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Questioni di Economia e Finanza

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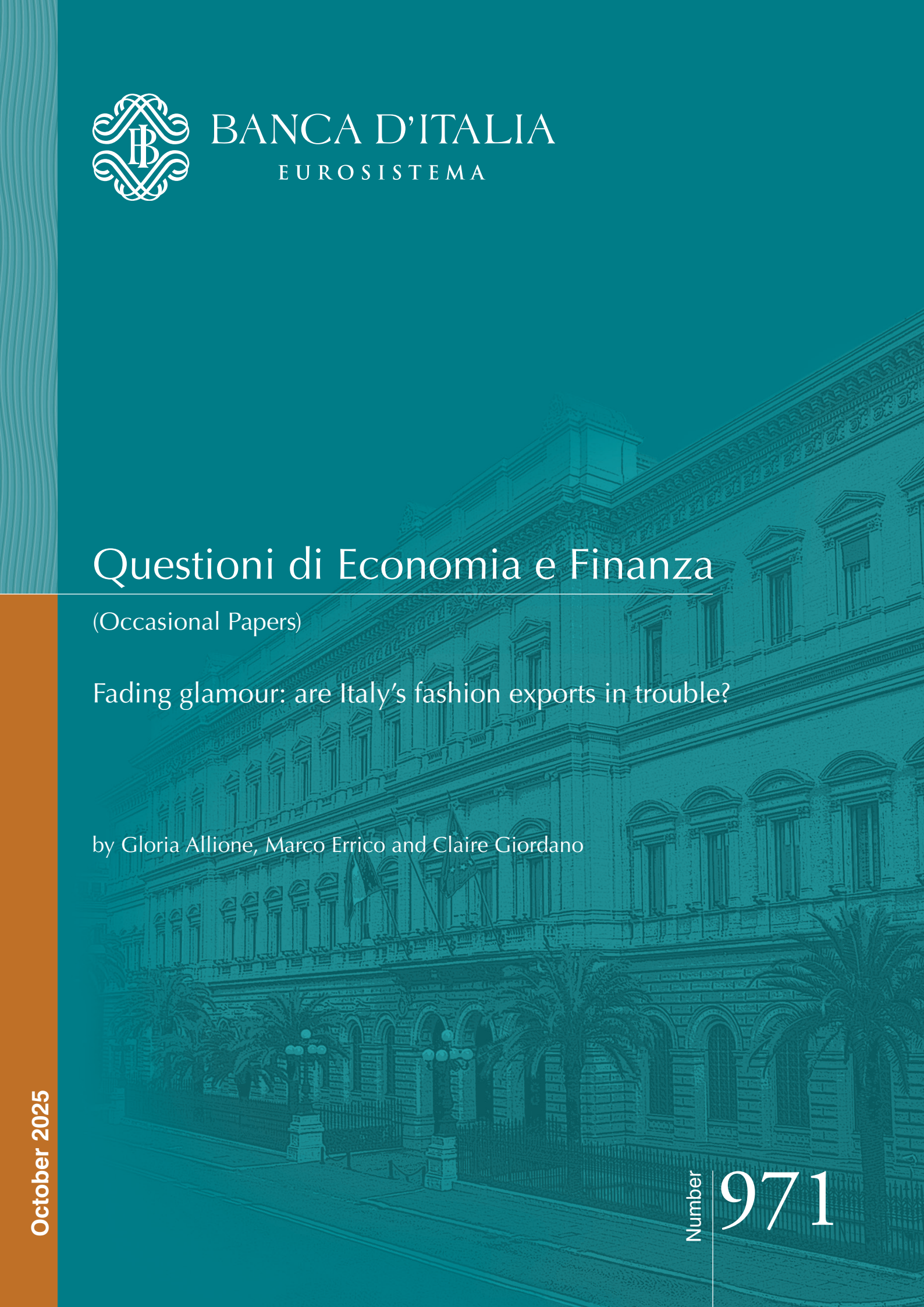

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FADING GLAMOUR:
ARE ITALY'S FASHION EXPORTS IN TROUBLE?

by Gloria Allione*, Marco Errico* and Claire Giordano*

Abstract

Historically, Italy has been known for its successful fashion industry (textiles, wearing apparel and leather). This article analyses the drivers of the recent downturn in the country's fashion exports. Over the years 2019-24, Italy's fashion export share in world markets remained stable, as a result, however, of weakening exports matching sluggish global demand. In 2022-24, the volume of Italy's fashion exports declined significantly; the fall was broad-based across the three branches and particularly marked for leather goods. Foreign sales for Italy's top 1 per cent of fashion exporters contracted the most; luxury goods exporters fared worse than 'fast-fashion' firms, especially in the leather goods branch. In the short term, demand for Italy's fashion exports is not expected to strengthen; US tariffs and Chinese export diversion to third markets pose downward risks, despite a possible buffer stemming from the high-quality positioning of Italy's exports.

JEL Classification: F14, L67, O52.

Keywords: goods exports, fashion, luxury goods.

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* Banca d'Italia, DG Economics and Statistics, Balance of payments Analysis Division. This article was written when Marco Errico was employed by Banca d'Italia.

1. Introduction[1]

The global economy is currently facing strong uncertainty, world trade is undergoing unprecedented shifts polarizing around geopolitical blocs and redefining global value chains[2] and many regions are recording a cyclical slowdown. Consumers in the euro area, scarred by the recent period of high inflation, are increasingly price-sensitive as well as cautious, accumulating savings in the face of high uncertainty (Panetta, 2025), which weakens demand. Climate change and the energy transition are also yielding changes in consumer behaviour, in favour of circularity and sustainability.

Although these macroeconomic trends weigh down on all economic sectors, the fashion industry – one of the manufacturing sectors in which Italy has a comparative advantage and which currently accounts for 11 per cent of the country's total nominal goods exports – has been particularly affected.[3] Indeed, since 2022 the volume of Italy's total goods exports has declined by 1.8 per cent, with the fashion industry alone contributing by nearly half to this fall.

The fashion industry masks strong heterogeneity, covering on the one hand textiles, which are generally intermediate goods, and on the other hand wearing apparel and leather products, which are final consumer goods, as well as both luxury and "fast-fashion" brands within the latter two branches in particular. Using manifold macro and micro data sources in order to take all these heterogeneous dimensions into account, this article aims at assessing developments of Italy's fashion exports over the past decade with a specific focus on the determinants of the 2023-24 decline, also in comparison with the main euro-area economies; the short-term outlook and risks for Italy's fashion exports are then discussed.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 analyses global competition and demand in the three fashion segments over the past decade. Section 3 investigates Italy's export performance in the three branches over the same period, in comparison with the other three largest euro-area economies. Section 4 zooms into the main geographical drivers of Italy's fashion export decline since 2022. Section 5 employs firm-level data to gauge further relevant heterogeneity dimensions, such as export size and luxury appeal. Section 6 uses survey and firm-level data to trace the short-term outlook and risks for Italy's fashion exports. Section 7 concludes.

2. Italy's global fashion competitors

The relevance of the fashion industry has been steadily declining in world markets over the last ten years. Indeed, the share of global fashion in world merchandise imports at current values net of energy goods (a proxy of world demand) decreased by around 20 per cent between 2015 and 2024 (from around 6 to just under 5 per cent), with this trend evident across all its component sectors (textiles, wearing apparel, and leather and leather articles; Fig. 1, left-hand side panel).[4] The overall

[1] We thank Stefano Federico, Alberto Felettigh, Alfonso Rosolia and Filippo Scoccianti for comments on a previous draft, and Claudia Borghese for retrieving historical data for us. The views expressed herein are those of the Authors and not of the institution represented.

[2] See for example Conteduca et al. (2024).

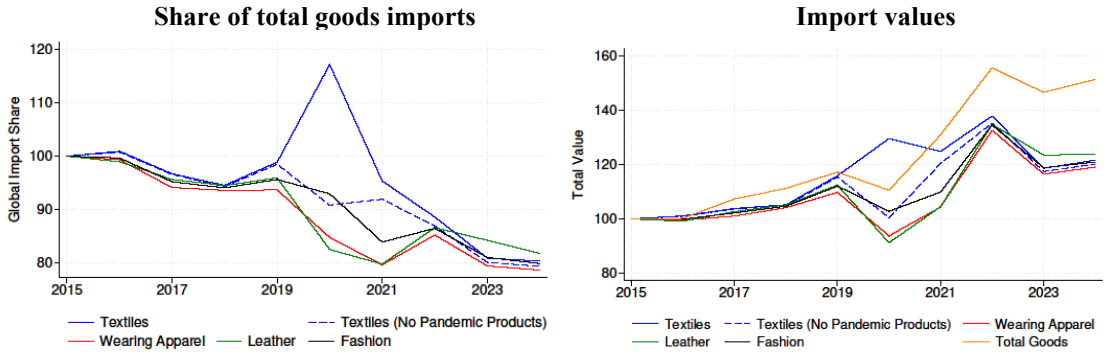
[3] McKinsey (2025) also refers to the rise in low-quality duplicate products and fakes as another factor specifically hampering the global fashion industry. OECD (2025) documents that clothing and footwear are the top targets for counterfeiters, accounting for 43 and 21 per cent of global seizures by number, respectively; for both categories, China, Hong Kong, and Turkey dominate counterfeit trade.

[4] See Table A1 in the Annex for the product classification based on international trade in goods statistics (ITGS). For brevity, in this note we refer to the "leather and leather articles" as simply "leather"; this branch also includes footwear. The anomalous peak in the global textiles import share in 2020 was driven by pandemic-related products such as face masks. These trends are confirmed also when considering all goods imports (including energy) or only consumption good imports.

decline in the fashion import share was due to faster growth in total goods imports than in purchases from abroad of all three fashion branches (Fig. 1, right-hand side panel). These patterns thus suggest a global shift towards the consumption of other products, to the detriment of fashion brands.

Figure 1 – Global imports of the fashion industry at current prices, 2015-24

(indices 2015=100)



Source: authors' calculations on Trade Data Monitor (TDM).
Notes: Total goods underlying both panels are net of energy goods (HS27). The classification for fashion products is reported in Table A1 in the Annex. In the dashed series pandemic-related products (HS 630790) are netted out.

Based on 2024 data, China dominates global markets in the three sectors of the fashion industry (Table 1); Italy's fashion export market share is instead the highest among the main euro-area economies. In particular, China holds an overall market share of 42 per cent, with a peak of 57 in textiles and shares of around 36 in the other two branches. Although way behind China, Vietnam and Italy are the following two top global fashion exporters, both with a market share of over 7 per cent, thanks to their significant presence in wearing apparel and leather. By contrast, in textiles Italy ranks only sixth, after China, India, Germany, Türkiye and the United States; China's share is more than double than that of the cumulative share of the other five top exporters.

