

**ITALIAN EYEWEAR:  
MORE THAN 61 MILLION PAIRS EXPORTED  
IN FIRST 9 MONTHS OF 2007**

**Exports at +14.2%: sunglasses lead the way at +15.6%,  
and prescription eyewear fares well at + 11.1%**

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The eyewear industry is the driving sector for I-style production: during January to September 2007, exports by the Italian fashion industry rose by **5.4% against the same period in 2006**, with eyewear posting double-digit increases at **+ 14.2%** - or + 34 % over January-September 2005 – and in excess of **€1.720 million**. The results for the first three quarters of 2007 therefore repeated the **positive trend** of 2006.

The best performers were **sunglasses**, whose uncompromised quality is recognized the world over, with exports rising by **15.6% and passing the € 1.136 million mark**. Exports of frames posted smaller, albeit significant increases at **+ 11.1%, amounting to more than €548 million**. **Imports** also confirmed the buoyancy of the sector at **+ 8.4%**, and totaling €509 million for the first 9 months of 2007.

A summary of January-September 2007 export figures for the industry shows that the highest increases were posted for sunglasses worldwide and for sunglasses-prescription eyewear within Europe. Another important factor however, is the future development opportunities for Italian eyewear.

For some years now, China has offered market potential for Italian eyewear. With GDP growing a 7%/10% a year and rising living standards, the Chinese are starting to attach importance to fashion and accessories and over recent years, I-Style products -- particularly eyewear -- have been the subject of sharply growing attention. **Italian products**, given their **high quality and innovative design**, have quickly gained a foothold in the medium-high market, where Italian companies are very competitive. However, there-s more to be done: in order to keep posting successes in this area Italian companies must **adapt to the fast-moving market**: a quick response is key to delivering an effective customer marketing service and to monitoring changes in product trends. Earning appreciation for **high quality products and services by developing products of excellence** that stand out from the offerings of all other manufacturers is therefore a must-have.

Some significant figures:

- ❖ During the first 9 months of 2007, **13.5% of total exports of Italian eyewear frames/sunglasses** were directed to Asia, with a **11.5% increase** over the same period in 2006, **and exceeding €226 million**.
- ❖ Noteworthy is the growing importance of China as a market for Italian eyewear exports. China currently ranks 20<sup>th</sup> for exports of Italian eyewear frames and sunglasses, with a 1.2% share, equal to about €20 million in the first 9 months of 2007. This market share is definitely still small, but the growth rates and potential of the area are very promising.
- ❖ Central Asia also posted good performance levels at + 36.8% for January-September 2007.

Apart from Italy's growing trade relations with Asia, **the main export market for Italian sunglasses and eyewear frames for January-September 2007** remained Europe, **accounting for 51.5% of total exports** and an **overall increase of 19.4%** against the same period in 2006, with both sunglasses (+19.1%) and frames (+20%) posting double-digit increases.

**Exports to the United States** settled during January-September 2007 **at 30.9% with exports to the area rising by 7.9% versus 2006**. Also noteworthy are trade relations with **Central and Southern America where exports scored +42.7% versus +3.2% in North America**. These figures are important given the general economic situation with the Euro at its highest levels versus the US\$ and the many repercussions of this on Italian exports which continue to hold on strong. Here, the key to the success of Italian eyewear remains the **extreme dynamism and competitiveness of companies**.

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