

## BUSINESS ENGLISH

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### *10 of the Strangest Laws from Italy*

di Tom Roper



As we have seen in a prior article regarding the peculiarities of laws and legislation around the world, sometimes there is good reason, sometimes an interesting precedent and sometimes it's just a historical (or hysterical) motive for these rules to still exist. As many of our readers are based in Italy, let's consider our own rules in this fair and democratic country and see if there are any particularly quirky laws to follow:

#### 1. No sandcastles at the beach

Amazingly, something as **traditional** and key to the seaside experience and equally as innocent, building sandcastles on the beach could find you at the **wrong end of the law** in Eraclea, a small beach town near Venice. With fines ranging from **€25 to €250**, as reported in [The Telegraph](#) for **misuse** of the local sand, you may consider leaving the bucket and spade at home and putting your creativity to other uses!

#### 2. No Goldfish bowls

After a **successful** campaign by animal rights activists, a bylaw was passed in Rome banning all typical "round" goldfish bowls. Experts have claimed that the particular shape doesn't **provide enough oxygen** and city councillors eventually ruled that the bowls are **cruel** to their resident fish. The same fish-friendly bylaw has also been used and extended to ensure **legal protection** to those who **feed** colonies of cats.

#### 3. No feeding the birds

Staying on the subject of **wildlife**, while once a key part of the **tradition** for visitors to the beautiful city of Venice, taking a typical photo of themselves as human bird perches by holding out a handful of birdseed, this practice is now **illegal** due to the numbers of pigeons and other **infestations** and the number of people who take advantage of unsuspecting tourists. According

to [Europe Up Close](#), people in violation of the rule can be **fined up to €700**.

#### 4. No touching yourself

Back In 2008, Italy's Supreme Court **ruled** that men who **touch** their genitals in public, even to "readjust" or scratch, will be **committing** a criminal offence. Naturally this is great news for social **etiquette** and people in general, however it is very much bad news for all those men who still believe the **superstition** that a quick touch of the trouser area will prevent any form of **bad luck**.

#### 5. No noisy footwear

If you have a visit booked to the beautiful Capri anytime soon, you might wish to consider **packing** your **slippers** – the island has outlawed **noisy footwear** such as very loose **sandals** or particularly loud **heels**. Strutting your stuff in clogs could result in more than just a fine too; one couple was actually **arrested** for their 'excessively noisy flip-flops'.

#### 6. No kissing in cars

Are you planning a **romantic** getaway? You should be aware that in Eboli, a small town in the region of Campania, it's prohibited to kiss in a car. This regulation was brought into action to deter **young couples** who, presumably with nowhere else to go, would park their cars near the town centre, in an area well known as a **meeting place** for lovers.

#### 7. No saving spots with towels

In Sirolo, a small town on the Adriatic Coast in Italy's Marche region, **saving** your space at the beach using your **towel** (a common competition between tourists to try and get their place nearest to the pool or beach without **spending all morning waiting**). Retenews24 originally reported this great travesty to British and German tourists but unfortunately it makes no mention of how vigorously the ban is **enforced**.

#### 8. No groups of three

Whilst, **relaxing** on a park bench taking in the local atmosphere might sound like a genuinely **harmless** activity however if you do it in a **group of three** after 11 p.m., you will be **breaking** the law, says [The Independent](#). Thankfully, this rule only applies to the city of Novara in the Piedmont region. However, lawmakers in Viareggio, Tuscany are also particularly **vigilant** about their benches; dare to put your **feet up** there and you could be **fined**.

#### 9. No Dead people onboard!

It's unclear exactly how this law came about, but the rule is pretty clear. If you intend to drive with a **corpse on board**, please ensure it has **health insurance**, otherwise you could be fined up

to **€3,098**. Don't say I didn't warn you.

## 10. No Dying

Staying on the rather **morbid** tone, it is simply **illegal** to **die** in Falciano del Massico. This quaint small town in Campania unfortunately doesn't have its own **cemetery**, so, in March 2012, the local mayor decided to solve this problem by **outlawing** the very act of dying itself. Unfortunately, two of the town's rather older residents had already **defied the law** before the end of that first year.

So there we have it, another group of particularly interesting rules and regulations that can affect daily life in cities and towns around Italy. As we suspected there is generally a good reason for them, but they can sound a little weird to outsiders or to those that come across them out of context. Do you have any others from your local area that we might not know about?

