

Culture and leisure

Theatre, music and film shows

The figures relating to theatre, music, films, sporting events and various types of entertainment are collected by the Italian Authors and Publishers Association (SIAE) with a survey conducted in the national territory through their network of local offices.

The acquisition and production of information and figures is performed on the basis of events taxation. In fact, since 1921 when the “taxation rights on events” were established, later converted in 1972 (Presidential Decree no. 633 and 640/1972) in “event taxes”, the SIAE has been responsible for ascertaining and collecting taxation due on events, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

This activity was conducted on a regular basis up until 31st December 1999 when, following the abolition of the events tax (Legislative Decree no. 60 dated 26th February 1999) and its substitution with VAT and the new Entertainment tax (ISI), the SIAE partially changed its functions and data collection system. From 01st January 2000 to date, statistical data has been collected on the basis of a convention with the Ministry of Finance, which has attributed the SIAE with the task of cooperating in VAT collecting in the events sector, updating the Tax office and acquiring and submitting the figures on events to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities¹.

The statistics, available from 1936 onwards, are therefore processed according to the information collected for administrative purposes and concern, in particular, the number of events, the number of tickets sold and spending by spectators exclusively for events with paid access. Data on theatre and music shows refer to an extremely wide and heterogeneous range of events including prose, plays, classical or light music concerts (which form the most important part of the events held) and the number of tickets sold and spectator spending. Dialect theatre, classical and modern dance, jazz and dance concerts, operetta, musical comedies and reviews, puppets and marionette shows, variety shows, literary recitals and cultural events are also included, as well as occasional events held outside of traditional spaces.

Warnings for time series comparisons

Over the years SIAE modified the survey form and data collection methods several times. The time series are therefore not coherent over time due to the variations in the definitions, classifications and survey procedures adopted. The most difficult moment for continuity was in 1999 due to the elimination of the events tax: the figures collected from 2000 onwards, therefore, are not directly comparable to those previously recorded. The time series provided by SIAE is, in any case, the only one capable of providing a systematic and exhaustive description of the offer and demand in the entertainment sector, although it must be used with the necessary precautions.

The following are the main variations to be considered for time series comparisons:

¹ Additional statistical information on the entertainment sector is collected and published by the Entertainment observatory, established by Law no. 163/1985 (art.5), as part of the General directorate for live entertainment. The Observatory is responsible for collecting figures and information relating to the performance of the sector in Italy, acquiring financial data on entertainment with particular reference to public, state, regional and local funding, and processing analyses and research on single issues to identify trends in the sector. A documentation centre is active at the Observatory with books and records on the subject of events, research and studies performed by Ministry consultants.

- From 1966 to 1999 spending on “various entertainment” includes the public’s spending for dancing shows, entertainment devices, juke-boxes, flippers, pool and other types of mechanical and electric games, billiards, go-karts, bowling, televisions in public places, exhibitions and trade fairs, circus zoos, animal shows, nativity scenes, travelling shows, equestrian circuses, town square festivals, etc.
- From 1973, spending on “various entertainment” also includes the public’s spending on billiards following the introduction of the tax reform which imposed taxation on billiards.
- From 1981 spending on “various entertainment” also includes the public’s spending on events held in tourist villages.
- From 2000 to 2003 the figures for “various entertainment” are not available.
- From 2004, the “various entertainment” category was redefined to exclude some forms of entertainment which were no longer widespread and to include other new forms. From this year onwards the category includes: dances and shows with either an orchestra or recorded music, travelling shows and attractions, including shows in entertainment and aquatic parks; exhibitions and shows; activities with a range of different forms, including open-air festivals and religious celebrations.
- From 1985 to 1999, the figures relating to sporting events include only A and B division football matches.
- From 2000 the figures relating to sporting events include both national and international football matches.
- From 2006 national events included football matches in C and lower divisions.
- In 2006, SIAE introduced important innovations in entertainment surveys: the values were processed using different definitions, aggregation categories and survey methods with respect to those adopted in previous years. In particular, in the years before 2006:
 - “concert activities” was included under “theatre shows”;
 - “circus” shows were not included under “theatrical activities”;
 - “band concerts” and “choral concerts” were not included under “classical concerts”;
 - the figures for “exhibitions and shows” were not recorded, including, in addition to cultural exhibitions (excluding museums), exhibition activities for commercial purposes, exhibitions of goods for sale and trade fairs;
 - at times “number of tickets sold” is recorded in place of “number of entrances”;
 - at times “number of days of shows” is recorded in place of “number of shows”;
 - “public’s spending”, which includes the amounts spent by spectators in order to access the entertainment venue by purchasing tickets and season tickets and which corresponds to the item “box office sales” in SIAE publications from 2006, also included any amounts paid by spectators for the use of obligatory services such as drinks and snacks at the bar during dance shows or concerts. From 2006, however, this revenue from obligatory services, together with all the other amounts spent by the public when attending entertainment events (costs for pre-sales of tickets, booking tables, wardrobe service, etc.) are recorded in detail and published separately and are not included in the values shown in the tables.
- From 2008 new criteria were introduced to survey the number of cinema shows with reference to individual showings. In previous years, however, if the organiser did not change the programme or the ticket price, one show corresponded to one day of programming.