outsourcing processes to find a cheaper way to obtain such materials.<sup>154</sup> And finally, as it has happened for Italian exports as well, the ongoing world economic crisis encouraged Italian enterprises to overtake their main dimensional problems. As our country's domestic demand was disappearing, Italian Market Seeking FDI outflows were forced to redirect towards new and most dynamic destinations. As a consequence, from 2001 to 2007 Italian multinationals and bigger companies decreased their attempts at internationalising, while smaller and middle enterprises strengthened their ability to invest abroad.<sup>155</sup> This situation also witnesses our country's current political and economic problems. Nowadays, Italy is not able to provide proper economic incentives to both foreign and domestic investors that consequently leave it. In sum, although the crisis has strengthened Italian SMEs' ability to successfully invest abroad on the one hand, it has weakened many chances to draw foreign investments on the other. Both national and foreign investors are now aware that they cannot find neither competitive advantages, nor a dynamic domestic demand, within our country.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2006-2007, p. 21.

<sup>155</sup> *Evoluzione del commercio estero per aree e settori*, Giugno 2013 cit. p. 8; *Italia multinazionale*, cit. p. 40.

<sup>156</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2010-2011, p. 14.

Finally, according to the main objectives Italian foreign direct investments have always aimed at, our country's FDI need being classified to better study the way national investing strategies have been changing over the years. From the 1980s to the 1990s, Italian foreign direct investments mostly aimed at reducing raw materials transport costs through mergers or creations of Italian foreign branches. These ones were also meant to reduce production wages by exploiting cheaper foreign manpower. For many years, Italian investments abroad have consequently been classified as resource seeking and efficiency seeking FDI. Nonetheless, from the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century until now, Italian enterprises have been paying less attention to efficiency aims, and now look for new end-markets where to sell their goods.<sup>157</sup> Recent macroeconomic transformations have consequently changed the way Italian producers invest abroad. The merger or creation of Italian foreign distribution branches now has replaced Italian previous flows of exports. Italian foreign investments in China clearly witness such a change. The Chinese are no more conceived as cheaper manpower. They have now become potential foreign customers, whose increasing purchase power make them extremely important. Furthermore, thanks to its unrelenting economic growth, China has also provided a springboard to increase Italian sales in the overall Asian region.<sup>158</sup> In sum, Italian market seeking practices mostly consist of distribution logistic outsourcing aiming at better allocating Italian goods, and particularly traditional ones, in order to increase our country's shares in the main foreign import markets. However, as Italian goods are particularly expensive yet appealing, market seeking FDI often need to direct wherever higher incomes are widely distributed to local customers. Before 2009, such markets mostly laid within the European Union. Nowadays, they mostly belong to many emerging countries far from Italy, and this is the main reason why Italian SMEs have overtaken their dimensional problems to successfully reach them.<sup>159</sup>

In sum, Italian resource and efficiency seeking FDI look for foreign countries where domestic wages are lower than Italian ones. On the other hand, market seeking foreign investments essentially direct wherever local

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<sup>157</sup> *Italia multinazionale*, cit. p. 60.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 85.

purchase powers and domestic demands are strong and dynamic. Further to that, this study now aims at briefly focusing on the main geographical trends of Italian FDI outflows, and particularly on the role of Central and Eastern Europe. Many scholars agree that our investments mostly directed towards North and Latin America, Asia, Japan and Middle East, during the 1990s and the first decade of the 21th century (see Table 2.4).<sup>160</sup> Such foreign markets almost exclusively drew distribution investments aiming at retailing and promoting Italian goods. On the contrary, over the same period of time, the European Union's market has slowly lost its importance. Finally, Central and Eastern Europe countries have been increasing their inflows of Italian direct investments over the last thirty years thanks to their geographical, cultural and historical closeness (see Table 2.4.).

The role of Central and Eastern European countries in the geography of Italian FDI outflows needs to be briefly analyzed to further explain the reason why this region has become so essential. Having outsourced its production towards the region since the 1980s, Italy is now well-known as the most important commercial partner of the area. Italian producers firstly resorted to the so-called *outward processing traffic regime* (OPT) to outsource in the region. Basically, they temporarily sent raw materials and semi-finished products out of the European Union to CEEC, to have them assembled and sent back to Italy. The OPT regime is an internationalisation tool relying on exports, that Italy resorted to in order to exploit cheaper labour, and benefit from lower custom duties when re-importing finished goods. Alongside with OPT, foreign direct investments further strengthened the relationship between Italian enterprises and Central and Eastern European countries. Such investments further aimed at exploiting CEEC comparative advantage in labour-intensive productions such as manufacturing.<sup>161</sup> In sum, Central and Easter Europe has always perfectly satisfied our enterprises' need for close foreign outsourcing destination, and as long as it supplies them with cheaper labour, our country's efficiency seeking FDI outflows will not stop growing.

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<sup>160</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2008-2009, e Sintesi del Rapporto ICE 2010-2011.

<sup>161</sup> *Integrating Central and Eastern Europe in the European trade and production network*, cit. p. 2.

Finally, many foreign investors with long-lasting interests in Italian companies have always belonged to the most advanced countries such as the United States and Japan (see Table 2.5.).<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, some flows of investments also come from Northern Africa and other emerging countries, as their recent rise turned them from passive FDI targets into active investors.

Table 2.4. – **The geography of Italian FDI outflows**  
(Italian shareholdings abroad)

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>European Union (15)</b>	6.963	9.530	9.987	10.729	11.030	11.228	11.292	11.253
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	2.803	4.367	4.736	5.219	5.521	5.721	5.861	5.912
<b>European Countries (not EU)</b>	565	779	820	891	936	970	1003	993
<b>Central and South Africa</b>	651	786	821	870	910	931	951	955
<b>Northern America</b>	1.963	1.939	2.094	2.304	2.465	2.598	2.683	2.792
<b>Latin America</b>	1.467	1.717	1.767	1.958	2.016	2.044	2.072	2.069
<b>Asia</b>	1.862	2.375	2.564	2.721	2.876	2.970	3.026	3.016
<b>Oceania</b>	203	247	234	249	251	252	269	1,7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.477</b>	<b>21.740</b>	<b>23.023</b>	<b>24.941</b>	<b>26.005</b>	<b>26.714</b>	<b>27.157</b>	<b>27.191</b>

Source: ICE data,  
*Le partecipazioni italiane all'estero ed estere in Italia, L' Italia Multinazionale 2012.*

<sup>162</sup> *Italia multinazionale*, cit. pp. 25, 70-

Table 2.5. - **The geography of Italian FDI inflows**  
**(Foreign shareholdings in Italy)**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Europe</b>	5.128	5.353	5.300	5.392	5.674	5.668	5.693	5.822
<b>Northern America</b>	1.880	1.974	1.970	1.943	1.993	1.929	1.870	1.874
<b>Japan</b>	304	319	321	34	339	332	334	328
<b>Other Countries</b>	229	256	312	360	490	486	499	468
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7.541</b>	<b>7.902</b>	<b>7.903</b>	<b>8.029</b>	<b>8.496</b>	<b>8.415</b>	<b>8.396</b>	<b>8.492</b>

Source: ICE data,  
*Le partecipazioni italiane all'estero ed estere in Italia, L' Italia Multinazionale 2012.*

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **ITALIAN SUPPORT TO NATIONAL COMPANIES' INTERNATIONALISATION**

The need for companies' great dimension has been underlined several times in the previous chapters. Bigger companies' capital endowment indeed adequately bears internationalisation costs and risks, easing the overall business process. Nonetheless, many Italian companies lack such a dimensional characteristic and consequently need additional external help supporting them through business internationalisation. The more Italian small and medium companies are supported, the more chances they have to successfully turn to foreign markets.

Chapter Three firstly specifically details which costs companies usually bears, and which risks they face up to, in order to show the great importance of public supporting systems. These last ones provide national exporters and investors with financial help and insurance coverage protecting Italian trade and investments. Furthermore, public assistance services help national economic operators search for new foreign markets and fulfil foreign and Italian business procedures, particularly for the first time. Finally, promotional activities spread positive information about the Italian industry, and increase international contacts between national producers and foreign buyers.

Despite the above great variety of supporting programs, Italian SMEs may not resort to them due to their lack of capital endowments. As loans, insurance conditions, assistance and promotional costs may prevent them from resorting to public support, it is absolutely essential that these ones are patterned on SMEs' structural characteristic.

### ***3.1. The financial support***

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Over the 1950s, the problem of providing national companies with adequate financial help, thus supporting their internationalisation, arose for the first time. Essentially, such a funding system should bear the costs of industrial properties, machineries and equipments used and owned abroad, alongside with stockpiling costs for goods stored in Italy or somewhere else.<sup>163</sup> As selling goods abroad inevitably entails extending credits to foreign buyers, public funds were also meant to support the export credit practice. Foreign buyers indeed, need to use, or sell, capital and consumption goods that they have bought, before making any profit and pay sellers back.<sup>164</sup> Extending credits to foreign buyers also requires national producers to forecast the exchange rate of foreign currencies. Any sudden depreciation of foreign buyers' currencies will reduce the total amount of money that national producers would eventually cash up.<sup>165</sup> Bigger companies are usually equipped for such operations. On the contrary, Italian SMEs lack such required skill. They consequently turn to national lending institutions to foresee foreign exchange rates, and further reduce their capital endowment.<sup>166</sup>

In sum, when it comes to internationalisation, the same costs affect both bigger companies and SMEs all over the world. In Italy, public financial support aimed at helping national enterprises to recover as many resources as they needed to better succeed in internationalising their businesses. Nevertheless, as the country abounds with small and medium enterprises that structurally lack capital resources, such a funding system may not allocate enough money to effectively help them.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, public loans firstly have to be based on local enterprises' structural characteristics, and especially what they need when resorting to an internationalisation strategy. Furthermore, credit terms need to be commensurate with companies'

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<sup>163</sup> G. Pillicelli, *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, ETAS LIBRI, p. 336.

<sup>164</sup> E. Gennaro, G. Gimelli, P. Giubasso, *Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione*, Commercio Estero, Edizioni del SOLE 24 ORE LIBRI 1985, p. 13.

<sup>165</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, cit. p.334.

<sup>166</sup> Ivi.

<sup>167</sup> W. G. Scott, *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, MEDIOCREDITO LOMBARDO Studi e Ricerche, Milano 1983, p. 243.

economic means, so that even small and medium companies would consider it favourable to resort to public loans.

The current Italian funding system is based on a national regulatory framework ruling the extending credit subject, as well as some additional loans and services that companies can count on when internationalising. Such a framework consists of an increasing number of laws that constantly revise the discussed topic. Despite that, this study will focus on its basic pillars as they firstly established the way that the field should be dealt with. Before doing so, the main rule provided by the International Community will be analyzed, as it must be implemented by subscribing states, no matter what their national frameworks had previously established.

### ***3.1.1. The Gentlemen's Agreement on Officially Supported Export Credit***

The International Community deal with the export credit practice in the *Gentlemen's Agreement on Officially Supported Export Credit*, that was signed in 1978 by Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United States, Korea and the European Union countries.<sup>168</sup> The agreement, which is widely known as *The Consensus*, aims at defining few essential conditions that the above states must follow when granting export subsidies to national producers. By following such rules the International Community will guarantee a fair competition among the several international exporters, and prevent a few of them from being more funded than others.<sup>169</sup>

First of all, according to the *Gentlemen's Agreement*, any extending credit activity requires an initial down payment. This one consists of at least 15% of the total amount of money owed to the exporter.<sup>170</sup> The minimum repayment term for the remaining amount extends over 24 months, while the maximum period depends on the national income bracket that the foreign buyer's country belongs to. Indeed, *The Consensus* used to distinguish between three different brackets. These ones corresponded to the main

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<sup>168</sup> *Una mappa di orientamento verso il mondo, L'operatività tradizionale di un'ECA: l'export credit*, SACE, 18 Luglio 2011,

<sup>169</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>170</sup> *Normativa OCSE, L'accordo "Consensus"*, SACE, 20 Maggio 2009.

advanced countries, to the so-called intermediate countries, and to the emerging and underdeveloped ones. The maximum repayment term for the first group extended over a period of 5 years, while these of the second and the third group over a period of 8 years and a half, and 10 years respectively.<sup>171</sup> The second national income bracket has recently been absorbed by the first one, and the *Agreement* now distinguishes between the OECD richest countries, and the world remaining ones. The maximum repayment term of 8 years and a half has consequently been absorbed as well. The richest OECD countries can now pay back their imports over a minimum period of 2 years, that can be extended from 5 years to 8 and a half.<sup>172</sup>

The above general conditions concern many capital and consumption goods that countries are used to trading. However, the above mentioned terms have been modified as stated in the four Sector Understandings concerning airplanes, ships, nuclear power plants, renewable energies and water projects. They provide longest repayment deadlines, entailing no distinction between the richest countries and other ones, as well as different interest rates.<sup>173</sup>

### **3.1.2. L. 24 maggio 1977, n. 227.**

*Disposizioni sull'assicurazione e sul finanziamento dei crediti inerenti alle esportazioni di merci e servizi, all'esecuzione di lavori all'estero nonché alla cooperazione economica e finanziaria in campo internazionale*<sup>174</sup>

The first Italian Act ruling the export credit practice appeared in 1977. Its aim was to provide loans for national exporters in order to ease their eventual success and increase national exports. Among such loans, the Act specifically establishes:

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<sup>171</sup> *Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione*, cit. p. 164

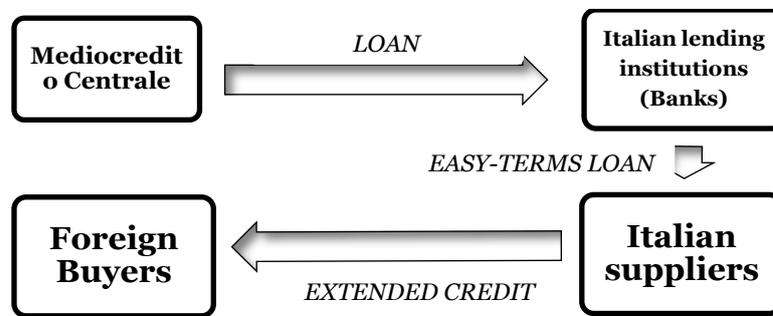
<sup>172</sup> *Normativa OCSE, L'accordo "Consensus"*.

<sup>173</sup> *Una mappa di orientamento verso il mondo*, SACE 2011.

<sup>174</sup> Website [www.mincomes.it/strumenti/capitolo\\_b/227\\_77.htm](http://www.mincomes.it/strumenti/capitolo_b/227_77.htm) Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Dipartimento per l'impresa e l'internazionalizzazione, D. G. Politica Commerciale Internazionale e D. G. Politiche di Internazionalizzazione e la promozione degli scambi.

- *Supplier's credit*

An easy-terms loan financing national exporters' extended credits for exported goods and services. National producers are granted easy-terms conditions by authorized Italian lending institutions. These ones are financed, in turn, by the Italian Mediocredito Centrale.<sup>175</sup> If national extended credits are meant to be paid back over a maximum period of 18 months, the Act prevents the Italian credit institute from financing such operations.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, extending credit activities lasting more than 24 months need to respect what the international *Gentlemen's Agreement* has arranged on the topic.



- *Buyer's credit*

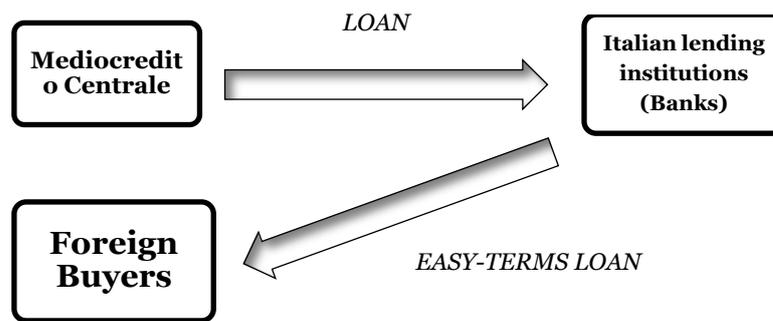
An easy-terms loan that Italian authorised banks directly grant to foreign buyers who will later use credits to buy Italian products.<sup>177</sup> Once again, the Italian Mediocredito Centrale works with national lending institutions and provides them with loans that are later paid back by foreign importers. Such an operation consequently does not concern Italian producers, although it is meant to strengthen their selling market.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>175</sup> G. Speciale, *Annuario del commercio con l'estero, guida agli scambi internazionali per gli operatori economici*, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE 1974, p. 254.

<sup>176</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*, IL SOLE 24 ORE LIBRI, p. 294.

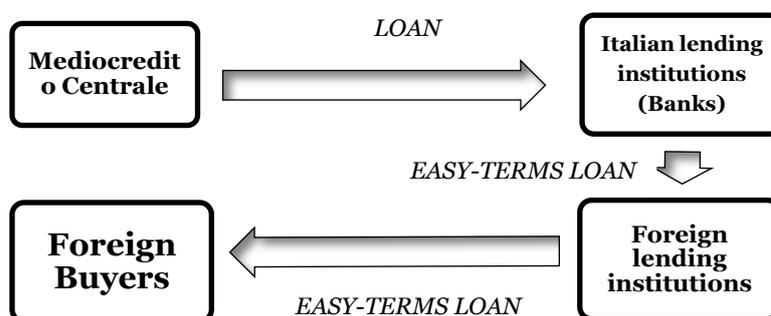
<sup>177</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, cit. p. 363.

<sup>178</sup> *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 240.



- *Financial credit*

Financial credit works as the buyer's one, as Italian loans are meant to support the purchase of Italian products abroad. However, such a practice also involves lending institutions in foreign buyers' countries, as they receive Italian easy-term loans and provide local importers with them.<sup>179</sup> Thanks to such loans, foreign buyers can immediately pay Italian suppliers back for the capital and consumption goods that they have bought. Eventually, they will pay down the loan to the national bank they turned to.<sup>180</sup>



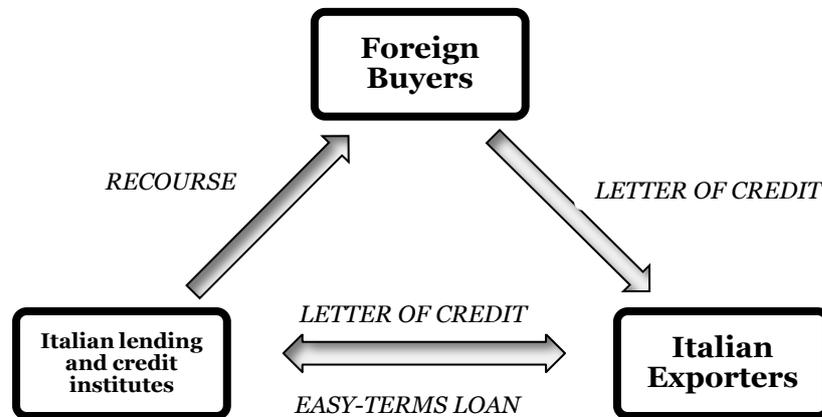
- *Endorsement without recourse*

Italian banks and credit institutes buy national exporters' letters of credit. These ones have been previously signed by foreign buyers, as the promise they will pay back the extended credit they have been granted by Italian exporters. By doing this, banks and credit institutes provide national exporters with easy-terms loans. However, as banks shoulder the risk that

<sup>179</sup>Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione, cit. p. 205.

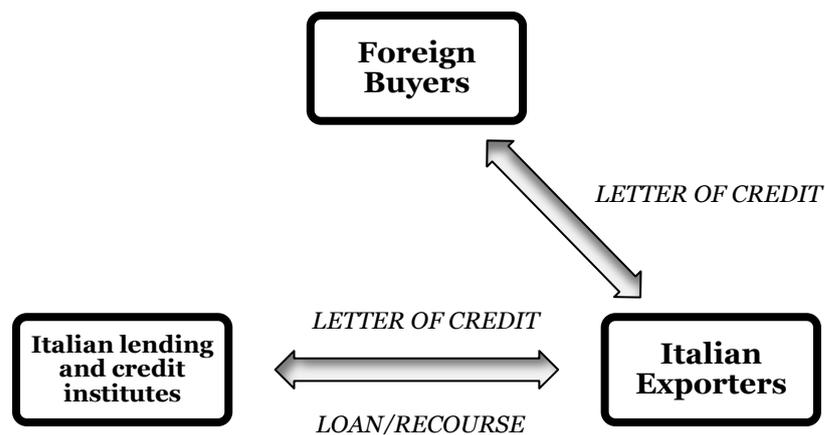
<sup>180</sup> Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri, cit. p. 360.

foreign buyers will not eventually respect their promises, any legal recourse will not involve national producers, directly affecting foreign buyers.<sup>181</sup>



- *Endorsement with recourse*

Once again, national exporters sell their export credits to Italian banks and credit institutes, to be granted with easy-terms loans. In this case, any insolvency concerning foreign buyers will not entail a legal recourse. Indeed, banks and credit institutes take actions against national producers that have sold their credits.<sup>182</sup>



<sup>181</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, cit. p. 363.

<sup>182</sup> *Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione*, cit. p. 205.

Alongside with loans concerning the export credit practice, the 1977 Act has also instituted an additional one helping national producers bear the costs of producing and assembling goods. Once again, the Italian Mediocredito Centrale provides the loan which covers up to 70% of production costs for production processes lasting more than a year.<sup>183</sup> Finally, the Act officially created the Special Department for the Export Credit Insurance (SACE – Sezione Speciale per l’Assicurazione dei Crediti all’Export), to provide national exporters with adequate insurance coverage.<sup>184</sup>

### **3.1.3. L. 29 luglio 1981, n. 394**

#### *Misure a sostegno delle esportazioni italiane<sup>185</sup>*

By providing a financial support to production processes, the 1977 Act clearly worries about the overall amount of costs that companies have to bear, alongside with those linked to the export credit practice. Although the topic was not widely discussed in 1977, over the following years the Italian government began attaching great importance to it, and consequently instituted additional loans to be supplied. Among them, the 1981 Act established an easy-terms loan financing Italian companies’ commercial penetration into foreign markets. Essentially, costs connected with the creation of foreign selling facilities, like distribution branches, warehouses and showrooms to be located outside of the European Union, are covered by the loan. This one is provided by the Italian Company for National Enterprises Abroad (SIMEST – Società Italiana per le Imprese all’Estero).<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Guida pratica all’assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all’esportazione, cit. p. 173.

<sup>184</sup> L’internazionalizzazione dell’impresa minore, cit. p. 241.

<sup>185</sup> Website <http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:1981-07-29;394> LEGGE 29 luglio 1981, n. 394 Conversione in legge, con modificazioni, del decreto-legge 28 maggio 1981, n. 251, concernente misure a sostegno delle esportazioni italiane (GU n.206 del 29-7-1981 ).

<sup>186</sup> A. D’Intinosante , F. Giorgio, *Strumenti di sostegno all’internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane*, Quaderni Area Internazionalizzazione, Ministero delle Attività Produttive, Roma, Giugno 2005.

### **3.1.4. D. Lgs. 31 marzo 1998, n. 143**

#### *Disposizioni in materia di commercio con l'estero*

The 1998 Act established further public credits covering the costs of “pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, as well as of technical support”<sup>187</sup>. According to it, any operation connected with the previous three, like organizing foreign travels, sojourns and training courses, or hiring external consultants and experts, can be covered by an easy-terms loan. This one is provided, once again, by the Italian SIMEST. However, Italian producers can rely on the loan only if feasibility studies and technical assistance concerns foreign end-markets outside of the European Union.<sup>188</sup>

Furthermore, the Act reminds the application of the international *Consensus* for extending credit activities lasting more than two years.<sup>189</sup> The maximum repayment term of such credits still depends on the national income bracket the foreign buyer’s country belongs to.

Arrangements disposed in Acts 394 and 143 clearly witness the active role that the Italian SIMEST has been playing in supporting national producers in moving their business abroad. The company was created in 1991 in order to back the spread of both Italian exports and investments outflows abroad. As to the former, SIMEST provides the above loans, financing Italian exporting enterprises’ commercial programs, feasibility studies, and technical services concerning countries located outside of the European Union. Furthermore, the company also allows national exporting enterprises to strengthen their economic reliability by financing the increase of their capital assets.<sup>190</sup> Over the last few years, such a loan has become essential to national exporters since the world economic crisis has reduced their capital endowment, especially those of small and medium enterprises. However, in

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<sup>187</sup> Website <http://www.simest.it/page-en.php?id=24> Società Italiana per le Imprese all’Estero.

<sup>188</sup> *Strumenti di sostegno all'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane, Quaderni Area Internazionalizzazione* pp. 20-21.

<sup>189</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>190</sup> Business Atlas, *Guida agli affari in 50 mercati per il business italiano*, a cura delle 76 Camere di Commercio Italiane all’estero e Assocamerestero.

2012, SIMEST was forced to cancel the loan, as it could no longer bear the increasing amount of applications.<sup>191</sup>

According to Acts 394 and 143, commercial programs, feasibility studies and technical services, concerning Italian direct investments outside the European Union, can be publically financed as well. As to FDI outflows, SIMEST has established two financial interventions supporting Italian companies resorting to such an internationalisation strategy. The first one entails the SIMEST's acquisition of up to 49% of the equity capital of Italian foreign branches, subsidiaries, or associates.<sup>192</sup> If the acquisition concerns Italian branches located outside of the European Union, SIMEST also grants Italian head-offices an easy-terms loan supporting their equity interests. On the contrary, equity interests related to national foreign branches located within the European Union are not financed by any loan.<sup>193</sup> In addition to the above financial intervention, national investors are also provided with a Venture Capital Fund they can resort to in order to increase the SIMEST's previous acquisition.<sup>194</sup> The share ceilings of 49% can be consequently overstepped to increase both the overall amount of SIMEST's shares, as well as the economic support that the company supplies Italian investors with. Once again, SIMEST's first priority goes to Italian investments outside of the European Union, as the Venture Capital Fund consists of many funds concerning some specific geographical areas: MENA's countries and South Africa, the Balkans, the People's Republic of China, Russia and Ukraine, Central and Latin America.<sup>195</sup>

On the whole, the above funding system entails many interventions strengthening the capital endowment that national producers can rely on when internationalising. Nowadays, as the global economic crisis has turned internationalisation from a chance into a necessity, any economic support has become more essential. Consequently, national institutions providing it are aware, more than ever, that any economic interventions must fulfil the main needs of Italian enterprises. Many of the sources used for this study,

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<sup>191</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana, p. 310.

