FCT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION LANDSCAPE COUNTRY PROFILE: ITALY

ENACT.
European Network Against
Crime and Terrorism

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About ENACT

ENACT is a knowledge network focused on the fight against crime and terrorism (FCT). The network is funded under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme in Cluster 3 – Civil Security for Society. The project addresses the call topic HORIZON-CL3-2022-SSRI-01-02 'Knowledge Networks for Security Research & Innovation', aiming to collect, aggregate, process, disseminate and make the most of the existing knowledge in the FCT area.

The project aims to satisfy two major ambitions,

- Provide evidence-based support to the decision-makers in the EU research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem in the FCT domain, targeted explicitly at enabling more effective and efficient programming of EU-funded R&I for the fight against crime and terrorism.

- Act as a catalyst for the uptake of innovation by enhancing the visibility and reliability of innovative FCT security solutions.

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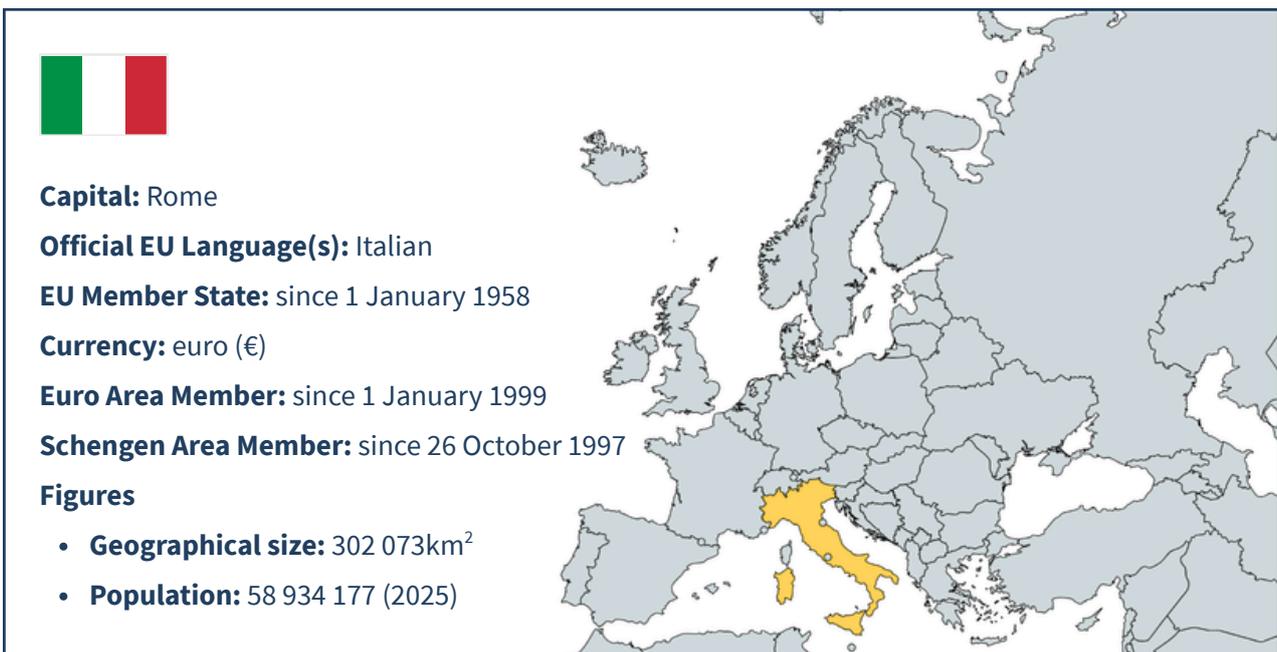**Funded by
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Overview

The **Fight against Crime and Terrorism (FCT)** domain is a critical pillar within the European Union's security research framework, designed to address the increasingly complex and transnational threats facing Europe today. **FCT** research aims to provide innovative solutions, tools, and knowledge to empower law enforcement, policymakers, and civil society to prevent, detect, and respond to criminal and terrorist activities across the continent. The European Union supports collaborative research and innovation through key programmes like **Horizon Europe**, focusing on multidisciplinary approaches that combine advanced technology with robust legal, ethical, and societal safeguards.

In line with **ENACT**'s objectives, this flash report is part of a series of reports that reviews the **FCT R&I** ecosystem in each EU Member State based on their participation in EU-funded **Security Research** under the **FCT** area between 2021 and 2024. The data used for the report comes from the most recent data available from **CORDIS** and the **Horizon Dashboard**, combined with data processed by **ENACT** under its **Structured Knowledge Base (SKB)**.

Italy Infobox

Capital: Rome

Official EU Language(s): Italian

EU Member State: since 1 January 1958

Currency: euro (€)

Euro Area Member: since 1 January 1999

Schengen Area Member: since 26 October 1997

Figures

- **Geographical size:** 302 073km^2
- **Population:** 58 934 177 (2025)

Italy maintains a central and highly competitive role within the European research and innovation landscape, consistently ranking among the **top five recipients** of EU research funding. In the current **Horizon Europe** framework, Italian entities demonstrate remarkable performance, characterised by a **high volume of participations** and a strong capacity for coordination. Italy is particularly distinguished by its **scientific excellence** and the active involvement of its academic and research institutions, such as the CNR and leading polytechnics, alongside a dynamic fabric of **innovative SMEs** that exceed the EU average in terms of collaborative innovation.

