NEWS RELEASE
MARKET SENSITIVE INFORMATION
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HCOB Italy Services PMI®

Growth of Italian services economy slows in February

Key findings:

Weaker rise in new business volumes, despite fresh increase in exports

Job creation hits seven-month high as outlook brightens

Inflationary pressures increase

Data were collected 10-24 February 2026.

The Italian service sector continued along a path of expansion in February, as signalled by fifteenth consecutive month of growth in activity. Although rates of expansion in both output and new business lost pace on the month and were similarly moderate, they were still elevated by historical standards. Export orders also rose for the first time in four months, albeit only slightly.

With limited spare capacity and improved growth expectations for the coming year, hiring activity picked up. On the price front, both input cost and output charge inflation intensified.

Down slightly from 52.9 in January, the **HCOB Italy Services PMI® Business Activity Index** posted at 52.3 in February. Although slightly softer than at the start of the year, growth in output was still moderate in nature and elevated when put into a historical context.

Qualitative evidence highlighted a general pick-up in services demand, new customer wins and the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympic Games as the key drivers of higher activity.

Indeed, the overall volume of new work placed with Italian service providers increased again in February. The rate of growth in total new business was slightly softer than in January, despite being boosted by a renewed increase in export sales. Higher sales to a variety of international markets were noted in panel member reports, including the UK, US and Middle East. The improvement in export performance was only slight overall, however.

Service providers reported little change in their volumes of outstanding business in February. The fractional reduction in backlogs was the joint-weakest in the current 12-month downturn (in line with June and July 2025).

Amid growth in new business and diminished signs of spare capacity, service sector employment was increased again in February. Workforce levels have now risen in each month for just over one year. Hiring activity, albeit only modest overall, was the strongest in seven months.

Survey respondents commonly cited wage pressures as a key driver of increased cost burdens in February. As well as being steep overall, the rate of input price inflation hit a three-month high and was back above the series trend. Panellists also reported paying more for transport, energy, fuel and business services.

In line with costs, prices charged also remained on an upward trend, as has been the case in each month for almost four-and-a-half years in February. Around 15% of firms increased charges, while only 5% discounted. Overall, the rate of inflation edged up to a seven-month high and was solid in nature.

Finally, February data indicated an improvement in Italian service providers' expectations for activity over the coming 12 months. Firms were widely hopeful for an influx in new business, in part linked to new client wins. The level of positive sentiment was broadly in line with the 2025 average, but notably below the historical trend.

Comment

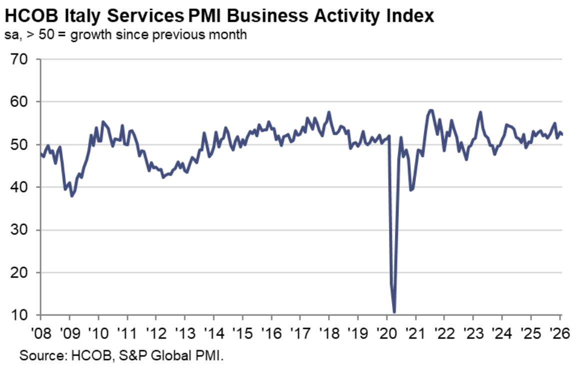
Commenting on the PMI data, Jonas Feldhusen, Junior Economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank, said:

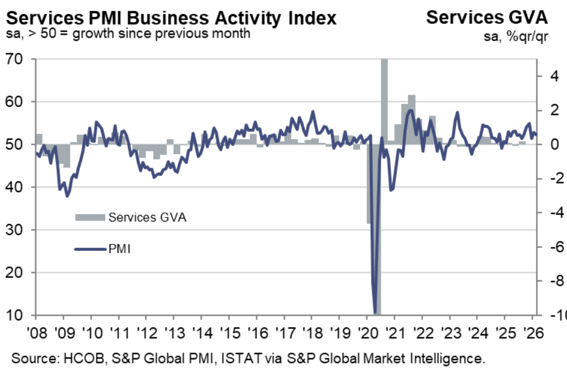
“Overall, the latest PMI figures paint an encouraging picture. The manufacturing sector recorded a solid improvement, while the service sector continues to expand at a comfortable pace. This could give Italy's private sector a welcome boost overall and enable it to get off to a solid start in the first quarter of the new year.

“The services sector remains in clear expansion mode. Some firms benefited in February from the Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina, while others reported broad-based gains from new clients and successful bids in public tenders. A further positive sign is that foreign demand increased slightly after three consecutive months of decline.