<sup>192</sup> Website <http://www.simest.it/page-en.php?id=21>.

<sup>193</sup> Business Atlas, *Guida agli affari in 50 mercati per il business italiano*.

<sup>194</sup> Ivi.

<sup>195</sup> *Strumenti di sostegno all'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane*, Quaderni Area Internazionalizzazione, Giugno 2005.

underline that Italian SMEs have always been given priority when resorting to public loans. In sum, although it is not completely clear if loans conditions are effectively commensurate with companies' economic means, such a public funding system seems to widely know what its entrepreneurial network truly needs.

### ***3.2. The insurance coverage***

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Alongside with additional costs, internationalisation also entails many risks that national exporters and investors must face when turning to the world market. One of the risks has previously appeared in this chapter when talking about national producers' need to forecast the exchange rate of foreign currencies. This would avoid reductions in the whole amount of money that national exporters expect to cash up. Such a possible decrease is defined as *foreign exchange risk*, and it is strictly connected with the extending credit practice. Essentially, what exporters are more frightened of is a sudden depreciation in foreign currency invoices. Once foreign currencies have been converted into national ones, foreign depreciations would cause the above reduction in national producers' eventual full payments.<sup>196</sup> By forecasting fluctuations in foreign exchange rates, companies can be better prepared for foreign exchange risks, and can consequently reduce their negative effects on domestic production systems. Alternatively, exporting companies can turn to stronger foreign currencies different from that of the foreign buyer's country. As such currencies are unlikely to depreciate, national exporters reduce the risk of not being fully repaid.<sup>197</sup>

In addition to foreign exchange risks, internationalisation also involves *commercial* and *political risks*. The former refers both to foreign buyers' sudden insolvencies, making them unable to pay exporters back for what they have bought, as well as their personal unwillingness to pay their debt.<sup>198</sup> On the other hand, political risks involve any political event, out of the control of foreign buyers, making it impossible for them to pay back their imports.

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<sup>196</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*. cit. p. 279.

<sup>197</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, cit. p. 348.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 358.

Among them, the governments' lack of foreign currencies, the introduction of political rules allowing no foreign payment, as well as disastrous events preventing final money transfers, mainly concern the export practice.<sup>199</sup> Nevertheless, foreign direct investments are concerned with political risks as well. Foreign civil wars, foreign governments' arrangements and domestic governments' nationalizations, or confiscations, can prevent foreign branches from transferring capital to national head-offices.<sup>200</sup>

Finally, additional risks entail the sudden suspension of exporters' commissions and orders, as well as any increase in production costs, so that eventual foreign payments would not adequately cover it.<sup>201</sup>

In sum, all the above risks threaten the eventual repayment of exports, production and distribution activities abroad. Accordingly, companies' economic resources are threatened, as well. As to Italian small and medium enterprises, their structural lack of capital endowments makes it more difficult for them to bear the consequences of losing foreign capitals. Commercial risks connected with importers and countries' insolvencies have been increasing over the past 5 years, especially within the European Union. As the UE is the main end-market of Italian exports, national producers have been more and more affected by such risks. They have consequently turned to further foreign markets looking for stronger domestic demands. However, political and foreign exchange risks have increased due to such a geographical redirection, as trading inside of the European Union means not worrying about any exchange rate, or civil disorders. On the contrary, many domestic currencies in developing and emerging countries are not as strong as the European one. Furthermore their weak domestic governances make political risks more likely to actualize.

Further to that, a proper insurance coverage has recently become more essential. Although companies can protect themselves by controlling foreign buyers' financial and political reliabilities, as well as foreign currencies exchange rates, Italian SMEs lack the main competencies to do that.

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<sup>199</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*, cit. p.281.

<sup>200</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>201</sup> *Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione*, Commercio Estero, IL SOLE 24 ORE 1985.

Furthermore, they often lack proper economic resources to pay external consultants and experts.

An alternative solution entails transferring commercial, political and foreign exchange risks to insurance companies. These ones supply national producers with many insurance policies remitting money in case one or more of the above risks actualize.<sup>202</sup> Companies relying on insurance coverage pay premiums for the money they would possibly be provided with. In the past, such premiums used to be very high. Furthermore, it was hard for national exporters and investors to fully understand all of the conditions and clauses related to insurance policies.<sup>203</sup> Accordingly, such a public insurance system never particularly spread among Italian small and medium companies, as it did not supply them with insurance solutions commensurate with their economic resources. On the contrary, like the above funding system, public insurance coverage should be strictly connected with national SMEs' main needs and economic resources. Italian producers would consequently consider it more convenient to resort to them, instead of running the risks connected with international activities.

The Italian public insurance coverage relies on the Special Department for the Export Credit Insurance (SACE – Sezione Speciale per l'Assicurazione dei Crediti all'Export). As the group is supplied with public funds, its activity represents a further help that the Italian government provides to national producers, alongside with loans, assistance services and promoting initiatives.<sup>204</sup> Among its programs, SACE supplies Italian enterprises with insurance policies covering exporters' commissions and orders, export credits extended to foreign buyers, as well as Italian outflows of foreign direct investments. Furthermore, it draws up a “country risk map” helping national operators to better direct their businesses abroad.

Essentially, the “country risk map” assesses where political, commercial and exchange risks are more likely to actualize.<sup>205</sup> It has recently become extremely essential as more and more Italian exporters and investors

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<sup>202</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, fattori di successo nei mercati esteri*, cit. p. 356.

<sup>203</sup> *Guida pratica all'assicurazione e al finanziamento dei crediti all'esportazione*, Commercio Estero, p. 22.

<sup>204</sup> *L'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa minore*, cit. p. 241.

<sup>205</sup> *Il Made in Italy non si ferma mai*, Annual Report 2012, SACE – Sezione speciale per l'assicurazione dei crediti all'export, p. 31.

have been turning to foreign markets. Thanks to the map, many European and emerging countries have been strategically avoided as they no longer represent “safe heavens” for Italian business, or still present high risk thresholds.<sup>206</sup>

As to SACE’s insurance policies, these ones do not fully reimburse national producers for any missing money transfer. They cover different lower percentages of the eventual expected amount, according to the kind of risk insured by the policy.<sup>207</sup> Italian exporters, banks and credit institutes are the main beneficiaries that such policies address to. Foreign banks and lending institutions can equally resort to them, when protecting operations concerning Italian exports and investments.<sup>208</sup> Among the wide range of programs provided by the company, the first one specifically concerns the export credit practice. Having resorted to public loans to finance their extended credits, national exporters must insure them through the *supplier’s credit insurance*. This one covers export credits extended for more than 24 months, and Italian lending institutions will be paid anyway, no matter what political, commercial or exchange risks have prevented foreign buyers from accomplishing their payments.<sup>209</sup> Foreign importers benefit from SACE’s export credit policies, as well. First of all, thanks to the supplier’s credit insurance, they are granted milder payment terms, since Italian operators are aware that they can reimburse national lending institutes anyway. Secondly, thanks to the *buyer’s credit insurance*, that foreign operators are provided with by SACE, they are easily granted public loans by their countries’ lending and credit institutes.<sup>210</sup> These ones know that any insolvency would not prevent them from being reimbursed.

SACE’s insurance programs secondly concern Italian outflows of foreign direct investments. National investors can resort to two different insurance policies when protecting their foreign capital endowments from political risks. The first one specifically concerns loans that Italian small and medium enterprises have been granted by national lending credits in order to

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<sup>206</sup> *L’Italia nell’economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 321-322.

<sup>207</sup> Guida Pratica al commercio internazionale, cit. p. 282.

<sup>208</sup> Ivi.

<sup>209</sup> *Il Made in Italy non si ferma mai*, Annual Report 2012, SACE, p. 34.

<sup>210</sup> Guida pratica al commercio internazionale, cit. p. 279.

invest abroad.<sup>211</sup> Once again, as SACE provides an adequate insurance coverage, Italian SMEs are easily granted public loans. Consequently, long-lasting mergers and creations of foreign branches are more likely to be successful. The second insurance policy for FDI outflows works as the above one. However, it concerns public loans that Italian bigger companies and multinationals are granted in order to strengthen their foreign branches, subsidiaries and associates.<sup>212</sup> By and large, FDI policies clearly distinguish SMEs' foreign investments from those of bigger companies and multinationals. According to such a distinction, the Special Department for the Export Credit Insurance is well aware that Italian SMEs work differently rather than their bigger counterparts. As they consequently need a proper insurance coverage protecting their international activities, SACE provides them with a bespoke one, as any adequate insurance system should do.

Alongside with ensuring export credits and foreign investments, SACE also provides all of the guarantees requested by national enterprises submitting foreign bids and commissioned orders. As political risks can prevent commissioned goods from successfully reaching foreign importers, SACE protects Italian exporters with an insurance policy reimbursing loans that they have been granted in order to produce such goods.<sup>213</sup> The policy also covers foreign governments' possible requisitions of Italian equipments and goods that have temporarily been sent abroad.<sup>214</sup>

In sum, the Special Department for the Export Credit Insurance effectively covers many situations endangering the successful internationalisation of Italian operators. When doing so, it also attaches great importance to the distinction between small and big enterprises' main needs, as the former need being provided with insurance conditions commensurate with their economic resources. This is the reason why the insurance company has been widely diversifying its activity to provide Italian SMEs with bespoke insurance policies, as well as cheaper technical assistance and advice. On the whole, despite the current economic background, the Italian insurance

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<sup>211</sup> *Il Made in Italy non si ferma mai*, Annual Report 2012, SACE p. 38.

<sup>212</sup> Website <http://www.sace.it/GruppoSACE/content/it/index.html> Gruppo SACE: assicurazione del credito, protezione degli investimenti, cauzioni e garanzie finanziarie.

<sup>213</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*, cit. p. 288.

<sup>214</sup> *Ivi*.

system has effectively improved its support to national operators to successfully help their internationalisation.

### ***3.3. Assistance services and promotion***

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The above financial and insurance support systems certainly provide adequate help to national producers and investors moving their businesses abroad. Nonetheless, they still do not suffice to effectively increase our country's business internationalisation. Although loans and insurances can largely remove higher costs and commercial, political and foreign exchange risks, internationalisation is still threatened by national companies' lack of experience and information. Misinformed exporters are more unlikely to successfully direct their goods abroad, while inexperience prevents investors from effectively exploiting foreign manpower, know-how and technologies. Accordingly, information concerning political, economic and social foreign backgrounds are firstly needed. Enterprises later require being supported when fulfilling foreign standard procedures and dealing with foreign bureaucracies, especially when they have just begun moving their businesses abroad. Finally, national operators should be helped find logistical facilities, like offices and warehouses, and oriented when looking for foreign employees to hire.<sup>215</sup> In sum, it is essential that Italian enterprises are adequately supported when facing all of the stages related with the internationalisation process that they have engaged in. Alongside with financial help and insurance coverage, public assistance services are consequently required.

On the other hand, promotion is equally fundamental. As quoted in Chapter 1, promotion consists of many communicative actions targeting foreign importers and enterprises that may be interested in starting international commercial partnerships. Since promotion is entailed by companies' marketing mix, exporters and investors can freely resort to it through their own advertising campaigns, or by taking part in international hallmark events. These ones consist of both *sector-based fairs*, concerning just one production field, and *general trade fairs*, involving all of the

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<sup>215</sup> M. G. Caroli, *Il marketing internazionale, strategie per la competitività sostenibile del territorio*, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE, Milano, p. 280.

producers, no matter which branches their productions belong to.<sup>216</sup> Essentially, Italian exporters display national goods and products to international attendees, knowing that these ones could potentially become strategic foreign importers. Although general trade fairs appeal to more potential customers and partners, relationships established during sector-based expositions are more likely to successfully actualize, as they target specific foreign buyers and operators. Nevertheless, thanks to high attendances, hallmark events truly provide Italian enterprises with multiple chances to strengthen their commercial networks.<sup>217</sup> Italian companies' private showcases, taking place in foreign buyers' countries, do not appeal to as many attendees as the above events, as they usually approach a limited selected public.<sup>218</sup>

On the whole, promotion lies at the bottom of business internationalisation. Due to the spread of the global economic crisis, it has become a strategic tool opposing the current downturn in our country's demand for goods. Now, more than ever, promotion needs being strategically planned to further advertise the already well-known quality of Italian products.<sup>219</sup> It will consequently prevent emerging countries' cheaper goods from spreading, and protect Italian shares in foreign import markets.

In sum, assistance and promotional services are as essential as loans and insurance coverage to support Italian companies turning to foreign markets, particularly Italian small and medium ones. These ones' lack of capital endowments often threaten the eventual success of their attempts at internationalising. Promotion and assistance act in order to decrease such threats. Once again, if provided by the Italian government, the above services firstly have to be aware of national companies' different characteristics and needs.<sup>220</sup> For instance, since bigger enterprises aim at reaching the furthest markets, they will consequently run into harder difficulties than those born by Italian small and medium companies. On the contrary, these one are supposed to direct goods to closer markets, whose national bureaucracies,

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<sup>216</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*, cit. p. 50.

<sup>217</sup> *Il marketing internazionale, strategie per la competitività sostenibile del territorio*, cit. p. 256.

<sup>218</sup> *Guida pratica al commercio internazionale*, cit. p. 51.

<sup>219</sup> 2007, *Attività promozionali, Le iniziative ICE per le imprese*, Ministero del Commercio Internazionale, ICE – Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio con l'Estero, p. 71.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

and standard practices to be fulfilled, are more likely to resemble Italian ones. Secondly, public promotional and assistance interventions need to be geographically focused. Assistance mainly aims at finding out which foreign markets provide Italian enterprises with more chances to successfully sell and outsource their productions.<sup>221</sup> Once foreign markets have been located, promotion acts to advertise and show off national products. The recent rise of emerging countries, the ongoing global economic crisis, and the European Union's related decline, have turned such a geographical focus into one of the main pillar of promotion and assistance, alongside with the above need to be strategically planned.

Nowadays, a great variety of national public and private organizations provide assistance and promotional services. The second part of the chapter lists and analyses just a few of them, as the most important actors ruling the issue. Among them, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation rely on their own foreign networks when carrying out the above services.

### ***3.3.1. Departmental assistance and promotional services***

In former times, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Trade was the first government department launching the public funding system for the export credit. Among its multiple tasks, the Ministry also studied the main risks connected with international business activities.<sup>222</sup> As to promotion, the Ministry took part in international promotional programs, and developed and financed national ones.<sup>223</sup> It provided Italian organizations, like the Institute of Foreign Trade, Italian Chambers of Commerce and regional administrative divisions, with public loans. When financing the Institute of Foreign Trade, that has recently been replaced by the Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation (ICE – Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione dell'impresa italiana), the Ministry also drew some guidelines binding funds to the achievement of its main promotional objectives. Among them, it mainly aimed at increasing Italian

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<sup>221</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>222</sup> *Annuario del Commercio con l'estero, guida agli scambi internazionali per gli operatori e gli organismi economici*, cit. p. 10.

<sup>223</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

exports and investment flows, and advertising the higher quality of Italian products.<sup>224</sup>

In 1999, the Ministry of Foreign Trade was absorbed by the Ministry of Production to be later recreated through the Ministry of International Trade. Nowadays, its functions are carried out by the Ministry of Economic Development. Among its main tasks, the Ministry keeps financing export credits, as well as national organizations pursuing promotional goals.<sup>225</sup> It equally contributes to the international definition of the main programs and tasks for entrepreneurial promotion.<sup>226</sup> As to the guidelines that it used to draw, although they have not completely changed, some of them have inevitably adapted to current international economic trends. Departmental guidelines are now drawn by the Italian Cabinet for Internationalisation (Cabina di Regia per l'Italia Internazionale). Their priorities go to the protection of the Italian *Made In*, to avoid the spread of counterfeit goods, and to successfully redirect Italian international activities to the most appealing emerging countries.<sup>227</sup> Alongside with geographical priorities, guidelines also state on which productions promotion need to focus, and which kind of promotional programs have to be preferred.

The Italian Cabinet for Internationalisation is currently co-headed by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the highest national authorities handling the public support to companies' internationalisation. Nevertheless the Cabinet also involves additional departmental and public actors dealing with the issue. Among them the Italian Chambers of Commerce Union (Unioncamere) and the Conference of Italian Regional Administration are the most strategic actors to be involved.<sup>228</sup> Alongside with drawing sector-based and geographical priorities, the Cabinet coordinates our country's wide range of assistance, informational and promotional actions supporting companies'

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<sup>224</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, pp. 378-379.

<sup>225</sup> Website [www.mise.gov.it](http://www.mise.gov.it), Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Impresa e Internazionalizzazione.

<sup>226</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>227</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 265; 2007, Attività promozionali, Le iniziative ICE per le imprese, p. 11.

<sup>228</sup> Website [http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita\\_Sistema\\_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Cabina\\_regia/](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita_Sistema_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Cabina_regia/) Diplomazia economica italiana al servizio del Sistema Paese e delle Autonomie Territoriali, Cabina di Regia per l'Italia Internazionale.

internationalisation. Its primary aim is to create an integrated supporting system whose actions better fulfil Italian business needs.

As the official department handling Italian international interests, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also deals with companies' internationalisation. Its Director General for country's promotion supports Italian enterprises in finding and entering new foreign end-markets, promotes the Italian entrepreneurial network, and works in order to draw new foreign investments.<sup>229</sup>

Among its assistance services, the above Director General firstly provides national economic operators with sector-based market researches that better match Italian productions with the most suitable foreign end-markets. Countries' economic analyses are further completed with a wide range of online informational services. These ones rely on many databases and portals that constantly upload information about foreign country's political and economic trends. Furthermore, they list commercial opportunities, concerning exports, investment inflows and outflows, as well as international contracts. Alongside with such services, the Director General for country's promotion has recently created a special division supporting Italian foreign investments outflows.<sup>230</sup> The division acts as the only assistance and information desk helping both Italian and international investors. The aim is to help them establish their long-lasting interests and to increase the overall amount of Italian FDI inflows and outflows.

As to departmental promotion, it firstly consists in organizing hallmark events. These ones provide national producers with strategic meeting points where to appeal to potential foreign buyers and partners. For that purpose, business-to-business meetings usually take place during trade fairs in order to further strategically match national exporters and foreign importers. The Ministry's Director General for promotion also arrange Italian business expeditions abroad presenting our country's industrial productions to foreign economic operators. On the contrary, study tours involve foreign business expeditions visiting Italian companies and meeting national

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<sup>229</sup> Website <http://www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Ministero/Servizi/Imprese/DiplomaziaEconomica/Farnesina>, Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

<sup>230</sup>[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita\\_Sistema\\_Paese/Menu/diplomazia+economica/Investinitaly/](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita_Sistema_Paese/Menu/diplomazia+economica/Investinitaly/) Diplomazia economica italiana al servizio del Sistema Paese e delle Autonomie Territoriali, Investinitaly.

producers. Such tours head foreign economic operators through the Italian entrepreneurial network, and provide solid foundations for drawing foreign investments. Furthermore, foreign direct investments to Italy are fostered through the above investment division. This one provides international investors with investments packages concerning potential mergers with Italian companies, as well as Greenfield and Brownfield projects to be launched within the country.<sup>231</sup>

As stated before, departmental services also rely on the Ministry's own world network. This one involves Italian embassies and consulates abroad, Italian permanent missions within International Organizations, as well as Italian cultural institutes and trade promotion offices. As to Italian Chambers of Commerce, they work together with such network as private independent organizations. The Ministry's foreign bodies equally work to protect and promote Italian interests abroad thanks to their assimilation within the main foreign communities. They strategically improve departmental assistance services by providing Italian exporters and investors with a wide range of reliable information about economic, political and social trends.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, they take advantage of diplomatic relationships with local administrations to strategically foster Italian companies' business partnerships. As to the Ministry's foreign promotion offices, their recent assimilation within the departmental world network will be analyzed in the following lines.

### ***3.3.2 The Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation***

In 1926, the Italian Government created the National Institute of Foreign Exports (Istituto Nazionale per l'Esportazione), and later converted it into the National Institute of Foreign Trade (Istituto per il Commercio

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<sup>231</sup>Website

[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita\\_Sistema\\_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Gruppo\\_Lavoro\\_attrazione\\_IDE/](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita_Sistema_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Gruppo_Lavoro_attrazione_IDE/) Diplomazia economica italiana al servizio del Sistema Paese e delle Autonomie Territoriali, Attrazione degli Investimenti Esteri.

<sup>232</sup>Website

<http://www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Ministero/Servizi/Imprese/DiplomaziaEconomica/Informazioni+sui+mercati+esteri.htm> La Farnesina, Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

Estero), in 1936.<sup>233</sup> The aim of the government was to create an official national organization carrying out promotional activities in order to help national producers' exports. Among its tasks, not only did the Institute organize a wide range of international promotional programs, but it also made Italian producers aware of the main problems and risks connected with the export practice.<sup>234</sup> In sum, since its creation, promotional activities have always been completed with assistance services, supplying Italian enterprises with the main information they needed when turning to foreign markets, particularly for the first time. Furthermore, the above services used to be developed through national and international partnerships. These ones involved local administrations, Italian Chambers of Commerce, both in Italy and abroad, as well as Italian embassies and consulates abroad.<sup>235</sup> The ICE's international network also involved the Institute's own foreign offices, whose number had been increasing over the years. The creation of foreign offices, alongside with national ones, aimed at further informing Italian enterprises about foreign markets' main macroeconomic changes. Over the last few years, the ICE's foreign offices have been absorbed within the above departmental foreign network. Many foreign offices have physically become part of Italian embassies and consulates' facilities to create one and only help desk where to provide information about business internationalisation. Duplicate services have consequently disappeared to better assist and promote Italian companies through the different stages of internationalisation.<sup>236</sup>

The Institute of Foreign trade kept carrying out its main activities until July 2011, when it was closed and absorbed by the Ministry of Economic Development to limit governmental spending.<sup>237</sup> Nevertheless, it was later recreated as the current Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation and recovered its primary aim to promote Italian

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<sup>233</sup> *Annuario del Commercio con l'estero, guida agli scambi internazionali per gli operatori e gli organismi economici*, cit. p.17.

<sup>234</sup> Decreto del Capo provvisorio dello stato, 2 Gennaio 1947 n. 8, *Nuovo Ordinamento dell'Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero*, Articolo 1.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibidem*, Articolo 4.

<sup>236</sup> *La Farnesina per l'internazionalizzazione del sistema Italia*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Dossier Farnesina, p. 15.

<sup>237</sup> C. Fo., *Soppresso l'ICE e liquidati gli enti in dissesto*, *Il Sole 24 Ore IMPRESA E TERRITORI*, 5 Luglio 2011.

companies' international businesses.<sup>238</sup> Assistance services have been restored, as well.

ICE's assistance activities are meant to supply Italian exporters and investors with the range of professional services listed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. – Professional Assistance services**

<p><b>Standard services of market analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic information about foreign trade and investments, and about how to start international businesses;</li> <li>- Legal and technical information about standard procedures to fulfil;</li> <li>- Statistical information and market researches, mainly concerning foreign markets' economic data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personalized services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constantly advising national exporters and investors about international commercial opportunities;</li> <li>- Organizing business meeting with potential foreign partners;</li> <li>- Providing confidential information about foreign potential partners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assistance services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fulfilling Italian and international standard procedures</li> <li>- Finding foreign facilities (offices, warehouses, building sites) and foreign employees to hire;</li> <li>- Legal assistance to solve disputes.</li> </ul>

**Source:** *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE – Istituto per il Commercio con l'Estero 2001-2002, p. 390-391

Professional services concerning foreign direct investments have not just supported Italian foreign outflows. The Institute's activities also entailed a wide range of marketing strategies promoting local backgrounds, and aiming at drawing more foreign investments. Foreign companies investing in the Italian industry could consequently count on scouting and assistance services, as well as on advertising ones, advising them about Italian investment opportunities.<sup>239</sup> Nevertheless, as the current Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation is now granted minor funds by the Italian government, it has consequently cut its range of professional services.

<sup>238</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 266.

<sup>239</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, p. 389-390.

Standard information are still provided, as they are mainly supplied through the Agency's internet site, while many personalized and assistance activities have disappeared.<sup>240</sup>

Alongside with its own assistance activities, the Institute of foreign trade also took part in the so-called SPRINT Program (Sportelli Regionali Per l'Internazionalizzazione delle Imprese).<sup>241</sup> This one entailed the creation of many help desks where to provide information about business internationalisation. The Institute supplied such help desks with its own employees in order to help national producers and investors in finding new foreign end-markets and commercial partners, provide legal assistance, and carry out marketing actions drawing foreign investments inflows.<sup>242</sup> Despite the ICE's suppression in 2011, the new Promotion Agency for Companies Internationalisation restored its active role within the SPRINT Program in 2012.

Information began playing an essential role within the main ICE's activities in 1998, when the Institute took part in a national program providing online informational support to business internationalisation.<sup>243</sup> Like the above departmental information, the ICE's one relies on many online databases and portals whose contents further complete the above standard assistance services. Once again, they supply essential information about the world macroeconomic trend, help national exporters during their markets researches and advice foreign commercial opportunities. Furthermore, they upload information about recent international agreements and arrangements concerning the world trade.<sup>244</sup>

Supporting national exporters and investors also entails providing them with skilled employees and experts that can perfectly deal with international business activities. In order to do so, the Institute of Foreign Trade provided Italian graduated students, Italian companies' employees, as well as foreign students and businessman with training activities.

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<sup>240</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 286.

<sup>241</sup> *Gli sportelli regionali per l'internazionalizzazione (SPRINT)*, Modulario Comm. Est. 128, Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Dipartimento per l'Impresa e l'Internazionalizzazione, Direzione Generale per le politiche di internazionalizzazione e la promozione degli scambi.

<sup>242</sup> Website <http://www.ice.gov.it/> Italian Trade Agency, ICE – Agenzia per la Promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane.

<sup>243</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, p. 374.

<sup>244</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 284.

Professional courses were firstly distinguished between management trainings, and international ones. The former supplied Italian private students with skilled notions about the world trade and foreign investments.<sup>245</sup> On the other hand, international training consisted in granting scholarships to foreign students.<sup>246</sup> These ones could consequently attend Italian masters' degrees, including placements in Italian companies. E-learning activities have later been added to management and international courses, supplying Italian and foreign private individuals with online lessons.<sup>247</sup> Nowadays, the new Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation has restored the old ICE's professional training service, and no change seems having affected its structure.

