

International Figures of the Week

COUNTRY FOCUS / ITALY

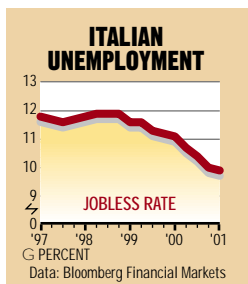
With May elections looming, Italy's center-left government, trailing in polls to the center-right opposition, can use all the good economic news it can get.

The latest quarterly labor-market report was a big help. The January jobless rate dipped from 10% in October to 9.9%, the lowest in eight years. The rate has been sliding lower since mid-1998, helped by a stronger economy and by modest attempts at labor-market reform.

Plus, the government's largest tax cut in Italy's history, the impact of

which took hold in November, is buoying household spending. Retail sales in January rose 2% from a year ago, the best showing in four months.

However, inflation at a 4½-year high of 3% is limiting buying power, and Italy will not likely avoid the effects of the U.S. slowdown, as most euro zone nations now admit. On Mar. 24, the government said it will revise downward its 2001 forecast for economic growth, from 2.9% to the 2.6-2.7% range. Many private economists say that is still too optimistic.



STOCK INDEXES

	MAR. 28	MAR. 21	% CHG. YEAR AGO
AUSTRALIA /All Ordinaires	3127.4	3180.5	-2.8%
BRAZIL /Bovespa	14631.9	16599.4	-19.0
BRITAIN /FTSE100	5614.0	6039.9	-14.9
CANADA /TSE 300	7506.5	8937.8	-22.6
FRANCE /CAC 40	5150.4	5684.1	-20.8
GERMANY /DAX	5817.5	6435.0	-26.0
HONG KONG /Hang Seng	12851.4	14589.6	-29.0
ITALY /MIB 30	38247.0	41972.0	-20.4
JAPAN /Nikkei 225	13765.5	13785.7	-33.5
MEXICO /IPC 35	5700.4	5857.5	-27.7
SOUTH KOREA /Composite	528.8	521.4	-41.8
SPAIN /IBEX 35	9163.4	9200.9	-24.2
UNITED STATES /Dow Jones	9785.4	10960.5	-11.2

Data: Bridge Information Systems, Inc.

CURRENCY CROSS RATES

	USDOLLAR	SKWON	SFRANC	MPESO	YEN	EURO	CDOL	POUND	REAL	ADOL
AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR	2.0265	0.00156	1.1739	0.2126	16.5710	1.7952	1.2948	2.9129	0.9559	-
BRAZILIAN REAL	2.1200	0.00163	1.2275	0.2225	0.0173	1.8856	1.3545	3.0477	-	1.0461
BRITISH POUND	0.6956	0.00053	0.4030	0.0730	5.6887	0.6163	0.4446	-	0.3281	0.3432
CANADIAN DOLLAR	1.5652	0.00120	0.9063	0.1642	12.7931	1.3865	-	2.2498	0.7383	0.7723
EUROPEAN EURO	1.1289	0.00087	0.6538	0.1184	9.2315	-	0.7212	1.6228	0.5325	0.5569
JAPANESE YEN	122.32	0.09500	70.82	12.8353	-	108.35	78.15	175.81	57.6981	60.3600
MEXICAN PESO	9.5300	0.00733	5.5179	-	0.0779	8.448	6.089	13.7080	4.4953	4.7027
SWISS FRANC	1.7271	0.00133	-	0.1812	1.4123	1.5299	1.1033	2.4826	0.8147	0.8522
SOUTH KOREAN WON	1301.00	-	753.286	136.516	10.636	1152.400	831.204	1870.12	613.679	641.994
U.S. DOLLAR	-	0.00077	0.5791	0.1049	8.1759	0.8858	0.6389	1.4375	0.4717	0.4934

Data: Bridge Information Systems, Inc., Quotes as of 4 p.m., Mar. 28, 2001

CENTRAL BANK POLICY RATES

	MAR. 28	MAR. 21	YEAR AGO
AUSTRALIA /Overnight cash	5.50	5.49	5.50
BRAZIL /Selic Overnight	15.86	15.36	18.56
BRITAIN /Base Lending	5.75	5.75	6.00
CANADA /Overnite Financing	5.25	5.25	5.50
EURO ZONE /Refinance	4.75	4.75	3.50
HONG KONG /Interbank Overnight	4.50	4.25	6.00
JAPAN /Overnight Call	0.02	0.06	0.02
MEXICO /One-day Loan	15.50*	17.15	13.50
SOUTH KOREA /Discount	5.10	5.05	5.03
UNITED STATES /Federal Funds Rate	5.04*	5.14	6.02

Data: Bridge Information Systems, Inc., Standard & Poor's DRI, *Mar. 27

GOVERNMENT BOND YIELDS (BENCHMARK 10-YEAR BOND)

	MAR. 28	MAR. 21	YEAR AGO
AUSTRALIA	5.25	4.95	6.56
BRITAIN	4.64	4.56	5.32
CANADA	5.47	5.20	6.01
FRANCE	4.83	4.85	5.38
GERMANY	4.67	4.70	5.27
HONG KONG	6.16	6.00	7.44
ITALY	5.12	5.09	5.56
JAPAN	1.24	1.09	1.87
SOUTH KOREA (3-Year)	7.31	7.17	9.05
SPAIN	4.15	4.92	5.50
UNITED STATES	4.84	4.82	6.15

Data: Bridge Information Systems, Inc., Standard & Poor's DRI