Table 1 – Export market shares in the fashion industry of the top ten exporter countries in 2024

(percentage shares on values)

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather		Fashion	
China	57.1	China	35.5	China	36.6	China	41.6
India	7.4	Vietnam	7.4	Vietnam	11.2	Vietnam	7.5
Germany	5.2	***Italy***	***6.7***	***Italy***	***11.1***	***Italy***	***7.2***
Türkiye	5.0	Germany	6.2	France	8.2	Germany	5.9
United States	4.7	Netherlands	4.2	Germany	6.0	France	4.5
Italy	***4.4***	Türkiye	4.0	Belgium	4.0	India	4.2
Vietnam	4.2	France	3.7	Netherlands	3.9	Netherlands	3.7
Pakistan	3.3	India	3.7	Indonesia	3.4	Türkiye	3.4
France	2.5	Spain	3.4	Spain	2.6	Spain	2.8
Netherlands	2.5	Poland	3.2	Hong Kong	2.2	Belgium	2.6

Source: authors' calculations on TDM.
Notes: The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

Table 2 analyses the medium-term developments of the export market shares of Italy, the other three main euro-area economies and any other top three global exporter country in each sector. These dynamics were heterogeneous over time. Between 2015 and 2019 Italy, together with Vietnam and

the other main euro-area economies, gained weight in global markets in the fashion industry at the expense of China (Table 2).[5] This trend for Italy was driven by the wearing apparel and leather sectors. By contrast in the same years Italy suffered a moderate decline in the textile sector, similarly to all other major players.[6] During the 2019-24 period China exhibited robust growth in its overall fashion export market share, mainly driven by textiles.[7] Most top global exporter countries experienced a negligible or modest rise in market shares in the overall fashion industry; Italy's stability, in particular, was driven by a strong positive contribution of wearing apparel (which marked an increase of 0.5 percentage points), against a marginal decrease in textiles and a declining market share in leather (by 0.7 points). Regarding the latter branch, Italy was the only "loser" amongst the reported economies, yet still remains the second largest global exporter world-wide. In the next section we dig deeper specifically into Italy's fashion export dynamics over the past decade.

Table 2 – Changes in export market shares across top global fashion exporter countries, 2015-24

(percentage points, values)

Textiles			**Wearing Apparel**		
	15-19	**19-24**		**15-19**	**19-24**
China	-3.4	8.1	China	-9.5	1.1
India	-1.1	0.8	Vietnam	-0.9	0.0
Germany	-0.5	-0.2	***Italy***	***0.7***	***0.5***
Italy	***-0.6***	***-0.2***	Germany	1.3	0.5
France	-0.3	0.3	France	0.3	0.7
Spain	0.0	0.1	Spain	0.4	0.0
Leather			**Fashion**		
	15-19	**19-24**		**15-19**	**19-24**
China	-8.1	2.7	China	-7.4	3.3
Vietnam	4.4	1.0	Vietnam	1.7	0.4
Italy	***1.0***	***-0.7***	***Italy***	***0.4***	***0.0***
France	1.4	2.1	Germany	0.8	0.4
Germany	1.4	0.9	France	0.4	0.9
Spain	0.0	0.4	Spain	0.2	0.2

Source: authors' calculations on TDM.

Notes: The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex. For each sector, the table reports the top three global exporter countries, taken from Table 1, plus the remaining of the four main euro-area economies not included in the top three.

3. Developments of Italy's fashion exports over the past decade

According to national accounts (NA) by sectoral economic activity available since 2015, across the overall 2015-24 period in Italy the volume of fashion exports increased at a similar rate of

[5] The particularly strong increase in Vietnam's export market share could be partially driven by a reallocation of Chinese exports to the country following the 2018-19 US-China trade war (Alfaro and Chor, 2023).

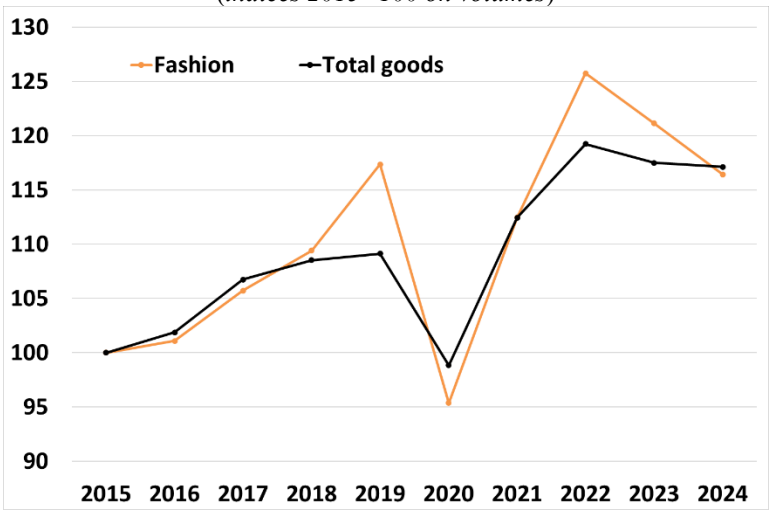
[6] Over this period the market share of Vietnam in textiles rose by 2 percentage points, together with smaller gains for Poland and the Netherlands (not reported in Table 2 due to their relatively small export market shares).

[7] China's export market share gain in textiles in 2019-24 was not driven by the surge in face mask sales in the pandemic years; net of these items, the gain was in fact larger. By contrast, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea are among the main economies that lost the most in textiles in this period.

total goods exports, namely by more than 15 per cent (Fig. 2);[8] however, developments were heterogeneous within the decade. In particular, 2019 was a year of exceptional growth for Italy's foreign sales of fashion products; by contrast, the COVID-19 outbreak hit the sector particularly hard. The fashion post-pandemic rebound was again stronger than the average, with another exceptional peak in 2022, followed by a sharp correction in 2023 and 2024. This recent reduction in fashion exports dragged down the country's total goods exports by 0.8 percentage points, explaining nearly half of the overall goods decline since 2022.

Figure 2 – Italy's fashion export dynamics, 2015-24

(*indices 2015=100 on volumes*)



Source: authors' calculations on Istat national account (NA) data by sectoral economic activity.
Notes: See footnote 8 for the definition of fashion herein.

To analyse these dynamics in more detail, we break down the available NA fashion data into the three component branches by proportionally matching the sum of the three industries' international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) values to the current-value NA data (reported in Figure 3, left hand-side panel). In order to estimate volumes, ITGS values are deflated with industry-specific producer price indices of goods sold in foreign markets and then proportionally matched with the overall fashion NA volume data (reported in Figure 2 and Figure 3, right hand-side panel).[9]

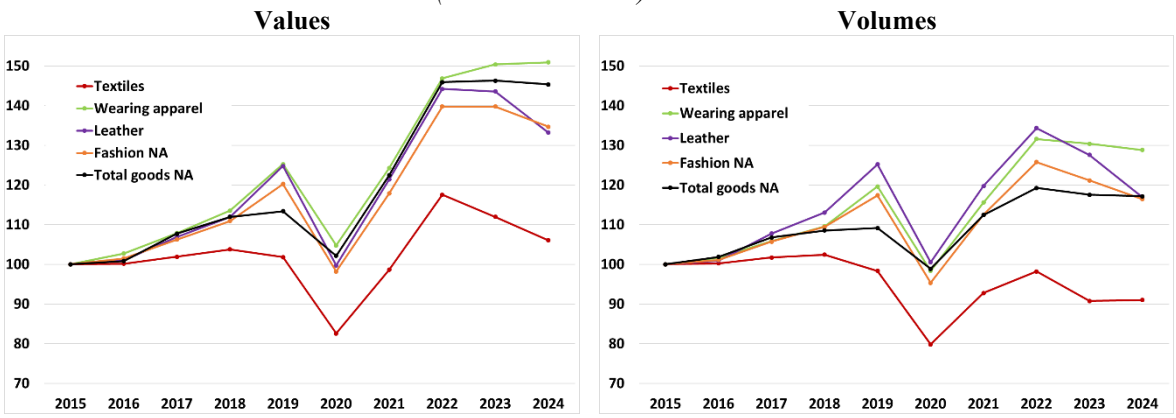
Over the past decade Italy's textile exports in volume terms were on a broad downward trend; however, based on current-price ITGS it is noteworthy that the decline in the share of textiles in Italy's overall foreign sales had actually already begun in the mid-1980s (Fig. A2 in the Annex).[10] Wearing apparel and leather were thus the sole contributors to the fashion expansion until the pandemic, growing at double-digit rates (in particular during the 2019 surge) and driving the post-pandemic rebound; in both periods the boost to Italy's total goods' exports stemming from these two branches was quantitatively significant (Fig. A3 in the Annex). Conversely, in the years 2023-24 leather was the main cause of the fashion export decline, falling by more than 10 per cent in

[8] Fashion here includes the NACE sectors textiles, wearing apparel and leather (including footwear); a further breakdown of these data is not available.
[9] In Figure A1 and in Table A2 in the Annex we report the (small) differences between NA and ITGS for total goods exports and the aggregate fashion exports in both value and volume terms. These data, disaggregated by NACE Rev. 2 sector of economic activity, also differ slightly from those by HS product employed in Section 2 of this article.
[10] Italy's specialization in textile exports was quite unique in comparison with other advanced economies, and indeed its share passed from a peak of nearly 6 per cent in the early 1970s to the current share of under 2 per cent.

volume terms, and weighing down on total goods export dynamics by 0.7 percentage points. The drop in wearing apparel's foreign sales was more contained (-2.1 per cent) and dragged down overall dynamics only marginally.[11] Textiles contributed negatively yet again, by a further 0.1 percentage point.

Figure 3 – A breakdown of Italy's fashion export dynamics, 2015-24

(indices 2015=100)



Source: authors' calculations on Istat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) and NA in the left hand-side panel and also on production price indices of goods sold in foreign markets in the right hand-side panel.

We next adopt a similar methodology to estimate export volumes by branch also of the other main euro-area economies, following Giglioli and Giordano (2022); for countries other than Italy, NA by economic sector of activity are indeed not available, therefore we adjust ITGS values and volumes (estimated by deflating values with producer prices of goods sold in foreign markets) so that total goods ITGS data match with NA data.[12] As regards textiles, it is notable that Italy's export decline since 2015 was rather unique amongst the main euro-area countries, since in the other economies a fall in sales of this sector was recorded only in the most recent years; as mentioned earlier, Italy's trend over the past decade was however part of a longer-term structural decline of the sector (again see Figure A2 in the Annex), which converged towards other advanced economies' (much lower) export shares. Wearing apparel and leather were instead positive contributors to fashion exports in all countries during the pre-pandemic expansion and the post-pandemic rebound, at rates that were generally even higher than for Italy.[13] Over 2022-24 wearing apparel foreign sales declined in the two economies where they weighed the most in their country-specific export mix, namely in Italy and, more pronouncedly, in Spain (where they both account for about 5 per cent of total goods exports).[14] A similar outcome is observed for leather: reductions were concentrated in France and, more significantly, in Italy (where this sector accounts for 3.2 and 4.5 per cent of total goods exports, respectively).

[11] The value of wearing apparel exports actually increased over the past two years (by 2.7 per cent).