As to the ICE's promotional activities, they were initially part of the government-funded program to support national companies' internationalisation. Since the ICE was granted Italian public funds, it consequently complied with the above governmental guidelines when drawing its official promotional program.<sup>248</sup> Guidelines used to be reviewed on a yearly basis, and the program constantly adapted to the main governmental aims. Nevertheless, despite annual changes, it never abandoned its primary aim of appealing to foreign customers and partners by strategically matching Italian products with the most suitable foreign end-markets. Further to that, promotional activities needed following a sector-based strategy, and governmental funds were consequently shared out among many Italian fields of production. Obviously, such sector-based strategies have been changing over the years, according to the main changes in the world trade. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century indeed, as emerging countries had just begun rising within the world market, the ICE's promotional programs still focused on promoting the most comparative advantaged Italian productions.<sup>249</sup> Traditional manufacturing, mechanical engineering and foodstuff later lost their leading role when the Institute began realizing that they did not completely meet international requirements for goods. The ICE consequently shifted its top priorities toward technology-

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<sup>245</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002 p. 376.

<sup>246</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>247</sup> 2007, *Attività promozionali, Le iniziative ICE per le imprese*, p. 141.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64.

<sup>249</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, p. 381.

intensive productions, particularly nanotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnologies.<sup>250</sup> Although Italy did not rule such productions, the Institute aimed at proving that the country could develop innovative goods alongside with high quality ones. As the global economic crisis has rapidly spread since 2009 and the Italian domestic demand began erasing, promotion has inevitably gone back to its old sector-based strategies. Nowadays, traditional productions have recovered their leading role as they actively pull Italian sales abroad.<sup>251</sup> This is one of the reasons why many of the ICE's latest promotional programs have focused on preventing emerging countries' cheaper goods from spreading on foreign markets. On the other hand, Italian technology-intensive productions have forcedly been left behind, as they require intensive promotional actions due to their underdeveloped status. Such an abandonment mainly depended on the minor funds that the new Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation has recently been granted by the government. Although the overall number of promotional activities have been maintained, each of them now lacks adequate resources to achieve its main goals, and has consequently lost its effectiveness.<sup>252</sup> On the other hand, the Italian traditional *Made In* better meets the Agency's promotional needs, as its well-known quality can be adequately promoted despite the current lack of financial resources.

The main tools that the old ICE, and the new Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisations have resorted to, are listed in Table 3.2. They mainly involve hallmark events, training activities, communication, and foreign expeditions to Italy.

The Agency organizes international sector-based trade shows, taking place both in Italy and wherever they can promote Italian productions. Trade shows are the most recurrent intervention that the ICE has always resorted to. Nevertheless, the Agency also supplies both Italian and foreign economic operators with training courses, sector-based seminars and trade workshops. Nevertheless, the Agency also supplies both Italian and foreign economic operators with training courses, sector-based seminars and trade workshops.

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<sup>250</sup> 2007, *Attività promozionali, Le iniziative ICE per le imprese*, p. 16.

<sup>251</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 281.

<sup>252</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 278.

According to the target they address to, they present both the main characteristics of foreign industries, as well as our country's trade opportunities.<sup>253</sup>

**Table 3.2. – Promotional tools**

<b>Hallmark events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General trade-fairs</li> <li>• Sector-based fairs</li> <li>• Information desks</li> </ul>
<b>Training courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector-based seminars</li> <li>• Trade workshops</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising campaign</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Press conferences</li> <li>• Newspaper inserts</li> <li>• Online advertisement messages</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business visits</li> <li>• Business meeting</li> <li>• Participation in local trade fairs</li> </ul>

**Source:** *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane

As to communication, it consists of advertising campaigns, press conferences, newsletters and newspaper inserts. These ones usually target foreign operators and promote the Agency's own trade fairs, as well as Italian business expeditions abroad.<sup>254</sup> Communication has recently played an essential role in trying to spread positive information about the current situation of the Italian industry. By and large, as the Agency also used to organize business visits and meetings, it has always perfectly met the main needs of local marketing strategies drawing foreign direct investments.

Alongside with the above actions, the Agency's promotion also relies on a Partnership Program entailing many public agreements to be subscribed

<sup>253</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 283.

<sup>254</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2001-2002, p. 385.

with national promotional institutes. Among them, partnership agreements addressing to regional administrations involve them in funding and carrying out some of the ICE's own activities. Although such partnerships have inevitably disappeared in 2011, they have immediately been restored with the creation of the new Promotion Agency, due to their strategic aims. Such shared programs complete the generic range of the ICE's promotional activities with more specific ones, thanks to administrations' awareness of local companies' main needs.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> *La Farnesina per l'internazionalizzazione del sistema Italia*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Dossier Farnesina, p. 6.

## CHAPTER 4

# AN ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: THE ITALIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE NETWORK

Alongside with the above governmental bodies, and the new Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation, the Italian Chambers of Commerce network equally provides assistance and promotional services supporting national companies' business internationalisation. Like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chambers of Commerce network relies on both national and international branches. National Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture are strategically located within Italian provinces.<sup>256</sup> On the contrary, the Chambers' foreign network consists of 74 Italian Foreign Chambers of Commerce Abroad, that have been officially recognized by the Italian Government.<sup>257</sup> The entire Chambers of Commerce network is even more developed, though. It includes many regional unions, special agencies, consortia, research institutes, arbitration and conciliation bodies, as well as a Chambers of Commerce Union.<sup>258</sup> Italian-Foreign Chambers of Commerce, Foreign Trade Centres, and the Association of the above Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad are equally part of the network, as the official bodies dealing with business internationalisation.<sup>259</sup>

Further to the great variety of internal divisions, the whole Italian CC network differs from the new ICE's Promotion Agency for many other

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<sup>256</sup> From now on, they will be referred to as national CC; *Le camere di commercio, industria, artigianato e agricoltura (CCIAA)*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione generale per la promozione del sistema paese, Ufficio I, Diplomazia economica italiana.

<sup>257</sup> From now on, they will be referred to as foreign CC; *Ibidem*.

<sup>258</sup> Website <http://www.chamberofcommerce.it/inglese/chisiamo2-.asp> The portal of Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture.

<sup>259</sup> *Ivi*.

reasons. First of all, although both of them mainly provide assistance, promotional and informational programs, the ICE's activities specifically concern business internationalisation. On the contrary, national CC support business development since its start up, and not only when it is meant to turn abroad. Secondly, although the ICE's Promotion Agency relies on its own foreign offices, these ones have recently been absorbed within the Italian departmental world network. This is not the case of foreign CC, having always opposed to any possible inclusion. Finally, the whole Italian CC network, including national and foreign CC, is well linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Economic Development. The CC Union's participation in the Cabinet for Country's Internationalisation (Cabina di Regia per l'Italia Internazionale) witnesses such a link. This participation better coordinates the Chambers' programs with departmental and regional ones. As to the ICE's Agency, although it relies on a Partnership Program, addressing to both regional divisions and the CC network, it is not currently part of the above Cabinet.

In sum, not only is the whole CC network better structured if compared to the old Institute of Foreign Trade, it is also granted a stronger official status. Accordingly, it requires being analyzed separately from the Institute.<sup>260</sup> Furthermore, such an analysis needs to follow a geographical focus, as it will bring to the light the main characteristics distinguishing domestic bodies from foreign ones. Chapter 4 will firstly study domestic bodies providing assistance and promotional services within the whole CC network. Then, Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad will be secondly presented as the main foreign network providing internationalisation programs.

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<sup>260</sup> Website

[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita\\_Sistema\\_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Rapporti+con+il+Sistema+Camerale/](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita_Sistema_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Rapporti+con+il+Sistema+Camerale/) Diplomazia economica italiana al servizio del Sistema Paese e delle Autonomie Territoriali, Rapporti con il sistema camerale.

## **4.1. The domestic network**

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### **4.1.1. Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture**

Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture are national and public independent bodies.<sup>261</sup> They generally assist, inform, train and promote local business activities in order to strengthen the overall Italian entrepreneurial network. Nevertheless, national CC deserve being mentioned within this study. Since the 1980s, indeed, national enterprises began attaching great importance to business internationalisation. Accordingly, national CC inevitably turned to the issue, as well. They developed their own assistance and promotional services that further helped Italian exporters and investors move their businesses to foreign markets.

When they were first created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, domestic CC arose as private associations gathering local economic operators and mediating between local economic interests and governmental ones.<sup>262</sup> Nonetheless, they were not completely new. During the Middle Ages, ancient guilds equally brought together merchants and producers in order to protect their business activities.<sup>263</sup> When guilds disappeared, former CC inherited their *raison d'être* and functions. Such organizations kept ensuring local business development through the Napoleonic era, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>264</sup> Once Italy had been unified, the Chambers' role started being officially recognized. In March 1910, Act 121 established old CC as the official organizations ensuring and promoting Italian provinces' business development. Furthermore, thanks to their actions, Italian CC also linked such a development to departmental economic aims.<sup>265</sup>

As departmental goals perfectly fitted with provincial ones, ancient CC began assimilating within the government's economic bodies. At the same

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<sup>261</sup> *Le camere di commercio, industria, artigianato e agricoltura (CCIAA)*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri

<sup>262</sup> R. Fricano, *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, Presentazione di Giovanni Nasi, Unioncamere/Ricerca, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE, Milano, 1983, p. 17.

<sup>263</sup> Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A0C183S75/Storia.htm> Unioncamere - L'Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura, Storia.

<sup>264</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>265</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, cit. p. 20.

time, they started distancing from foreign CC. Although these latter ones were equally charged with the promotion of Italian business development, in the 1910s, foreign Chambers' aims began opposing to national ones. Such an opposition mainly depended on foreign CC closeness to foreign economic backgrounds. Opposition later turned into a deep structural contradiction that further separated foreign CC from their homeland's government. At that time, such a contradiction was certainly the main feature distinguishing domestic Chambers' nature and goals from foreign Chambers' ones. On the one hand, foreign CC fought for their institutional autonomy, and were later recognized as private associations in the 1970s. On the other, through the Act 121, national CC were acknowledged as public organizations for the first time ever.<sup>266</sup>

Nevertheless, domestic organizations did not stop assimilating. During the 1920s the fascist state further absorbed the Italian CC network, by merging it with additional organizations protecting local productions. Italian CC were consequently turned into local Economic Councils, and could not escape departmental guidelines and controls.<sup>267</sup> As members were not meant to sustain local Economic Councils, these latter ones completely lost their guilds' inheritance, as well as their private legal framework.<sup>268</sup> Once the Italian dictatorship ended, local Economic Councils were dissolved. Ancient Italian CC began looking for an institutional definition, which did not entail autonomy, though. During the post-war period, the Italian economy struggled to recover its ancient status, while local companies engaged in national reconstruction. Italian Chambers of Commerce consequently restored their primary aim, and hardly worked in order to support local business activities. Once again, such a purpose perfectly fitted with governmental ones. Accordingly, Italian CC were eventually acknowledged as essential organizations supporting both local economic interests, and national ones. As they met the entire country's economic needs, their public nature was reaffirmed in 1944. According to Act 35 the Italian public law was

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<sup>266</sup> Ibidem, p. 21.

<sup>267</sup> Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A627C183S75/Il-primo-conflitto-mondiale.htm>  
Unioncamere - L'Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura, Il primo conflitto mondiale.

<sup>268</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, cit. p. 30.

recognized as the primary ruler for national Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture.<sup>269</sup>

At this point in history, national CC are well established in their nature, as they have achieved the stable legal framework that they had adopted many years before 1944. As such organizations shared their purposes with the Italian government, their acknowledgment did not result into a difficult process. On the contrary, in 1944, the above contradiction still prevented foreign CC from being assimilated within departmental structures. Such a contradiction needs being underlined once again. As the main cause leading to the adoption of different legal frameworks, it will also influence national and foreign Chambers' activities.

As to national CC indeed, their supporting programs never limited to business internationalisation. Being deeply-rooted into our country's economic history, Italian CC activities used to concern a great variety of subjects that were all related to the Italian business development. As national CC aimed at supporting and promoting local companies' development, such activities could not restrict to business internationalisation.<sup>270</sup> Alongside with the internationalisation issue, that had begun gaining importance since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chambers' assistance, informational, promotional and training activities also concerned access to finance, arbitration and conciliation, the environment, and companies' innovation. In the following page, Table 4.1. refers a few activities related to the subjects just instanced.

As to promotion, Italian CC promotional programs need being separately analyzed from the above actions. Promotional activities indeed indirectly support business internationalisation, no matter which business subject they are primarily promoting. When promotion concerns territorial marketing, local CC primarily support development policies, as well as infrastructural ones. By doing so, they increasingly contribute to the wide

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<sup>269</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.

<sup>270</sup> Decreto Legislativo del 15 febbraio 2010, n. 23, *Riforma dell'ordinamento relativo alle camere di commercio, industria, artigianato e agricoltura, in attuazione dell'articolo 53 della legge 23 luglio 2009*, n. 99, art. 2 (Compiti e Funzioni).

range of material and non-material resources that local producers are usually supplied with.<sup>271</sup>

Table 4.1. – **Italian CC main activities**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expert advices on public easy-terms loans and assistance services dealing with Italian credit institutes (<i>access to finance</i>);</li> <li>- Expert advices to fulfil environmental procedures and acquire new technologies; (<i>innovation and environment</i>);</li> <li>- Arbitration services solving disputes between companies, or companies and customers (<i>arbitration and conciliation</i>);</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online databases and portals providing information about environmental duties, license and intellectual properties (<i>innovation and environment</i>);</li> <li>- Statistical analysis concerning the Italian market, its sectors and productions;</li> <li>- General studies about the Italian economic situation, as well as political and economic changes;</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management trainings providing local businessmen with skilled notions about trade practices;</li> <li>- High school internships and university placements both within local Chambers and enterprises.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A627C183S75/Il-primo-conflitto-mondiale.htm> Unioncamere/Attività; Website <http://www.camcom.gov.it/> Il portale delle Camere di Commercio in Italia/I temi; *Noi per le imprese, Come il sistema camerale italiano sostiene lo sviluppo*, Unioncamere

As they provide foreign investors with additional infrastructural incentives, national CC indirectly support Italian inflows of foreign direct investments. Furthermore, they generally finance companies' participation in local hallmark events, arrange sector-based fairs where to display local productions and certificate the quality of Italian goods.<sup>272</sup> To a great extent,

<sup>271</sup> Website

[http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id\\_pagina/26/id\\_dominio/3/t\\_p/Territorio-e-Infrastrutture.htm](http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id_pagina/26/id_dominio/3/t_p/Territorio-e-Infrastrutture.htm), Il portale delle Camere di Commercio in Italia , Territorio e infrastrutture.

<sup>272</sup> Website

[http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id\\_pagina/26/id\\_tema/39/t\\_po/Le-attivita--Promozionali.htm](http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id_pagina/26/id_tema/39/t_po/Le-attivita--Promozionali.htm), Il portale delle Camere di Commercio in Italia, Le attività promozionali.

all of the above actions equally support our country's passive internationalisation, as they strengthen our country's consciousness of local productions. In sum, national CC promotional activities spread positive pictures of the Italian industry, on the one hand, while appealing to foreign investors, on the other.

Nevertheless, promotional actions specifically concern internationalisation, as well. Italian CC mainly support national companies' participation in international hallmark events, arrange business-to-business meetings between foreign buyers and national exporters, and supervise business expeditions' inflows and outflows.<sup>273</sup> These latter ones strategically foster international commercial partnerships, as they ease contacts between national and foreign investors. Furthermore, national CC provide local economic operators with workshops, seminars and training actions concerning the world trade topic.<sup>274</sup>

When it comes to internationalisation, Italian CC assistance services mainly provide national exporters and investors with market researches and expert advice. These latter ones particularly help national economic operators fulfil all of the Italian and foreign business procedures related to the world trade.<sup>275</sup> By directing such operators towards the most suitable foreign end-markets, Italian CC successfully ease national companies' access to the world trade, to a great extent. Like the ICE's Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation, Italian CC have adhered to the above SPRINT Program, as well. Essentially, they host SPRINT's help desks in order to support national exporters and investors with basic information about business internationalisation.<sup>276</sup> Alongside with the SPRINT Program's help desks, Italian CC also rely on the Enterprise European Network, to further improve the limited range of assistance services they usually provide. The above European Network particularly helps them spread information about business procedures, and internationalisation incentives within the European

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<sup>273</sup> *Noi per le imprese, Come il sistema camerale italiano sostiene lo sviluppo*, Unioncamere, p. 43.

<sup>274</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale*, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013, p. 304.

<sup>275</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>276</sup> *Gli sportelli regionali per l'internazionalizzazione (SPRINT)*, Modulario Comm. Est. 128, Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Dipartimento per l'Impresa e l'Internazionalizzazione, Direzione Generale per le politiche di internazionalizzazione e la promozione degli scambi.

Union.<sup>277</sup> Nevertheless, although Italian CC cannot allocate all of their economic resources to the internationalisation matter, they have successfully developed their own informational databases and portals. These ones constantly revise notions and news about financial loans and insurance coverage that national economic operators are granted when turning to foreign markets. Furthermore, they inform about Italian departmental actions, and present national programs supporting business internationalisation.

In sum, the national CC network relies on the same activities that the old Institute of Foreign Trade used to provide national economic operators with. In 2011, when the Institute disappeared, domestic CC certainly gained an essential role, as they became the closest local organizations that national exporters and investors could rely on when internationalising. Nonetheless, the Institute's supporting programs were quickly restored through the new Promotion Agency. National CC internationalisation activities began strictly coordinating with such new programs. Coordination depends on our country's lack of economic resources. Because of this lack, duplicate services and similar activities can no longer coexist. Domestic CC consequently need to coordinate their actions with all of the national public and private institutes supporting international business. For that purpose, they firstly comply with general departmental guidelines when drawing their official promotional programs.<sup>278</sup> These ones are consequently bound to the same goals that the Ministry of Economic Development considers of paramount importance for promotional activities. Secondly, coordination also relies on the ICE's Partnership Program. National CC subscribe to the Agency's partnerships agreements to share and co-fund some promotional activities.<sup>279</sup> Like the ICE's regional partnership programs, bringing to the light the main regional business needs, CC shared actions further underline local companies' primary aims. Accordingly, they improve the Agency's promotional system, on the one hand. On the other hand, domestic CC

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<sup>277</sup> Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42AoC424S145/Promozione.htm>, Unioncamere, Attività, Internazionalizzazione, Promozione.

<sup>278</sup> Decreto Legislativo del 15 febbraio 2010, n. 23, articolo 2, punto (e).

<sup>279</sup> 2007, *Attività promozionali, Le iniziative ICE per le imprese*, Ministero del Commercio Internazionale, ICE – Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero.

benefit from such shared actions, as well, as the Agency's generic aims prevent the Chambers' promotional actions from being too focused on local priorities.

Now that internationalisation has become the main strategic solution to our country's business survival, both national CC, and the new Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation, need being aware that they all belong to one and only national supporting network. Nevertheless, Italian CC are firstly part of their own network, and consequently need to coordinate their individual actions, no matter where they are located in Italy. As to internationalisation, twelve Chambers, from the North to the South of Italy, guarantee coordination through a consortium (Consortio Camerale per l'Internazionalizzazione).<sup>280</sup> Although it is not an autonomous organization, the consortium links each chamber's promotional program to further increase their eventual effectiveness, and share the most successful internationalisation strategies.<sup>281</sup>

#### ***4.1.2. The Chambers of Commerce Union***

Coordination requires being extended to all of the business subjects that national CC usually deal with. For that purpose, the Chambers of Commerce Union (Unioncamere) works to link and support national Chambers' individual activities. Accordingly, the Union also coordinates and strengthens assistance and promotional programs supporting business internationalisation.

The Chambers' Union was firstly created in 1901 and dissolved in 1924, when the fascist state merged national Chambers with local business organizations to create local Economic Councils. It was later restored after the Second World War and finally took on its current functions.<sup>282</sup>

Coordination is one of the ancient goals that the Union has always tried to pursue. By linking the wide range of activities that each Chamber provides, the Union further safeguards local economic interests, and

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<sup>280</sup> Website <http://www.ct.camcom.gov.it/consorzio-camerale-per-l-internazionalizzazione.html> Camera di Commercio di Catania, Consorzio camerale per l'internazionalizzazione.

<sup>281</sup> Website [http://www.to.camcom.it/Page/to1/view\\_html?idp=15290](http://www.to.camcom.it/Page/to1/view_html?idp=15290) Camera di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato, Agricoltura di Torino, Consorzio camerale per l'internazionalizzazione.

<sup>282</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, cit. p. 53.

successfully pursues the hardest goals that national CC cannot individually achieve.<sup>283</sup> As to internationalisation, in 2012, the Chambers' Union has become a member of the new Italian Cabinet for Country's Internationalisation. Such a membership firstly bestows an official status upon national CC, whose programs are well qualified to support business internationalisation. Domestic CC consequently participate in the national network supporting business internationalisation, alongside with the ICE's Promotion Agency, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and few more bodies.

Furthermore, the Union also finances assistance and promotional activities for the Chambers' foreign network.<sup>284</sup> Such a loan firstly prevents the geographical distance from separating foreign Chambers and national ones. Nevertheless, as foreign CC are specifically concerned with business internationalisation, national ones need to work strictly together with them. For that purpose, the Union's loan strategically eases contacts between these two distant groupings. National bodies gain experience with the topic and improve their own assistance and promotional programs.

Alongside with coordination, the Union provides national Chambers with its own assistance, informational and promoting activities.<sup>285</sup> These ones strengthen both the Chambers' actions, and economic operators' reliance on the network. Internationalisation is concerned by the Union's activities, as well. Just to mention few examples, the Union promotes national Chambers' seminars, and trainings, concerning counterfeiting and the protection of Italian trademarks, and supplies national CC with economic and statistical information concerning the world trade.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A624C183S75/Lo-Statuto-del-1901.htm> Unioncamere - L'Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura, Lo Statuto del 1901.

<sup>284</sup> F. Montera, *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, Unioncamere, Camere di Commercio d'Italia, Assocamerestero, Associazione delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, p. 5.

<sup>285</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, cit. p. 53.

<sup>286</sup> Website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42AOC426S145/Made-In.htm>, Unioncamere - L'Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura, Internazionalizzazione, Made In; website <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42AOCOS146/Infrastrutture-e-Innovazione.htm> Unioncamere, Infrastrutture e Innovazione.

### **4.1.3. Foreign Trade Centres**

Alongside with the above Union, domestic CC also rely on their Foreign Trade Centres. At a regional level, Foreign Trade Centres provide local economic operators with the same range of promotional and assistance services that national CC already supply. Essentially, such centres link national CC internationalisation actions to develop their own supporting programs, whose effectiveness extends over the provincial boundaries that local Chambers usually reach.<sup>287</sup> Like the ICE's partnership agreements, Foreign Trade Centres strategically prevent national CC individual programs from focusing too much on local companies' main needs. As national Chambers usually protect and promote local small and medium enterprises' interests, the risk involved lies in the lack of coordination. Although Foreign Trade Centres are just concerned with business internationalisation, they successfully avoid such a risk through their own assistance, promotional and informational activities.

On the whole, all of these programs rely on the same tools and actions that local CC already supply. Promotion entails supporting local exporters and investors' participation in international hallmark events, as well as arranging Italian business expeditions abroad and foreign business expeditions to Italy.<sup>288</sup> Assistance services provide Italian economic operators with market researches and expert advice concerning the world trade.<sup>289</sup> These latter ones are supplied through the Centres' online databases and portals, which also spread statistical and economic information that better orient national exports.<sup>290</sup> Finally, not only do Foreign Trade Centres arrange seminars and workshop, training Italian businessmen in the internationalisation practice, but they also provide specialised training addressing to companies' businessmen and employees.<sup>291</sup>

As the need to avoid duplicate services has been underlined several times before, it is worth remembering, once again, that Foreign Trade

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<sup>287</sup> Website [http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id\\_pagina/26/id\\_ui/259/t\\_p/I-Centri-estero.htm](http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id_pagina/26/id_ui/259/t_p/I-Centri-estero.htm) Il portale delle Camere di Commercio in Italia, Servizi, I Centri Estero.

<sup>288</sup> CE, *Commercio estero e internazionalizzazione*, 05 Unioncamere Veneto.

<sup>289</sup> Website [http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id\\_pagina/26/id\\_ui/259/t\\_p/I-Centri-estero.htm](http://www.camcom.gov.it/cdc/id_pagina/26/id_ui/259/t_p/I-Centri-estero.htm) Il portale delle Camere di Commercio in Italia, Servizi, I Centri Estero.

<sup>290</sup> Ivi.

<sup>291</sup> Ivi.

Centres do not simply imitate national CC internationalisation programs. Foreign Trade Centres are specifically concerned with business internationalisation, while national CC support many business subjects. Accordingly, although they both resort to the same assistance, promotional and informational tools, the formers' programs strategically strengthen the latters' actions within the whole Chambers of Commerce network. The more local CC coordinate with Foreign Trade Centres, the more the supporting system that national producers and investors are supplied with will be efficient.

#### ***4.1.4. Foreign-Italian Chambers of Commerce***

In order to conclude the focus concerning all of the national CC bodies supporting business internationalisation, Foreign-Italian Chambers of Commerce need being mentioned. These latter organizations firstly differ from the above national CC, as well as from Foreign Trade Centres, due to their institutional nature. First of all, as they consist of private associations they are not ruled by the Italian public law, as the above CC and Foreign Trade Centres actually do.<sup>292</sup> Secondly, Foreign-Italian CC members do not exclusively belong to Italy, as memberships also extend to foreign businessmen and investors.<sup>293</sup> All of these latter ones belong to the same foreign country, and Foreign-Italian CC develop a dual nature that makes them giving equal priority to both Italian and foreign interests.

In former times, foreign interests often prevailed on national ones, and such organizations were not concerned by the Italian law, due to their promiscuous aims. Nevertheless, since 1995, such organizations need to subscribe to the Foreign-Italian CC register in order to officially acquire the Chamber of Commerce title.<sup>294</sup> Before signing up the register, these private associations need to successfully pass all of the departmental controls assessing their real contribution to our country's business internationalisation.<sup>295</sup> Accordingly, Foreign-Italian CC need being taken into

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<sup>292</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio in Italia*, cit. p. 61.