Italian beneficiaries are at the forefront of the **Civil Security for Society (Cluster 3)** and **digital** sectors, with a pervasive presence in projects dedicated to **Fighting Crime and Terrorism (FCT)**, **Border Management**, and the **Protection of Critical Infrastructure**. The country's contribution is pivotal in areas such as **Artificial Intelligence**, **Cybersecurity**, and **Quantum Technologies**, where it often acts as a bridge between high-level research and industrial application. Furthermore, Italy's strategic focus on **Digital Transformation** and its commitment to the **Security Union Priorities** reflect a national vision deeply integrated with European goals for a safer and more resilient Union.

This sustained engagement not only reinforces Italy's status as a **key pillar of the European Research Area (ERA)** but also enhances its influence in shaping future EU policy. Through its leadership in complex, cross-disciplinary consortia, Italy continues to drive the development of cutting-edge technologies and best practices, ensuring a significant real-world impact on the safety of citizens and the competitiveness of the European digital economy.

Country overview in FCT Research & Innovation

Italy's country profile in the **FCT** domain will be examined from three perspectives: policy coverage, functional coverage, and technology, in accordance with the **EU Civil Security Taxonomy (EUCST)**.

FCT Policy Coverage

The policy coverage charts indicate Italy's comprehensive engagement in the **Fight against Crime and Terrorism (FCT)** research and innovation policy areas. In alignment with the thematic areas defined by the European Commission under the **FCT** domain of the **EUCST**, Italy, due to its size and complexity, faces the entire spectrum of challenges, including **Organised Crime**, **Drug Trafficking**, **Human Trafficking**, **Terrorism**, the **Protection of Public Spaces**, and **Cybersecurity**. The following graph illustrates the policy coverage of the participants, categorised into the main **Security Research** areas: **OC (Organised Crime)**, **TR (Terrorism and Radicalisation)**, **CC (Cybercrime)**, and **HSI (other Horizontal Societal Issues)**.
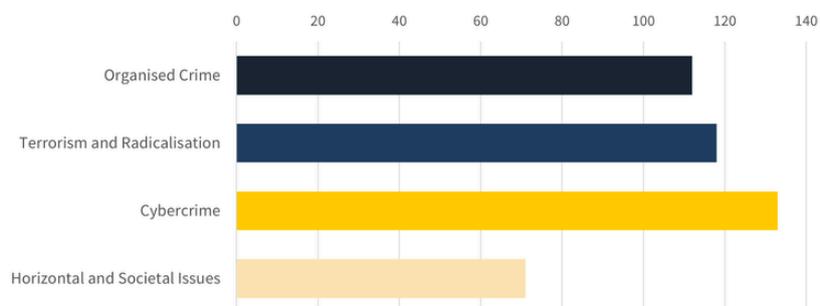

Figure 2 - Policy coverage across Italian participants in the ENACT Stakeholders Directory

This alignment reflects Italy's broad and sustained presence across the security sector. Italian expertise is well distributed across major policy domains, with significant representation in **Cybercrime**, **Terrorism and Radicalisation**, and **Organised Crime**. This comprehensive engagement demonstrates a strategic commitment and responsiveness to evolving threats that characterise the entire national security landscape, reaching beyond specific funding frameworks.

Figure 3 illustrates the broad engagement of Italian stakeholders across the security sector, reflecting a diverse national ecosystem. The highest level of activity is concentrated in **Dark Net (Illegal Markets/Cryptocurrencies)**, which represents the most significant area of focus, followed closely by **Trafficking of Humans and Goods**. Strong strategic engagement is also evident in the **Protection of Public Spaces** and various **Cybercrime (CC)** sub-domains, particularly **Digital Forensics** and **Other Forms of Cybercrime**. Notable involvement is observed in the fields of **Economic Crime, Corruption and Fraud**, as well as in **CBRN Threats** and **Explosives and Explosives Precursors**.

In contrast to more prominent pillars, areas such as **Counterfeit Goods and Documents**, **Cargo Crime**, and **Domestic Violence** show more moderate levels of representation. This distribution highlights a comprehensive national responsiveness to complex security challenges, extending beyond specific funding programs to encompass a wide range of institutional and professional expertise.
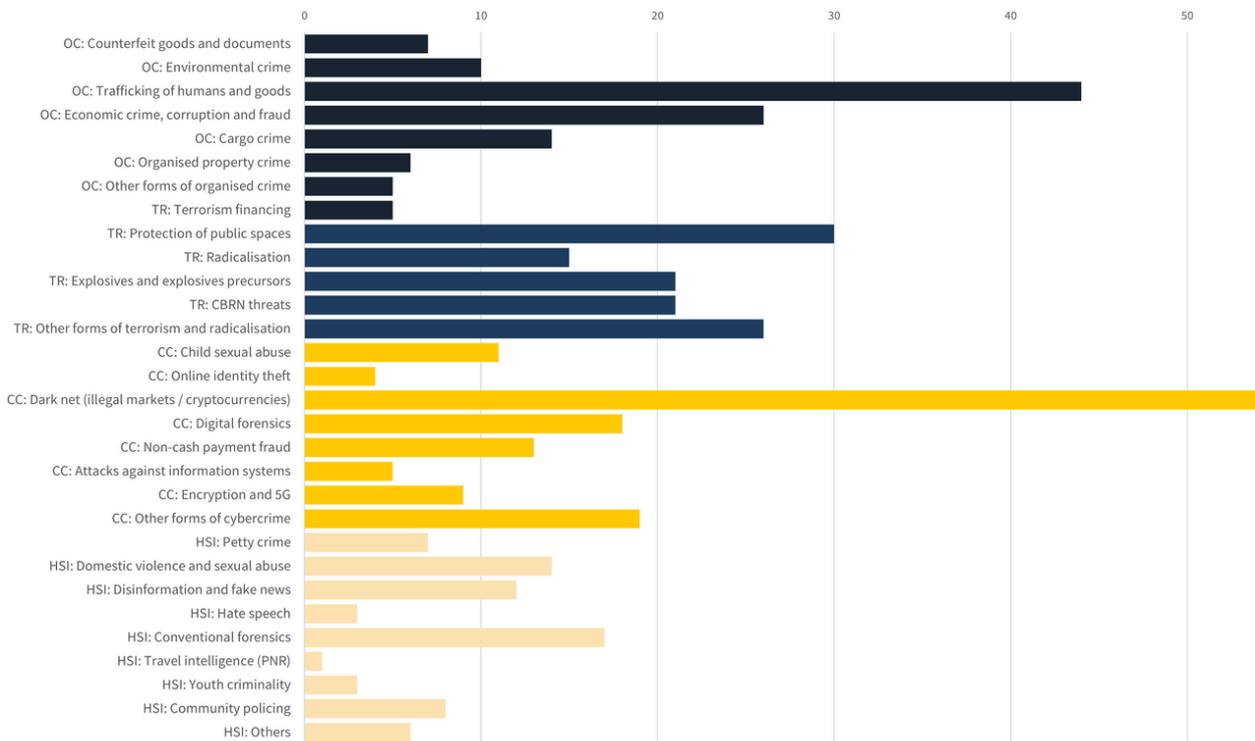

