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Cover story

In the makeup of the World Academy of Materials and Manufacturing Engineering Fellows there are representatives of Italian science, who actively participate in the actions of the WAMME Academy. On the cover one can see places well known to tourists visiting Italy, including Santa Lucia harbour in Naples, the city view seen from Monte Casino hill, typical buildings in Alberobello and a view of the Maggiore Lake on the Italian-Swiss border.



Tourism is then one of the fastest growing and most profitable sectors of the Italian national economy; with 43.7 million international tourist arrivals. Italy is the fifth major tourist destination and the fourth highest tourist earner in the world. Italy, officially the Italian Republic, is a country located on the Italian Peninsula in Southern Europe and on the two largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea, Sicily and Sardinia. Italy shares its northern, Alpine boundary with France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia. The independent states of San Marino and the Vatican City are enclaves within the Italian Peninsula. The Apennine Mountains form the peninsula's backbone; the Alps form its northern boundary. The largest of its northern lakes is Garda; in the centre is Campotosto Lake. The Po, Italy's principal river, flows from the Alps on the western border and crosses the great Padan plain to the Adriatic Sea. There are several active volcanoes in Italy; Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe; Vulcano; Stromboli; and Vesuvius, the only active volcano on the mainland of Europe. Italy has been the home of many European cultures, such as the Etruscans and the Romans, and later was the birthplace of the University, the Renaissance that began in Tuscany and spread all over Europe, Vitruvian Man, modern science and astronomy, heliocentrism and Opera. Italy's capital, Rome, was for centuries the centre of Western civilisation. Italy possessed a colonial empire from the second half of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Today, Italy is a democratic republic and a developed country with the eighth-highest quality of life index rating in the world. According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2008 Italy was the seventh-largest economy in the world and the fourth-largest in Europe. It is a founding member of what is now the European Union, having signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957, and it is a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It is a member of the G8, and is also a member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Trade Organisation, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Central European Initiative. Italy is a Schengen state.