<sup>293</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>294</sup> Decreto Ministeriale 15 febbraio 2000, n. 96, *Regolamento recante norme per la disciplina dell'albo delle Camere di Commercio italo-estere o estere in Italia*.

<sup>295</sup> *Ivi*.

consideration by this study. On the contrary, all of the organizations, whose activities do not foster our country's international economic development, are deliberately left out from the CC network.

As to their functions, once again Italian-Foreign CC activities do not duplicate national CC and Foreign Trade Centres internationalisation programs. As Foreign-Italian CC strategically link national members to just one foreign country, their assistance, promotional and informational services are far more specific. Market researches, expert advice, information about foreign trade fairs and trade standard procedures, as well as statistical and economic informational supports, are geographically focused on just one foreign end-market. Accordingly, national exporters and investors are provided with a specific range of strategic services that the above Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture cannot supply. By sharing their economic resources on many business subjects, Italian CC lack the adequate resources to geographically improve their internationalisation services.

## ***4.2. The foreign network***

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### ***4.2.1. Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad***

Although Foreign-Italian Chambers of Commerce differ from national ones, as well as from Foreign Trade Centres, they share many features with foreign CC. To begin with, the Italian government institutionally recognizes both these organizations as private associations, whose memberships equally extend to national and foreign economic operators. Furthermore, due to their physical location within foreign countries, foreign Chambers of Commerce had been developing a dual nature, as well as promiscuous aims, as their Foreign-Italian counterparts did within our country. Despite similarities between the two groups, foreign CC act as autonomous associations whose activities further complete our country's system supporting business internationalisation. Accordingly, not only do they need being included within the whole Italian Chambers of Commerce network, but they also deserve to be mentioned within this study.

Nowadays, the foreign CC network counts 74 Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad (see picture 4.7. at the end of Chapter 4). These ones essentially improve our country's commercial relationships with the foreign end-markets they are located in. Nevertheless, because of their geographical locations, foreign CC inevitably contribute to foreign country's business internationalisation, as well. Foreign exporters and investors can equally rely on the same assistance and promotional services that Italian economic operators are provided with by such organizations. In sum, foreign CC successfully improve commercial relationships in both directions.<sup>296</sup> Such a mission results from foreign CC historical evolution and dual benefits are the main features distinguishing them from national CC.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when foreign CC were firstly created, they immediately linked their mission to Italian diasporas. During these years, Italian diasporas had just begun massively moving abroad. Accordingly, the foreign CC title could not appear before 1883, when Italian foreign Chambers were firstly conceived as commercial delegations fostering our country's economic interests. Such associations were strictly bounded to Italian business communities abroad, whose initial devotion to homeland goods strengthened Italian exports.<sup>297</sup> Nevertheless, according to Italian economic aims, such exports should spread outside of the diasporas' boundaries, to access local end-markets. As Italian commercial delegations, the first foreign CC were consequently charged of supporting diasporas' business activities. These ones initially consisted in selling Italian imported goods to national inhabitants.<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, foreign CC were required keeping diasporas' members strictly together, in order to safeguard these ones' devotion to Italian habits and goods.<sup>299</sup> In sum, as long as Italian goods kept being consumed and sold abroad, foreign CC successfully increased

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<sup>296</sup> F. Montera, *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, Unioncamere, Camere di Commercio d'Italia, Assocamerestero, Associazione delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, p. 33.

<sup>297</sup>A. Zampieri, *La dinamica del commercio estero e le strategie di globalizzazione (1900-1998)*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 146.

<sup>298</sup> G. L. Fontana, *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, in *Profili di Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 14.

<sup>299</sup> E. Pozzi, *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero nel secondo dopoguerra (1946-1998)*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 241.

Italian shares in foreign import markets. Nevertheless, such a mission did not involve any foreign businessmen's participation in the Chambers' activities. Foreign CC were forbidden from providing foreign exporters and investors with their supporting services. On the contrary, they were expected to exploit their geographical location to supply Italian producers with strategic information that they could never collect from Italy.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, thanks to their close connection with local governments, they were required fostering significant reductions in foreign customs fees.<sup>301</sup> In 1883, when the first foreign CC was created in Montevideo, Uruguay, the grip that the Italian state kept on such organization was firm. Nevertheless, the more foreign CC spread all over the world, the more such a grip was undermined by diasporas' integration within foreign backgrounds (see pictures from 4.1. to 4.6. at the end of Chapter 4). Foreign CC missions consequently began opposing to national economic aims. Not only did the CC foreign network not assimilate within Italian bodies supporting our country's business internationalisation, but it started fighting to be officially recognized as an autonomous and independent body.

Despite the way foreign CC had been initially conceived by the Italian state, they would have never been founded without Italian business communities abroad. Like national producers and merchants, who created former guilds in the Middle Ages, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italian businessmen located abroad began associating in order to protect their local economic interests.<sup>302</sup> Foreign CC were consequently charged with the primary aim of protecting their members' interests within foreign hosting countries. For that purpose, they connected diasporas with local economic administrations, and made business communities aware of the main procedures ruling local business activities.<sup>303</sup> As a consequence, foreign CC dual nature began appearing. Alongside with keeping diasporas' members connected with their homeland, Italian CC Abroad also fostered these ones' integration within

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<sup>300</sup> E. Franzina, *Le comunità imprenditoriali italiane e le Camere di Commercio all'estero (1870-1945)*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 37.

<sup>301</sup> A. B. Curi, *La Camera di commercio italiana di Montevideo*, in *Profili di Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 155.

<sup>302</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 61.

<sup>303</sup> G. Sapelli, *Con l'Italia, fuori dall'Italia. Considerazioni analitiche sulla diaspora italiana creatrice d'impresa*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 239.

foreign hosting backgrounds. Such an integration later turned into a deep structural contradiction, as Italian business communities abroad were losing their Italian nature. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, assimilation had almost erased the diasporas' need for Italian products. Italian foodstuff, textiles and clothes stopped being imported, consumed and sold within local markets.<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, assimilation supported Italian business communities' development, and the diasporas' own entrepreneurial networks began appearing. Essentially, such networks used to produce what Italian immigrants had previously imported from their homeland.<sup>305</sup> Accordingly, Italian shares on foreign imports markets decreased, while Italian products had to compete against diasporas' ones. As former business communities no longer benefited our country's economic development, foreign CC partially lost their traditional mission. Although they kept informational and basic assistance services, addressing to national economic operators aiming at internationalising, they could not spread the Italian national identity, and commercially exploit Italian business communities, any longer. On the contrary, due to its physical location, the CC foreign network did not lose its strict connection with former Italian business communities. It kept supporting their activities, despite their integration within foreign hosting countries. To a great extent, indeed, foreign CC actively contributed to such an assimilation. As Italian entrepreneurial networks abroad were growing, foreign CC eased these ones' contacts with local economic administrations, supported their commercial competition against Italian exported goods, and fostered the adoption of modern business strategies.<sup>306</sup>

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, foreign CC had clearly revealed their dual nature and began opposing to the ancient mission that the Italian government had charged them with. On the other hand, Italian economic opinions wanted foreign CC to exclusively safeguard Italian economic interests abroad. As a consequence, both national departmental bodies, as well as Italian embassies and consulates, began undermining the Chambers' activities in order to impose their former control, once again.

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<sup>304</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 13.

<sup>305</sup> Z. A. Forcione, *La Camera di commercio italiana di San Paolo del Brasile*, in *Profili di Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Unioncamere*, cit. p. 165.

<sup>306</sup> M. Vassanelli, *La Camera di commercio italiana di San Francisco*, in *Profili di Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Unioncamere*, cit. p. 129.

Conflicts between foreign CC and diplomatic bodies did not limit to the formers' promiscuous functions. Opposition also arose because of foreign CC lack of official status. When they were firstly created in 1883, both the Italian state, and the Chambers themselves, conceived such organizations as private associations. Since they had arisen as autonomous associations, foreign CC were not part of the Italian diplomatic network. Nevertheless, due to their legal framework, such associations could not enjoy the same legal position that embassies and consulates were granted by the Italian government.<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, Italian diplomatic networks were essential to the creation of new foreign Chambers of Commerce. As the only official bodies that the Italian government could count on when turning to foreign countries, Italian embassies and consulates hardly worked to create national CC abroad. Essentially, they provided Italian business communities with diplomatic facilities and employees.<sup>308</sup> Such a contribution supported the national government's need to create Italian commercial delegations abroad. For that purpose, Italian consuls and ambassadors used to be granted honorary chairmanships within foreign CC governing bodies.<sup>309</sup>

Honorary chairmanships inevitably nourished conflicts. Both diplomatic bodies, and new foreign CC, acted as Italian delegations. While the formers connected Italian diasporas to their homeland's government on many different subjects, the latter were just concerned with commercial matters. These ones, previously belonged to the diplomatic range of activities. Although new foreign CC did not take commercial matters away from diplomatic delegations, they inevitably limited these ones' room of manoeuvre on the topic. By exclusively focusing on economic and commercial subjects, foreign CC provided Italian business communities abroad with better assistance services. As they partially menaced diplomatic powers, Italian embassies and consulates often tightened the grip that they had on foreign CC. Thanks to honorary chairmanships, they limited the Chambers' decision-making processes and actions.<sup>310</sup> These strategies often nourished conflicts between such delegations.

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<sup>307</sup> *Le comunità imprenditoriali italiane e le Camere di Commercio all'estero (1870-1945)*, cit. p. 37.

<sup>308</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 8.

<sup>309</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 10.

<sup>310</sup> *Le comunità imprenditoriali italiane e le Camere di Commercio all'estero (1870-1945)*, cit. pp. 33-34.

Relationships between domestic and foreign Chambers did not grow any better. Once again, foreign Chambers' lack of official status further nourished the loan controversy that involved the whole Chambers of Commerce network. Since foreign CC had been legally considered as autonomous private associations, they were required funding themselves through members' shares. Such funds often did not suffice to the Chambers economic survival. Accordingly, foreign CC were granted an additional modest fund by the Italian government.<sup>311</sup> National CC could equally freely finance their foreign counterparts to further increase our country's international economic development.<sup>312</sup> However, national CC were not forced to fund foreign ones and often found it inappropriate to do so. Essentially, they could not conceive foreign private associations to be part of the national CC network. Accordingly, they did not shoulder foreign CC need for funds. Once again, foreign CC legal framework prevented their activities from being adequately recognized within national boundaries. Paradoxically, the associative framework prevented autonomy instead of fostering it. On the one hand indeed, foreign CC could not escape the diplomatic grip. On the other, due to their lack of economic means, the effectiveness of foreign Chambers' activities was strongly weakened.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all of the above conflicts clashed with the extension of the foreign CC network. Despite the effective lack of autonomy, such organizations did not stop growing. They involved more and more foreign associates on the one hand, and strengthened contacts with local administrations and governments, on the other.<sup>313</sup> Such improvements fostered the foreign Chambers' need for an official status, putting them on the same level of national diplomacies and internal CC. Nevertheless, many foreign CC did not agree on the topic. On the one hand, Italian Chambers located within the European boundaries feared such an acknowledgment could weak their unstable autonomy.<sup>314</sup> On the other, Latin American foreign CC believed that the above acknowledgement was the only tool that could

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<sup>311</sup> *Il problema della legittimazione interna (1870-1945)*, in *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 115.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 117.

<sup>313</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 19.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

strengthen their autonomous room of manoeuvre.<sup>315</sup> Despite internal conflicts, in 1918, the Italian government eventually acknowledge foreign CC. Although such organizations kept being considered as free and private associations, they were asked to fulfilled a few conditions in order to be granted an official status. According to the administrative Act ruling such conditions, if the Italian citizenship had previously been lost, then members could not engage in the Chambers' administration.<sup>316</sup> As many migrants had obviously assimilated within hosting countries, members asked for the condition to be reviewed. Despite revisions, European CC fears had eventually actualized: the conditions that foreign CC were required to fulfil strongly undermined their autonomy.

Despite the 1918 Act, the Italian fascist government strongly prevented foreign Chambers from growing autonomously. Alongside with the creation of the old Institute of Foreign Trade, whose activities immediately clashed with foreign Chambers' ones, the fascist government wanted the Chambers to be restored as Italian commercial delegations abroad.<sup>317</sup> Furthermore, as the government fostered national protectionism, the Chambers could hardly provide assistance services to national economic operators. During the following years, World War II further weakened international economic businesses, and many foreign CC consequently disappeared. They were later restored in the post-war years, taking advantage of the International Community's need to avoid economic protectionism from coming back again. Nationally, the new Italian government was in favour of a new official status for foreign Chambers as they had always been improving international economic contacts. In 1970, the Act 518 acknowledged foreign CC as: "private associations that could freely gather both Italian and foreign members".<sup>318</sup> Although the Act produced no legal change, it officially acknowledged the Chambers' dual nature. As no Italian citizenship was requested, such organizations could freely protect and promote both national and foreign economic interests. Nevertheless, the Act bounded the Chambers' acknowledgement to a few conditions, once again. To begin with, although

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<sup>315</sup> Ivi.

<sup>316</sup> *Il problema della legittimazione interna (1870-1945)*, cit. p. 131.

<sup>317</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 30.

<sup>318</sup> L. 1 luglio 1970, n. 518, *Riordinamento delle camere di commercio italiane all'estero*, Articolo 1.

such organizations were not prevented from benefiting local economies, they needed to prove they also effectively improved our country's economic development. For that purpose, they were requested to prove having provided Italian exporters and investors with assistance and promotional services for almost two years.<sup>319</sup> Such a proof also legitimized foreign CC to be granted Italian public funds. As the act did not change the Chambers' legal framework, foreign CC economic support still relied on members' shares. On the contrary, Italian public funds were officially bound to the above acknowledgment, as they aimed at strengthening the Chambers' services, particularly those addressing to Italian economic operators.<sup>320</sup>

The 1970 Act also clearly defined how foreign CC should relate to national bodies achieving the same purposes. To begin with, according to the Act, foreign CC used to be acknowledged by the old Ministry for Foreign Trade. Nowadays, foreign CC relate to the Ministry of Economic Development that has replaced the Foreign Trade one. On the whole, the Ministry supervises the Chambers' activities through the same departmental guidelines that it used to address to the ICE Agency.<sup>321</sup> It decides which assistance, promotional, informational or training activities can be financed through departmental funds. Foreign CC cannot freely decide how to allocate such external funds. Even if, once again, the Chambers' autonomy seems being hindered by the above national arrangements, these latter ones strategically connect foreign and national activities supporting the Italian internationalisation. Autonomy relies on the free choice that foreign CC can make when agreeing to national acknowledgment. By deciding to be acknowledged, they freely engage in fulfilling all the above requirements. This is an additional feature distinguishing foreign CC from the former Institute of Foreign Trade. Since departmental funds were the only economic support that the Institute could count on, it was forced to comply with departmental guidelines.

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<sup>319</sup> Website

[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita\\_Sistema\\_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Rapporti+con+il+Sistema+Camerale/](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/Unita_Sistema_Paese/Menu/Attivita/Rapporti+con+il+Sistema+Camerale/) Diplomazia Economica Italiana al servizio del Sistema Paese e delle Autonomie Territoriali, Rapporti con il sistema camerale.

<sup>320</sup> L. 1 luglio 1970, n. 518, Articolo 9.

<sup>321</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 42.

The 1970 Act also reviewed the way that foreign CC should relate to Italian diplomatic delegations. In order to avoid all of the previous conflicts, the Act tried to limit the influence that Italian embassies and consulates had previously exerted on foreign Chambers. According to the Act, the Italian diplomatic network conveyed the Chambers' official requests to be acknowledged and funded to the above Ministry.<sup>322</sup> It provided its opinion about such requests, and kept being granted honorary chairmanship.<sup>323</sup> This latter one symbolized the networks' attempt at cooperating with the Chambers at the same level, instead of limiting their room of manoeuvre. In sum, once foreign CC decide to be acknowledged, they autonomously agree to relate to Italian diplomatic delegations. Although foreign CC have not been assimilated within the diplomatic network yet, the Act certainly foster some kind of rapprochement between such bodies.

As to foreign Chambers' relationship with national CC, the 1970 Act did not establish any official rule. Nevertheless, since foreign CC were eventually granted an official status, their national counterparts certainly stopped conceiving them as inferior organizations. In 2010, the Legislative Decree 23 officially established foreign CC as an essential part of the Italian Chambers of Commerce network.<sup>324</sup>

Nowadays foreign CC are well integrated within the Italian network supporting national companies' business internationalisation. Essentially, they develop their own internationalisation program, entailing assistance, informational and promotional activities, once again.<sup>325</sup> These ones need being implemented as they strategically contribute to the wide range of services that the above supporting network already provides.

Foreign CC informational services clearly witness such a strategic contribution. Since their creation, such associations have been acting as strategic observers, catching political and economic information that national CC would have never collected.<sup>326</sup> Such information helped national economic operators to increase their exports. Furthermore, informational

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<sup>322</sup> Ibidem, p. 44.

<sup>323</sup> Ivi.

<sup>324</sup> Ibidem, p. 39.

<sup>325</sup> Decreto ministeriale 28 gennaio 2013, *Requisiti, criteri e modalità per la concessione dei contributi alle Camere di Commercio italiane all'estero ufficialmente riconosciute ai sensi della legge 518/1970*, Articolo 2.

<sup>326</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 37.

services appealed to local customers' interests by advertising Italian goods and habits within the foreign countries that they were located in.<sup>327</sup> In sum, information collection provided by foreign CC strategically suggested the way that Italian exports should be arranged and oriented in order to succeed. As one of the most ancient tasks that foreign CC were charged with, information was universally recognized as one of the main activities that such organizations should deal with. Despite all of the above conflicts characterizing the Chambers' relationships with national bodies, information never lost its strategic role. Once foreign CC were restored after the end of the Second World War, they began focusing on Italian small and medium enterprises. As the Italian entrepreneurial network was structurally changing, foreign CC began reflecting about such a transformation. They locally and nationally spread information concerning the way that Italian SMEs' and foreign enterprises could successfully work together.<sup>328</sup> Since that period, foreign CC, and the whole Italian Chambers of Commerce network, had become aware that Italian companies' main needs and resources were changing. Both domestic and foreign Chambers consequently transformed their whole range of services, whose strategies and costs adjusted to the kind of international business that Italian SMEs could actually bear. Alongside with focusing on the way that national industries were changing, foreign CC informational services further enriched their previous contents. They began concerning both Italian and foreign commercial procedures, bilateral custom fees, and all of the recurrent costs related to international commercial operations.<sup>329</sup> Nevertheless, foreign CC never stopped informing national economic operators about the main characteristics of bilateral trades. By focusing on the local productions that better met national exporters and investors' main needs, they still draw strategic market researches. Furthermore, foreign CC informational services have begun relying on online databases and portals. These latter ones constantly upload the Chambers' macroeconomic studies, as well as information about commercial procedures, local financial incentives and bilateral agreements.<sup>330</sup> Thanks to their free

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<sup>327</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 18.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>330</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 37.

access, online databases and portals easily spread the above information to both local and Italian economic operators.

Foreign CC assistance services have always been equally strategic. Like the above informational activities, in former times, assistance services met the Italian government's need to extend national exports. Nevertheless, when foreign CC were firstly created, assistance services resulted in just few activities, particularly expert advice and arbitration. Expert advice addressed to national exporters and investors, providing them with confidential information concerning local potential partners.<sup>331</sup> Furthermore, CC experts also explained how packaging, payments and trademarks protection were locally ruled.<sup>332</sup> On the other hand, arbitration inevitably involved both national and local economic operators. Such a service aimed at solving commercial controversies between Italian exporters and foreign local importers or customers. At the time, there was no evidence that such arbitrational services used to favour Italian exporters. Despite that, foreign CC assistance services certainly failed to mediate between local and Italian business needs, as they primarily intended to benefit their homeland's economic development.<sup>333</sup> Once foreign CC had successfully assimilated with foreign economic backgrounds, assistance services inevitably transformed. Not only did the Chambers help Italian migrants strengthen their own business activities, but they also provided foreign local producers with the same expert advices that were previously meant to exclusively support Italian exports. Foreign CC began suggesting local producers how they could successfully contact Italian importers and fulfil Italian commercial procedures.<sup>334</sup> At the same time, such organizations also enriched the range of assistance activities that they already provided Italian economic operators with. They helped national producers find foreign facilities and employees, and generally eased contacts with foreign potential partners.<sup>335</sup> Once again, foreign CC activity benefited both Italian and foreign economic development. In sum, the more the Italian focus was lost, the more foreign CC assistance

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<sup>331</sup> *Il problema della legittimazione interna (1870-1945)*, cit. p. 111.

<sup>332</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 18.

<sup>333</sup>G. Riello, *La Camera di commercio italiana per il Regno Unito*, in *Profili di Camere di commercio italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere, cit. p. 79.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>335</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 18.

programs could successfully mediate between Italian and foreign economies. Although national CC have always tried to pursue the same aims, they structurally lacked the strategic knowledge that foreign ones had been acquiring within foreign backgrounds. Foreign CC assistance services never replaced national CC ones. On the contrary, they strategically completed the wide range of assistance services that national CC and Foreign Trade Centres used to provide. Nowadays, the above assistance services have further diversified. Expert advice are no longer limited to market researches and potential partners' lists. They also support Italian companies tendering for foreign contracts, creating foreign distribution branches, and recovering foreign extended credits.<sup>336</sup> Foreign CC also provide simpler assistance services, like offering their own addresses as legal residence for companies located in Italy.<sup>337</sup>

Alongside with information, promotional services are widely recognized as one of the most ancient tasks that foreign CC were charged with by the Italian government. At the end of the 1880s, promotional services just aimed at strategically increasing Italian shares on foreign import markets. During these years, the Italian government still kept its tight grip on such organizations.<sup>338</sup> Commercial and trade fairs, as well as international expositions, were the most ancient hallmark events that foreign CC used to resort to. Foreign Chambers could equally arrange their own trade fairs, or work together with foreign promotional organizations. Universal expositions, the most well-known promotional event, engaged foreign CC to mediate between Italian exhibitors and foreign coordinators, ensuring adequate exhibition stalls to the formers.<sup>339</sup> Alongside with commercial expositions, foreign CC also resorted to printed bulletins, advertising campaigns, promotional monographs, as well as their own periodicals.<sup>340</sup> Although promotional activities were well arranged, they later transformed when foreign CC were recreated in the second post-war period. International exhibitions were mostly replaced with sector-based trade fairs, and foreign Chambers kept supporting Italian participations. Furthermore, they began

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<sup>336</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 49.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>338</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 19.

<sup>339</sup> *La Camera di commercio italiana di Parigi*, cit. p. 45.

<sup>340</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 28.

setting informational workshops and seminars, appealing to both Italian and local economic operators. They also arranged business meetings and visits addressing national business expeditions abroad, as well as foreign business expeditions to Italy. In sum, over the years, foreign CC promotion began relying on the same promotional tool that both national CC, and the new ICE's Promotion Agency, used to resort to. Nevertheless, foreign promotional activities better met international customers' main needs. Thanks to their closeness to foreign end-markets, foreign CC were better able at catching the transformations affecting the world trade. Accordingly, foreign CC were the first promotional bodies underlying the need for Italian goods to advertise their higher quality.<sup>341</sup> As the world demand for products shifted from consumption goods to capital ones, such organizations began advertising Italian technology-intensive productions.<sup>342</sup> In sum, foreign CC promotional activities are as much strategic as informational and assistance ones. Nowadays, such a range still relies on the above programs and these ones keep adapting to the main transformations in the world trade, as well as to technologic innovations in promotional activities.

Of course, training activities further complete the above range of services that foreign CC provide both national and foreign economic operators with. In former times, training activities particularly helped Italian diasporas develop their own local businesses. These ones would have later competed with Italian exports to gain control of local end-markets. Nevertheless, over the years, foreign CC began strengthening their commercial training programs. At the end of World War II, European countries took part in the post-war reconstruction, while the world trade began reactivating. Both Italian and foreign companies' needed more commercial experts.<sup>343</sup> Alongside with providing professional management trainings, foreign CC also taught Italian and foreign languages to foreign and Italian economic operators. Linguistic studies particularly concerned trade and economics to further complete the above management studies.<sup>344</sup> Once again foreign CC closeness to local business communities prevented training

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<sup>341</sup> *La Camera di commercio italiana per il Regno Unito*, cit. p. 73.

<sup>342</sup> *Per una storia delle CCIE e della business community italiana nel mondo*, cit. p. 33.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>344</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 50.

activities from simply duplicating national CC management trainings. On the contrary, foreign CC linguistic studies further complete the above range of training services that the whole national supporting network provides Italian exporters and investors with.

#### **4.2.2. *The Association of Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad***

During the 1980s, once foreign Chambers of Commerce had officially been acknowledged by the Italian government, they all gather together in their own official association.<sup>345</sup> By ensuring foreign CC coordination with national CC, as well as with departmental bodies and the ICE's Agency, the Association of foreign CC absolutely need being mentioned within this study. Its essential role lies in the coordinative function that the Association has been playing since its creation. As foreign CC belong to foreign economic backgrounds, their dual nature and purposes have been underlined several times before within this chapter. Although such organizations can easily support both Italian and local economic interests, these latter ones still risk predominating over the former. In order to prevent the geographical distance from fostering such a risk, the Association of foreign CC was firstly created to link all of the acknowledged foreign Chambers, in order to create one and only network. Within this latter one it ensured coordination, while preventing the Chambers from conflicting with each other.<sup>346</sup> Secondly, the association later connected the above foreign network with its national counterpart. Like the above Chambers of Commerce Union, the Association of foreign CC also guaranteed coordination between national and foreign Chambers' programs. Obviously, coordination just limited to the Chambers' internationalisation programs. Nevertheless, it was essential in order to successfully increase our country's economic international development. Nowadays, coordination still plays an essential role. For that reason, the Union's president officially participates in the Association's governing body.<sup>347</sup> In addition to the

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<sup>345</sup> Website

<http://www.assocamerestero.it/default.asp?idtema=1&idtemacat=1&page=informazioni&idcategoria=24597> Assocamerestero, I profili di Assocamerestero.