Figure 3 - Policy coverage at level 3 across Italian stakeholders

FCT Functions Coverage

Analysis of the function's coverage graphs demonstrates that Italian entities are actively involved in a wide range of functions, from research and development to operational deployment. The data show a noticeable emphasis on functions that facilitate collaboration among law enforcement agencies, technology providers, and academia, helping to bridge the gap between innovative research and field implementation.

The data highlights that within the Italian security ecosystem, the most prominent functional capability is **Investigation and Forensics**, which stands as the primary area of expertise. This is followed closely by **Data, Information & Intelligence Gathering Management** and **Training and Exercises**, both of which show significant engagement across various stakeholders.

Strategic depth is also evident in **Monitoring and Surveillance of Environments and Activities**, alongside a strong presence in the **Detection of Goods, Substances, Assets, and People,** and in **Secure and Public Communication**.

In contrast, capabilities such as **Physical Access Control** and **Positioning and Localisation, Tracking and Tracing** display the lowest participation levels on the chart. This distribution suggests a sophisticated national focus on intelligence-led and investigative functions, representing a comprehensive landscape of expertise that extends beyond specific funding frameworks.

This broad functional engagement maximises project impact, ensuring that research outputs are well connected to real-world applications in security and law enforcement operations.
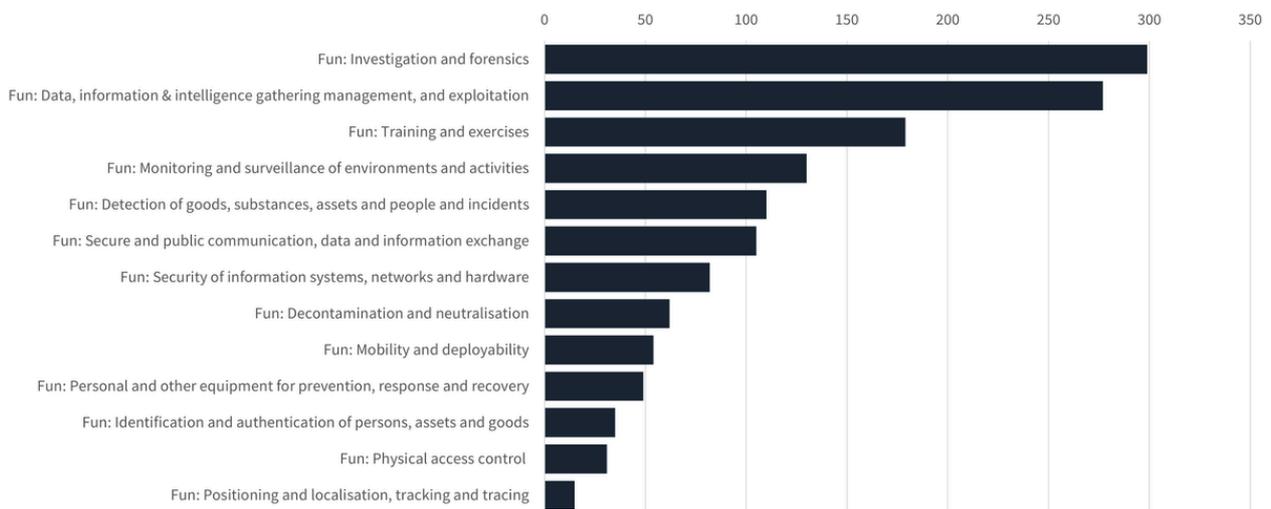
Figure 4 - Functions coverage across Italian stakeholders

FCT Technology Domain Coverage

The mapping of technological capabilities highlights a versatile and robust Italian security ecosystem, capable of addressing a wide spectrum of modern challenges. Italy's technological leadership is anchored in **general equipment** and advanced **data analytics**, which serve as the primary pillars of its technical expertise.