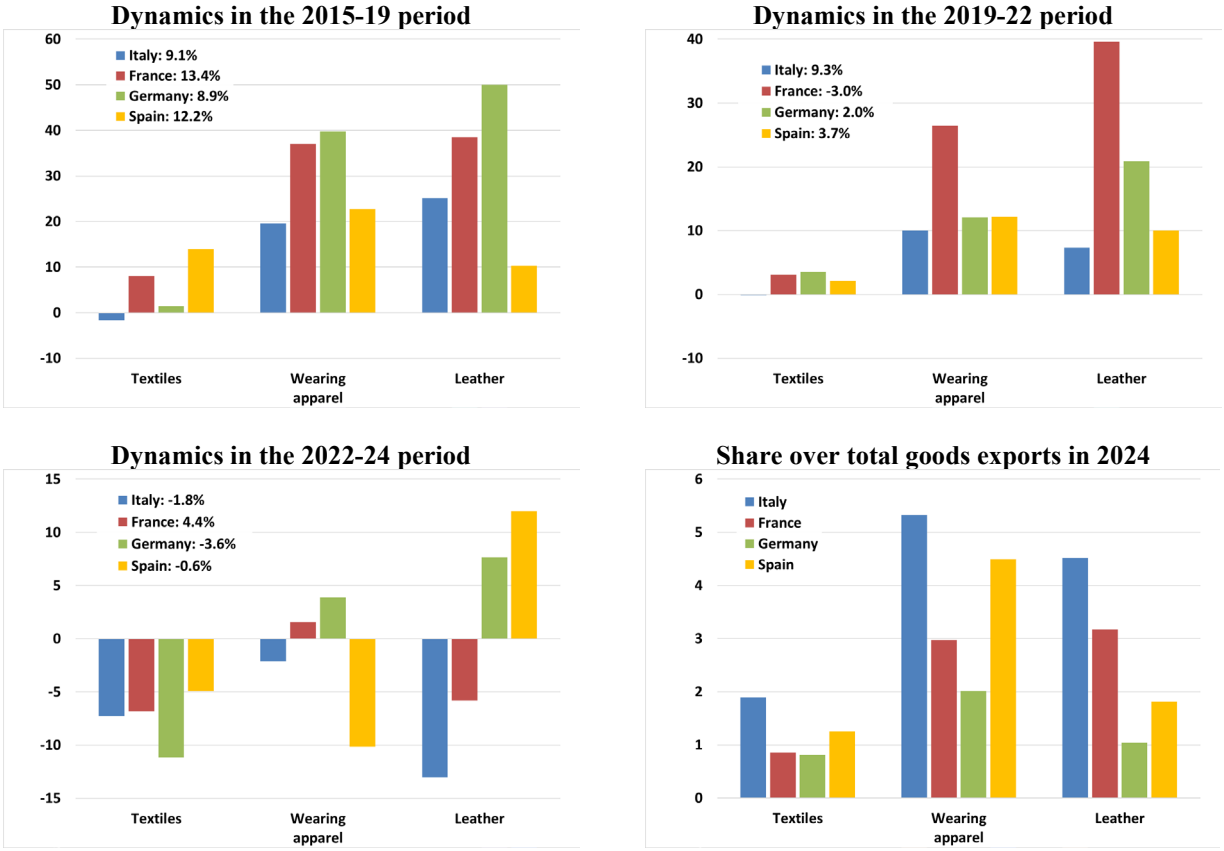
[12] Table A2 in the Annex reports differences between NA and ITGS for aggregate goods exports, in value and volume terms, also for the main euro-area economies other than Italy.

[13] In particular, France's export boom in the leather branch is particularly noteworthy. Whereas Italy holds a high export market share in both leather and leather products, France is specialized solely in leather products. The boom was driven by a surge in leather article sales especially in China and other Asian countries (https://alliancefrancecuir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Brochure-Commerce-Exterieur-2023-Filiere-Francaise-du-Cuir-Parution-2024.pdf).

[14] Spain's wearing apparel exports in value terms also declined (by nearly 5.9 per cent), differently from Italy where they grew moderately (see footnote 11).

Figure 4 – A breakdown of fashion exports of the four main euro-area economies, 2015-24 by sub-period

(percentage changes and percentage shares on volumes)



Source: authors' calculations on Istat and Eurostat NA, ITGS and producer price indices of goods sold in foreign markets.

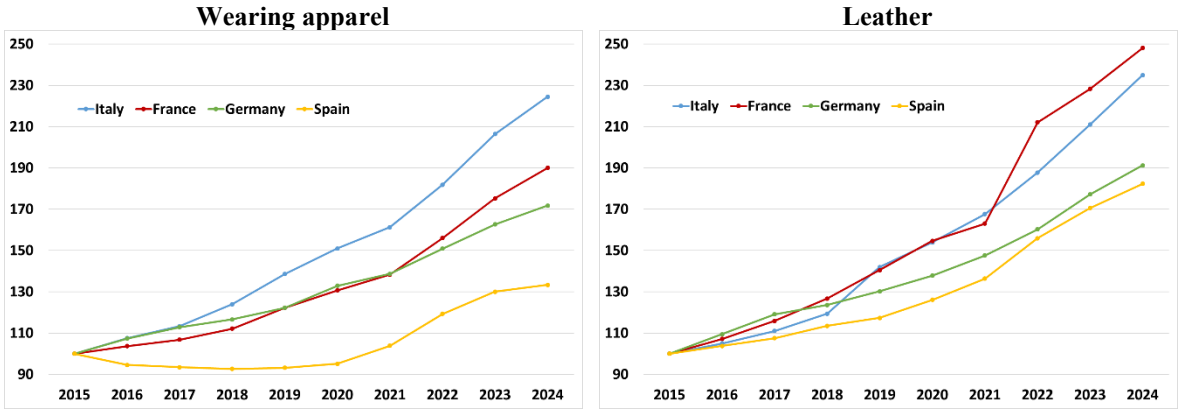
Notes: Percentage changes in total goods export volumes by country are reported in the legends. For the estimation of volumes, see the methodology in the main text.

Finally, we also consider export unit value indices (UVIs), which are a rough proxy of quality,[15] and which generally grew much more than producer price indices of goods sold in foreign markets in the main euro-area economies (Figure A4 in the Annex). We focus solely on wearing apparel and leather, since these are the two branches in which we expect vertical differentiation to be relevant. Since 2015 the rise in wearing apparel export UVIs has been the largest for Italy, and the lowest for Spain (Fig. 5, left hand-side panel), suggesting these two euro-area competitors largely operate in different product segments, mainly high-quality and luxury brands, on the one hand, and low-quality and "fast-fashion" brands on the other. Leather export UVIs for Italy have grown significantly over the past decade, more than wearing apparel UVIs, but the rise in France's leather UVIs has been even more pronounced (Fig. 5, right hand-side panel), confirming that both these countries are specialized in luxury leather products.

[15] UVIs are known to suffer from several drawbacks. In particular, UVIs are indices and therefore can only provide information on quality changes rather than quality levels. Moreover, they are affected by changes in product composition.

Figure 5 – Wearing apparel and leather export unit values of the four main euro-area economies, 2015-24

(indices 2015=100)



Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat ITGS export unit value indices.

4. The macro-determinants of Italy's recent fashion export decline

In this section we investigate the contributions of Italy's main fashion destination markets to the export decline since 2022, as well as foreign sale developments by Italian region. We can only conduct this exercise in value terms as producer prices indices are not available for disaggregated outlet markets or by region.

Structurally, Italy's exports in all three branches, and especially leather, are concentrated geographically (such that the top five export markets account for around half of Italy's exports), but generally to a lesser extent than for the other three competitor countries (Table 3).[16] Italy's main destinations in 2024 for wearing apparel and leather were the other three euro-area economies, the United States and China (Table A3 in the Annex); for leather, Japan appears amongst the top five destinations in lieu of Spain. France's leather exports are directed to similar markets as Italy's, with Hong Kong also being a relevant outlet. Spain's wearing apparel sales are instead largely shipped to Poland and Portugal, in addition to the other main euro-area destinations.

Table 3 – Share of the top five partner countries in 2024

(percentage shares in sectoral exports at current prices)

	Textiles	Wearing Apparel	Leather
Italy	36.1	45.5	47.6
France	46.7	47.5	52.5
Germany	34.7	60.3	49.2
Spain	65.4	60.6	61.8

Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat ITGS.

Italy's slightly higher geographical diversification – which is generally a strength of Italian exports, as it partly shields the country from market-specific shocks (Allione, Federico and Giordano, 2025) – did not, however, spare Italy from the recent contraction in its fashion exports. The decline in Italy's textiles exports was broad-based across all partner countries, although the main negative contributions stemmed from the other euro-area economies, Romania and the United States (Fig. 6,

[16] Spain is the country with the most geographically concentrated exports of fashion products.

upper panel).[17] By contrast, the performance in both Italy's wearing apparel and leather exports was decidedly heterogeneous across markets and especially in the case of the former sector often of opposite signs to that of the other main euro-area competitor countries (Fig. 6, lower panels and Fig. A4 in the Annex). In more detail, for both branches Switzerland exerted the main drag. This country historically hosts logistical centres for Italy's fashion products (for example, Kering, which owns renown luxury Italian brands such as Gucci and Bottega Veneta, and Prada Group, which owns brands such as Prada and Miu Miu). Part of the decline in Italy's wearing apparel and leather exports to Switzerland could be linked to Kering's recent reorganization of its logistics operations: in 2022 indeed this company completed its Italian logistics hub in Piedmont, transferring there most services previously based in Switzerland.[18] As a result of this reorganization, Switzerland's share in Italy's wearing apparel exports dropped from 10.0 per cent in 2022 to 4.3 in 2024 (again see Table A3 in the Annex); for leather it declined from 15.7 per cent to 4.6.[19] Another part of the fall in Italy's fashion exports to Switzerland could instead reflect drops in sales in other (unidentifiable) final destinations.

For these reasons, we experimentally attempt to "look through" flows to Switzerland (again see Figure 6, lower panels). In particular, we assume Swiss domestic production of wearing apparel and leather to be zero[20] and we compute Swiss domestic consumption as the difference between Switzerland's total imports and total exports of these products using Federal Office for Customs and Border Security ITGS. Italy's exports transiting through Switzerland and not locally consumed are reassigned to other markets by assuming in each year and for each different sector the same geographical composition of Swiss exports.[21] As a result of this "look-through" exercise, the drag exerted by Switzerland is approximately halved for both wearing apparel and leather.[22] The negative contributions of other destinations (in particular, Germany) appears to be larger than those based on standard ITGS, whereas the positive contributions of other markets are reduced. Moreover, some of the goods shipped to Switzerland are later re-imported by Italy for domestic consumption; however, the magnitude of these flows is modest and does not affect overall export dynamics.[23]

[17] For France, China was the main contributor to textiles export growth over the past two years (Fig. A5 in the Annex), expanding at an exceptional rate and thus becoming the top destination market for this country in 2024 (again see Table A3).

[18] https://www.reuters.com/business/gucci-owner-kering-track-with-global-logistic-hub-italy-2021-04-08/.

[19] By contrast and as a benchmark, the share of Switzerland for Germany's exports of wearing apparel and leather remained relatively stable in 2024 (again see Table A3).

[20] According to the Federal Statistical Office data, in 2022 (latest data available) Switzerland's fashion value added was only 0.6 per cent of its total industrial value added and we therefore view this assumption as acceptable.

[21] We use the geographical composition of Swiss fashion exports (instead of that of Italian exports) in order also to be able to identify flows that from Switzerland return to Italy.