<sup>346</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 10

<sup>347</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 65.

president, many representatives of national Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture are part of the above governing body.<sup>348</sup>

Alongside with ensuring coordination between the Chambers' national and foreign networks, the Association also supports foreign CC in carrying out their internationalisation programs. Such a supporting activity prevents the Chambers' foreign network from failing to provide its services. Thanks to the Association, foreign CC successfully act as an integrated network. Nevertheless, if one or more Chambers fail in providing its services, then the entire network risks not succeeding.<sup>349</sup> Accordingly, the Association assists newborn foreign Chambers to be granted departmental acknowledgment, as well as funds.<sup>350</sup> As to older foreign CC, their assistance, promotional, informational and training services are constantly supervised by the above Association. Not only has this one improved the wide range of activities that successfully support Italian companies' business internationalisation, but it drastically cancels unsuccessful activities.<sup>351</sup>

Finally, the Association also acts to promote and spread information about the Chambers' main activities. Communication is one of the ancient goals that such an association has been trying to pursue. In order to better link foreign CC with their national counterpart, this latter one previously needs being informed about foreign Chambers' programs. Communication consequently cancels doubts about foreign CC promiscuous aims. Thanks to annual publications, partnerships agreements and the foreign CC world convention, the Association successfully spreads such information.<sup>352</sup> Furthermore, it also encourages Italian exporters and investors to directly turn to foreign CC to successfully achieve their business internationalisation.

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<sup>348</sup> Ivi.

<sup>349</sup> Ibidem, p. 72.

<sup>350</sup> Website

<http://www.assocamerestero.it/default.asp?idtema=1&idtemacat=1&page=informazioni&idcategoria=24597> Assocamerestero.

<sup>351</sup> Ivi.

<sup>352</sup> *Le Camere di Commercio Italiane all'Estero, Natura, caratteristiche e funzioni*, cit. p. 69.

Picture 4.1. – **The foreign CC network in 1900**



**Europa:**

Belgium **Bruxelles**  
France **Lyon**  
France **Paris**  
United Kindom **London**  
Turkey **Izmir**  
Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Alexandria**  
Tunisia **Tunis**

**North America:**

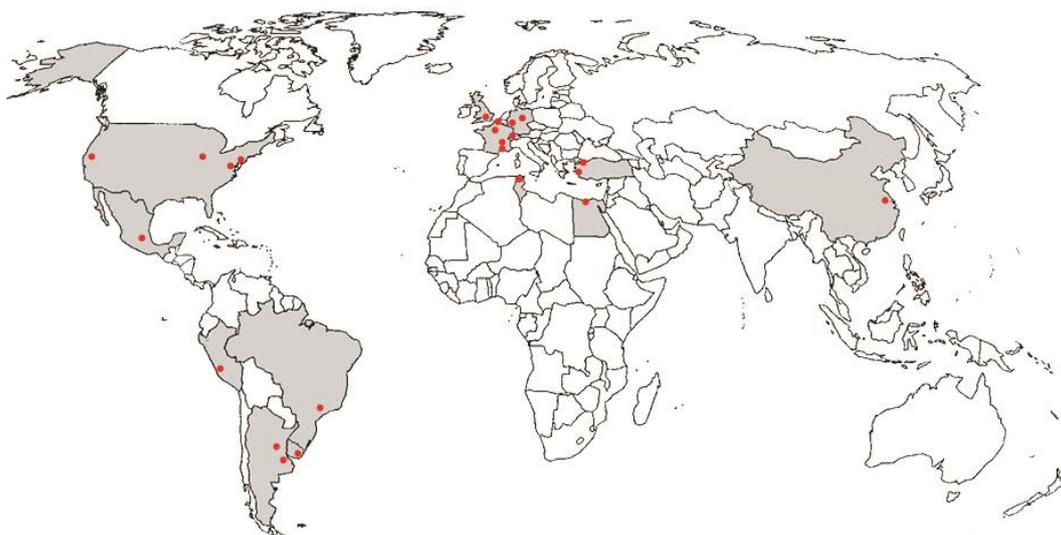
USA **New York**  
USA **San Francisco**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
Argentina **Rosario**  
Messico **Mexico City**  
Perù **Lima**  
Uruguay **Montevideo**

**Source:** *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.2. – **The foreign CC network in 1913**



**Europa:**

Belgium **Bruxelles**  
France **Lyon**  
France **Marseille**  
France **Paris**  
Germany **Berlin**  
Germany **Frankfurt**  
United Kindom **London**  
Switzerland **Zurich**  
Turkey **Izmir**  
Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Alexandria**  
Tunisia **Tunis**

**Asia:**

China **Shanghai**

**North America:**

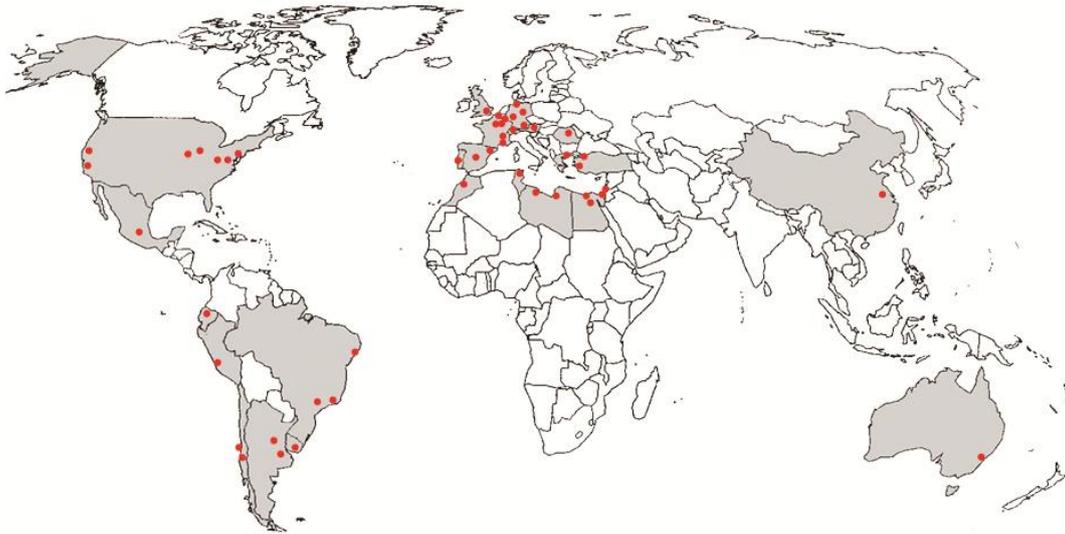
USA **Chicago**  
USA **New York**  
USA **Boston**  
USA **San Francisco**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
Argentina **Rosario**  
Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
Messico **Mexico City**  
Perù **Lima**  
Uruguay **Montevideo**

**Source:** *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.3. – The foreign CC network in 1928



**Europa:**

Austria **Vienna**  
 Belgium **Bruxelles**  
 Bulgaria **Bucarest**  
 France **Lyon**  
 France **Marseille**  
 France **Metz**  
 France **Paris**  
 Germany **Berlin**  
 Germany **Frankfurt**  
 Germany **Munich**  
 Germany **Hamburg**  
 Greece **Thessaloniki**  
 Luxemburg **Luxemburg**  
 Portugal **Lisbon**  
 United Kindom **London**  
 Spain **Barcelona**  
 Spain **Madrid**  
 Switzerland **Zurich**  
 Turkey **Izmir**  
 Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Alexandria**  
 Egypt **Cairo**  
 Libya **Benghazi**  
 Libya **Tripoli**  
 Morocco **Casablanca**  
 Tunisia **Tunis**

**Asia:**

Lebanon **Beirut**  
 Israel **Jerusalem**  
 China **Shanghai**

**Oceania:**

Australia **Sydney**

**North America:**

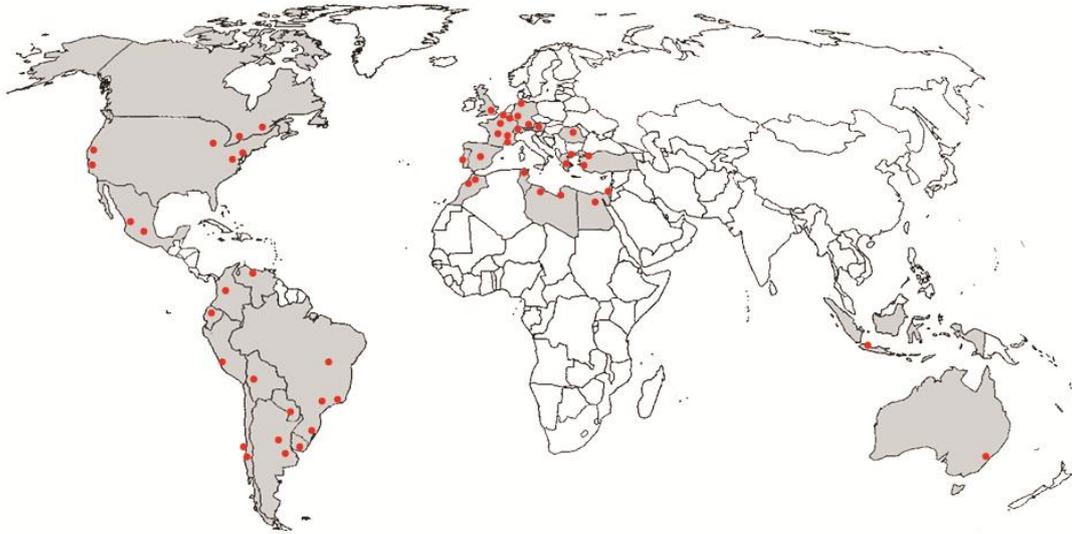
USA **Chicago**  
 USA **Los Angeles**  
 USA **New York**  
 USA **Boston**  
 USA **San Francisco**  
 USA **Detroit**  
 USA **Paterson**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
 Argentina **Rosario**  
 Brasil **Pernambuco**  
 Brasil **Rio de Janeiro**  
 Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
 Chile **Santiago**  
 Chile **Valparaiso**  
 Ecuador **Guayaquil**  
 Messico **Mexico City**  
 Perù **Lima**  
 Uruguay **Montevideo**

Source: *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.4. – **The foreign CC network in 1952**



**Europa:**

Austria **Vienna**  
 Belgium **Bruxelles**  
 Bulgaria **Bucarest**  
 France **Bordeaux**  
 France **Lyon**  
 France **Marseille**  
 France **Paris**  
 Germany **Frankfurt**  
 Germany **Munich**  
 Germany **Hamburg**  
 Greece **Athens**  
 Greece **Thessaloniki**  
 Luxemburg **Luxemburg**  
 Portugal **Lisbon**  
 United Kindom **London**  
 Spain **Madrid**  
 Switzerland **Zurich**  
 Turkey **Izmir**  
 Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Cairo**  
 Libya **Benghazi**  
 Libya **Tripoli**  
 Morocco **Casablanca**  
 Morocco **Tangier**  
 Tunisia **Tunis**

**Asia:**

Lebanon **Beirut**  
 Indonesia **Jakarta**

**Oceania:**

Australia **Sydney**

**North America:**

Canada **Montreal**  
 Canada **Toronto**  
 USA **Chicago**  
 USA **Los Angeles**  
 USA **New York**  
 USA **Boston**  
 USA **San Francisco**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
 Argentina **Rosario**  
 Bolivia **La Paz**  
 Brasil **Belo Horizonte**  
 Brasil **Curitiba**  
 Brasil **Rio de Janeiro**  
 Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
 Chile **Santiago**  
 Chile **Valparaiso**  
 Ecuador **Guayaquil**  
 Messico **Mexico City**  
 Uruguay **Montevideo**  
 Venezuela **Caracas**

**Source:** *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.5. – The foreign CC network in 1970



**Europa:**

Austria **Vienna**  
 Belgium **Bruxelles**  
 France **Lyon**  
 France **Marseille**  
 France **Paris**  
 Germany **Frankfurt**  
 Germany **Munich**  
 Germany **Berlin**  
 Germany **Hamburg**  
 Greece **Athens**  
 Luxemburg **Luxemburg**  
 Portugal **Lisbon**  
 United Kindom **London**  
 Spain **Madrid**  
 Sweden **Stockholm**  
 Switzerland **Zurich**  
 Turkey **Izmir**  
 Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Cairo**  
 Israel **Tel Aviv**  
 Libya **Benghazi**  
 Morocco **Casablanca**  
 Morocco **Tangier**  
 Tunisia **Tunis**

**Oceania:**

Australia **Melbourne**  
 Australia **Sydney**

**North America:**

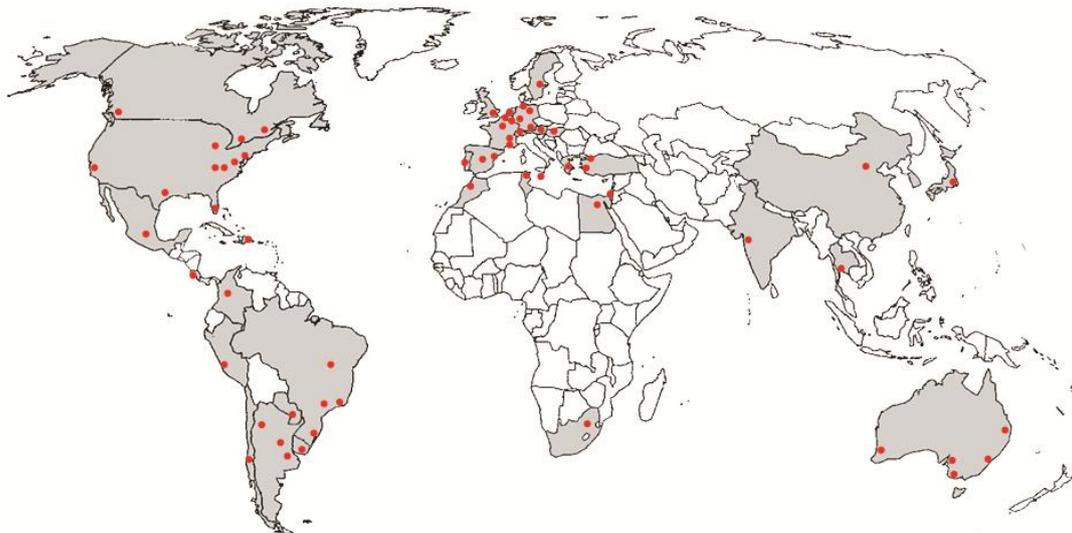
Canada **Montreal**  
 Canada **Toronto**  
 USA **Chicago**  
 USA **Los Angeles**  
 USA **New York**  
 USA **Boston**  
 USA **San Francisco**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
 Argentina **Rosario**  
 Bolivia **La Paz**  
 Brasil **Belo Horizonte**  
 Brasil **Puerto Alegre**  
 Brasil **Rio de Janeiro**  
 Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
 Chile **Santiago**  
 Chile **Valparaiso**  
 Colombia **Bogotá**  
 Ecuador **Guayaquil**  
 Messico **Guadalajara**  
 Messico **Mexico City**  
 Perù **Lima**  
 Uruguay **Montevideo**  
 Venezuela **Caracas**

Source: *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.6. – **The foreign CC network in 1998**



**Europa:**

Austria **Vienna**  
 Belgium **Bruxelles**  
 France **Lyon**  
 France **Marseille**  
 France **Paris**  
 Germany **Frankfurt**  
 Germany **Munich**  
 Germany **Berlin**  
 Germany **Hamburg**  
 Greece **Athens**  
 Netherlands **The Hague**  
 Luxemburg **Luxemburg**  
 Malta **Valletta**  
 Portugal **Lisbon**  
 United Kindom **London**  
 Spain **Barcelona**  
 Spain **Madrid**  
 Sweden **Stockholm**  
 Switzerland **Zurich**  
 Hungary **Budapest**  
 Turkey **Izmir**  
 Turkey **Istanbul**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Cairo**  
 Israel **Tel Aviv**  
 Morocco **Casablanca**  
 South Africa **Johannesburg**  
 Tunisia **Tunis**

**Asia:**

China **Beijing**  
 Japan **Tokyo**  
 India **Mumbai**  
 Thailand **Bangkok**

**Oceania:**

Australia **Adelaide**  
 Australia **Brisbane**  
 Australia **Melbourne**  
 Australia **Perth**  
 Australia **Sydney**

**North America:**

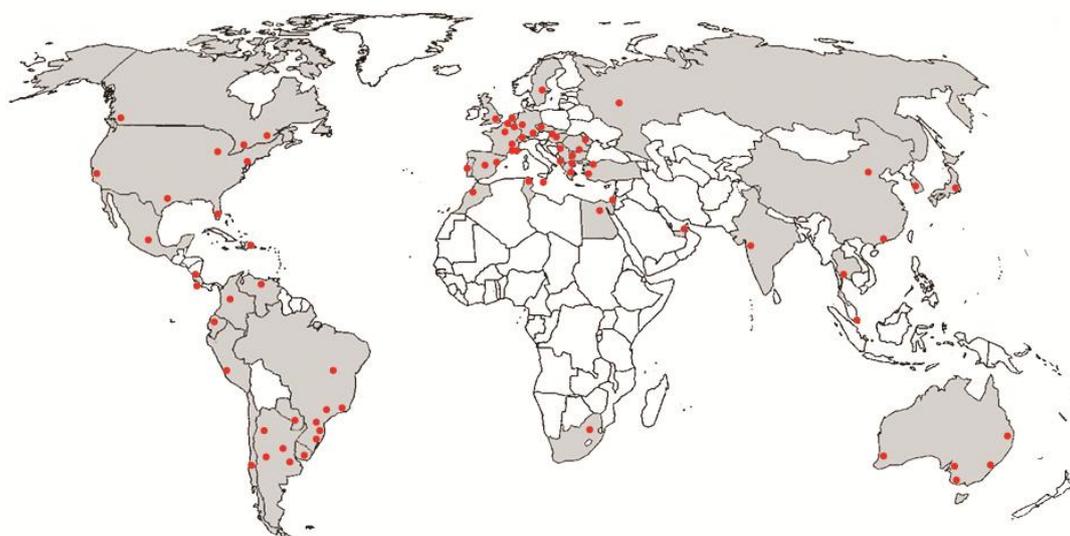
Canada **Montreal**  
 Canada **Toronto**  
 Canada **Vancouver**  
 USA **Chicago**  
 USA **Houston**  
 USA **Los Angeles**  
 USA **Miami**  
 USA **New York**  
 USA **Boston**  
 USA **Philadelphia**  
 USA **Pittsburgh**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
 Argentina **Cordoba**  
 Argentina **Rosario**  
 Brasil **Belo Horizonte**  
 Brasil **Puerto Alegre**  
 Brasil **Rio de Janeiro**  
 Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
 Chile **Santiago**  
 Colombia **Bogotá**  
 Costa Rica **San José**  
 Messico **Mexico City**  
 Paraguay **Asuncion**  
 Perù **Lima**  
 Dominican Republic **Santo Domingo**  
 Uruguay **Montevideo**

**Source:** *Tra identità culturale e sviluppo di reti. Storia delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero*, Unioncamere.

Picture 4.7. – The foreign CC network in 2012



**Europa:**

Albania **Tirana**  
 Belgium **Bruxelles**  
 Bulgaria **Sofia**  
 France **Lyon**  
 France **Marseille**  
 France **Nice**  
 France **Paris**  
 Germany **Frankfurt**  
 Germany **Munich**  
 Greece **Athens**  
 Greece **Thessaloniki**  
 Luxemburg **Luxemburg**  
 Malta **Valletta**  
 Moldova **Chisinau**  
 Netherlands **Amsterdam**  
 Portugal **Lisbon**  
 United Kindom **London**  
 Czech Republic **Prague**  
 Romania **Bucarest**  
 Russia **Moscow**  
 Serbia **Belgrade**  
 Slovakia **Bratislava**  
 Spain **Barcelona**  
 Spain **Madrid**  
 Sweden **Stockholm**  
 Switzerland **Zurich**  
 Turkey **Istanbul**  
 Turkey **Izmir**  
 Hungary **Budapest**

**Middle East & Africa:**

Egypt **Cairo**  
 UAE **Sharjah**  
 Israel **Tel Aviv**  
 Morocco **Casablanca**  
 South Africa **Johannesburg**  
 Tunisia **Tunis**

**Asia:**

China **Hong Kong**  
 China **Beijing**  
 South Korea **Seoul**  
 Japan **Tokyo**  
 India **Mumbai**  
 Singapore **Singapore**  
 Thailand **Bangkok**

**Oceania:**

Australia **Adelaide**  
 Australia **Brisbane**  
 Australia **Melbourne**  
 Australia **Perth**  
 Australia **Sydney**

**North America:**

Canada **Montreal**  
 Canada **Toronto**  
 Canada **Vancouver**  
 Messico **Mexico City**  
 USA **Chicago**  
 USA **Houston**  
 USA **Los Angeles**  
 USA **Miami**  
 USA **New York**

**Latin America:**

Argentina **Buenos Aires**  
 Argentina **Cordoba**  
 Argentina **Mendoza**  
 Argentina **Rosario**  
 Brasil **Belo Horizonte**  
 Brasil **Curitiba**  
 Brasil **Florianopolis**  
 Brasil **Puerto Alegre**  
 Brasil **Rio de Janeiro**  
 Brasil **Sao Paulo**  
 Chile **Santiago**  
 Colombia **Bogotá**  
 Costa Rica **San José**  
 Ecuador **Quito**  
 Nicaragua **Managua**  
 Paraguay **Asuncion**  
 Perù **Lima**  
 Dominican Republic **Santo Domingo**  
 Uruguay **Montevideo**  
 Venezuela **Caracas**

**Source:** *Business Atlas, Guida agli affari in 50 mercati per il business italiano*, a cura delle 76 Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero e di Assocamerestero – Associazione delle Camere di Commercio Italiane all'estero, 2012.

## CHAPITRE 5

### UN EXEMPLE CONCRET : LA CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE ITALIENNE DE NICE

Suite à l'analyse concernant les supports proposés aux entreprises italiennes par le réseau des Chambres de Commerce, ce chapitre a pour but de présenter des exemples concrets d'accompagnements commerciaux, des programmes promotionnels, d'information, et de formation. La Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, en particulier les services qu'elle propose, seront considérés afin de réussir cette présentation. Située dans la région française Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA), la CCIT de Nice travaille afin de renforcer les relations commerciales franco-italiennes et transfrontalières. Celles-ci, seront dans un premier temps analysées afin de mieux comprendre le contexte économique dans lequel la Chambre de Commerce opère. Les paragraphes suivants présenteront donc une vue d'ensemble des échanges commerciaux entre les deux pays. L'attention sera ensuite posée sur le contexte économique de l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée, regroupant trois régions italiennes et deux régions françaises, parmi lesquelles la région PACA. Celle-ci fera donc l'objet d'un focus commercial avant d'analyser les activités de la CCIT de Nice.

#### ***5.1. Les relations commerciales franco-italiennes : une vue d'ensemble***

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La France représente le deuxième marché de provenance des importations italiennes et le deuxième marché extérieur pour nos

exportations.<sup>353</sup> C'est également l'un des partenaires économiques les plus fidèles et les plus anciens de l'Italie. Depuis des centaines d'années, le marché italien est perçu comme l'une des destinations les plus stratégiques pour les exportations françaises. Bien que les ventes italiennes au-delà des Alpes Méditerranée aient récemment baissé, les deux pays se considèrent donc en tant que deuxième partenaire commercial.<sup>354</sup>

En ce qui concerne les investissements directs à l'étranger franco-italiens, les deux pays se confirment réciproquement deuxième partenaires mutuels. En particulier, le tissu entrepreneurial français représente la première destination des IDE italiens, alors que les entrepreneurs français se classent parmi les deuxième investisseurs étrangers en Italie.<sup>355</sup> Du point de vue français, en revanche, la position italienne est différente. Bien que l'Italie se confirme généralement deuxième destination des IDE nationales, elle n'occupe que la septième position dans la liste des investisseurs étrangers en France.<sup>356</sup>

Les données présentées témoignent donc d'une relation commerciale exclusive qui lie les deux pays. Celle-ci se base, en premier lieu, sur la proximité géographique permettant de simplifier les contacts franco-italiens, mais surtout sur la connaissance mutuelle des deux pays. A cette proximité géographique s'ajoute le rapprochement culturel qui réunit la France et l'Italie parmi les puissances internationales les plus anciennes au monde. Les deux pays ont donc toujours entretenu des relations transfrontalières, allant au-delà des simples échanges commerciaux. Pendant la deuxième moitié du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, la coopération franco-italienne a certainement encouragé la création de l'Union Européenne. Aujourd'hui, les deux pays ne cessent de se battre, l'un à côté de l'autre, pour protéger le marché commun et les politiques européennes. De plus, ils proposent ensemble des solutions

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<sup>353</sup> *L'Italia nell'economia internazionale, Rapporto ICE 2012-2013*, Sistema Statistico Nazionale, Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane, p. 105/106; *Quando l'export diventa necessario*, Rapporto Export 2012-2016, SACE, Dicembre 2012, p. 49.

<sup>354</sup> Website <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/> Trésor Direction Générale, Ministère de Finances et des Comptes Publics, Ministère de l'Economie, du Redressement Productif et du Numérique.

<sup>355</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>356</sup> *Ivi.*

concernant la crise économique actuelle, notamment en matière de croissance et de solidarité économique.<sup>357</sup>

En conclusion, le rapport exclusif franco-italien dépend principalement de l'ancienneté des relations entre les deux pays. Se connaissant depuis toujours, la France et l'Italie n'arrêtent pas de développer leurs relations bilatérales. Selon la finalité de cette étude concernant l'internationalisation des entreprises italiennes, les paragraphes suivants traiteront exclusivement les flux de marchandises et d'investissements italiens à destination française. Les flux d'investissements français à destination de l'Italie, contribuant à l'internationalisation passive du tissu entrepreneurial italien, seront également présentés.

### ***5.1.1. Le commerce franco-italien***

Les flux d'exportations italiens destinés au marché français se sont donc bien renforcés tout au long des siècles. Aujourd'hui, les actifs de production à longue durée de vie se confirment être les produits les plus achetés au-delà des Alpes Méditerranée. Les biens de consommation italiens sont également très répandus dans l'Hexagone. Parmi ces derniers, les produits de la manufacture et l'agroalimentaire dominent les marchés français. Face à la concurrence des marchandises provenant des pays en développement, les vêtements et les meubles italiens gardent tout de même leurs parts du marché.<sup>358</sup> Le secteur agroalimentaire, en revanche, a toujours détenu une quote-part fixe dans le commerce d'importation français. Parmi les produits les plus achetés, les pâtes italiennes dominent le marché incontestablement.<sup>359</sup> Le succès du commerce alimentaire italien en France témoigne de l'importance de la proximité culturelle entre les deux pays. Au-delà de la ressemblance des goûts et des saveurs, les productions agroalimentaires françaises et italiennes s'engagent dans la certification de la qualité et des origines de leurs produits.<sup>360</sup> De la même façon, les deux pays demandent aux producteurs alimentaires étrangers les mêmes certifications.