Beyond these core strengths, the national landscape is characterised by a significant capacity in **internet-based investigation** and **data storage and exchange**, alongside a strong focus on **critical and interoperable communications**. Furthermore, the depth of expertise in **digital forensics** and **training & simulation** demonstrates Italy's commitment to providing sophisticated, end-to-end solutions within the European security framework. This diversified technological base reflects the high level of innovation across a broad range of national institutional and industrial actors.
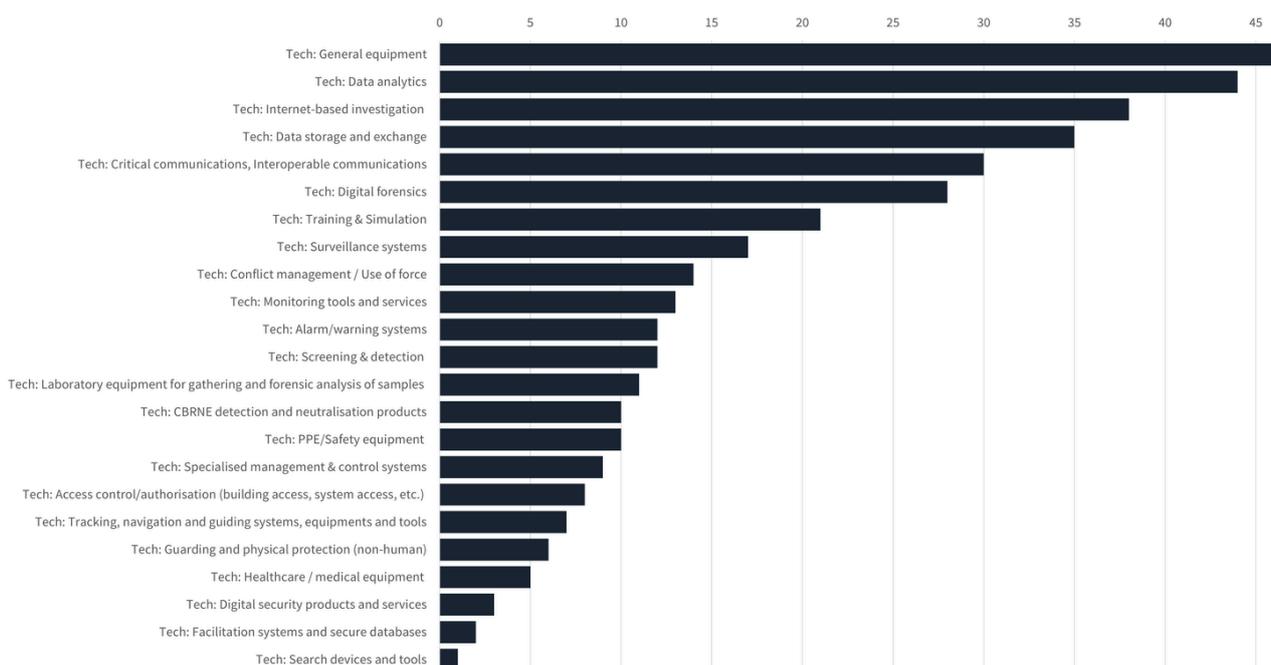

Figure 5 - Technology coversage across Italian stakeholders

Overview of Italy's Horizon Europe participation metrics

The next graph compares Italy's and the EU's key performance indicators in the **Horizon Europe FCT** domain, highlighting Italy's strong engagement and specific contributions relative to the European reference figures.

Italy	25	2.60	€ 763,554.86	€ 703,632.00	11	€ 2,600,634.34
	Signed Grants	Average Participation	Average Total Cost	Average EU Contribution	SME Participation	SME Net EU Contribution
EU	41	18.12	€ 4,310,115.27	€ 3,987,660.71	172	€ 44,114,024.00
	Signed Grants	Average Participation	Average Total Cost	Average EU Contribution	SME Participation	SME Net EU Contribution

Figure 6 - Italian project participation metrics compared to EU

The data shows that Italy has secured 25 signed grants with an average EU contribution of €703,632.00 per project. This performance results in a return rate of 10.76% of the total EU grants budget for this sector. A significant element of the Italian landscape is the SME participation, with 11 SMEs involved, accounting for **6.40%** of the total SME participation within the EU framework for this sector. Overall, these indicators demonstrate that while Italy may engage in a smaller signed grants compared to other top recipients, its participation is highly efficient and focused on high-value contributions, yielding robust and meaningful returns from Horizon Europe security funding.

Based on the figures above and the table below, Italy ranks fifth in terms of signed grants, while standing as the **second-highest** recipient in terms of total net EU contribution, with over €17.5 million secured.

Country Code	Country	Signed Grants	Total Participations by Country	Net EU Contribution
EL	Greece	34	90	€ 26,290,653.24
IT	Italy	25	65	€ 17,590,799.90
ES	Spain	34	87	€ 17,409,733.00
DE	Germany	27	48	€ 13,558,133.33
FR	France	21	43	€ 10,163,819.63
BE	Belgium	23	39	€ 9,606,930.16
NL	Netherlands	19	27	€ 8,513,248.75
FI	Finland	22	29	€ 5,954,334.86
PL	Poland	16	26	€ 5,898,789.00
CY	Cyprus	18	23	€ 5,723,581.25
PT	Portugal	21	28	€ 4,924,522.00
UK	United Kingdom	30	52	€ 4,525,528.75
LU	Luxembourg	10	11	€ 4,401,443.75
AT	Austria	12	16	€ 4,347,636.75
IE	Ireland	7	10	€ 3,456,761.80
RO	Romania	14	22	€ 2,733,978.00
BG	Bulgaria	6	13	€ 2,241,263.14
SE	Sweden	10	10	€ 2,128,071.25
CZ	Czechia	10	13	€ 2,061,742.25
IL	Israel	4	5	€ 1,761,025.00
HU	Hungary	3	4	€ 1,731,153.75
MD	Moldova	18	20	€ 1,288,120.00
SI	Slovenia	4	8	€ 1,201,050.00
EE	Estonia	7	9	€ 1,177,348.75
NO	Norway	3	3	€ 1,071,048.75
SK	Slovakia	1	3	€ 831,038.50
HR	Croatia	2	3	€ 602,395.26
RS	Serbia	4	5	€ 478,496.25
LT	Lithuania	2	3	€ 420,080.00
CA	Canada	2	2	€ 418,417.50
MT	Malta	3	3	€ 283,356.00
TR	Türkiye	1	2	€ 160,432.50
UA	Ukraine	1	1	€ 135,000.00
DK	Denmark	2	2	€ 107,375.00
XK	Kosovo *	2	2	€ 78,750.00
MK	North Macedonia	2	2	€ 67,226.25
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	€ 59,625.00
AL	Albania	1	1	€ 48,750.00
IS	Iceland	1	1	€ 42,430.00
CH	Switzerland	8	11	€ 0.00