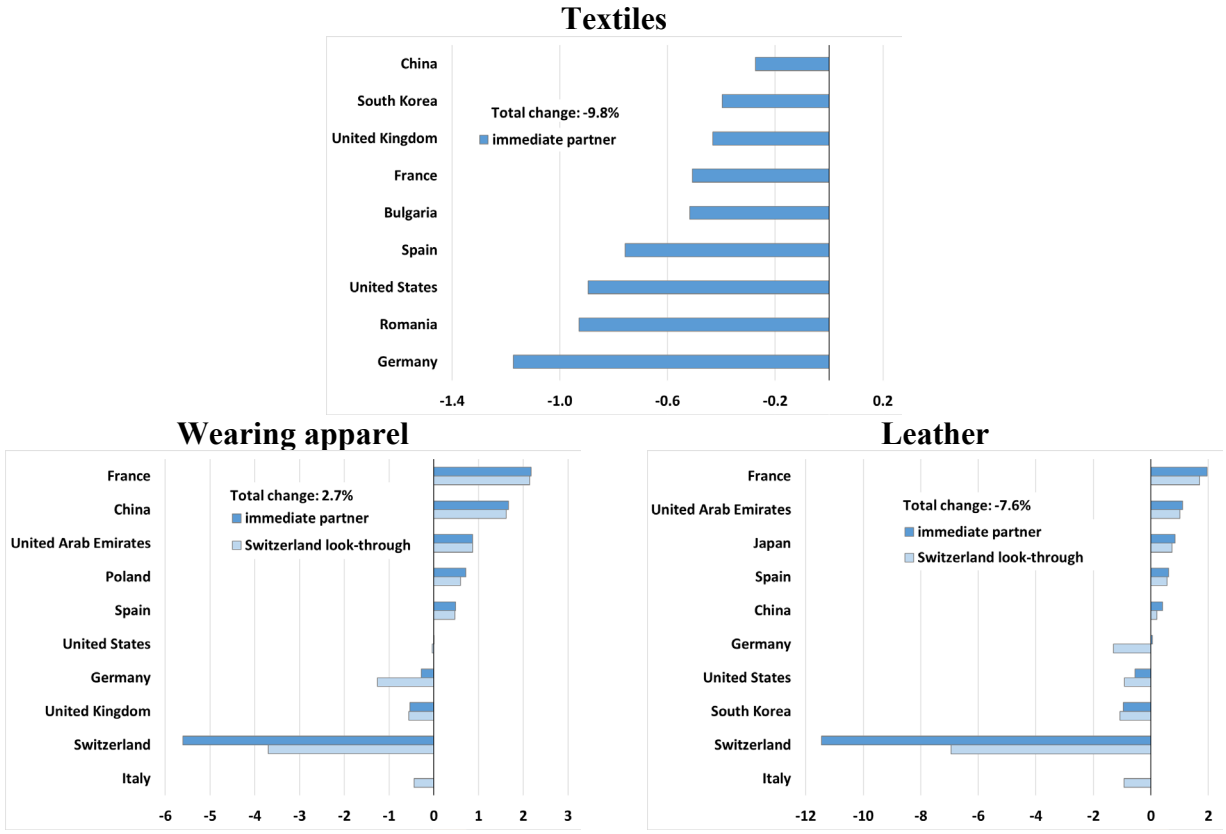
[22] Our exercise is subject to several caveats. First, statistical discrepancies exist in ITGS between Italian and Swiss sources, which is a frequent issue with mirror ITGS. Second, we assume zero domestic production in Switzerland, so our estimates in the light blue bars of Figure 6 may be under-estimating the negative contribution stemming directly from this country. As a robustness check, we replicate the "look-through" exercise also by using the 2023 distribution of Italy's sectoral exports to Switzerland by final destination, based on the Asian Development Bank's world input-output tables. For wearing apparel, we adopt the "Textiles and clothing" composition, as separate data for the two branches are unavailable. Using these data, Switzerland's drag is reduced by only one percentage point in both the wearing apparel and leather sectors with respect to official ITGS.

[23] In general, the "look-through" exercise is also key to understanding Italy's 2019 boom in exports of wearing apparel and leather products. Prior to the exercise, Switzerland appeared as the predominant contributor to the 2015-19 export growth of both sectors (Fig. A6 in the Annex). However, once part of the Swiss flows is redistributed, Germany becomes the top contributor for wearing apparel, while the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, China play a role comparable to that of Switzerland as relevant destination markets. In the case of leather products, following the "look-through" exercise, significant contributions are also observed for several European and Asian destinations.

After the "look-through" exercise, also Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and South Korea emerge as the main drivers of the decline in Italy's foreign sales of either wearing apparel or leather or both. The recent German economic recession does not appear however to fully explain its negative contribution, since exports from France and Spain to this market generally increased (again see Fig. A5 in the Annex). By contrast, the downturn of the US market for wearing apparel was common also to Spain, the only other competitor country recording a fall, and for leather to all three other euro-area economies, including France, suggesting a general weakening in demand for (at least euro-area) fashion products from the United States already in 2022-24. Boosts to Italy's wearing apparel exports instead came from European markets other than Germany, such as France, Poland and Spain, but also Asian economies, such as China, United Arab Emirates and Japan. Similar patterns can be seen for Italy's leather sales.

Figure 6 – Contributions of the main destination markets to Italy's fashion export dynamics, 2022-24

(percentage points, values)



Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat and Federal Office for Customs and Border Security (FOCBS) ITGS, and Istat NA.

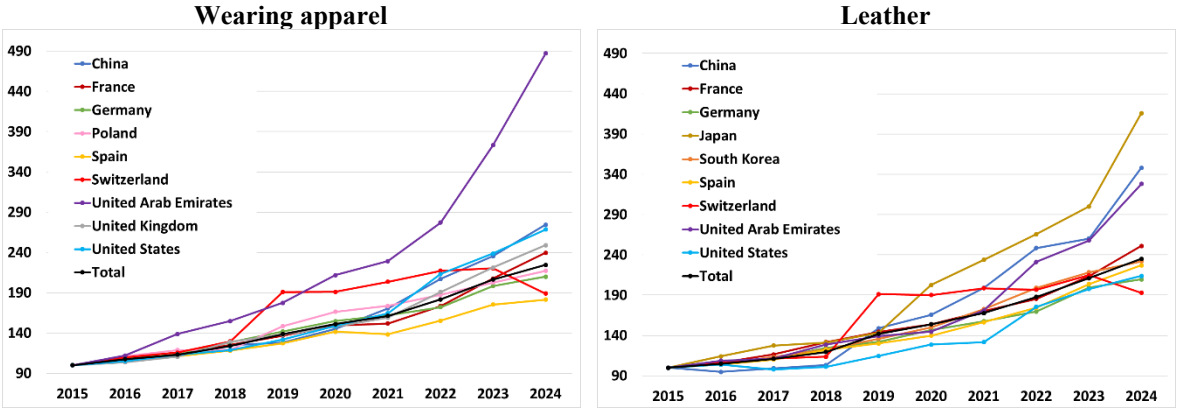
Notes: Percentage changes in each fashion sector exports in value terms between 2022 and 2024 are reported in the legends, after having adjusted the ITGS values to sum up to the total NA fashion values. In order to consider a fixed number of (nine) markets for each sector, each panel presents the three main euro-area economies other than Italy, the top three markets by Italy's sector export share in 2024 excluding the former three economies, and the top three markets with the highest contribution to sector dynamics between 2022 and 2024 excluding the previously included economies; for wearing apparel and leather, for which the Switzerland "look-through" exercise was conducted (see the main text for the methodology), Italy also appears as a destination country because some of the goods initially shipped to Switzerland are subsequently re-imported by Italy for domestic consumption.

Circling back to UVIs, the increase in Italy's wearing apparel export UVIs was particularly pronounced in the United Arab Emirates (Fig. 7, left hand-side panel), where demand for luxury goods is high; significant rises were also recorded in the China and the United States. Patterns for

leather were similar, albeit with a different ranking across outlet markets, and with Japan replacing the United States (Fig. 7, right hand-side panel). For both sectors the Swiss market was a notable exception: export UVIs of both wearing apparel and leather accelerated abruptly in 2019 but then the broad upward trend was interrupted in 2023, leading to a decline in 2024.[24]

Figure 7 – Italy's wearing apparel and leather export unit values by main partner country, 2015-2024

(indices 2015=100)



Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat ITGS export unit value indices.

Notes: The figure represents key destination markets for Italy's fashion exports, following the same criteria as in Figure 6.

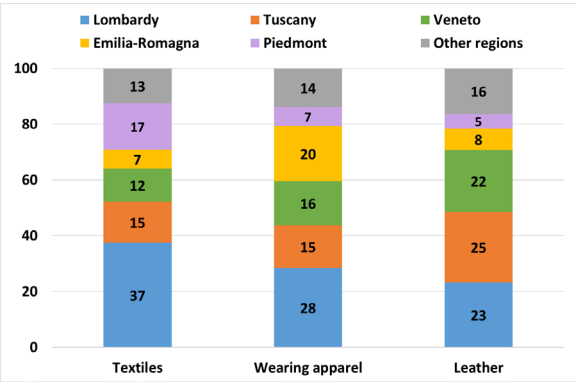
Another heterogeneity dimension we can explore employing ITGS is Italian fashion exports by region, albeit again only in value terms. Lombardy is Italy's top textiles and wearing apparel exporter region by far, accounting for 37 per cent and 28 per cent of national foreign sales of the two branches, respectively (Figure 8, left hand-side panel). Leather exports are instead more diversified in terms of localization: Tuscany accounts for one fourth of Italy's leather foreign sales, followed closely by Lombardy and Veneto, which report similar shares.[25] It is generally the top exporter regions that drove the overall 2022-24 export dynamics of the three sectors, with the partial exception of Lombardy, whose foreign sales in wearing apparel remained broadly stable and whose leather exports increased (Figure 8, right hand-side panel). Tuscany in particular exerted a notable drag on all three branches, especially leather where its share in the sector exports fell by around 7 percentage points between 2022 and 2024. Part of the decline may be linked to the afore-mentioned relocation of Kering's logistics operations from Switzerland to Piedmont: since many of Kering's production sites are located in Tuscany, plausibly some goods that were previously sent to Switzerland as part of the company's logistics network are now routed through Piedmont and subsequently exported from there, resulting in export flows from Piedmont instead of from Tuscany. Indeed, between 2022 and 2024 wearing apparel and leather exports from Piedmont to the rest of the world grew by an exceptional 33 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively. Another, smaller drag on Tuscany's exports could have stemmed from the floodings that hit the region, and in particular its fashion industrial base, in November 2023 (Giordano and Russo, 2023).

[24] The 2019 jump in Switzerland UVI is confirmed also when using Istat ITGS.

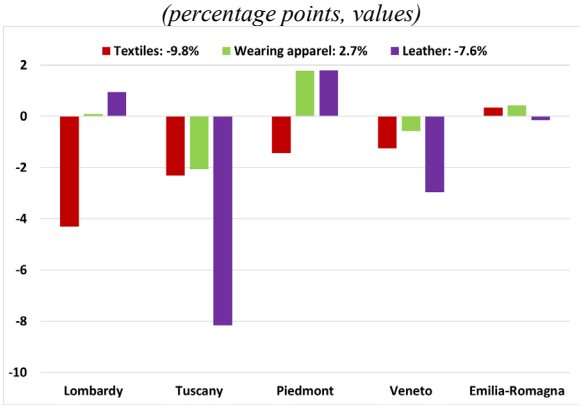
[25] Despite lagging Lombardy, Tuscany is also a relevant exporter of textiles (ranking third, after Piedmont) and of wearing apparel (again ranking third, after Veneto).

Figure 8 – Italy's fashion exports by region

Fashion exports by region in 2024
(percentage shares on values)



Contributions of the main regions to Italy's fashion export dynamics, 2022-24
(percentage points, values)



Source: authors' calculations on Istat ITGS and NA.
Notes: The regions reported are among the top five exporters, except for Piedmont, which ranks sixth for leather. The fifth region for leather exports is Le Marche, with a 7 per cent share; however, for the sake of simplicity, we have chosen not to include it, as its contribution to the 2022-24 dynamics was negligible. Percentage changes in Italy's sectoral exports in value terms are reported in the legend of the right hand-side panel, after having adjusted the ITGS values to sum up to the total NA fashion values.

