Italy

Registering and searching for a will

→ What are the principal forms of will in Italy?

* the **public will**, drawn up by a notary, in the presence of two witnesses.

* the **holographic will**, written, dated and signed by the testator's hand.

* the **secret will**, placed in a sealed envelope and handed over to a civil law notary in the presence of two witnesses, which constitutes a further form of notarised will.

* the **international will**, recognised by the States that have acceded to the 1973 Washington Convention. It does not affect the law applicable to the succession, for which EU Regulation No 650/2012 applies. The will consists of the testamentary document, which sets out the testator's wishes, and the notarial certificate, which constitutes the public deed documenting compliance with the formalities laid down by the Convention.

→ Does a register of wills exists in Italy?<0}

Yes, there are three: the register of wills, managed by the Ministry of Justice; the register of successions, managed by the Italian courts; and the **Voluntary Register of Holographic Wills**, established by the Consiglio Nazionale del Notariato through Notartel S.p.A., the Notaries' IT company, which enables the collection and retrieval of data on holographic wills held in trust by notaries. In these registers, the registration and searching of wills are carried out electronically.

Important

These questions and answers are intended as a general source of information, updated 19 November 2026. If you have any specific queries, please consult a notary. This factsheet has been prepared by ARERT in collaboration with the European Commission and Notaries of Europe.

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I. The registration of a will

→ Why register a will?

Registration of a will is automatic in the case of notarised wills. Registration of a will in the voluntary register of holographic can be very useful, because a will that cannot be found is equivalent to a will that does not exist. In this way, the testator can be sure that his last wishes will be found and, therefore, respected upon his death.

→ Who can carry out the registration?

The civil law notary is responsible for filing with these registers only the information necessary to find the will.

The civil law notary is obliged to file this information with the register maintained by the Ministry of Justice when he receives, in particular, a public will or a record of the publication of a holographic will, or a record of the formal deposit of a holographic or secret will.

Any citizen may deposit their holographic will with a notary in trust, asking the notary (always on a voluntary basis) to also enter it in the voluntary register of wills. At any time, the notary acting as custodian may, at the testator's request, amend the entry if the will is revoked by the testator, or if the testator transfers the will to another notary.

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Although a holographic will and a will drawn up by a notary have the same legal effect, the complexity of succession law, family relationships and property matters makes the involvement of a notary – as a trusted professional with in-depth knowledge and expertise – particularly valuable.

→ Who keeps the will?

The civil law notary is responsible for keeping the public, secret, international and holographic wills (the latter if deposited with a notarial document).

→ Can the testator's family members consult the register while he is still alive?

No, the existence of a will and its contents are secret throughout the testator's lifetime.

→ How much does it cost to register a will?

Registering a will costs **€18.20**, plus €48.00 in stamp duty.

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II. The search for a will

→ Who may query the register of wills?

Upon the death of the testator, his family (and generally anyone with an interest) can consult the register of wills, the voluntary register of holographic wills and the register of successions in person or also through a notary to ascertain whether the deceased left a will

→ Is it necessary to provide a death certificate?

Yes, in order to carry out a search, the deceased's family or interested parties must provide a death certificate. This measure enables to ensure that the existence of the will remains secret during the testator's lifetime.

→ How much does a search cost?

A search of Italian registers costs **€37.16**.

If there is a possibility that the deceased may have left a will in another country, it is also advisable to consult foreign registers. In this case, such a consultation will **cost €50.00** per register consulted.

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