Table 1 - Comparison of Italy to other participating countries in Horizon Europe for signed grants, total projet participations and net EU contribution

Participants Summary

Italian participation in **Horizon Europe CL3-FCT** projects encompasses a broad range of organisations, including research centres, universities, industry, and public sector bodies. The involvement of both well-established institutions and emerging players signals a robust and healthy ecosystem.
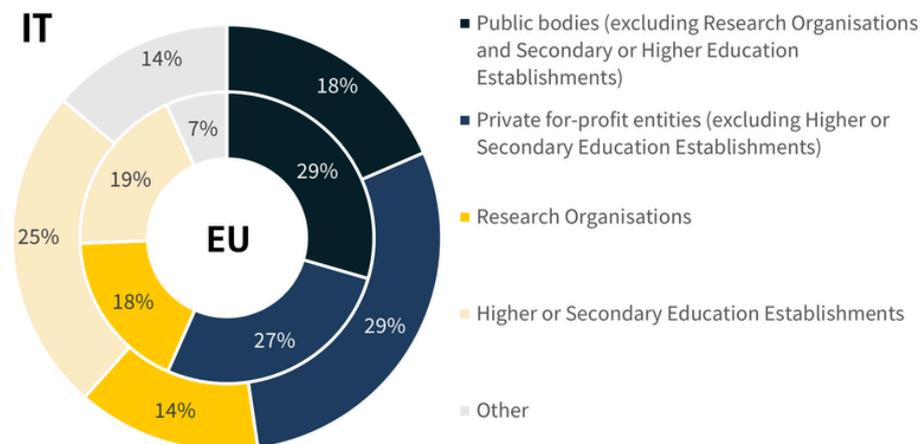

Figure 7 - Organisational types of Italian participation compared to the EU average in Horizon Europe projects

Particularly significant is the active role played by Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs), reflecting both scientific excellence and application-driven project designs. When analysing individual participants by their type, the following overview highlights the current key organisations involved.

Top End Users

End User	Total Cost	Signed Grants	Total EU Contribution
Ministero della Difesa	€ 916,775.00	5	€ 916,775.00
Comune di Torino	€ 312,250.00	1	€ 312,250.00
Ministero Dell'Interno	€ 219,437.50	3	€ 219,437.50
Agenzia Regionale per la Protezione dell'Ambiente (ARPA) della Lombardia	€ 114,228.75	1	€ 114,228.75
Comune di Gorizia	€ 74,025.00	1	€ 74,025.00
Procura della Repubblica Presso il Tribunale di Bari	€ 0.00	1	€ 0.00
Grand Total	**€ 1,636,716**	**12**	**€ 1,636,716**

Top Research and Technology Organisations

Research and Technology Organisation	Total Cost	Signed Grants	Total EU Contribution
Fondazione Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia	€ 1,279,900.06	1	€ 1,339,900.06*
Fondazione Bruno Kessler	€ 798,000.00	2	€ 798,000.00
Agenzia Nazionale per le Nuove Tecnologie, l'Energia e lo Sviluppo Economico Sostenibile (ENEA)	€ 704,730.00	1	€ 704,730.00
Sociography, Multi knowledge actions for research and ethics	€ 356,750.00	1	€ 356,750.00
Fondazione LINKS - Leading Innovation & Knowledge For Society	€ 267,500.00	1	€ 267,500.00
ABI Lab - Centro di Ricerca e Innovazione per la Banca	€ 234,500.00	1	€ 234,500.00
Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia	€ 206,450.00	1	€ 206,450.00
Università Verde di Bologna APS	€ 95,785.00	1	€ 95,785.00
Grand Total	**€ 3,943,615**	**9**	**€ 4,003,615**

Top Industry

Industrial Organisation	Total Cost	Signed Grants	Total EU Contribution
Engineering - Ingegneria Informatica Spa	€ 4,185,817.50	7	€ 3,265,528.00
STAM SRL	€ 729,950.00	1	€ 510,965.00
Deep Blue SRL	€ 275,922.50	1	€ 275,922.50
ICT Legal Consulting - Studio Legale Associato Balboni, Bolognini & Partners	€ 387,250.00	1	€ 271,075.00
Maggioli Spa	€ 203,750.00	1	€ 253,750.00*
CyberEthics Lab SRLS	€ 243,750.00	1	€ 243,750.00
Crime and Tech SRL	€ 385,942.50	2	€ 239,093.75
Dylog Hitech S.R.L.	€ 325,000.00	1	€ 227,500.00
DigInnov - Digital Innovation Consulting	€ 180,963.60	1	€ 180,963.60
Copan Italia Spa	€ 153,375.00	1	€ 153,375.00
StAG SRL	€ 109,049.09	1	€ 109,049.09
Dinova SRL	€ 50,000.00	1	€ 0.00
Grand Total	**€ 7,230,770**	**19**	**€ 5,730,971**

Top Academia

Higher Education	Total Cost	Signed Grants	EU Contribution
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	€ 2,080,415.00	6	€ 2,111,481.00*
Politecnico di Milano	€ 849,000.00	2	€ 849,000.00
Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro	€ 613,462.50	2	€ 613,462.50
Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna	€ 413,453.75	2	€ 413,453.75
Politecnico di Torino	€ 324,562.50	1	€ 324,562.50
Università degli Studi di Firenze	€ 312,750.00	1	€ 312,750.00
Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata	€ 168,075.00	1	€ 168,075.00
L'Università degli Studi di Trento	€ 120,500.00	1	€ 120,500.00
Grand Total	**€ 4,882,219**	**16**	**€ 4,913,285**

* In a small number of cases, where entities participate with a Linked Third Party, the EU Contribution may appear higher than the Total Cost as the figure includes the amount awarded to both the main beneficiary and to any Linked Third Parties.