5. A micro-analysis of Italy's fashion exporters

In this section we further break down the analysis of recent fashion export developments for Italy by exploiting granular firm-level data from the Italian custom agency for the latest years available (between 2021 and 2023).[26] Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather; one-person firms are excluded.[27] Exporters also includes retailers, wholesalers and carriers (to which we refer as "intermediaries" hereafter).

Overall, out of about 117,000 goods exporters, there are around 25,000 operating in the fashion industry (Table 4). These enterprises are smaller than the average Italian exporter in terms of export size. Around two thirds of fashion exporters operate solely in one of the three fashion sectors, but they account for only 13 per cent of total foreign sales as they are significantly smaller (see also Figure A7 in the Annex); single-sector firms are especially common in textiles, pointing to higher specialization therein. About one fourth of firms operates in two sectors, most often in textiles and wearing apparel, suggesting vertical integration, or in wearing apparel and leather, indicating complementarities in final products. Only one tenth of firms is active in all three sectors although they make up more than 70 per cent of total fashion exports, being substantially larger also in comparison with the average Italian goods exporter.

[26] Total fashion exports in the customs data closely match the official statistics from Istat for these three years (Table A4 in the Annex).
[27] This definition is different from that, for example, in Istat (2025).

Table 4 – Summary statistics of Italy's fashion exporters, 2023

	Number of Exporters *(units)*	Average Exports *(EUR mil)*
All Exporters	116,862	4.8
Fashion Exporters	24,653	2.5
Only Textiles	7,025	0.6
Only Wearing Apparel	5,733	0.3
Only Leather	3,853	0.6
Both Textiles and Wearing Apparel	2,173	2.0
Both Textiles and Leather	1,105	2.3
Both Wearing Apparel and Leather	2,271	1.1
Textiles, Wearing Apparel and Leather	2,493	17.9

Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).
Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in 2023. The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

Relatedly, exports of wearing apparel and leather are highly concentrated in the top 1 per cent of exporters, which account for more than 65 per cent of total exports, against a 54 per cent average for overall goods (Table 5, upper panel); by contrast, the textiles sector is less concentrated than average, also due to the larger relevance of smaller single-sector firms. This evidence is consistent with further information provided by ICE-Istat and reported in Figure A8 in the Annex: nearly half of textile exports are sold by standalone firms, against under one third for the other two fashion sectors (available only jointly) and only 6.5 per cent for overall manufacturing on average. By contrast, around one fourth of foreign sales of wearing apparel and leather accrue to firms in foreign multi-national groups, against a 14 per cent share for textiles.

Between 2021 and 2022 all fashion exporters, regardless of their export size, recorded a substantial rebound following the pandemic (Table 5, lower panel),[28] although smaller exporters marked the most significant rises, possibly due to the negative impact of global supply-side bottlenecks especially on large, internationally integrated firms in that period (Allione and Giordano, 2023). Between 2022 and 2023 the top 1 per cent of exporters in all three fashion sectors registered a downturn in foreign sales and underperformed relative to the sector-specific average, while the smallest enterprises continued to register export growth.[29] Beyond these two findings, however, no other clear-cut pattern emerges across export size, suggesting that other heterogeneity dimensions are at play in the most recent period.

[28] Aggregate export changes do not coincide with official ITGS changes by sector, reported for example in Table A2 in the Annex, because of the different definition of fashion exporter and because of the differences between customs data and ITGS reported in Allione and Giordano (2022); also, sectors are attributed according to the product classification in Table A1 in the Annex. Moreover, the discrepancy between export changes in Table 5 and in Table A2, both based on customs data, is due to the fact that the former does not account for entry of new exporters, dampening total export change.
[29] Most multi-sector fashion firms exhibited concordance in sign for export dynamics between 2022 and 2023 across their different products sold, pointing to the presence of complementarities and synergies across sectors (Table A4 in the Annex).

Table 5 – Exports by percentile of exporters within each fashion sector

Panel A. Export shares in 2023

(percentage shares on values)

	Textiles	Wearing Apparel	Leather	Total goods
99-100	50.4	66.6	65.8	54.4
95-99	31.0	20.0	21.1	25.8
75-95	16.9	12.0	11.9	17.4
0-75	1.7	1.3	1.2	2.5

Panel B. Annual export changes between 2021 and 2023

(percentage points, values)

	Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather		Total goods	
	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23
99-100	13.5	-7.3	15.4	-1.0	19.4	-5.0	17.4	-6.3
95-99	18.5	-6.6	16.4	0.5	12.9	-2.0	14.1	-1.5
75-95	15.0	-8.8	20.2	-0.5	17.0	-5.2	14.4	2.3
0-75	43.3	22.1	57.0	105.3	42.3	66.4	36.9	30.6
Total	15.8	-6.9	16.8	0.8	18.1	-3.6	16.5	-2.7

Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).
Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in 2023 (panel A), or in 2021 or 2022 (panel B). The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex. Fashion exporters are ranked within each sector based on their annual export levels in that same sector, meaning that the same firm may fall into different percentile classes across sectors. Export changes are computed for each percentile as defined in 2022 for the 2022-23 changes and in 2021 for the 2021-22 changes; hence they account for exit but not for entry.

For this reason, we next identify the most relevant fashion exporters in each sector, by including both the top 50 firms in terms of their export share in 2022 and the top 50 contributors to the 2021-22 or 2022-23 export dynamics; the resulting sample consists of approximately 80 firms in each sector. We classify them according to the "luxury" level of their exported products by manually retrieving publicly sourced firm information (e.g. the name of the sold brands, information on the firms' website describing their mission and/or specialization, etc.). We conduct this classification only for the wearing apparel and leather exporters, because textiles represent an intermediate good and defining the "luxury" level of textile products is much harder. In particular, we classify these firms according to two levels, "luxury" and "fast fashion", and additionally identify "intermediaries" (since the latter may distribute both luxury and "fast-fashion" brands). A residual category includes firms selling highly technical sportswear, which we are not able to assign to any specific luxury level, and firms for which we do not have sufficient information to classify them; specifically for leather, this grouping also includes tanneries and, more broadly, suppliers of raw leather materials.

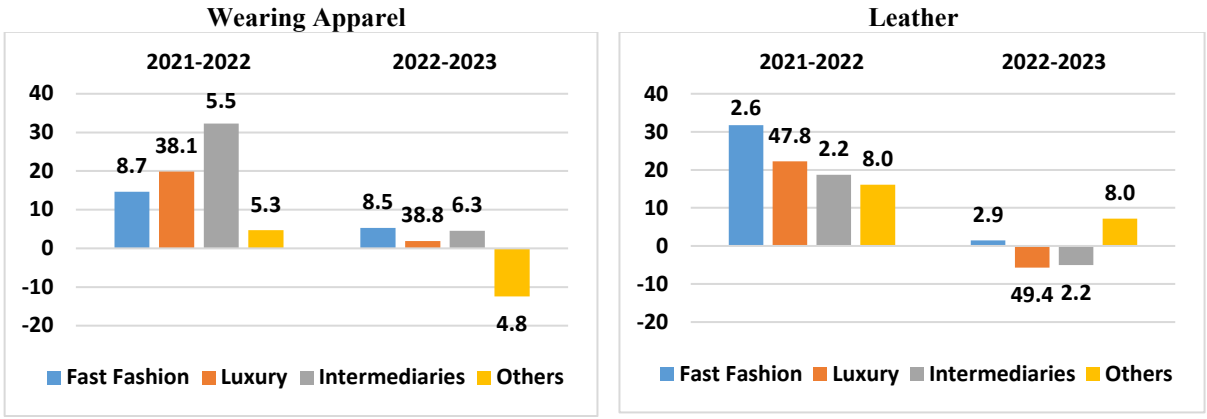
Over the observed period, the exporters of the sample accounted for 58 and 61 per cent of total exports in the wearing apparel and leather sector, respectively, and explained about two thirds of the aggregate export changes. In the wearing apparel (leather) sector, we identify 46 (48) luxury exporters, 6 (7) fast-fashion exporters, and 12 (5) intermediaries. In the wearing apparel sector all exporters excluding the residual category grew in both periods, with the slower growth in 2022-23 driven by a major slowdown in the luxury and intermediaries categories (Fig. 9).[30] In the leather

[30] In the period 2022-23 the export decline by "other" fashion exporters is driven by exporters of technical sportswear.

sector the strong rise between 2021 and 2022 reflects the positive performance of all categories, with fast-fashion exporters exhibiting the fastest growth but luxury exporters contributing the most, owing to their significant share of total sector exports. In the period 2022-23 luxury exporters and, to a much lesser extent, intermediaries determined the fall in foreign sales;[31] fast-fashion firms' contribution was positive, albeit negligible.

Figure 9 – Export dynamics by luxury category

(percentage changes on values)



Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data.

Notes: Firms are classified into the reported categories as described in the main text. Labels in the graphs refer to the export share of each category over total sector exports, as reported by customs data, in the reference year, that is 2021 for the 2021-22 period and 2022 for the 2022-23 period.

6. The short-term outlook for the fashion industry

Based on currently available data and according to our seasonally adjusted estimates in value terms, in the first semester of 2025 Italy's fashion exports continued to fall relative to the 2024 average, especially in the case of leather, in the context of a rise of aggregate goods sales abroad.

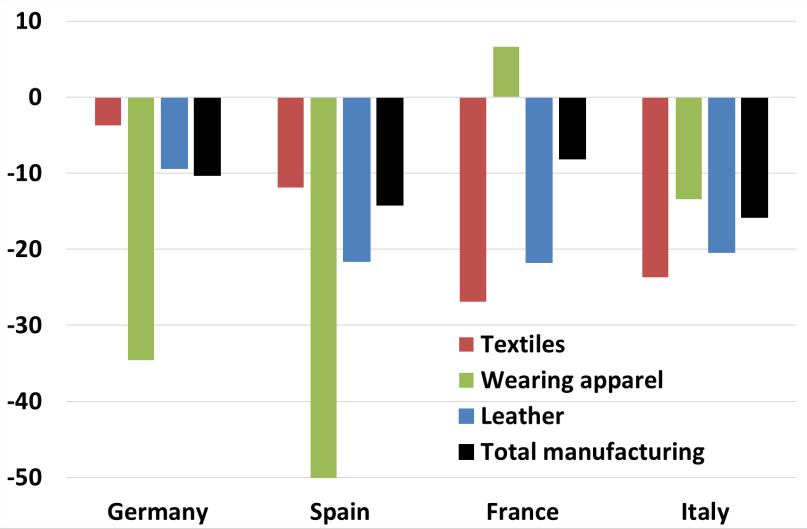
Looking forward, risks to the short-term export outlook of the fashion industry are tilted to the downside. Weak demand is indeed one of the main factors that may continue to hamper Italy's and other countries' fashion exports. According to the European Commission's harmonized business surveys, assessments on new orders – a proxy of demand for goods – by manufacturing firms of all four main euro-area economies in the four quarters until 2025Q3 are significantly more negative than those reported in pre-pandemic years, especially in Italy (Fig. 10); opinions of fashion enterprises are generally even worse. Specifically for Italy, views on orders of textile and leather firms are particularly unfavourable, whereas those of wearing apparel firms are only marginally better than the manufacturing average.[32]

[31] The recent "troubles" of luxury firms are confirmed by recent newspaper articles, e.g. in La moda nel 2025: prezzi, mercati e nuovi creativi tra le sfide per il settore - Il Sole 24 ORE

[32] The perception of Spanish enterprises is instead extremely negative in the wearing apparel sector. According to the estimates reported in Figure 4, in Spain the 2023-24 decline in fashion exports was mainly due to wearing apparel. This actual negative trend could explain the particularly unfavorable assessments of Spanish firms in the latter sector. It could also be driven by the very recent slowdown in the Spanish group Inditex (which includes brands such as Zara, Pull & Bear, and Massimo Dutti), in turn due to high uncertainty around tariffs and their potential effects (Zara Owner Inditex Cautions On Sales Given Uncertain Environment). By contrast, France's wearing apparel firms are more positive than prior to the pandemic; this could be due to the fact that in the 2022-24 years this was the only French fashion branch that recorded export growth (again see Figure 4).

