



Global Firepower 2026: Italy remains the second military power in the European Union and in the global Top 10

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Italy maintains its place among the world's major military powers. In the **2026 Military Strength Ranking** published by **Global Firepower**, our country is once again **tenth out of 145 nations**, with a **Power Index of 0.2211**. It is the same position held in 2025 and, looking only at European Union member states, it means an even more significant confirmation: **Italy remains the second military power of the EU according to the GFP model, behind only France.**

Global Firepower explicitly defines Italy as a **“Top 10 global military power”**. The data does not stem from a single parameter, such as the number of military personnel or tanks, but from the intersection of numerous variables that include personnel, equipment, aviation, navy, logistics, infrastructure, economic capacity, resources and geography.

Already in our article dedicated to the **2025 ranking** we had highlighted how Italian strength resided above all in the balance between the various components. The 2026 picture substantially confirms that interpretation, but Global Firepower's updated data allows us to see in more detail where Italy is particularly competitive and where, instead, it presents less impressive numbers.

The global Top 10 for 2026

The overall ranking still sees the **United States** in first place. Followed by **Russia** and **China**, then India and South Korea. The first power of the European Union is **France**, sixth globally.

The Top 10 for 2026 consists of:

1. **United States** – PwrIndx **0.0741**
2. **Russia** – **0.0791**
3. **China** – **0.0919**
4. **India** – **0.1346**
5. **South Korea** – **0.1642**
6. **France** – **0.1798**
7. **Japan** – **0.1876**
8. **United Kingdom** – **0.1881**
9. **Turkey** – **0.1975**
10. **Italy** – **0.2211**

For Global Firepower, a value of **0.0000 would theoretically represent the “perfect” result**: the lower the PwrIndx, the better the position assigned to the analyzed military power.

1	United States	0.0741	
2	Russia	0.0791	
3	China	0.0919	
4	India	0.1346	
5	South Korea	0.1642	
6	France	0.1798	
7	Japan	0.1876	
8	United Kingdom	0.1881	
9	Turkiye	0.1975	
10	Italy	0.2211	

Source: globalfirepower.com

Italy second military power of the European Union

If the comparison is limited to **European Union** countries, only France remains ahead of Italy. Germany, despite having a much higher defense budget and having launched a vast process of strengthening its Armed Forces, in the 2026 GFP ranking is **twelfth in the world**, with an index of **0.2463**.

Further back we find **Spain**, eighteenth with **0.3247**, and **Poland**, twenty-first with **0.3891**.

Among the main military powers of the EU the picture is therefore:

- **France:** 6th in the world – PwrIndx **0.1798**
- **Italy:** 10th – **0.2211**
- **Germany:** 12th – **0.2463**
- **Spain:** 18th – **0.3247**
- **Poland:** 21st – **0.3891**

The United Kingdom, eighth in the world ranking, naturally no longer falls within the EU comparison following its exit from the European Union.

1	France	PwrIndx: 0.1798	▲
2	United Kingdom	PwrIndx: 0.1881	▼
3	Italy	PwrIndx: 0.2211	↔
4	Germany	PwrIndx: 0.2463	▲
5	Spain	PwrIndx: 0.3247	▼
6	Ukraine	PwrIndx: 0.3691	↔
7	Poland	PwrIndx: 0.3891	↔
8	Sweden	PwrIndx: 0.4834	▲
9	Greece	PwrIndx: 0.5484	↔
10	Netherlands	PwrIndx: 0.6142	▲

Source: globalfirepower.com

Why Italy is so high: a balanced Defense system

Looking at the details of the Italian profile, we understand better why Italy manages to remain in the Top 10 without excelling in all categories.

Global Firepower estimates for our country **288,800 military personnel overall**, considering active personnel, reserves and paramilitary forces. The active duty personnel indicated are **165,500**, to which are added **18,300 reservists** and **105,000 members of paramilitary forces** considered by the model.

On the ground, Italy is not a power built primarily on the mass of tanks: GFP indicates **203 tanks**, a figure that places the country only in the **58th position** in the specific category. Very different is the result regarding overall military vehicles: **87,364 units**, which give Italy the **9th place worldwide** according to the GFP database.

This is precisely one of the most interesting aspects of the ranking: the Italian position does not derive from a generalized numerical superiority, but from the sum of different capabilities and relatively well distributed.

The Army: less mass, more mobility

For the land component, the picture drawn by Global Firepower is rather clear: Italy does not compete with the great continental powers on the number of tanks or heavy artillery, but presents a much more consistent force in terms of mobility and wheeled and armored vehicles.