Horizon Europe FCT Proposals Summary

Italy demonstrates a high level of engagement in **Horizon Europe** calls, reflected by a steady and significant number of proposals submitted by Italian entities. The data indicate a diversified participation across several topics within the programme, highlighting a strong alignment with national strategic priorities in research and innovation.

Figure 8 presents a comparative overview of Italy's and the EU's performance in **Horizon Europe FCT** proposal activities, allowing for a direct analysis of Italy's contribution and competitiveness.

Italy	162	24	363	€ 100,738,625.49	15%
	Eligible Proposals	Retained Proposals	Eligible Applications	Eligible EU	Success Rate
EU	278	39	4458	€ 1,099,171,410.00	14%
	Eligible Proposals	Retained Proposals	Eligible Applications	Eligible EU Contribution	Success Rate

Figure 8 - Statistics for Horizon Europe proposal submission for Italy compared to the EU overall

Considering the number of retained proposals with respect to the eligible proposals, Italy's success rate stands at 15%, which is slightly above the EU average of 14%. This underscores the quality and competitiveness of Italian proposals within the highly selective European context. The data collectively indicate that Italy not only maintains a strong and effective participation but also achieves competitive outcomes by securing a significant portion of the available funding. This reinforces Italy's position as a leading and reliable player within the Horizon Europe security research program, capable of delivering excellence across a wide range of strategic initiatives.

Horizon Europe FCT Projects Summary

The number of projects with strong Italian participation has increased, with Italy regularly occupying lead or key partner roles in many initiatives. Italian organisations are well-represented in large-scale, multi-partner projects, often taking responsibility for coordination, work package leadership, or pilot activities.

Acronym	Project Title	Type	No.
SAFE-CITIES	riSk-based Approach For the protEction of public spaces in European CITIES	IA	7
ARIEN	ARtificial IntelligencE in fighting illicit drugs production and traffickiNg	IA	6
EMERITUS	Environmental crimes' intelligence and investigation protocol based on multiple data sources	IA	5
NARCOSIS	Non-tArgeted foRensic multidisCiplinary platfOrm for inveStigatIon of drug-related fatalitieS	IA	5
PERIVALLON	Protecting the EuRopean terrItory from organised enVironmentAl crime through inteLLigent threat detectiON tools	IA	5
DETECTOR	Deepfake Evidence and Technology for Forensic Content Oversight and Research	RIA	4
ECLIPSE	PrEventing and Combating onLine and offline hate speech and dIsinformation through multidisciPlinary innovation, education, and awareneSs in Europe	IA	4
FALCON	Fight Against Large-scale Corruption and Organised Crime Networks	IA	4
RITHMS	Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security	RIA	4
LAGO	LESSEN DATA ACCESS AND GOVERNANCE OBSTACLES	IA	3
GANNDALF	A Ground-breAking collaboratioN framework realizing the next era of cybercrime Detection And muLti-stakeholder investigation For LEAs, judicial ecosystems, and citizens.	IA	2
VANGUARD	adVANced technoloGical solutions coupled with societal-oriented Understanding and AwaReness for Disrupting trafficking in human beings	IA	2
EITHOS	European Identity THeft Observatory System	RIA	2
2PS	2PS - Prevent & Protect Through Support	RIA	1
Ceasefire	Advanced versatile artificiaAdvanced versatile artificial intelligence technologies and interconnected cross-sectoral fully-operational national focal points for combating illicit firearms trafficking	IA	1
BEHOLDER	Build and Extend CBRN-E related Hazard-Assessment and Anomaly Detection Capabilities on Urban Environment.	IA	1
AMALTHEA	EnAbling a Model-driven deep understAnding of the roLe of gender Towards a Holistic solution against Extremism and radicalization Activities	RIA	1
ENSEMBLE	ENhanced AI-baSEd cybercriMe-oriented collaBorative investigation technologies and capabiLitiEs	RIA	1

Acronym	Project Title	Type	No.
PRESERVE	Ethical and Privacy-preserving Big Data platform for Supporting criminal investigations	IA	1
FERMI	Fake nEws Risk MItigator	IA	1
IAMI	Identity Attributes Matrix Initiative	RIA	1
CapCell	Innovative forensic trace investigation via microfluidics and single-cell genomics	RIA	1
ISEDA	Innovative Solutions to Eliminate Domestic Abuse	IA	1
PRESERVE	Protecting euRopean public spaces against Emergent hoStile drone thrEats thRough an adVanced multidimensional shield and cross-border intelligEnce	RIA	1
TENACITy	Travelling Intelligence Against Crime and Terrorism	IA	1

This level of engagement demonstrates Italy's capacity to drive cross-border collaboration in R&D activities and make meaningful contributions to the overall objectives of **Horizon Europe**.