Figure 10 – The current assessment of new orders of firms in the four main euro-area economies

(percentage gap between average 2024Q4-2025Q3 balances and average 2015-2019 balances)



Source: authors' calculations on European Commission Business Survey.
Notes: The balances on which the gaps are computed are the percentage differences of the share of firms which report an increase in orders in recent months and the share of firms which report a decline. The gap for Spain's wearing apparel firms is -89 percentage points and off the scale.

Another downward risk stems from the import duties introduced by the United States under the second Trump administration. At the time of writing of this article and as of 7th August 2025, after the EU-US trade deal was struck, European fashion goods flows to the United States were targeted by tariffs of 15 per cent; this represents a modest rise of tariffs for the fashion sector relative to pre-existing ones, but could still stall sales in the already weakened US market further.

There are approximately 11,000 Italian fashion exporters that sell to the United States, of which more than 2,100 export exclusively to this market. Table 6 reports the average share of foreign sales to this destination for each export size category.[33] On average, fashion exporters have a lower direct exposure to the US market than the average Italian goods exporter.[34] Within fashion, leather exporters rely more on the United States as a destination market than wearing apparel and, especially, textiles exporters.[35] The exposure to the US market is also not linear across export size: in textiles and wearing apparel, small exporters are more exposed to this economy than medium, large and top exporters, while in leather the latter firm category is the most vulnerable to tariffs.

[33] Trade redirected through Switzerland to the United States should not significantly distort the bilateral exposures reported due to the higher tariffs applied by the United States to Switzerland, relative to those for the European Union, at the time of writing of this article. In this exercise we do not instead consider the exposure of Italian firms supplying inputs and intermediate goods to the fashion exporters to the US market.

[34] According to ITGS, the share of the United States in Italy's total goods exports in 2023 was 10.7 per cent, a very similar figure to that reported in Table 6.

[35] The same qualitative pattern holds when measuring exposure in terms of total sales. As a robustness check, we merged customs data with balance sheet data from CervedX, available for a subsample of around 18,000 fashion exporters. The exposure to the US market was on average 0.8 per cent of total sales in textiles, 2.5 per cent in wearing apparel and 3.8 in the leather sector.

Table 6 – Direct exposure to the United States by percentile of Italy's fashion exporters, 2023

(percentage shares on values)

	Textiles	Wearing Apparel	Leather	Total Goods
99-100	4.7	9.1	12.2	12.7
95-99	4.0	6.3	6.7	8.6
75-95	5.0	8.1	9.3	7.3
0-75	7.7	11.9	11.3	8.2
Average	4.6	8.5	10.7	11.4

Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).

Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in 2023. The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

In addition to potential lower exports to the United States, Italy's fashion exporters may also suffer from trade diversion of Chinese fashion products to markets different from the United States. Federico et al. (2025), indeed, documents how for textiles and wearing apparel, on the one hand, and for leather, on the other, the share of Chinese imports in the US market is very high and the share of US production is very low in comparison with most other industrial sectors. Given the higher tariff applied to products of Chinese origin, Italian and other European fashion exporters may thus also face more intense competition from this economy in non-US markets. They are also unlikely to benefit from trade diversion as US importers search for cheaper alternatives to Chinese suppliers, since Chinese exports are more similar to and thus more substitutable with products from other Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, South Korea and Thailand.

On the upside, the strong quality positioning of Italy's fashion brands could help shield Italian exporters both from the direct and indirect exposure to US tariffs, owing to lower substitutability of Italian products and to less price-sensitive demand (Banca d'Italia, 2025; Allione, Federico, and Giordano, 2025).

7. Conclusions

To conclude, the fashion industry as a whole (textiles, wearing apparel and leather) is a relevant export sector for Italy but, after the exceptionally strong 2019 performance and the post-pandemic rebound of wearing apparel and leather, it has lost steam, explaining nearly half of the country's total goods' export decline since 2022.

This decline appears to have been matched by a comparable weakening in global demand for these products, such that the country has maintained a stable fashion export share in world markets since 2019. Developments differ however across branches: a moderate gain in Italy's wearing apparel export market share was offset by a loss in the corresponding shares for textiles (in which Italy has anyhow structurally lost ground since the mid-1980s) and, more importantly, leather.

In an international comparison, since 2022 fashion exports have contracted also in the other main euro-area countries, namely Spain for wearing apparel and France for leather. The difference in the size of the export declines across these euro-area economies (larger for Spain and smaller for France in the corresponding branches) reflects differences in product composition (and their quality level, as proxied by export unit value indices) and in destination markets. But the common developments again point to sluggish global demand for these goods.

Standard international trade in goods statistics show that the Swiss market exerted a significant drag on Italy's wearing apparel and leather exports; however, since Switzerland is a logistic hub for these goods, the drop of sales to this market masks decreases across other world destinations. Moreover, a relocation of a relevant logistics centre from Switzerland to Piedmont in Italy should also have contributed to the fall in fashion exports to the Swiss market. We estimate that Switzerland's negative contribution approximately halves when "looking through" export flows to this country.

Firm-level data, currently available only up to 2023, point to the top 1 per cent exporters – which alone account for between 50 (textiles) and 67 per cent (wearing apparel) of foreign sales in each branch – contributing the most to the recent fashion export decline in all three segments. We also document a greater resilience of "fast-fashion" firms in 2022-23 than exporters of luxury brands, where the latter in particular drove the downturn in the leather sector. One explanation of the "troubles" of the leather sector in recent years could thus be its greater specialization in luxury goods in a global phase of weak demand and high uncertainty; conversely, Italy's wearing apparel sector covers a larger variety of brands and of intermediaries selling these brands, which could contribute to explain why this industry fared relatively better than leather over the past two years.

Looking forward, there are no current signs of a pick-up in Italy's fashion exports in the short term. Weak demand, especially for leather products, is not expected to reverse. Moreover, the implementation of new import tariffs by the current US Administration – although affecting fashion exporters to a lesser extent than the average Italian goods exporter – could negatively impact especially the top exporters in the leather sector. A diversion of exports from China previously directed to the US to other foreign markets as a result of very high US tariffs on Chinese goods could also partly displace Italy's fashion exports in these other markets. However, the strong quality positioning of Italy's fashion exports could limit the most dire consequences of international trade fragmentation and reconfiguration. In the longer term, it is the structural developments in world demand for Italy's fashion brands following shifts in consumer preferences and habits, also across different generations, that will ultimately decide their fate.

Annex- Additional figures and tables

Table A1 – Correspondence HS4- NACE Rev. 2

HS4	NACE	HS4	NACE	HS4	NACE	HS4	NACE	HS4	NAC
1505	13	**5209**	13	**5801**	13	**6116**	14	**6506**	14
4104	15	**5210**	13	**5802**	13	**6117**	14	**6507**	14
4105	15	**5211**	13	**5803**	13	**6201**	14	**7019**	13
4106	15	**5212**	13	**5804**	13	**6202**	14	**9113**	15
4107	15	**5301**	13	**5805**	13	**6203**	14	**9404**	13
4112	15	**5304**	13	**5806**	13	**6204**	14	**9605**	15
4113	15	**5305**	13	**5807**	13	**6205**	14	**9616**	13
4114	15	**5306**	13	**5808**	13	**6206**	14		
4115	15	**5307**	13	**5809**	13	**6207**	14		
4201	15	**5308**	13	**5810**	13	**6208**	14		
4202	15	**5309**	13	**5811**	13	**6209**	14		
4203	14	**5310**	13	**5901**	13	**6210**	14		
4204	15	**5311**	13	**5902**	13	**6211**	14		
4205	15	**5401**	13	**5903**	13	**6212**	14		
4302	15	**5406**	13	**5907**	13	**6213**	14		
4303	14	**5407**	13	**5909**	13	**6214**	14		
4304	13	**5408**	13	**5910**	13	**6215**	14		
5002	13	**5506**	13	**5911**	13	**6216**	14		
5004	13	**5507**	13	**6001**	13	**6217**	14		
5005	13	**5508**	13	**6002**	13	**6301**	13		
5006	13	**5509**	13	**6003**	13	**6302**	13		
5007	13	**5510**	13	**6004**	13	**6303**	13		
5101	13	**5511**	13	**6005**	13	**6304**	13		
5104	13	**5512**	13	**6006**	13	**6305**	13		
5105	13	**5513**	13	**6101**	14	**6306**	13		
5106	13	**5514**	13	**6102**	14	**6307**	13		
5107	13	**5515**	13	**6103**	14	**6308**	13		
5108	13	**5516**	13	**6104**	14	**6309**	14		
5109	13	**5602**	13	**6105**	14	**6310**	13		
5110	13	**5603**	13	**6106**	14	**6401**	15		
5111	13	**5604**	13	**6107**	14	**6402**	15		
5112	13	**5607**	13	**6108**	14	**6403**	15		
5113	13	**5608**	13	**6109**	14	**6404**	15		
5203	13	**5609**	13	**6110**	14	**6405**	15		
5204	13	**5701**	13	**6111**	14	**6406**	15		
5205	13	**5702**	13	**6112**	14	**6502**	14		
5206	13	**5703**	13	**6113**	14	**6503**	14		
5207	13	**5704**	13	**6114**	14	**6504**	14		
5208	13	**5705**	13	**6115**	14	**6505**	14		

Source: authors' calculations based on official correspondence between NC8 and CPA. NACE 13, 14, and 15 refer to textiles, wearing apparel, and leather and leather articles, respectively.

Table A2 – Changes in total goods exports of the four main euro-area economies in volume terms by ITGS and NA statistics, 2015-24

(percentage changes)

		Values		Volumes	
		ITGS	NA	ITGS	NA
2015-19	Italy	16.5	13.4	13.5	9.1
	France	11.7	14.5	9.3	13.4
	Germany	11.3	10.9	8.7	8.9
	Spain	17.2	16.8	13.7	12.2
2019-22	Italy	30.4	28.6	11.6	9.3
	France	15.6	18.9	-6.6	-3.0
	Germany	19.8	19.5	0.9	2.0
	Spain	32.4	31.8	5.2	3.7
2022-24	Italy	-0.4	-0.4	-1.7	-1.8
	France	0.4	-0.7	3.7	4.4
	Germany	-2.4	-1.8	-3.3	-3.6
	Spain	-0.7	0.2	-0.1	-0.6

Source: authors' calculations on Istat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) and national accounts (NA) in the first two columns and also on production price indices of goods sold in foreign markets in the last two columns.