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<sup>357</sup> *La relazione Francia-Italia, Presentazione e cifre chiave*, Ambassade de France en Italia, Novembre 2013, p. 3.

<sup>358</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>359</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>360</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

Au niveau du commerce alimentaire bilatéral, les produits italiens répondent parfaitement aux exigences du marché français.

En général, le commerce extérieur italien en France dépend de la spécialisation productive française. La France compte aujourd'hui parmi les productions les plus avancées technologiquement. De son côté, l'Italie domine le marché des produits manufacturiers traditionnels. Par conséquent, l'Hexagone s'adresse à l'Italie afin de satisfaire ses besoins de produits traditionnels.

La résistance française face à la crise économique soutient également les ventes italiennes au-delà des Alpes Méditerranée. Bien que les consommations internes se soient récemment affaiblies, la France est encore loin de la récession économique. Puisque le pouvoir d'achat italien a presque disparu, les producteurs nationaux profitent des consommations françaises.<sup>361</sup> De plus, ils bénéficient de l'absence du risque de change pour accorder des crédits acheteurs aux clients français. Suite à l'introduction de la monnaie commune, les anciennes dépréciations françaises ne risquent donc plus de menacer le règlement des ventes italiennes.

Enfin, la coopération franco-italienne dans le domaine des transports simplifie l'accès aux marchés français. D'une part, la proximité géographique joue un rôle fondamental. De l'autre, les nombreux passages transfrontaliers ferroviaires, routiers et maritimes répondent également aux exigences des PME italiennes. Ces dernières, en effet, ne possèdent pas les ressources économiques nécessaires pour rejoindre les marchés extérieurs les plus lointains. En ce qui concerne la France, la distance n'empêche pas les ventes des PME italiennes. De plus, les autorités des deux pays travaillent constamment ensemble afin de renouveler et d'améliorer les voies d'accès existantes.<sup>362</sup>

### **5.1.2. Les investissements directs à l'étranger**

Bien que la présence entrepreneuriale italienne en France soit plus ancienne, depuis 1980, la pratique internationale des investissements directs à l'étranger a certainement renforcé les relations commerciales entre les deux

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<sup>361</sup> *Info Mercati Esteri Francia*, cit. p. 6.

<sup>362</sup> *La relazione Francia-Italia*, Ambassade de France en Italia, cit. p. 10.

pays. Etant donnée la composition du tissu entrepreneurial italien, composé par de nombreuses PME, les investissements nationaux directs à l'étranger n'ont quasiment jamais dépassé les frontières de l'Union Européenne. Compte tenu de l'absence de ressources économiques, l'Italie a toujours privilégié les destinations les plus proches pour ses investisseurs. Par conséquent, aujourd'hui, un tiers des investisseurs italiens délocalise ses activités productives et commerciales en France.<sup>363</sup> Bien que la crise économique ait affaibli le flux d'investissements italiens à destination française, environ 1700 entreprises italiennes sont répertoriées en France.<sup>364</sup> Elles se consacrent également à la création des actifs de productions parmi les produits les plus achetés sur le marché français.<sup>365</sup>

La proximité géographique se confirme, donc, comme l'un des facteurs fondamentaux à la base des investissements italiens en France. Pourtant, la recherche des consommations étrangères soutient également le déplacement commercial italien en France : les consommations françaises ne cèdent pas à l'augmentation des prix, ainsi qu'à la baisse des salaires. De plus, les producteurs italiens bénéficient de la position géographique de la France, donnant accès aux marchés étrangers du nord de l'Europe et aux départements et territoires d'outre-mer. Grâce aux ports du nord de la France, les marchandises italiennes traversent donc la Manche et la Mer du Nord.<sup>366</sup>

L'accès à ces marchés extérieurs représente un avantage conséquent pour les entrepreneurs italiens en France. En général, toutes les entreprises délocalisent leur activité dans le but de profiter des ressources naturelles et infrastructurelles proposées par les territoires étrangers. Les supports économiques destinés au tissu productif local attirent également les investisseurs étrangers. En ce qui concerne la France, le support gouvernemental se traduit dans la simplification des procédures internes administratives liées aux activités productives. Grâce aux outils électroniques et aux portails internet réalisés par le gouvernement français, les entrepreneurs italiens sont donc en mesure de compléter tous les procédés

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<sup>363</sup> *Info MercatiEsteri Francia*, cit. p. 31.

<sup>364</sup> Website <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/> Trésor Direction Générale, Ministère de Finances et des Comptes Publics, Ministère de l'Economie, du Redressement Productif et du Numérique.

<sup>365</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>366</sup> J. Guillaume, *La France dans l'Union Européenne*, BELIN MEMENTO, Paris 2007, p. 113.

nécessaires afin d'entreprendre en France.<sup>367</sup> Cette simplification permet donc aux PME italiennes de ne pas dépenser leurs faibles ressources économiques dans l'embauche d'experts externes en matière d'internationalisation. De plus, elles profitent de la compétitivité des coûts de localisation, d'implantation, d'usage de la main d'œuvre et des ressources naturelles.<sup>368</sup> D'un point de vue politique, la France ne présente aucun risque, c'est une République forte et stable. Les investisseurs italiens, ne craignent pas la perte de leurs capitaux délocalisés en France et bénéficient ainsi de cette stabilité politique nationale.

Les paragraphes qui suivent concernent les investissements français directs en Italie. L'internationalisation par l'IDE, en fait, entraîne à la fois des pratiques actives et passives. Ces dernières comptent sur les déplacements productifs et commerciaux des investisseurs étrangers. Cela fait trente ans que la France soutient l'internationalisation passive italienne. Aujourd'hui, plus de 1200 entreprises nationales à participation française opèrent dans les secteurs industriels, notamment dans les productions chimiques et pneumatiques mais également dans la transformation des minéraux.<sup>369</sup> Ainsi, les Français profitent du faible développement des services italiens pour investir dans le secteur bancaire et assurantiel.<sup>370</sup>

En ce qui concerne les raisons des investissements français à destination italienne, ils se différencient par rapport aux raisons soutenant les IDE italiens en France. Bien que l'Italie propose un vaste réseau de ressources naturelles et infrastructurelles, sa compétitivité s'est affaiblie suite à l'augmentation des coûts d'usage. La gamme des avantages financiers proposés aux entreprises est également faible. Il semblerait qu'investir en Italie n'entraîne quasiment aucun avantage. En revanche, le soutien français aux investissements externes, ainsi que l'homogénéité entre les tissus entrepreneuriaux français et italiens sont essentiels. La *Banque Publique d'Investissement* a récemment été créée par le Gouvernement français afin de financer les fusions, les acquisitions et les coentreprises franco-

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<sup>367</sup> Ivi.

<sup>368</sup> Ivi.

<sup>369</sup> *Effetti degli investimenti diretti esteri in Italia*, a cura della Soris, Studi Economici e Ricerche di Mercato, ETAS KOMPASS, Milano, pp. 88-89.

<sup>370</sup> Website <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/> Trésor Direction Générale, Ministère de Finances et des Comptes Publics, Ministère de l'Economie, du Redressement Productif et du Numérique.

internationales.<sup>371</sup> S'adressant notamment aux PME françaises, ces financements soutiennent l'internationalisation active nationale. Nonobstant les aides financières, les PME françaises restent structurellement affectées par l'absence de ressources économiques nécessaires afin de supporter les procédés d'internationalisation les plus complexes. Elles bénéficient donc de la proximité géographique avec l'Italie et de la ressemblance avec le tissu entrepreneurial local. Compte tenu de l'abondance des petites et moyennes entreprises italiennes, les investisseurs français comptent retrouver tous les supports spécifiques nécessaires pour leur développement économique et commercial.

L'Italie profite donc de ces facteurs et des flux d'investissements français, afin d'augmenter son internationalisation passive. En revanche, elle ne semble jouer aucun rôle actif dans l'attraction des investissements directs étrangers.

## ***5.2. L'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée : un contexte économique coopérant***

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Née de l'union de trois régions italiennes, le Piémont, la Vallée d'Aoste, la Ligurie et les régions françaises Rhône-Alpes et Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée regroupe cinq territoires transfrontaliers.<sup>372</sup> Ces derniers ont toujours coopéré d'un point de vue politique, culturel et géographique. En 1982, la création de la Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentales (COTRAO) témoigne de cette coopération pour la première fois.<sup>373</sup> En 2006, en revanche, l'Eurorégion prend la place de la Communauté dans le but de renforcer les liens de coopération parmi les cinq territoires.

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<sup>371</sup> F. Grassi, *La création de valeur pour le territoire, l'Eurorégion des Alpes-Méditerranée*, Prix « Luciana Falotico 2009 », Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, p. 95.

<sup>372</sup> *Colloque Franco-Italien, I Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'Alpmed*, CCIAA di Torino, Unioncamere Piemonte, Ambassade de France en Italie.

<sup>373</sup> Website <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/> Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Eurorégion Alpes Méditerranée.

Image 5.1. – L’Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée



Source : Website [medalp.eu](http://medalp.eu)  
Il portale web dedicato all'Euroregione delle Alpi del Mare.

En tant que territoire transfrontalier, l’Eurorégion garde un fort potentiel économique, se trouvant parmi les régions transfrontalières les plus actives en Europe. Tout au long de ces années, les cinq territoires transfrontaliers ont partagé, les uns avec les autres, l’ensemble des ressources naturelles et infrastructurelles des Alpes Méditerranée. La frontière franco-italienne passe donc en second plan par rapport à l’exploitation du bassin productif eurorégional.<sup>374</sup> L’Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée est un bassin commercial unique. A l’Est, comme à l’Ouest, les territoires situés au-delà de la frontière méditerranéenne ne sont pas conçus comme des marchés extérieurs.<sup>375</sup> Au contraire, ils représentent l’extension naturelle de simples marchés internes.

En conclusion, l’Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée est caractérisée par un contexte économique très intégré, dont la coopération économique vise à améliorer le tissu productif et commercial transfrontalier. La France et l’Italie bénéficient, toutes les deux, des avantages liés à l’intégration. De plus, face à la crise économique actuelle, les deux pays ont fait de la coopération une solution stratégique. Dans ce contexte, le réseau des Chambres de

<sup>374</sup> Website <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/>, Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Thèmes, Développement économique transfrontalier.

<sup>375</sup> Ivi.

Commerce nationales, en particulier celles des territoires transfrontaliers, soutient, également, la coopération régionale. Du point de vue italien, en revanche, les Chambres de Commerce italiennes, situées dans la zone transfrontalière franco-italienne, jouent un rôle fondamental dans le développement des relations économiques, productives et commerciales.

### **5.2.1. Les régions transfrontalières italiennes**

Concernant les procédés d'internationalisation des régions transfrontalières italiennes, les paragraphes suivants analyseront les caractéristiques des investissements directs à l'étranger, notamment la composition sectorielle des flux d'exportations.

Tout d'abord, les territoires transfrontaliers se caractérisent par une forte vocation commerciale. Du Mont Blanc dans le Nord, jusqu'à la ville de Menton, sur le littoral azuréen, les nombreux passages ferroviaires, routiers et maritimes, servent les échanges commerciaux. Les flux commerciaux par autoroute se concentrent principalement dans le sud frontalier, tandis que les passages routiers alpins jouent un rôle mineur.<sup>376</sup> Les flux maritimes des marchandises se localisent sur le littoral azuréen. Le port de Marseille par exemple, représente l'un des points de départ et d'arrivée des échanges commerciaux franco-italiens les plus importants.<sup>377</sup> De plus, les passages maritimes supportent les flux commerciaux italo-espagnols. Les ports azuréens, se situent stratégiquement le long du littoral méditerranéen, se développant de la Catalogne espagnole jusqu'à la capitale italienne. En revanche, le sud frontalier n'est pas suffisamment en mesure de gérer le trafic commercial par les voies de chemin de fer. Celui-ci se développe donc principalement dans le nœud ferroviaire de Fréjus.<sup>378</sup>

Les passages présentés supportent les flux commerciaux italo-français et ceux limités aux territoires transfrontaliers. De nombreux investissements et exportations partent des régions transfrontalières italiennes, pour se destiner dans les départements français. Le premier marché de destination

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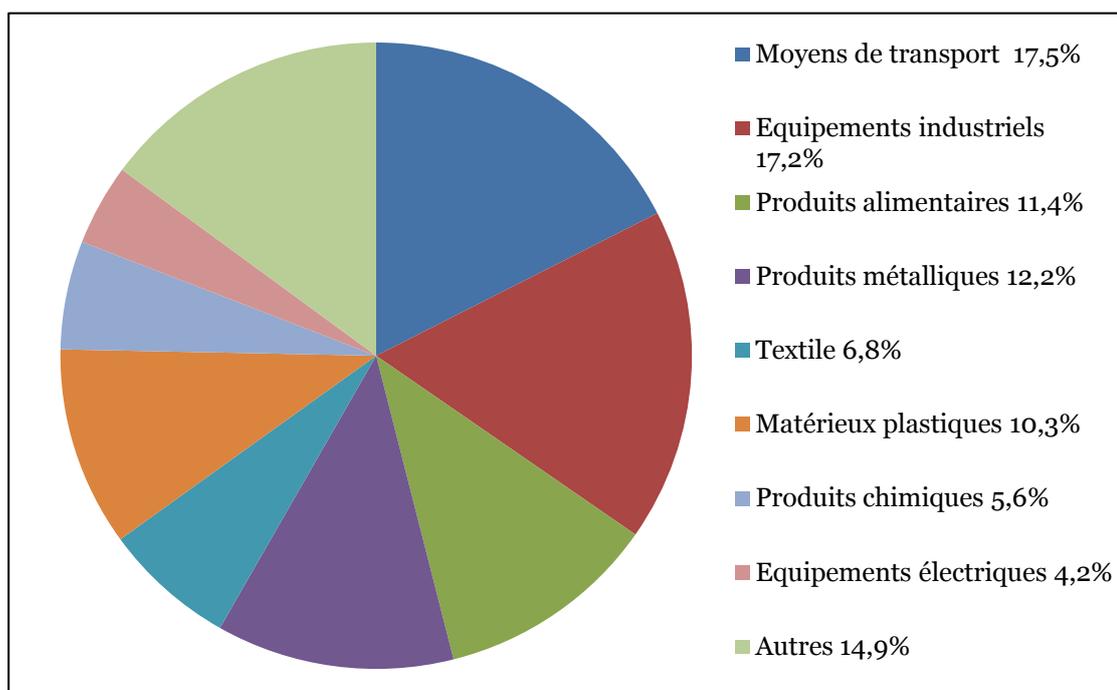
<sup>376</sup> *Collegamento Ferroviario Nizza-Italia, Perché e Come? Una rete ferroviaria ad alto rendimento tra la Francia e l'Italia*, Dossier di concertazione Nizza-Italia Réseaux Ferré de France, LGV Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, p. 45.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51.

<sup>378</sup> *Ivi* .

des exportations transfrontalières italiennes et le deuxième marché d'importation, la France achète de l'Italie plus de marchandises qu'elle ne lui vend.<sup>379</sup> Cela dépend principalement de l'industrialisation italienne, face à la vocation touristique des villes transfrontalières françaises. Du côté italien, le Piémont est la région la plus industrialisée. Malgré la formation montagneuse du territoire, la production locale s'est quand même développée dans le pôle industriel de Turin, ainsi qu'aux abords de Cuneo. Elle se destine principalement en France, notamment dans les régions Rhône-Alpes et PACA.<sup>380</sup> Le tableau 5.2. illustre la composition sectorielle des exportations piémontaises en France.

Tableau 5.2. – **Composition sectorielle des exportations Piémontaises en France**



**Source :** ISTAT – Banque de données COEWEB (données du décembre 2011)  
*Colloque Franco – Italien, II Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*

En ce qui concerne les flux des investissements piémontais en France, la région italienne prime sur la Ligurie et la Vallée d'Aoste.<sup>381</sup> Le tissu entrepreneurial piémontais profite donc de la participation française. Les investissements français à destination piémontaise dépendent de

<sup>379</sup> *Colloque Franco-Italien, I Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*, cit. p. 21.

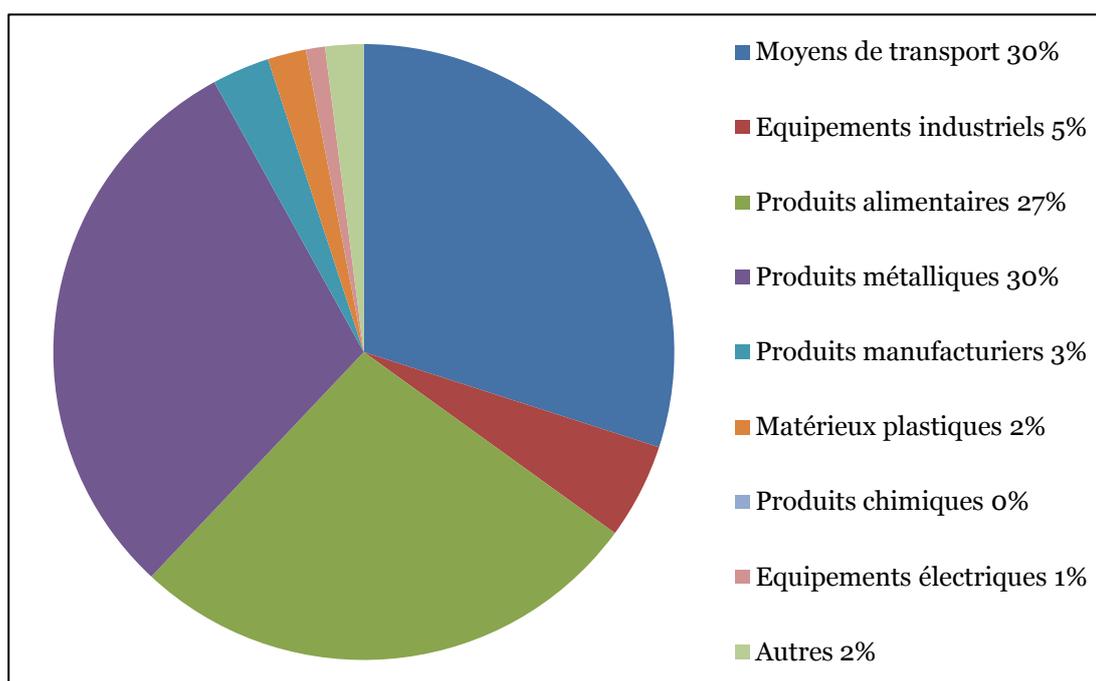
<sup>380</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

l'industrialisation de la région, mais surtout du pôle turinois. La proximité du Piémont avec la Lombardie soutient également ces flux d'investissement : à travers le Piémont les investisseurs français accèdent aux pôles industriels lombards.<sup>382</sup>

La Vallée d'Aoste destine la majorité de ces exportations au-delà des Alpes Méditerranée (Tableau 5.3.).

Tableau 5.3. – **Composition sectorielle des exportations de la Vallée d'Aoste en France**



Source : ISTAT – Banque de données COEWEB (données du décembre 2011)  
*Colloque Franco – Italien, II Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*

Bien que la région investisse activement en France, les flux d'investissements français à destination valdôtaine sont dominants. En tant que premier investisseur dans la région, la France joue un rôle fondamental dans l'internationalisation passive du tissu entrepreneurial valdôtain.<sup>383</sup>

Avec le Piémont, la Ligurie présente un tissu productif et industriel très développé. La conformation géographique ligurienne soutient les productions agroalimentaires<sup>384</sup>. En revanche, la vocation touristique du

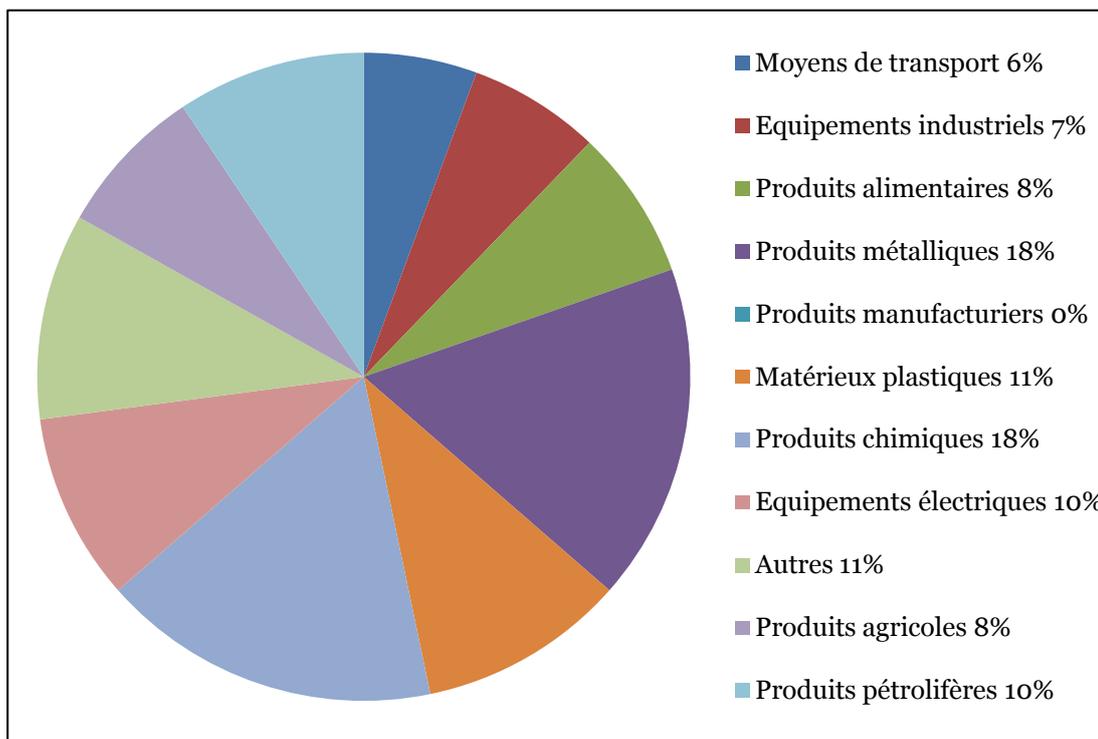
<sup>382</sup> Website [http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Nizza](http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato_Nizza), Consolato Generale d'Italia a Nizza, Fare affari in Francia.

<sup>383</sup> *Colloque Franco-Italien, I Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*, cit. p. 37.

<sup>384</sup> *Collegamento Ferroviario Nizza-Italia, Perché e Come?*, cit. p. 25.

littoral dépend du développement des services liguriens.<sup>385</sup> En ce qui concerne les productions industrielles et agroalimentaires, la région consacre la majorité de ses produits au marché français (Tableau 5.4.)

Tableau 5.4. – **Composition sectorielle des exportations liguriennes en France**



Source : ISTAT – Banque de données COEWEB (données du décembre 2011)  
*Colloque Franco – Italien, II Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell’ALPMED*

Même si le pourcentage des flux d’investissements liguriens en France est inférieur par rapport aux flux piémontais, la performance des coentreprises liguro-françaises et liguriennes en France, est satisfaisante. En revanche, depuis le début de la crise économique en 2009, plusieurs investisseurs français ont abandonné la région.<sup>386</sup>

En conclusion, la France participe activement aux procédés d’internationalisation des régions transfrontalières italiennes. Ces dernières bénéficient également de la coopération économique transfrontalière, gérée aujourd’hui au niveau européen. Parmi les projets les plus importants, le programme INTERREG ALCOTRA et l’action des réseaux des Chambres de

<sup>385</sup> Ivi.

<sup>386</sup> *Colloque Franco-Italien, I Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell’ALPMED*, cit. p. 37.

Commerce et d'Industrie ALPMED seront illustrés. Le portrait économique et commercial de l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée sera donc terminé.

### **5.2.2. La coopération économique transfrontalière**

Les actions de coopération économiques transfrontalières s'inscrivent dans un vaste projet d'intégration touchant plusieurs domaines. Avec l'économie, la protection des espaces naturels transfrontaliers, le développement durable des zones maritimes et la gestion des flux touristiques et des initiatives culturelles sont tous concernés par les projets de coopération transfrontalière.<sup>387</sup> Les domaines relatifs aux transports et à la santé sont également concernés, compte tenu du nombre de travailleurs transfrontaliers se déplaçant, chaque jour, au-delà de la frontière franco-italienne.<sup>388</sup>

A propos de la coopération économique, celle-ci témoigne des objectifs communs partagés par les cinq territoires faisant partie de l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée. Face à la crise économique actuelle, la compétitivité territoriale et le développement durable, représentent les objectifs les plus importants.<sup>389</sup> Le renforcement de la compétitivité territoriale transfrontalière dépend de l'augmentation des ressources naturelles et infrastructurelles, partagées par les cinq territoires. Cette abondance se traduirait dans l'augmentation des flux d'investissements étrangers à destination transfrontalières. Par conséquent, le tissu productif local profiterait immédiatement des flux de capitaux étrangers. La gestion des ressources locales est donc au cœur des coopérations économiques transfrontalières. Bien que l'exploitation des ressources soit fondamentale, celle-ci nécessite également d'être protégée. Les territoires transfrontaliers doivent donc se développer durablement, dans le but de préserver leurs ressources face aux exploitations économiques les plus brutales.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> F. Grassi, *La création de valeur pour le territoire, l'Eurorégion des Alpes-Méditerranée*, p. 95.

<sup>388</sup> *Ivi*.

<sup>389</sup> *Colloque Franco – Italien*, II Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED, CCIAA Torino, Ambassade de France en Italie, ALPMED les CCI de l'Eurorégion, Unioncamere Piemonte, 2012.

<sup>390</sup> M. G. Caroli, *Il marketing territoriale, strategie per la competitività sostenibile del territorio*, FRANCO ANGELI EDITORE, Milano, p. 33.