The following section presents a series of charts detailing the policy, functional, and technological coverage of the projects, based on the comprehensive list of projects outlined above.
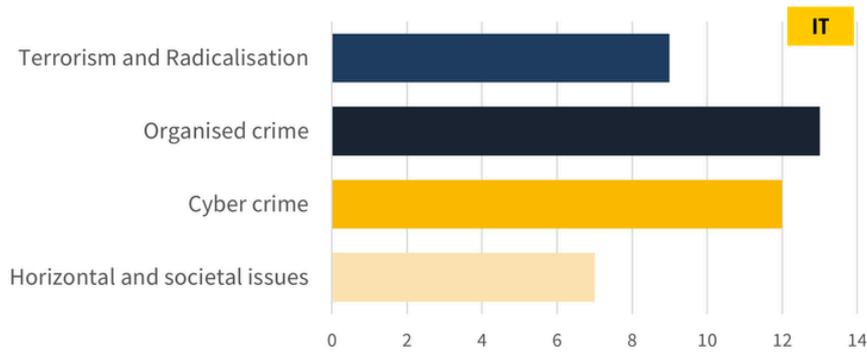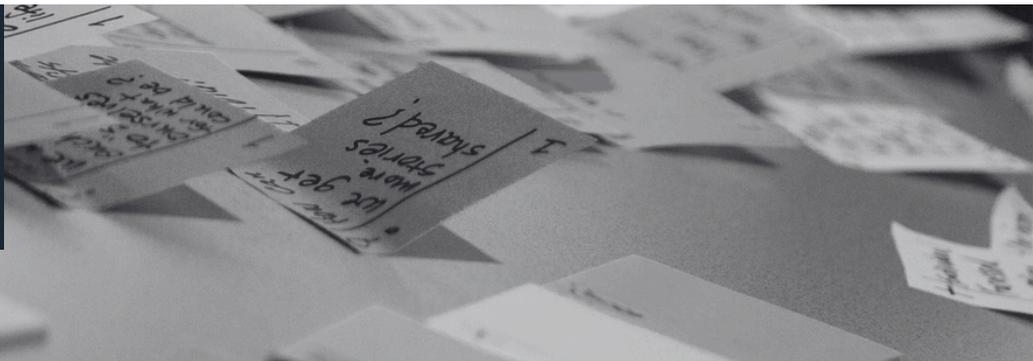

Figure 9 - Policy Project Coverage according to projects with Italian participation
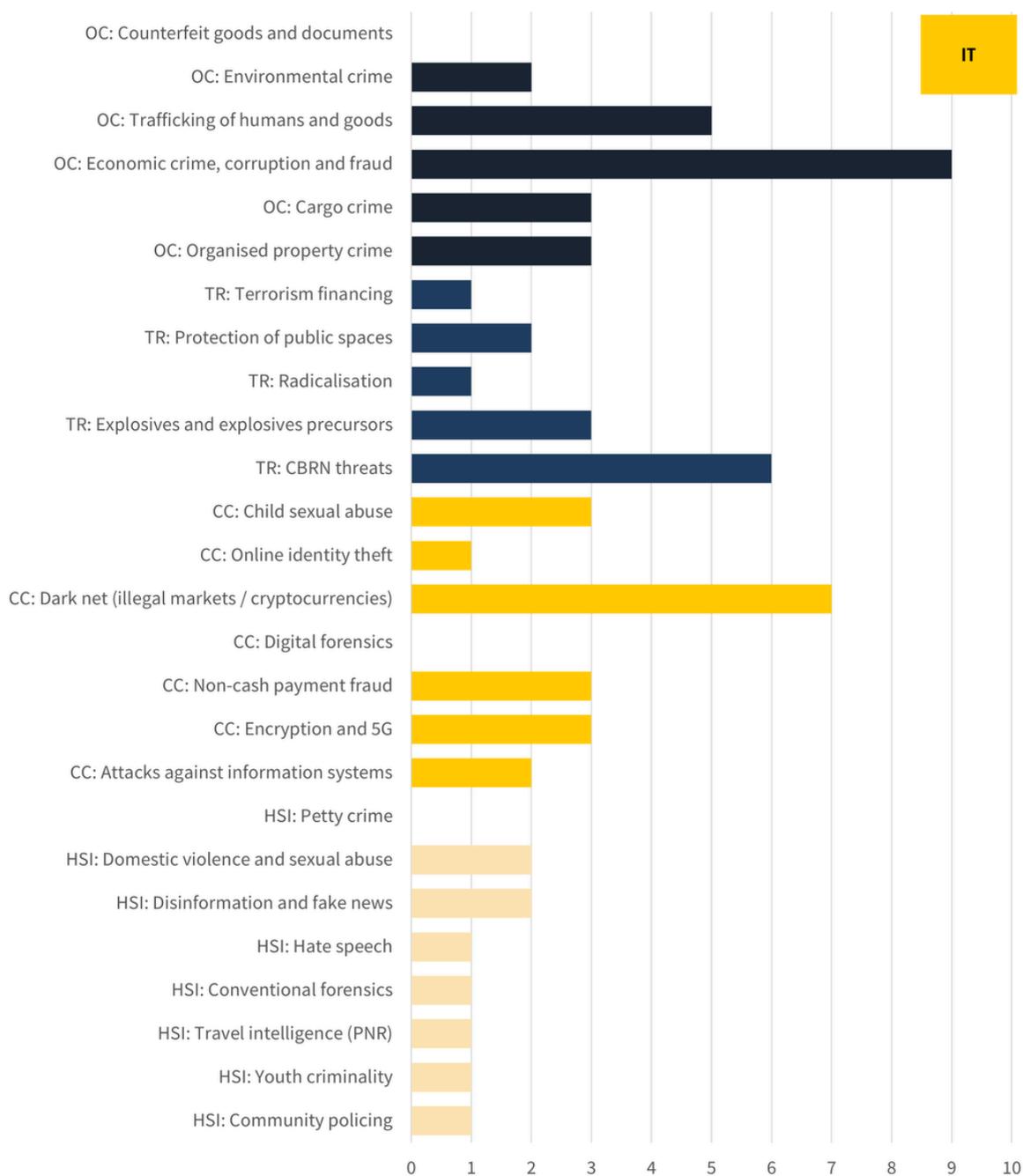
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Figure 10 - L3 Policy Coverage according to projects with Italian participation