Table A3 – Top five destination markets by fashion sector

(percentage shares on values)

Panel A - 2022

Italy

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
France	9.2	France	11.7	Switzerland	15.7
Germany	9.8	Germany	10.1	France	14.4
Romania	6.7	Switzerland	10.0	United States	10.5
Spain	5.9	United States	9.0	Germany	7.4
United States	5.2	China	6.6	China	5.5

France

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
Germany	9.5	Italy	11.9	China	14.2
Belgium	9.4	Spain	10.2	United States	14.1
Tunisia	9.3	Germany	10.1	Italy	10.0
Italy	8.1	China	9.1	Singapore	9.1
China	7.4	United States	7.6	Hong Kong	7.6

Germany

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
Poland	10.0	Austria	13.0	Poland	13.3
Austria	7.7	Poland	12.8	France	10.1
France	6.5	Switzerland	12.4	Switzerland	7.8
Italy	5.9	France	9.5	Netherlands	7.4
Netherlands	5.9	Netherlands	9.5	Italy	6.9

Spain

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
Morocco	26.9	France	14.9	France	20.5
France	12.9	Italy	11.3	Italy	14.6
Portugal	8.6	Portugal	8.7	Germany	9.7
Italy	8.5	Poland	7.6	Portugal	8.6
Germany	7.3	Germany	6.7	United States	5.8

Panel B – 2024

Italy

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
France	9.6	France	13.5	France	17.7
Germany	9.5	Germany	9.5	United States	10.8
Romania	6.4	United States	8.8	Germany	8.1
Spain	5.7	China	8.0	China	6.4
United States	4.8	Spain	5.7	Japan	4.7

France

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
China	11.5	Italy	11.2	China	14.5
Belgium	10.3	Germany	10.0	United States	12.5
Germany	9.9	Spain	9.2	Italy	9.1
Tunisia	7.9	China	8.7	Japan	8.8
Italy	7.1	United States	8.3	Hong Kong	7.6

Germany

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
Poland	8.9	Poland	18.7	Poland	17.0
Austria	7.5	Austria	11.8	France	9.0
France	6.5	Switzerland	11.8	Netherlands	8.6
Netherlands	6.2	Netherlands	9.9	Switzerland	7.5
Italy	5.6	France	8.2	Italy	7.2

Spain

Textiles		Wearing Apparel		Leather	
Country	Share %	Country	Share %	Country	Share %
Morocco	28.9	France	15.8	France	19.7
France	12.7	Italy	14.5	Italy	18.1
Portugal	8.7	Poland	11.5	Germany	9.4
Italy	8.1	Portugal	10.5	Portugal	9.1
Germany	7.1	Germany	8.3	Poland	5.6

Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS).

Notes: In 2024 Switzerland ranked seventh for Italy's exports of wearing apparel and sixth for leather products, and is therefore not reported in the 2024 panel, down from third and first place, respectively, in 2022.

Table A4 – Comparison between Istat and customs data fashion exports

(values)

	Istat					Customs				
	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**Change 21-22**	**Change 22-23**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**Change 21-22**	**Change 22-23**
	(EUR bln)			*(percentage changes)*		*(EUR bln.)*			*(percentage changes)*	
Textiles	9.5	11.3	10.7	18.9	-4.9	9.75	11.4	10.8	16.9	-5.2
Wearing Apparel	23.2	27.2	27.8	17.2	2.3	21.6	25.5	26.0	18.1	1.9
Leather	22.8	26.8	26.7	17.5	-0.6	22.3	26.4	25.7	18.4	-2.6

Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).
Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in a given year. The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

Table A5 – Changes in exports of multi-sector fashion firms between 2022 and 2023

(percentage shares on values)

Firms in wearing apparel and textiles

		Δ<0 in Textiles	Δ>0 in Textiles
Δ>0 in Wearing Apparel	Share of firms	21.6	**36.4**
	Share of exports	23.2	**26.4**
Δ<0 in Wearing Apparel	Share of firms	**25.2**	16.9
	Share of exports	**28.7**	21.7

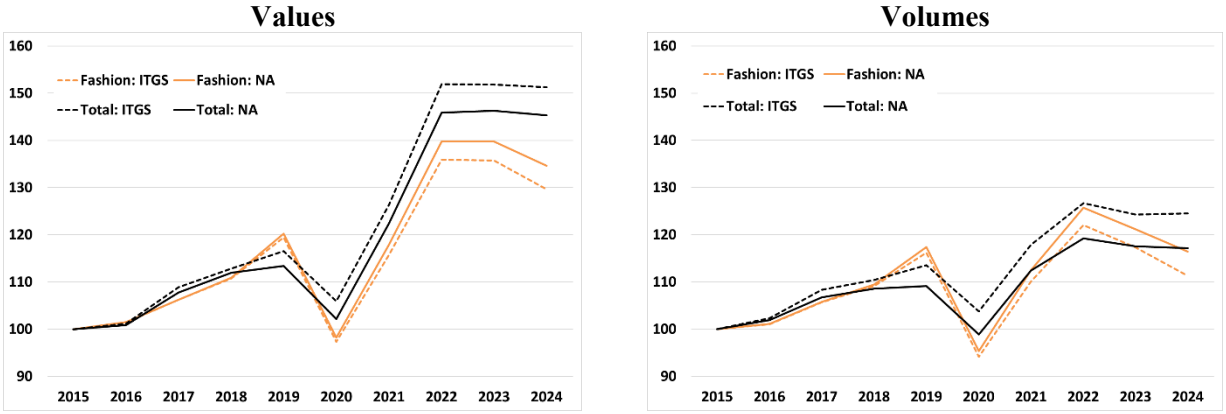
Firms in wearing apparel and leather

		Δ<0 in Leather	Δ>0 in Leather
Δ>0 in Wearing Apparel	Share of firms	8.2	**38.5**
	Share of exports	19.1	**28.6**
Δ<0 in Wearing Apparel	Share of firms	**34.6**	18.7
	Share of exports	**31.3**	21.0

Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).
Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in 2022. The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

Figure A1 – Italy's exports by ITGS and NA statistics, 2015-24

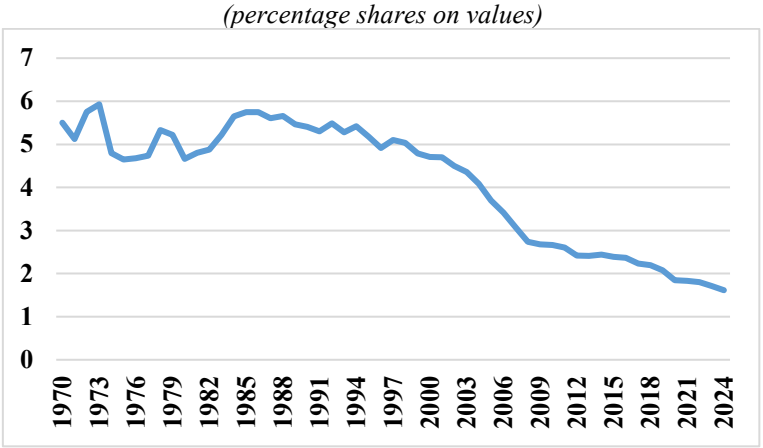
(indices 2015=100)



Source: authors' calculations on Istat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) and national accounts (NA) in the left hand-side panel and also on production price indices of goods sold in foreign markets in the right hand-side panel.

Figure A2 – The share of Italy's textile exports in total goods exports, 1970-2024

(percentage shares on values)

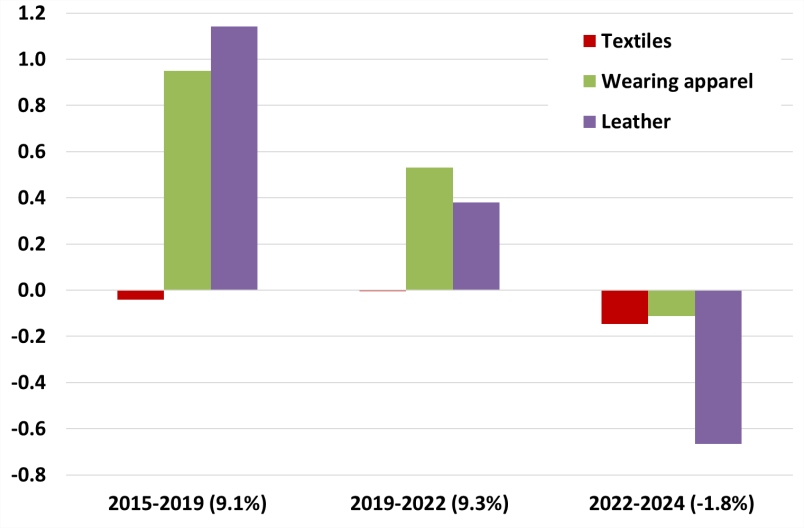


Source: authors' calculations on Istat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS).

Notes: The data prior to 1993 are constructed by aggregating the NACE-CLIO branches 431, 432, 438, and 439.

Figure A3 – The contribution of fashion sectors to Italy's total goods export dynamics, 2015-24

(percentage points, volumes)

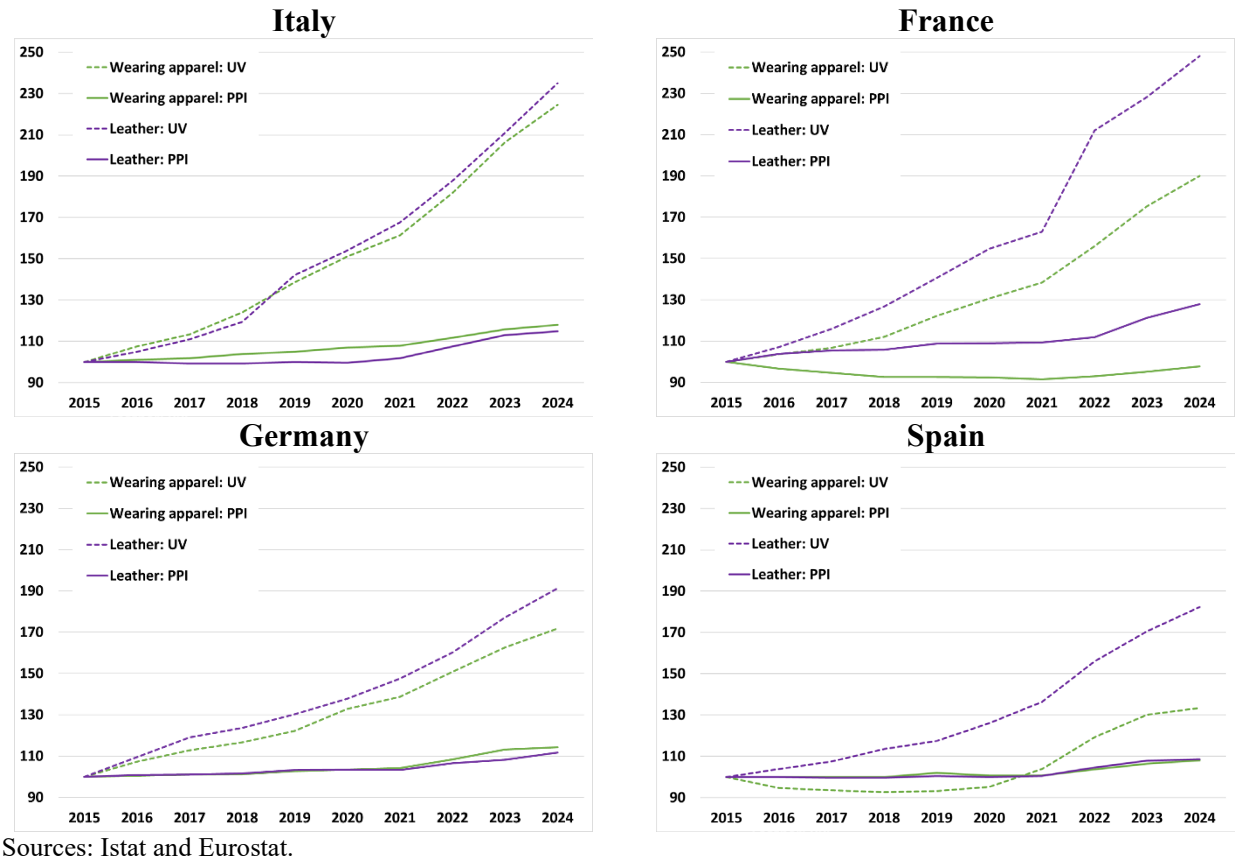


Source: authors' calculations on Istat international trade in goods statistics (ITGS), national accounts (NA) and production price indices of goods sold in foreign markets.