Cela fait plus de 20 ans que les programmes officiels de coopération transfrontalière ont été lancés par l'Union Européenne. Reconnaisant ainsi l'intégration des territoires frontaliers, le Fond Européen de Développement Régional (FEDER) partage ses fonds afin de poursuivre les objectifs de coopération économique. Parmi ces programmes, le projet INTERREG *Alpes Latines Coopération Transfrontalière* (ALCOTRA) concerne spécifiquement l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée. Il s'adresse aux communes reconnues par la Nomenclature européenne des Unités Territoriales, le programme admet les territoires suivants : les départements de Savoie et Haute-Savoie dans la région Rhône-Alpes, les départements des Hautes-Alpes, des Alpes de Haute-Provence et des Alpes-Maritimes dans la région PACA, les provinces de Turin et de Cuneo dans le Piémont, la province d'Imperia dans la Ligurie, ainsi que la région Vallée d'Aoste.<sup>391</sup> Le programme INTERREG ALCOTRA a débuté en 1991, et il se compose de quatre projets d'une durée de 6 ans, dont le dernier s'est terminé en 2013.<sup>392</sup> Chaque projet entraîne des objectifs spécifiques concernant tous les domaines de coopération. Les dispositions ALCOTRA en matière économique, ont de plus en plus augmenté la compétitivité transfrontalière, notamment celle des économies rurales et industrielles. Tout d'abord, ces projets ont soutenu le développement des productions agricoles et alimentaires partout dans les cinq régions transfrontalières. De plus, ils ont développé le savoir-faire local, tout en valorisant ces productions.<sup>393</sup> En revanche, la production industrielle a fait l'objet des actions d'harmonisation ALCOTRA, dans le but d'augmenter l'intégration productive eurorégionale. Les tissus industriels transfrontaliers ont donc partagé leurs savoir-faire artisanaux et leurs technologies, tout en se connaissant mutuellement.<sup>394</sup> Une partie de ces fonds ALCOTRA sont destinés aux institutions locales, régionales et transfrontalières, proposant des actions de soutien aux entreprises.<sup>395</sup> Faisant partie de ces réseaux, les Chambres de Commerce dans les Alpes Méditerranée franco-italiennes bénéficient donc des financements Européens.

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<sup>391</sup> Website <http://www.regione.liguria.it/> Cooperazione transfrontaliera, Regione Liguria.

<sup>392</sup> Website <http://www.interreg-alcotra.org/> ALCOTRA 2007-2013 Alpes Latines Coopération Transfrontalière France – Italie.

<sup>393</sup> Document ALCOTRA, Axe 1 – *Développement et innovation*, Mesure 1.2. – Economie rurales.

<sup>394</sup> Document ALCOTRA, Axe 1 – *Développement et innovation*, Mesure 1.1. - Systèmes Productifs.

<sup>395</sup> Website <http://www.interreg-alcotra.org/> INTERREG IIIA 2000-2006, Alpes Latines Coopération Transfrontalière France – Italie.

Les institutions Eurorégionales reconnaissent le rôle joué par les réseaux nationaux des Chambres de Commerce par rapport au développement économique transfrontalier. Parmi de nombreuses actions et partenariats économiques eurorégionaux, l'*Association des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie de l'Eurorégion Alpes Méditerranées* (CCI ALPMED) a été créée en 2009.<sup>396</sup> L'association regroupe sept Chambres de Commerce régionales, dont la majorité sont transfrontalières. En 2011, la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Corse a rejoint l'association qui comptait déjà les Chambres de Commerce des régions Rhône-Alpes et PACA, la Chambre de Commerce Valdôtaine des Entreprises et des Activités Libérales, les associations Unioncamere de la Ligurie et du Piémont.<sup>397</sup> Compte tenu sa composition binationale, l'association CCI ALPMED constitue le premier réseau transfrontalier des Chambres de Commerce régionales. A côté du programme INTERREG ALCOTRA, l'association CCI ALPMED soutient, également, la connaissance mutuelle des régions transfrontalières, notamment des tissus productifs et entrepreneuriaux.<sup>398</sup> Grâce aux fonds européens, l'association supporte également le développement productif, industriel et territorial des régions transfrontalières.<sup>399</sup>

### ***5.3. La Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur***

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#### ***5.3.1. Le contexte économique local***

Les paragraphes précédents ont ainsi présenté le contexte économique transfrontalier, tout en soulignant son apport au développement économique des régions italiennes. Le rôle joué par les réseaux de Chambres de Commerce nationales a été également mis en évidence. Les Chambres de Commerce Italiennes des régions transfrontalières valorisent les activités italiennes à

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<sup>396</sup> Website <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/> Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée.

<sup>397</sup> Website <http://www.ccialpmed.eu/> Les CCI de l'Eurorégion.

<sup>398</sup> Ivi.

<sup>399</sup> Ivi.

l'intérieur du contexte français. La Chambre de Commerce Italienne pour la France de Marseille et la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, se regroupent à l'intérieur de la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Cette dernière fera l'objet de l'analyse suivante, afin de mieux présenter le contexte économique régional, celui du département des Alpes-Maritimes, mais aussi la ville de Nice.

Image 5.5. – **Le Département des Alpes-Maritimes**



Source : Website <http://paca.frandonnee.fr/>  
Le site du comité Régional de la Randonnée Pédestre de Provence - Alpes - Côte d'Azur.

Parmi les régions françaises les plus productives, la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur est au cœur du commerce européen.<sup>400</sup> L'Italie bénéficie donc de sa proximité de la région, mais aussi des ses accès maritimes. Au niveau des échanges commerciaux bilatéraux, l'Italie représente le premier fournisseur pour la région PACA<sup>401</sup>. En revanche, la région française ne résulte qu'à la deuxième position parmi les fournisseurs étrangers en Italie.<sup>402</sup> Bien que les flux de marchandises français en Italie aient récemment

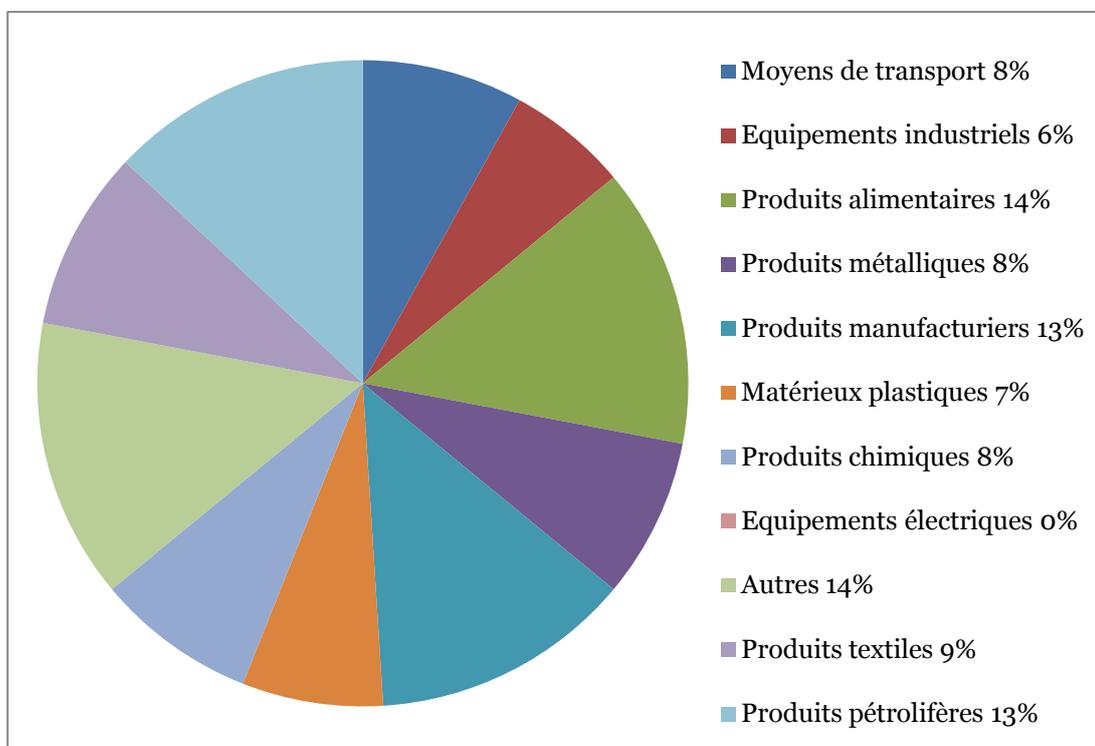
<sup>400</sup> Website [http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Nizza](http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato_Nizza) Consolato Generale di'Italia a Nizza, Fare affari in Francia.

<sup>401</sup> *Les échanges commerciaux entre la France et l'Italie, Quelques données comparatives*, Chambre de Commerce italienne de Nice, 8 avril 2013, p. 6.

<sup>402</sup> Ivi.

augmenté, ils n'ont jamais dépassé l'afflux des marchandises italiennes en France.

Image 5.6. – **Composition sectorielle des importations PACA de l'Italie**



**Source :** ISTAT – Banque de données COEWEEB (données du décembre 2011)  
*Colloque Franco – Italien, II Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*

Compte tenu des échanges transfrontaliers, de nombreuses marchandises provenant de la région PACA se destinent au marché italien du Piémont. De la même façon, la région italienne, notamment les entreprises dans la province de Cuneo, s'est spécialisée dans les productions les plus vendues sur les marchés de la région PACA.<sup>403</sup>

Dans le département des Alpes-Maritimes, au sud du territoire montagneux, les échanges commerciaux franco-italiens se développent le long de la frontière. Créée en 1860, par l'annexion du Comté italien de Nice à l'arrondissement français de Grasse, cette dernière n'est terminée qu'en 1947, par l'annexion du Canton de Tende.<sup>404</sup> Aujourd'hui, ce passage franco-italien

<sup>403</sup> *Colloque Franco-Italien, I Rapporto sugli scambi transfrontalieri nei territori dell'ALPMED*, cit. p. 27.

<sup>404</sup> M. Ortolani, *Les Alpes-Maritimes entre la France et l'Italie à travers le discours politique local (1860-1914)*, Cahier de la Méditerranée, 2008, p. 3.

favorise tout type d'échange entre les deux pays. Auparavant, il a été le théâtre des disputes franco-italiennes causées par les mouvements séparatistes niçois. L'esprit de coopération n'a donc pas forcément caractérisé les relations franco-italiennes dans les Alpes-Maritimes.

En revanche, les échanges commerciaux transfrontaliers ont bénéficié des flux migratoires italo-français. La proximité géographique du département et les nombreuses voies de communication avec l'Italie ont fait des Alpes-Maritimes l'une des destinations les plus choisies.<sup>405</sup> Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les migrants partaient de l'Italie et s'installaient là où ils pouvaient améliorer leurs conditions économiques. Les conséquences des migrations italiennes par rapport aux économies des pays de destinations ont déjà été traitées par cette étude. Pourtant, l'intégration économique italienne dans les Alpes-Maritimes diffère des cas précédemment analysés. En général, tout mouvement migratoire s'assimile à l'intérieur du contexte social, culturel, politique et économique de destination. Cette assimilation entraîne la perte des caractères italiens distinctifs, tout en décourageant le commerce avec le pays d'origine. Au contraire, la proximité géographique et culturelle des Alpes-Maritimes n'a entraîné quasiment aucune perte. Les migrants ont gardé leur besoin des marchandises italiennes, dont le commerce s'étend des groupes migratoires sur les marchés locaux.

Aujourd'hui, les activités commerciales soutiennent le développement économique du département, alors que les l'industrie et l'agroalimentaire sont affaiblis par la conformation géographique des Alpes-Maritimes. Le caractère montagneux des territoires alpins, d'une part, et l'urbanisation extrême des pôles urbains de Monaco, de Nice et de Cannes, de l'autre, découragent la création des agglomérations industrielles.<sup>406</sup> En revanche, l'urbanisation du littoral azuréen soutient la première vocation économique du territoire : le tourisme. Le commerce représente la deuxième activité principale. Parmi les partenaires commerciaux les plus importants, l'Italie se place à nouveau en première position. Nonobstant la crise économique, les échanges commerciaux bilatéraux entre les Alpes-Maritimes et ses partenaires italiens, n'arrêtent pas d'augmenter.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Ibidem p. 10.

<sup>406</sup> Website <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/> Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière.

<sup>407</sup> *Les échanges commerciaux entre France et Italie*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, cit. p.8.

Tableau 5.7. – **Composition sectorielle des échanges commerciaux italo-maritimes**

<b>Importations</b>	<b>Exportations</b>
Equipements médicaux	Produits chimiques
Planches à voiles	Déchets industriels
Vêtements	Planches à voiles
Produits alimentaires	Produits synthétiques
Meubles	Produits agroalimentaires
Matériaux de construction	Produits pharmaceutiques

**Source** :Données tirées du site internet [http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Nizza](http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato_Nizza)  
Consolato Generale d'Italia a Nizza

Les investissements directs à l'étranger franco-italo-monégasques bénéficient également de leur proximité économique de partenaires étrangers. De nombreuses entreprises Piémontaises, Liguriennes, mais aussi Lombardes, ont toujours délocalisé leurs activités économiques et commerciales au-delà de la frontière italienne.<sup>408</sup> Aujourd'hui, le flux d'investissements italiens à destination PACA a augmenté, notamment à cause de la résistance des consommations françaises.

Cette analyse, présentant le contexte économique de la région PACA, se termine enfin par quelques mots concernant la ville de Nice. Nice est le chef-lieu du département des Alpes-Maritimes. Elle est également la cinquième ville de France et l'un de pôle les plus urbanisés dans la région PACA. Compte tenu de son pôle hôtelier, le plus vaste de la Côte d'Azur, cette

<sup>408</sup> Website [http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Nizza](http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/Consolato_Nizza) Consolato Generale di'Italia a Nizza, Fare affari in Francia.

ville se consacre premièrement au tourisme.<sup>409</sup> Le tourisme niçois soutient le commerce au détail local et le secteur tertiaire des services aux particuliers. En ce qui concerne l'industrie, la majorité des entreprises niçoises se sont spécialisées dans les productions les plus innovantes, notamment en matière scientifique, médicale, des télécommunications, et de l'énergie.<sup>410</sup> Ces productions se localisent surtout dans le pôle scientifique de Sophia Antipolis.

### **5.3.2. La Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice**

Fondée en 1997, la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur est l'une de quatre Chambres de Commerce Italiennes officielles répertoriées en France.<sup>411</sup> En accord avec les dispositions italiennes contenues dans la loi 518 du 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1970, la CCIT de Nice travaille afin de développer les relations commerciales entre la France et l'Italie, en particulier au niveau de la région PACA.<sup>412</sup> Cette CCIT reprend donc toutes les qualités précédemment attribuées aux Chambres de Commerce Italiennes à l'étranger. Tout d'abord, sa naissance et ses activités dépendent de la présence d'immigrés italiens économiquement actifs sur le sol niçois. Ses associés, à la fois italiens, niçois et monégasques, bénéficient des liens institutionnels offerts par la CCIT afin de protéger et de promouvoir leurs intérêts.<sup>413</sup> Ses activités, enfin, correspondent aux programmes d'assistance et promotion illustrés tout au long des chapitres précédents.

#### *- Les services aux entreprises*

La Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice soutient les activités productives et commerciales italiennes localisées sur le sol transfrontalier français. Son programme de services aux entreprises s'adresse à la fois aux associés et aux particuliers nécessitant de l'assistance des experts commerciaux. Il entraîne des actions d'assistance de base, des services

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<sup>409</sup> *Collegamento Ferroviario Nizza-Italia, Perché e Come?*, cit. p. 19.

<sup>410</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>411</sup> Website <http://www.italieatable.fr/> L'Italie à table, la première expo vente de la gastronomie italienne.

<sup>412</sup> *Votre porte d'entrée pour l'Italie*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, 2013.

<sup>413</sup> *Ivi.*

commerciaux et des services techniques. Parmi les premières, des activités de traduction des documents légaux et fiscaux, mais aussi la domiciliation des filiales et des bureaux étrangers à l'adresse de la Chambre, sont offerts.<sup>414</sup> De plus, toutes les entreprises bénéficient des services d'entrepreneuriat proposés par la Chambre.

Les services commerciaux, en revanche, entraînent des actions d'étude concernant le choix du marché de destination pour les produits italiens exportés. La vente des marchandises italiennes produites directement en France est également soutenue par les études de marché de la CCIT de Nice. Ses experts se concentrant sur les caractéristiques des produits à vendre, ils recherchent les marchés les plus réceptifs dans la région PACA et dans le reste de la France.<sup>415</sup> Ils réalisent des analyses comparant les secteurs de production italiens avec les français afin de renseigner sur la concurrence locale, sur ses points de force et sur ses points de faiblesse. La gamme des services d'étude se termine par des tests de produit s'adressant aux consommateurs. Un nombre limité parmi ces derniers est testé pour identifier les chances de succès ou d'échec des produits.<sup>416</sup> Tous les services d'études proposés s'achèvent dans la recherche des clients-partenaires français. Tout au long de cette recherche, la CCIT de Nice bénéficie de sa connaissance du tissu productif français et des marchés locaux.<sup>417</sup> Suite à l'identification des partenaires et des clients intéressés, des rencontres d'affaires sont finalement organisées avec les opérateurs économiques italiens.<sup>418</sup>

Par rapport aux services techniques, la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice accompagne les opérateurs économiques italiens tout au long de l'accomplissement des formalités françaises en matière légale, fiscale et bancaire. Tout d'abord, les conseils fiscaux concernent les accomplissements relatifs à la TVA intracommunautaire, aux déclarations d'impôts et aux formalités douanières.<sup>419</sup> De plus, la CCIT propose des actions d'information concernant les nouveautés en matière de fiscalité

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<sup>414</sup> *Entreprendre en Italie*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, 2013.

<sup>415</sup> Ivi.

<sup>416</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Développement Commercial.

<sup>417</sup> Ivi.

<sup>418</sup> *Entreprendre en Italie*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, 2013.

<sup>419</sup> Ivi.

française et italienne. En revanche, la gamme des conseils légaux ne traite que les formalités relatives à la création des entreprises italiennes en France. La CCIT de Nice prévient les investisseurs en matière des dépenses et des réglementations concernant la rédaction des contrats commerciaux, de travail et d'embauche. Ces réglementations diffèrent de l'Italie à la France, notamment celles concernant le personnel embauché. Les investisseurs italiens bénéficient des conseils bancaires afin de se mettre en contact avec les instituts bancaires bilingues de la région PACA.<sup>420</sup> Compte tenu du soutien offert par la CCIT de Nice le long de cette recherche, elle propose, elle-même, des supports dans l'accomplissement des procédés bancaires et dans le choix des financements étrangers.<sup>421</sup> Enfin, les conseils immobiliers complètent la gamme des services techniques. En particulier, la CCIT de Nice bénéficie de ses contacts avec le réseau urbain local et régional pour renseigner les investisseurs italiens le long de leur recherche de locaux productifs et commerciaux sur la Côte d'Azur.<sup>422</sup> De la même façon, elle est en mesure de conseiller des candidats à embaucher.

Bien entendu, tous les services analysés s'adressent, à la fois, aux producteurs et aux investisseurs français et italiens. La CCIT de Nice peut donc aider les opérateurs économiques français pendant la recherche des marchés italiens les plus appropriés, pendant l'accomplissement des formalités italiennes, mais aussi dans la recherche des supports bancaires et immobiliers en Italie.

#### - *L'information*

L'information est également à la base de tous les procédés d'internationalisation. Tous les opérateurs économiques nécessitent d'être informés avant de s'engager dans l'exportation des produits et dans les investissements à destination de pays étrangers. Parfois, ces informations dépendent de l'assistance demandée : de nombreux conseils techniques, par exemple, entraînent des actions informatives de base. Les activités d'informations diffusent des données stratégiques concernant les tissus

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<sup>420</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Création d'Entreprise.

<sup>421</sup> Ivi.

<sup>422</sup> Ivi.

entrepreneuriaux étrangers, leurs points de forces, leurs points de faiblesse, mais aussi leurs changements. Compte tenu des caractéristiques des PME italiennes, dont la connaissance des marchés étrangers est faible, les services d'information proposés par la CCIT de Nice sont essentiels afin de renseigner en matière de commerce et de production dans la région PACA.

Tout d'abord, la CCIT de Nice organise des séminaires spécialisés tout au long de l'année.<sup>423</sup> Les questions abordées s'étendent des formalités légales, à la description des secteurs productifs et commerciaux les plus intéressants sur la Côte d'Azur. De la même façon, la Chambre de Nice organise des séminaires spécialisés se déroulant pendant ses manifestations promotionnelles afin de bénéficier des flux de participants et des opérateurs économiques invités.<sup>424</sup> Enfin, des portails informatifs en ligne complètent la gamme des actions informatives proposées.

- *Les programmes promotionnels*

La promotion des produits italiens sur les marchés transfrontaliers français est également fondamentale. Nonobstant la proximité géographique et culturelle, le succès des ventes italiennes en France dépend également des goûts et des intérêts des consommateurs français. Les programmes promotionnels proposés par la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice rapprochent donc les consommateurs français de la région PACA des produits italiens exportés dans l'Hexagone.

Ces actions sont constituées principalement par des activités de communication, des expositions, des missions économiques et des visites d'entreprises. Tout d'abord, les actions de communication visent à la réalisation des campagnes publicitaires et d'image, publicisant les produits italiens vendus en France. Cette première typologie de promotion se lie aux services commerciaux précédemment analysés. Suite à l'analyse des marchés locaux, aux tests de produits et aux études sectorielles comparatives, la CCIT de Nice est en mesure de produire des stratégies publicitaires spécifiques.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Séminaires Spécialisés.

<sup>424</sup> *L'Italie à table, 8<sup>ème</sup> salon de la gastronomie italienne*, RESOCONTO, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice ; *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, RESOCONTO VII Edizione, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice.

<sup>425</sup> *Votre Porte d'entrée pour l'Italie*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, 2013.

D'un côté, les campagnes publicitaires s'achèvent dans la création des logos de produits et de leurs messages en langue française. Les liens avec la presse locales et nationale, mais aussi l'accès aux réseaux de télévision et internet, garantissent ensuite la publicisation des produits. De l'autre, les actions d'image s'adressant aux nouveaux entrepreneurs italiens de la région PACA, entraînent la création de la nouvelle identité de l'entreprise et l'adaptation de sa mission entrepreneuriale aux caractéristiques des marchés français.<sup>426</sup>

Enfin, les expositions sectorielles organisées par la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice consistent principalement dans des foires et des salons agroalimentaires. Pendant ces expositions, les consommateurs français et internationaux de la Côte d'Azur sont renseignés sur les excellences gastronomiques italiennes. Du point de vue des exposants, ces salons représentent donc des vitrines promotionnelles à ne pas rater.<sup>427</sup> De plus, la CCIT Nice publicise auprès des opérateurs économiques italiens les salons sectoriels de la Côte d'Azur les plus intéressants. Elle participe aux expositions locales afin de promouvoir les entreprises adhérent, et de rechercher des clients-partenaires pour ces dernières.<sup>428</sup>

De la même façon, les missions économiques organisées par la CCIT de Nice renforcent la connaissance mutuelle des tissus entrepreneuriaux italiens et de la région PACA. Tout d'abord, les délégués économiques français sont guidés à la découverte des pôles industriels italiens les plus compétitifs. En Italie, ils participent aux expositions sectorielles italiennes les plus célèbres. Ce type de promotion vise à la création des partenariats industriels franco-italiens et au renforcement des flux d'investissements français en Italie. Ces missions économiques s'adressent également aux opérateurs économiques italiens intéressés par le tissu entrepreneurial azuréen. Dans ce cas, la CCIT de Nice organise des visites d'entreprises dans les pôles industriels locaux, notamment le pôle scientifique de Sophia Antipolis, le pôle cosmétique de Grasse et les chantiers navals de Cannes.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur.

<sup>427</sup> Websites <http://www.italieatable.fr/> L'Italie à Table, <http://www.amourchocolat.fr/> Pain, Amour et Chocolat.

<sup>428</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Foires et Salons.

<sup>429</sup> Website <http://www.consnizza.esteri.it/> Consolato Generale d'Italia a Nizza, Fare affari in Francia

- *La formation*

Toutes les Chambres de Commerce Italiennes à l'étranger proposent des cours de formation aux particuliers italiens et étrangers dans le pays où elles se localisent. Etant donnée sa collocation transfrontalière stratégique, la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice fait de ses cours de langue un outil essentiel. La collaboration économique et commerciale transfrontalière nécessite, en effet, de la connaissance des deux langues. Celle-ci est quasiment toujours demandée aux employés transfrontaliers.

Tout d'abord, les cours professionnels de la CCIT de Nice soutiennent l'apprentissage du vocabulaire technique français et italien selon le domaine d'intérêt.<sup>430</sup> En général, les salariés des entreprises transfrontalières s'adressent à la CCIT Nice afin d'apprendre le langage parlé, et écrit, nécessaire au commerce transfrontalier. Tous les particuliers français peuvent bénéficier du *Certificat de Connaissance de l'Italien Commercial* (CIC) attestant la maîtrise du langage commercial italien.<sup>431</sup> Celui-ci est délivré par la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice en collaboration avec l'Université de Pérouse. A côté du CIC, la CCIT de Nice délivre d'autres certificats attestant la connaissance de la langue italienne. En revanche, la Chambre ne délivre aucun certificat officiel concernant la maîtrise de la langue française.

D'une part, l'apprentissage linguistique soutient le développement des relations commerciales transfrontalières dans le territoire des Alpes-Maritimes. De la même façon, il bénéficie au tissu économique local, compte tenu des nombreux touristes venant d'Italie. La maîtrise de la langue italienne renforce donc la vente des produits locaux.

### **5.3.3. Quelques exemples concrets**

Ces derniers paragraphes traiteront des exemples concrets par rapport aux activités considérées, en particulier les services commerciaux et les

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<sup>430</sup> *La vostra porta d'ingresso per la Francia*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice.

<sup>431</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Formation.

actions promotionnelles. L'attention sera donc posée sur l'entreprise italienne CORRADI, adhérent de la CCIT de Nice, dont le service d'accompagnement commercial sera analysé. En revanche, parmi les actions promotionnelles proposées, les salons alimentaires *L'Italie à table* et *Pain, Amour et Chocolat* seront étudiés.