GFP indicates **203 tanks, 64 self-propelled artillery systems, 108 towed guns** and **21 MLRS systems**.

Numbers that, taken individually, do not place Italy at the world's top. The data that changes the perspective, however, is that of **87,364 overall military vehicles**, which rank **9th in the world** in the category. To this is added an Army strength indicated by GFP at approximately **97,755 personnel**.

This reveals a land force oriented less towards mass and more built around mobility, mechanization and the ability to rapidly sustain units on the ground: a profile consistent with a modern military instrument designed for NATO operations and out-of-area missions.



Copyright photo Ministry of Defence - Italian Army

The Air Force: 714 aircraft and a strong support component

Global Firepower attributes to Italy an overall fleet of **714 military aircraft**, which ranks **14th in the world** in the category.

In detail, there are **88 fighters, 65 attack aircraft, 31 transport planes, 152 trainers, 22 special mission aircraft, 8 tankers** and **352 helicopters**, of which **37 attack helicopters**.

Particularly significant is the data relating to the tanker fleet: with eight aerial refueling aircraft, Italy is placed **9th in the world** in the category. Helicopters also represent a quantitative strength, with **10th place** attributed by GFP.

Beyond raw numbers, the data reflects an articulated air component, capable of covering airspace defence, attack, transport, in-flight refueling and special missions: all capabilities that assume particular importance when assessing the possibility of sustaining operations far from national territory.



Copyright photo Ministry of Defence - Italian Air Force

The Navy is one of the true multipliers of Italian power

It is, however, at sea that some of Italy's highest results emerge.

Global Firepower attributes to the Italian naval component **285 overall assets**, sufficient for **8th place in the world** in the category, and a total tonnage of approximately **387,892 tonnes**, which ranks **9th place**.

The 2026 sheet also counts:

- **2 aircraft carriers**, which place Italy **3rd in the world** in the relative category;
- **3 destroyers**;
- **14 frigates**, with **5th place worldwide** by number;
- **8 submarines**;
- **15 patrol boats**;
- **10 mine warfare units**.

The Navy thus continues to represent one of the main factors that increase the overall military weight of the country. It is a characteristic already clearly emerged in last year's analysis and which in the 2026 ranking remains central.



Copyright photo Ministry of Defence - Italian Navy

Logistics and infrastructure: the factor that is often overlooked

One of the most interesting aspects of the Global Firepower model is that it does not consider only men and weapons. The ability to fight also depends on the possibility of **moving personnel, equipment, fuel and supplies**.

From this point of view, Italy achieves high results. GFP counts **123 ports and commercial terminals**, a figure that ranks **6th in the world**, as well as **655 airports**, **228,863 kilometers of road network** and **18,475 kilometers of railways**.

The merchant fleet, with **1,276 units** recorded in the database, also places Italy **15th in the world**. These are less striking elements than a fighter or an aircraft carrier, but fundamental to the ability to sustain a military force over time and to project it towards an operational theatre.

Defense Budget in the GFP Model

For 2026, Global Firepower assigns Italy a **Defense Budget of 37.3 billion dollars**, which ranks **17th worldwide** in the relevant category. The site also indicates a purchasing power parity exceeding **3,100 billion dollars**, eleventh among the 145 countries examined.

These parameters also contribute to the final result, because Global Firepower seeks to measure not only what forces are available, but also how realistically a country can maintain and support them during a prolonged conflict.

What Global Firepower Really Tells Us

The ranking must be read for what it is: **a comparative index of conventional military power**, not a prediction of who would win a war.

Many decisive elements in a real conflict, quality of training, command capability, intelligence, doctrine, operational experience, alliances, actual availability of equipment and characteristics of the scenario, cannot be fully synthesized in a mathematical formula.

Moreover, Global Firepower itself specifies that some values are **estimated when official data are not available**.

The ranking remains useful, however, for comparing the overall structure of different military powers. And in the Italian case it returns an image of **a balanced military instrument and a logistical and infrastructural network of high level**.

It is this combination of factors that, according to Global Firepower, allows Italy to confirm itself in **2026 as the tenth military power in the world and the second in the European Union, behind only France**.

Sources

- [Global Firepower – 2026 Italy Military Strength](#)
- [Global Firepower – 2026 Military Strength Ranking](#)
- [Global Firepower – 2026 Germany Military Strength](#)
- [Global Firepower – 2026 Spain Military Strength](#)
- [Global Firepower – 2026 Poland Military Strength](#)
- [BrigataFolgore.net – Global Firepower 2025, Italy is the second military power of the European community and the tenth in the world](#)

News link: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>