Notes: The figures reported in brackets are the changes in Italy's total goods exports in the three periods, according to NA.

Figure A4 – Export unit values (UV) and producer price indices (PPIs) of the four main euro-area economies, 2015-24

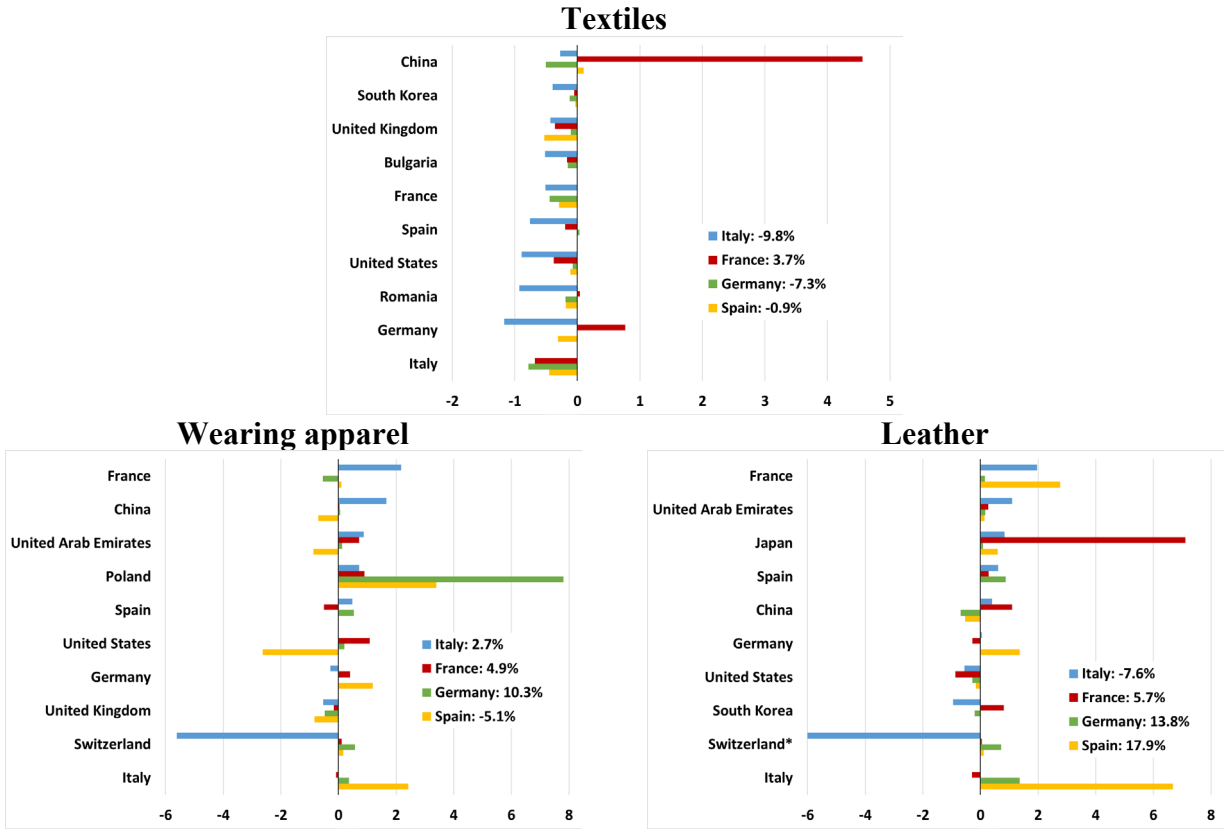
(indices 2015=100)



Sources: Istat and Eurostat.

Figure A5 – Contributions of the main destination markets to the four main euro-area economies' fashion export dynamics, 2022-24

(percentage points, values)

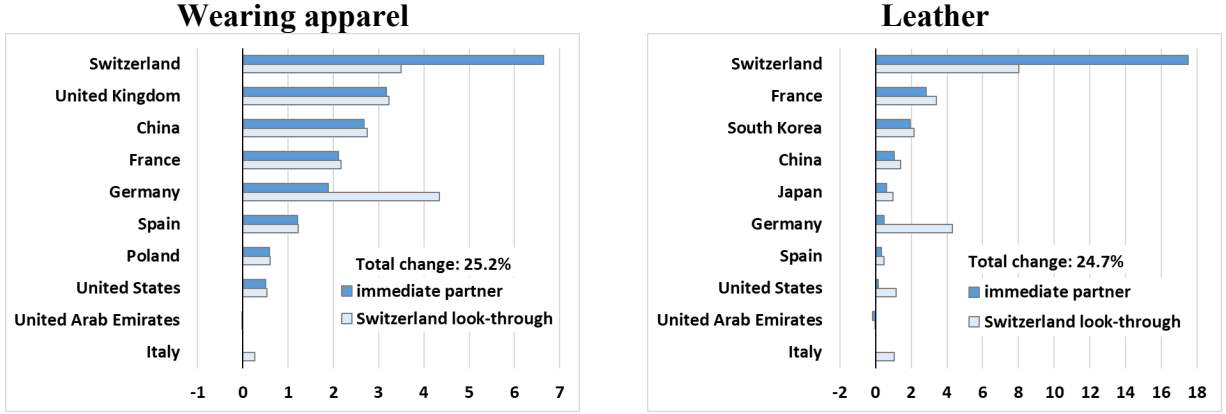


Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat ITGS.

Notes: (*) Italy's leather exports to Switzerland have dampened the overall sector dynamics by 11.5 percentage points; Switzerland is not fully reported as it is off the scale. Percentage changes in sectoral export values by country are reported in the legends, after having adjusted the ITGS values to match the total fashion NA values for Italy and the total goods NA values for the other three countries. The figure represents key destination markets for Italy's fashion exports as in Figure 6 in the main text plus Italy itself.

Figure A6 – Contributions of the main destination markets to Italy's fashion export dynamics, 2015-19

(percentage points, values)

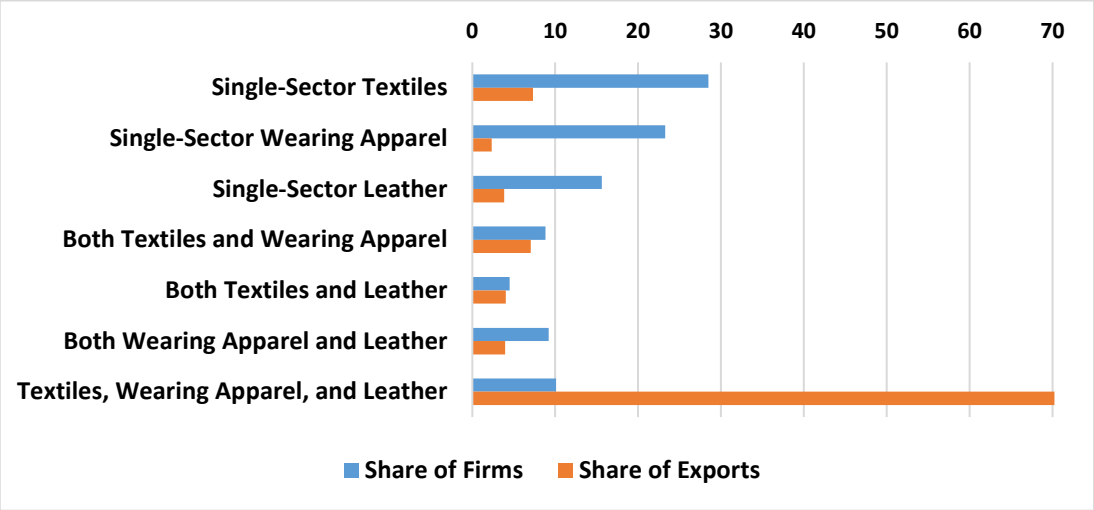


Source: authors' calculations on Eurostat and Federal Office for Customs and Border Security ITGS and Istat NA.

Note: Percentage changes in each fashion sector exports in value terms between 2015 and 2019 are reported in the legends, after having adjusted the ITGS values to sum up to the total NA fashion values. The figure represents key destination markets for Italy's fashion exports as in Figure 6 in the main text. For the methodology underlying the Switzerland "look-through" exercise conducted in the lower panels, see the main text in Section 3.

Figure A7 – Exports of multi-sector firms

(percentage shares of total goods export values and firms)

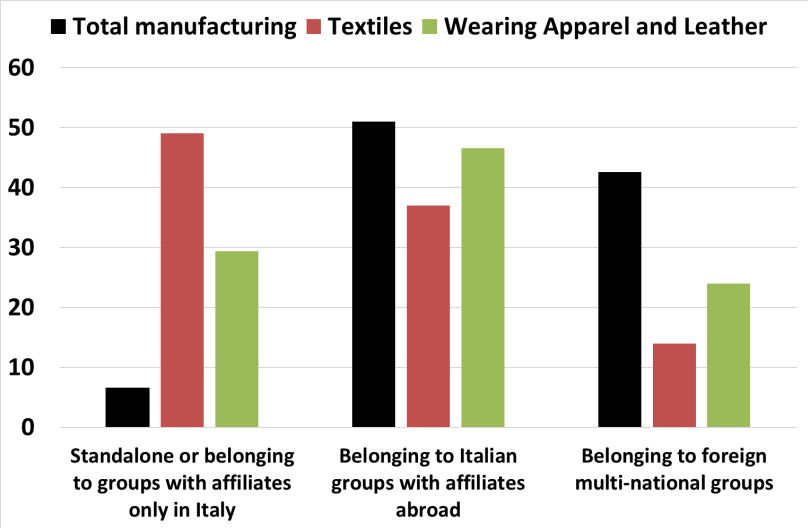


Source: authors' calculations on Italian customs data (universe of exporters excluding one-person firms).

Notes: Firms are classified as fashion exporters if they exported more than EUR 1,000 in either textiles, wearing apparel or leather in 2023. The product classification is reported in Table A1 in the Annex.

Figure A8 – Export shares of Italy's fashion exporters according to their status

(percentage shares of total goods export values)



Source: Istat-ICE (2025).

Notes: The breakdown of wearing apparel and leather is unavailable. Data refer to 2022 (latest available data).

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