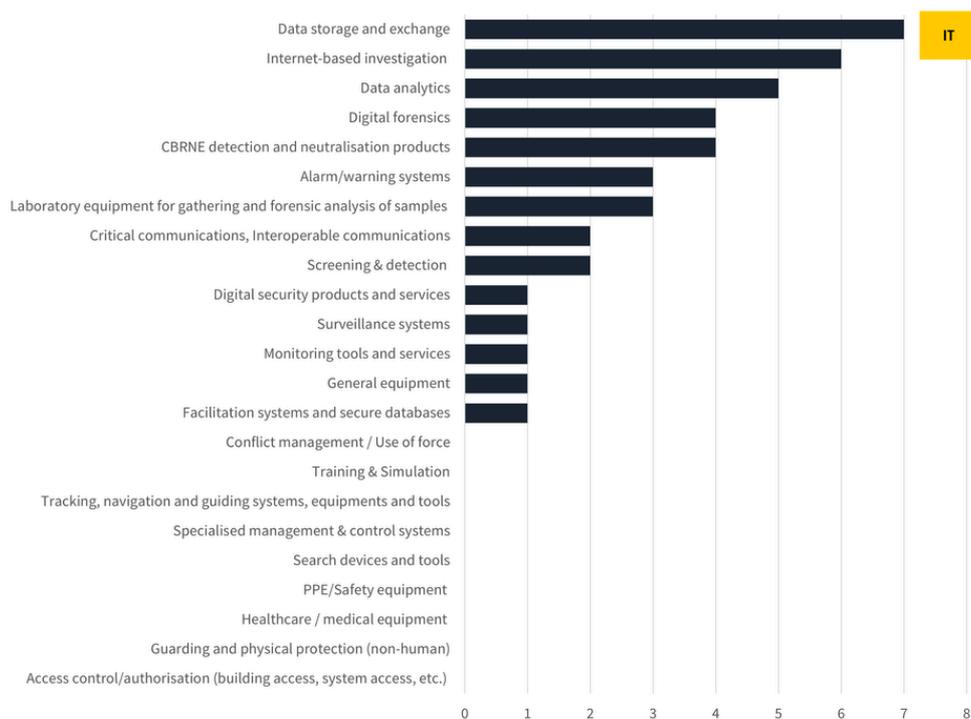*Figure 11 - Functions coverage according to projects with Italian participation*

Figure 12 - Technology coverage according to projects with Italian participation

Final Remarks

Italy's role in European security research is characterised by a high degree of efficiency and strategic leadership, evidenced by its position as one of the top recipients of **Horizon Europe** funding and its capacity to coordinate high-value collaborative projects. Within the policy landscape, Italian organisations are most active in tackling **Economic Crime, Corruption and Fraud**, alongside significant contributions to **CBRN Threats** and the **Fight Against Cybercrime** (including **Dark Net and Illegal Markets**).

This robust involvement is driven by a prestigious research community, comprising law enforcement agencies, world-class academic institutions, and a highly innovative SME sector, ensuring that research outcomes effectively bridge the gap between scientific excellence and operational utility.

Regarding the functional dimension, data show that Italian organisations are especially active in **training and exercises**, followed closely by **investigation and forensics** and **data, information & intelligence gathering**. These functional areas highlight Italy's focus on building operational capabilities and developing sophisticated investigative tools, maximising the impact of Italian research on real-world law enforcement applications across the Union.

In the technological area, Italy demonstrates robust expertise in data-driven solutions, particularly in **data storage, exchange, and analytics**, as well as **internet-based investigation**. The country also shows significant capacity in digital forensics and CBRNE detection technologies, reflecting a broad technological base that supports both national security priorities and the broader European digital agenda.

Italian organisations secure a substantial portion of allocated funding in **Horizon Europe** security projects, often acting as cornerstones of the consortia they join. With a success rate of 15%, which exceeds the EU average, Italy reinforces its reputation as a highly competitive and reliable contributor.

Notably, Italy's ability to secure the highest total net EU contribution in the analysed dataset underscores the strategic importance and the high-level impact of its involvement in the program. Collectively, these strengths support a mature, resilient, and fully aligned security innovation ecosystem that is well-suited to address evolving European challenges and the **Digital Decade** goals.

For more information and guidance regarding the Italian participation in **CL3** and possible collaboration opportunities, please visit the National Contact Points Portal: https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/ and search for the Italian NCPs.

A note on data sources

The data used to compile this report is from the following sources

- **ENACT Stakeholder Directory**, where relevant organisations participating in **Horizon Europe**, **Horizon 2020** or relevant security events have been compiled and categorised according to the **EU Civil Security Market Taxonomy** for policy levels two and three, functions and technology.
- **ENACT Project Directory**, where relevant projects have been compiled and categorised according to the **EU Civil Security Market Taxonomy** for policy levels two and three, functions and technology.
- The **Horizon Dashboard** for R&I Projects and R&I Proposals.[1]

An explorable version of the **ENACT Stakeholders Directory** is available on the **ENACT** website.[2]

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[1]Horizon Dashboard - https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard
[2]ENACT Stakeholders Map - https://enact-eu.net/enact-fct-stakeholder-map/

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