- *Le service à l'entreprise CORRADI*

CORRADI est une entreprise leader dans le secteur de l'aménagement d'extérieur, elle vante aujourd'hui un réseau international largement répandu. Depuis son siège principal dans la ville de Bologne, et de ses filiales étrangères localisées dans les pays le plus dynamiques, CORRADI vend ses produits partout dans le monde.

Le développement international de cette entreprise s'accompagne de l'évolution de ses activités. Depuis sa création en 1978, l'atelier bolonais s'est spécialisé dans la production de voiles d'ombrage.<sup>432</sup> Tout au long des décennies, cette production s'est accompagnée de la spécialisation dans les systèmes de couverture les plus complexes.<sup>433</sup> Dès 1998, la gamme des produits offerts par CORRADI s'est enrichie des meubles pour l'extérieur, dont cinq lignes mobilières ont été conçues, mais aussi des modules préfabriqués servant de nombreuses activités commerciales.<sup>434</sup>

Suite à l'évolution de sa production, CORRADI a diversifié sa localisation nationale. Le siège principal de Bologne se consacre actuellement à la création des systèmes de couverture, alors que le pôle industriel de Forlì s'occupe de la production des voiles d'ombrage CORRADI. Dans le pôle mobilier de Pesaro se développe enfin la production des meubles pour l'extérieur.<sup>435</sup> Etant donnée la diversification du savoir-faire italien dans des pôles régionaux de compétitivité, l'entreprise CORRADI recherche les régions italiennes les plus compétitives par rapport à ses produits.<sup>436</sup> Au-delà du

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<sup>432</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Nos Adhérent, CORRADI.

<sup>433</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>434</sup> Website <http://www.corradi.eu/> CORRADI – Outdoor Living Space.

<sup>435</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Nos Adhérent, CORRADI.

<sup>436</sup> Website <http://www.osservatoriodistretti.org/> Osservatorio Nazionale Distretti Italiani.

positionnement stratégique, CORRADI fait de la qualité des matériaux utilisés et de l'innovation technologique ses points de force.

De la même façon, CORRADI compte sur la qualité et l'innovation des produits exportés pour se développer à l'étranger. Depuis sa création, l'entreprise vend ses voiles d'ombrages et ses systèmes de couverture aux grossistes et aux revendeurs étrangers sur un marché extérieur très répandu. De plus, CORRADI a récemment créé des sièges commerciaux à l'étranger afin de se rapprocher de sa clientèle internationale. Le réseau international CORRADI compte aujourd'hui cinq bureaux commerciaux à l'étranger : en France, aux Etats-Unis, en Australie, en Chine, et à Abu Dhabi.<sup>437</sup> Ceux-ci gèrent la distributions des produits CORRADI dans les marchés européens, dans l'Amérique du Nord, au Moyen Orient et en Asie. Le développement du réseau international CORRADI témoigne de la nécessité récente des PME italiennes de renforcer leurs ventes à l'étranger. D'une part, depuis 2009, CORRADI s'est remis aux investissements directs à l'étranger afin de soutenir ses flux d'exportations. En revanche, la crise économique n'est pas la seule raison à la base du développement international. Celui-ci dépend également du succès des ventes à l'étranger.

En France, le siège commercial de CORRADI a été créé en 2012 dans la ville de Lyon.<sup>438</sup> Etant donné le succès du *contract* en France, c'est-à-dire du secteur de l'ameublement de tout espace public, CORRADI a bénéficié de ce marché dynamique dont les ventes ont récemment augmenté.<sup>439</sup> La création du siège commercial lyonnais soutient principalement le renforcement des flux d'exportation CORRADI à destination française, en particulier dans la région du Rhône Alpes. CORRADI s'adresse également à la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice afin de renforcer sa présence dans la région PACA. L'entreprise nécessite d'un programme d'accompagnement commercial se fondant sur des actions d'étude commercial et sur des services promotionnels.

L'assistance commerciale se consacre à la recherche des clients-partenaires dans le territoire azuréen. Parmi les secteurs considérés par les experts commerciaux de la CCIT de Nice, l'ameublement des espaces publics,

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<sup>437</sup> Website <http://www.corradi.eu/> CORRADI – Outdoor Living Space.

<sup>438</sup> Ivi.

<sup>439</sup> Website <http://www.italplanet.it/> èItalia for Francia n. 39, Giugno 2013.

l'architecture, en particulier l'urbanistique et des paysages, le bâtiment et le secteur hôtelier sont dominants.<sup>440</sup> Suite au choix des marchés des destinations, la CCIT de Nice analyse les contacts identifiés afin d'en sélectionner les plus appropriés pour la vente des produits CORRADI, mais aussi pour la création des partenariats commerciaux.<sup>441</sup> Tout au long de cette phase, les actions promotionnelles prennent la place des services commerciaux. Cette promotion entraîne des actions de communication et de marketing, le contact téléphonique des clients potentiels et l'envoi des emails de présentation de l'entreprise. Le contact téléphonique est essentiel afin de donner des informations de base concernant l'activité de CORRADI, mais aussi pour en tirer des informations détaillées concernant l'activités des partenaires potentiels.<sup>442</sup> Selon le type d'intérêts manifesté par le client contacté, la CCIT de Nice envoie des dossiers commerciaux intégrant les services de communication précédents avec des informations détaillées.<sup>443</sup> Du succès des actions de communication dépendent les rendez-vous entre CORRADI et les clients partenaires français (Tableau 5.9.). Durant les rendez-vous suivant les actions de communication et de marketing, les représentants CORRADI rencontrent directement ses partenaires potentiels. Ces représentants peuvent bénéficier de l'assistance directe offerte par la CCIT de Nice, entraînant des services d'entrepreneuriat et des conseils techniques.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> *Progetto di Promozione ed Accompagnamento Commerciale Francia per CORRADI – Outdoor Living Space*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur, Maggio 2013

<sup>441</sup> *Preventivo di spesa, Accompagnamento Commerciale CORRADI*, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Maggio 2013.

<sup>442</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>443</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>444</sup> Website <http://www.ccinice.org/> Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur.

Tableau 5.8. – **Sélection des contacts CORRADI**

NOM	RESPONSABLES	ADRESSE	VILLE	SECTEUR D'ACTIVITE	RESULTAT
ALUTEXTILE	OUDOT Franck	1450 AVENUE PLAINE	MOUGINS	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
ARQUATI STOREA	PAPU Aurélien	14 BOULEVARD PAPE JEAN XXIII SAINT ROCH	NICE	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
ATELIER NOUVEAU DE CONFECTION CHUTEL	CHUTEL Marie-Christine	16 BOULEVARD LOUIS NEGRIN	CANNES LA BOCCA	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
ALU MAX	LAMY Olivier	100 ROUTE NATIONALE LE CHENE	APT	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
AXIS STORES	MARAFIOTI Joseph	278 ROUTE TURIN	NICE	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
DESTOCK PISCINES ET SPAS	Corinne et Stéphane	AVENUE VIADUC	APT	GROSSISTES	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
MSM ENTREPRISE	VETTESE Pascal	zone d'activité de la Massane - RUE BAUXITES	SAINT REMY DE PROVENCE	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
MICHEL	MICHEL Maurice	8 RUE ARTISANAT ZI LES ARCHES	DIGNE LES BAINS	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
ART ET FENETRES MOREAU	MOREAU F.	ZAC DES ESCAMPADES - 59 chemin de rouliers	MONTEUX	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
LA SYMPHONIE DES SENS	RIPOLL Christophe	95A ROUTE DES ALPES	ROBION	GROSSISTES	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
LIGNE ET CONCEPT	SELTZ	800 ROUTE DE ROBION	CAVAILLON	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
DELASARA MICHEL	DELASARA Michel	48 COURS BERTEUIL	VALREAS	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
ENTREPRISE GERBAUD	GERBAUD Claude	12 LOTISSEMENT CLOS DES SOURIRES	MONTEUX	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
LES STORES DE L'ISLE	COLLIGNON Gérard	79 ZONE ARTISANALE LA CIGALIERE	LE THOR	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
LAFONT STORE	LAFONT	CHEMIN MARAICHERS	CARPENTRAS	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS
KIONE HOME ' ISOL PERTUIS	Gilles LAGAREC	762 ROUTE D'AIX EN PROVENCE	PERTUIS	INSTALLATEURS	OK RENDEZ-VOUS

Source : Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur.

Tout au long de l'année, la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice organise les salons gastronomiques *Pain, Amour et Chocolat* et *L'Italie à table*. L'activité de promotion de la CCIT se consacre premièrement au secteur italien de l'agroalimentaire qui constitue l'un des points de force des exportations italiennes en France.<sup>445</sup> Parmi les produits les plus achetés, des pâtes, des légumes, de la viande, mais aussi les vins italiens, dominent les marchés transfrontaliers français.<sup>446</sup> Etant données la qualité et la traçabilité des produits italiens, ces derniers répondent aux exigences des consommateurs et des opérateurs économiques français. Au niveau de la région PACA, le succès de l'agroalimentaire italien se base également sur l'activité de restaurants français et italiens. Compte tenu de la vocation touristique du territoire azuréen et des nombreux touristes italiens, les spécialités culinaires du beau pays se sont intégrées dans l'offre gastronomique local. D'une part, les restaurateurs français proposent des spécialités traditionnelles italiennes, dont les ingrédients sont directement importés de l'Italie. De l'autre, les restaurateurs italiens profitent également de la proximité de l'Italie et des flux touristiques italiens, et ils proposent les spécialités culinaires les plus traditionnelles de leurs régions de provenance. La restauration, en effet, représente l'activité la plus répandue parmi les immigrés italiens de la Côte d'Azur.

Dans ce contexte, les salons organisés par la CCIT de Nice constituent des rendez-vous essentiels. Ici, les dégustations des produits italiens régionaux, les séminaires et les démonstrations alimentaires contribuent à la connaissance des produits italiens, en particulier de leur qualité et de leurs origines. Ces salons soutiennent à la fois la vente des produits italiens sur le marché agroalimentaire azuréen, et la création des partenariats commerciaux entre les producteurs italiens et les opérateurs économiques français.

- ***Pain, Amour et Chocolat : le salon aux doux parfumes de l'amour***

Pendant la fête des amoureux, du 14 au 16 février, la ville d'Antibes accueille le salon de la gastronomie italienne *Pain Amour et Chocolat*. Depuis

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<sup>445</sup> *L'alimentare italiano prospera in Francia, risorsa ancora forte per l'Italia.*

website <http://www.montecarlonews.it/> Quotidiano online sul Principato di Monaco e Costa Azzurra.

<sup>446</sup> Ivi.

2007, cette manifestation se consacre à l'exposition des produits gastronomiques de la pâtisserie, de la chocolaterie, de la confiturerie et de la boulangerie italienne et française.<sup>447</sup> Le salon admet également l'exposition de l'artisanat non-culinaire des idées cadeaux.<sup>448</sup> Toutes ces productions bien se lient à l'occasion de la fête culturelle de la Saint-Valentin. La ville d'Antibes est également transformée pour devenir une vitrine promotionnelle bénéficiant des premiers flux touristiques saisonniers. *Pain, Amour et Chocolat* s'adresse aux particuliers, alors que les exposants sont les seuls opérateurs économiques présents. Par conséquent, cette manifestation vise premièrement à la diffusion du savoir-faire culinaire italien et français auprès du public international de la Côte d'Azur.<sup>449</sup> La création de partenariats commerciaux ne constitue qu'un objectif secondaire par rapport à la promotion des excellences pâtisseries, chocolatières, et confiturières.

Cependant, cette manifestation renforce également les relations commerciales franco-italiennes. La promotion auprès des touristes français et italiens, mais aussi la diffusion du savoir-faire culinaire supportent la grande distribution de ces produits sur les deux marchés transfrontaliers. Des dégustations et des démonstrations culinaires des produits régionaux italiens et français sont donc organisées, afin de susciter de l'intérêt des consommateurs présents.<sup>450</sup> De plus, des visites muséales et des projections italiennes sur le thème de l'amour, sont également proposées afin de renforcer les relations culturelles entre les deux pays.<sup>451</sup> *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, entraîne enfin des actions de marketing territorial, dont la ville d'Antibes profite. Ainsi, les flux touristiques attirés par la manifestation contribuent au développement économique du centre historique.

En ce qui concerne les exposants, *Pain, Amour et Chocolat* s'ouvre à tous les producteurs italien et français intéressés par cette manifestation. Chaque année, la majorité des exposants effectifs provient principalement des territoires transfrontaliers de l'Eurorégion des Alpes Méditerranée. Le Piémont, notamment la province de Cuneo, domine parmi les régions de provenance. Ce flux d'exposants piémontais témoigne de l'importance de la

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<sup>447</sup> *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, RESOCONTO VII Edizione, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice

<sup>448</sup> Website <http://www.amourchocolat.fr/> Pain, Amour et Chocolat, Antibes.

<sup>449</sup> Ivi.

<sup>450</sup> *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, RESOCONTO VII Edizione, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice.

<sup>451</sup> Website <http://www.amourchocolat.fr/> Pain, Amour et Chocolat, Antibes.

région PACA par rapport à l'exportation des produits alimentaires piémontais. La Ligurie, la Lombardie, l'Emilie-Romagne, notamment la province de Bologne, les Marches et la Calabre, sont également représentées.<sup>452</sup> Du côté français, les exposants appartiennent aux régions transfrontalières du Rhône-Alpes et PACA. Certains d'entre eux proviennent des régions de la Languedoc Roussillon et du département d'Allier, toujours dans le sud de la France.<sup>453</sup>

Enfin, le salon *Pain Amour et Chocolat* témoigne de la capacité des réseaux de Chambres de Commerce différents de collaborer dans le but de supporter le développement des tissus entrepreneuriaux locaux. La Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice travaille en partenariat avec la Chambre des Métiers et de l'Artisanat des Alpes-Maritimes afin de réaliser cette vitrine promotionnelle pour les exposants italiens et français.<sup>454</sup>

#### - ***L'Italie à table : le salon de la gastronomie italienne***

Depuis 2004, la manifestation gastronomique *L'Italie à table* se déroule au cœur de la ville de Nice, traditionnellement le long de la Promenade des Anglais, parfois dans le vert des jardins Albert 1<sup>er</sup>.<sup>455</sup> D'une part, le salon bénéficie des flux touristiques attirés par ces lieux. De l'autre, la période choisie est également importante : quatre jours, traditionnellement fixés de la fin du mois de mai au début de juin. Cette période représente le début de la saison touristique azurienne, dont *L'Italie à table* exploite les premiers flux.

Le salon *Italie à table* s'adresse premièrement aux particuliers, notamment les touristes de la Côte d'Azur. Parmi les vacanciers internationaux, les américains, les brésiliens, les arabes, les russes, les chinois et les japonais, participent à cette expo vente des produits alimentaires italiens.<sup>456</sup> Néanmoins, les touristes et les citoyens italiens de la Côte d'Azur sont également attirés par ce salon. Nonobstant leurs origines

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<sup>452</sup> *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, RESOCONTO VII Edizione, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice.

<sup>453</sup> Ivi.

<sup>454</sup> Website <http://www.amourchocolat.fr/> Pain, Amour et Chocolat, Antibes.

<sup>455</sup> Website <http://www.italieatable.fr/> L'Italie à table, la première expo vente de la gastronomie italienne.

<sup>456</sup> *L'Italie à table, 8ème salon de la gastronomie italienne*, RESOCONTO, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur.

italiennes, ils sont intéressés par les activités de dégustation, les démonstrations et les animations culinaires.<sup>457</sup>

*L'Italie à table* partage avec le salon *Pain, Amour et Chocolat* le but de diffuser la connaissance des spécialités gastronomiques italiennes et régionales. Au contraire, la promotion de la gastronomie française est abandonnée. Les exposants de *L'Italie à table* ne proviennent que de certaines régions italiennes, notamment les transfrontalières. Parmi les régions de provenance des exposants, la Lombardie, la Vénétie, l'Emilie-Romagne, la Toscane, l'Ombrie, le Latium, la Basilicate, les Pouilles, et la Sicile, s'ajoutent aux régions transfrontalières italiennes de la Ligurie et du Piémont.<sup>458</sup> Pendant 4 jours, ces producteurs se déplacent sur Nice, afin de bénéficier de cette vitrine promotionnelle. Ils proposent des spécialités gastronomiques régionales, tout en donnant des informations concernant les origines des produits, leur qualité, mais aussi les procédés des productions.<sup>459</sup> De plus, ils bénéficient de cette manifestations afin de rechercher des partenaires commerciaux dans le territoire azuréen. Tout au long des années, en effet, *L'Italie à table* s'est également consacrée à la créations de partenariats commerciaux franco-italiens, à travers des actions spécifiques. Elle s'est ouverte aux buyers français et internationaux, tout en devenant un rendez-vous économique essentiel. Par rapport au salon *Pain, Amour et Chocolat*, les touristes ne constituent qu'une partie du public participant à *L'Italie à table*. Des séminaires, des conférences professionnelles et des rencontres business-to-business s'adressent aux opérateurs économiques français et internationaux. Ces activités renforcent la connaissance des productions italiennes et les contacts avec les producteurs régionaux italiens.

Ce salon de la gastronomie italienne est organisé par la Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, la Région PACA et la Ville de Nice.<sup>460</sup> Cette collaboration témoigne de la capacité de la CCIT de Nice de s'intégrer à l'intérieur du réseau institutionnel et administratifs niçois. En général, toutes les Chambres de Commerce italiennes à l'étranger bénéficient de leur localisation étrangère. En revanche, les Chambres de Commerce nationales

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<sup>457</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>458</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>459</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>460</sup> *L'Italie à table, 8ème salon de la gastronomie italienne*, RESOCONTO, Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Nice, Sophia Antipolis, Côte d'Azur.

en Italie rencontrent de nombreuses difficultés dans l'organisation des manifestations à l'étranger. La distance physique, mais aussi les faibles contacts avec les institutions locales, menacent la réussite des actions promotionnelles. Voilà donc que les Chambres de Commerce italiennes à l'étranger constituent un réseau essentiel et stratégique complétant et améliorant les supports pour l'internationalisation des entreprises italiennes.

## ***Conclusions***

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Since the late 1980s, internationalisation processes had been playing a central role in the world economy. Nowadays, they are assumed to be of paramount importance to many countries' economic survival. As Italy is one of them, this study has aimed at presenting the Italian institutional network supporting such processes: it particularly focuses on the Italian Chambers of Commerce network as the most well-structured system supporting Italian companies' international development.

From a historical point of view, internationalisation processes result from many political, social and economic changes that have occurred since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Innovations in the way goods used to be transported, the rise of technology-intensive productions and changes in the way international labour was divided fostered both the expansion of the world trade, as well as new international business procedures. More and more countries have consequently engaged with their international business development, as newer internationalisation techniques have arisen. The current free trade regime, preventing protectionism from reducing international business operations, equally proves how essential internationalisation processes are to the States' world community. Many of them have turned to internationalisation as the only solution to the current economic world crisis. Older European economies were more heavily affected by rising public debts than other countries, triggering economic austerity measures that inevitably weakened domestic purchasing powers. Searching for dynamic external markets appeared to be the greatest solution to avoid the European entrepreneurial breakdown. According to historical evidence, there has been a change in the way States have been relating to internationalisation. In the past exports, foreign acquisitions and mergers just increased national entrepreneurial profits, by selling domestic overproductions to additional foreign end-markets. Nowadays, overproduction also includes older national sells whose volumes have dramatically decreased, particularly in the European area. Foreign sells have now replaced national ones. Internationalisation procedures do not simply add foreign profits to domestic ones any more, as they are now the main source to countries' economic survival.

As to the Italian business internationalisation, our country's production system has presented more than just one structural characteristic preventing it from successfully developing on foreign markets. Nowadays, such problems have seriously endangered the Italian entrepreneurial survival. On the one hand, Italy could never have benefited from its technology-intensive productions. Foreign imported raw materials primarily fostered Italian manufactured productions and then mechanical engineering. Such a comparative advantage has always depended on national under-average education standards, especially in high technologies. This latter educational gap has inevitably discouraged foreign investors from transferring their national advanced technologies to our country. As to the Italian export performance, consequences are equally negative. Since manufactured goods have always firmly ruled Italian comparative advantage, Italy is currently suffering from emerging countries' efficiencies and competitiveness, now more than ever. As a consequence, Italy cannot stop ceding its older shares on foreign import markets to emerging countries. Secondly, this study asserts that Italian companies' dimensions equally negatively impact on national exports and foreign investments. Italian small and medium enterprises abound, fostering a domestic entrepreneurial network that structurally lacks both the required capital endowment and know how to internationalise. Because of such deficiencies, Italian PMEs' export flows are forcedly restricted within the main European markets, whose domestic purchasing powers are strongly affected by the above austerity measures. As to Italian investment flows, local decentralisation, as well as undemanding internationalisation strategies resulted to be preferred.

The above picture mainly brings to light the harmful features of our country's production system. Nonetheless, it is equally worth specifying its main advantages, like the world-renowned quality of Italian products. Quality represents the most competitive feature that Italian goods can count on when facing emerging countries' competition. Furthermore, Italian SMEs' ability to partially solve the above structural problems further improves our country's production system. More and more Italian companies appear to have recently undertaken some relocation processes aiming at reaching the furthest and most dynamic markets.

All of the above improvements, like relying on quality products and newer logistic services, do not completely suffice for successfully improving our country's economic international development. As a structural deficiency, the lack of capital endowment and proper know-how still remains. Although Italian enterprises have certainly done the best that they could to successfully internationalise, they need further external help bringing real solutions to structural problems. Italian public bodies are the first institutional actors providing both financial, insurance, assistance, informational and promotional help. Such bodies are well-structured into a deep network including departmental bodies, Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture, Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad, as well as credits, insurance and trade institutes. Despite differences in the kind of services usually provided, these later ones need being commensurate with Italian SMEs' capital endowments. Such a prerogative is essential in order to successfully support Italian internationalisation. Accordingly, credits loans conditions and insurance terms are usually designed for Italian small and medium enterprises.

Nonetheless, a curious paradox appears, threatening assistance, informational and promotional help. On the one hand, assistance and informational services fill national SMEs' cognitive gaps related to business internationalisation procedures, costs and risks. On the other, promotion advertises our country's production system, as well as its entrepreneurial network, in order to draw foreign direct investments and foster international commercial partnerships. The Italian government officially considers all of the above activities of paramount importance to business internationalisation, as it personally finances and directs them through its Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All of the national public institutions providing such services can be assumed to be equally important. Nevertheless, their survival is constantly threatened by the same departmental bodies that should keep sustaining them. To begin with, over the last few years, the amount of departmental public funds that Italian Chambers of Commerce and the old Institute of Foreign Trade used to be granted, have inevitably decreased. Even worse, departmental interventions did not exclusively limit to financial cuts. In 2011, the above Institute of

Foreign Trade was officially closed and absorbed within the Ministry of Economic Development, while the Italian Chambers of Commerce network is currently threatened to be officially dismantled. The reason explaining such severe interventions consists in the high amount of public resources that such bodies usually require. Both of them, indeed, rely on a national and international network. As to the Italian Chambers of Commerce one, it also includes many special centres and agencies that additionally impact on departmental economic resources.

Nevertheless, dismantling such well-structured networks does not represent the better solution. Once the old ICE Institute was officially closed in 2011, a *Promotion and Internationalisation Fund* was created within the Ministry of Economic Development, while the Institute's foreign bodies were absorbed within the Italian diplomatic network.<sup>461</sup> Although this later takeover effectively cancelled many duplicate services provided from abroad, the above Promotion Fund never successfully provided the most strategic assistance, informational and promotional services. The creation of the new Promotion Agency for Companies' Internationalisation, just one year later, clearly displays how much such activities are essential to business internationalisation. This new Agency inherited the old Institute's main functions, although its structure was inevitably unburdened. Further to such an example, the Italian CC national network might be reviewed. Although national Chambers of Commerce are not exclusively concerned with Italian enterprises' business internationalisation, they equally provide assistance, informational and promotional services supporting Italian exports and foreign investments. On the one hand, reshaping the network would certainly cause few damages to national economic operators, as they would inevitably lose their closest institutions. Nonetheless, this would still represent a better solution, rather than dismantling the entire network. This latter one is deeply-rooted into our country's geography and history. The range of assistance, informational and promotional services, that such a network used to provide, have always taken into consideration both Italian companies' structural as well as geographical needs. It is worth reminding, that Italian enterprises' main needs change from one region to another, as our country's

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<sup>461</sup> C. Fo., *Soppresso l'ICE e liquidati gli enti in dissesto*, website <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/IMPRESA & TERRITORI>, 5 Luglio 2011.

production system is well decentralised to better benefit from natural and infrastructural endowments. In sum, foreign CC can successfully provide national companies with the above special supporting programs, that can help them when turning to foreign markets. If compared to the new Promotion Agency for Italian Companies' Internationalisation, the Italian CC network does not provide duplicate services. On the contrary, it further completes the former's standard assistance and promotional programs bringing to the light the main companies' priorities.

As to the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad network, it is still uncertain whether the above departmental threats actually concern it. Thanks to departmental acknowledgements, foreign CC are considered as part of the whole Chamber of Commerce network, including the above national CC. They are equally officially acknowledged as a part of the above network providing assistance, informational as well as promotional services. Nonetheless, as autonomous private associations, they primarily fund themselves through entrance and service fees and consequently enjoy much more autonomy rather than their national counterparts. Though, if departmental intervention should also concern foreign CC, once again consequences would be negative. To begin with, our country's entrepreneurial network would lose the one and only remaining foreign network, covering all of the range of activities related to business internationalisation. Secondly, such a network differs from the above ones, due to its strategic geographical location. Services provided cannot be duplicated neither by national CC, nor by the current ICE Promotion Agency. As these latter ones just rely on domestic bodies, they would never provide the same informational and advice heritage coming from Italian institutions located abroad.

In sum, the described network appears to be well-structured, including both a wide range of bodies and services. Nonetheless, due to the current economic difficulties that our country is suffering from, quality has turned to be more important than quantity. The above network cannot avoid being reshaped on the one hand. None of its bodies should be completely removed, though, as they all differently contribute to our country's business internationalisation. As to the wide range of services provided, it should

neither be reduced. Each and every credit, insurance, assistance, informational and promotional service has become essential, due to the above national companies structural problems. Despite all of the above considerations, the problem is still unsolved. Accordingly, it is still uncertain whether the Italian entrepreneurial network will eventually successfully internationalise.



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