“The outlook, however, is more challenging to gauge. Around a third of panellists anticipate an expansion of business activity over the coming twelve months (compared to only 10% that expect a fall), and the corresponding index has risen compared to January. Yet by historical standards, sentiment remains subdued. The continued upward trend in hiring signals cautious optimism: firms are looking ahead positively, but their stance remains measured.

“Price and cost pressures remain elevated across Italy’s service sector. Companies cite rising wages as well as higher transport and energy costs. Output prices also increased in February, partly driven by markups from businesses benefiting from the Olympic Games.”





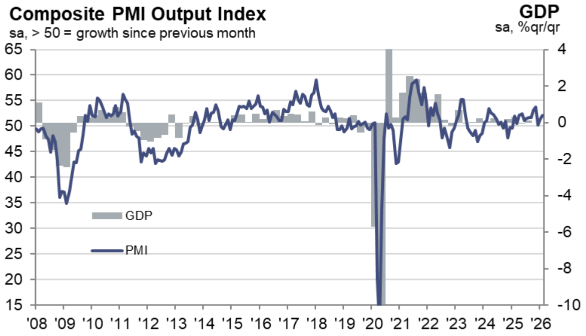
HCOB Italy Composite PMI®

Private sector expansion supported by upturn in manufacturing and services

The expansion of the Italian private sector entered its thirteenth month in February, with the **HCOB Italy Composite PMI Output Index** posting at 52.1. Up from 51.4 in January, the latest reading signalled the strongest upturn in three months. Manufacturing joined services in recording growth for the first time since November 2025. The improvement in output was linked to a similarly moderate rise in new business, which was also broad-based in February.

Although companies had sufficient capacity to work through backlogs, the rate of depletion was the weakest since July last year. Meanwhile, the rate at which jobs were added across the private sector was the strongest in eight months. Hiring activity was stronger in the service sector than it was in its manufacturing counterpart.

On the price front, building cost pressures across both broad sectors pushed the composite reading to the second-highest in almost a year (softer than only November 2025). There was a similar trend of intensification in charge inflation, where the rate of increase hit a seven-month high.



Source: HCOB, S&P Global PMI, ISTAT via S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Contact

Hamburg Commercial Bank AG
Jonas Feldhusen
Junior Economist
T: +49-151-2294-2945
jonas.feldhusen@hcob-bank.com

Katrin Steinbacher
Head of Press Office
Senior Vice President
T: +49-40-3333-11130
katrin.steinbacher@hcob-bank.com

S&P Global Market Intelligence
Eleanor Dennison
Economist
T: +44-1344-328-197
eleanor.dennison@spglobal.com

Hannah Brook
EMEA Communications Manager
T: +44-7483-439-812
hannah.brook@spglobal.com
press.mi@spglobal.com

Note to Editors

The HCOB Italy Services PMI® is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. The sectors covered include consumer (excluding retail), transport, information, communication, finance, insurance, real estate and business services. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in January 1998.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

The headline figure is the Services Business Activity Index. This is a diffusion index calculated from a question that asks for changes in the volume of business activity compared with one month previously. The Services Business Activity Index is comparable to the Manufacturing Output Index. It may be referred to as the 'Services PMI' but is not comparable with the headline manufacturing PMI figure.

The Composite Output Index is a weighted average of the Manufacturing Output Index and the Services Business Activity Index. The weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data. The Composite Output Index may be referred to as the 'Composite PMI' but is not comparable with the headline manufacturing PMI figure.

Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

For further information on the PMI survey methodology, please contact economics@spglobal.com.

Hamburg Commercial Bank AG
Hamburg Commercial Bank (HCOB) is a private commercial bank and specialist financier headquartered in Hamburg, Germany. The bank offers its clients a high level of structuring expertise in the financing of commercial real estate projects with a focus on Germany as well as neighboring European countries. It also has a strong market position in international shipping. The bank is one of the pioneers in European-wide project financing for renewable energies and is also involved in the expansion of digital and other areas of important infrastructure. HCOB offers individual financing solutions for international corporate clients as well as a focused corporate client business in Germany. The bank's portfolio is completed by digital products and services facilitating reliable, timely domestic and international payment transactions as well as for trade finance.

Hamburg Commercial Bank aligns its activities with established ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) criteria and has anchored sustainability aspects in its business model. It supports its clients in their transition to a more sustainable future.

The bank's specialists are as experienced as they are pragmatic. They act in a reliable manner and at eye level with their customers. They provide in-depth advice in order to jointly find efficient solutions that are a perfect fit – for complex projects in particular. Tailor-made financing, a high level of structuring and syndication expertise and many years of experience are just as much a hallmark of the bank as are our profound market and sector expertise.

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