

Milan and the Changing Landscape of Remote Work

Milan is Italy's main economic and financial centre and one of Europe's most important business hubs. The Metropolitan City of Milan (Città Metropolitana di Milano), comprising 133 municipalities, combines a highly diversified economy, major universities and research institutions, international companies and strong transport connections. **Remote and hybrid work have become increasingly widespread**, particularly among large companies, **although adoption varies significantly across sectors**. The [R-MAP](#) typology places the NUTS2 region covering **Milan among European regions with the highest levels of remote work adoption** and within the cluster of regions **with high capacity**. However, **the longer-term spatial effects remain gradual** rather than transformative.

How remote work is changing Milan

One of the most visible changes is **the way offices are being used**. Companies are increasingly reducing office footprints while **investing in higher-quality, more flexible spaces designed for collaboration, shared work and employee wellbeing**. Co-working and mixed-use spaces are also growing, while **the traditional five-day office model is becoming less common**.

Remote work is also giving some workers **greater flexibility in where they live**. Rising housing costs in Milan, combined with improved transport connections, are encouraging some households to **consider suburban and smaller municipalities where housing is more affordable and larger homes are available**. However, **this shift remains moderate, with housing costs and job location still stronger drivers than remote work alone**. At the same time, **fewer daily commutes are changing mobility patterns**, with lower demand on some weekdays and greater potential for more local, "15-minute" neighbourhood-based activity. These changes also have socio-economic effects. Remote work can **improve work-life balance and reduce commuting costs and time**, while **helping employers access a wider pool of workers**. However, some household costs, such as energy and home-working equipment, shift from employers to employees.

What is driving these changes?

Several factors shape Milan's remote work landscape:

- **Policy and work culture influence adoption.** Italy's Law No. 81/2017 (Articles 19 and 21) regulates smart working through voluntary written agreements between employers and employees, while companies determine how much flexibility employees receive.
- **Housing costs and connectivity matter.** High housing costs in Milan and strong transport connections within the metropolitan area make **living further from the city more attractive** for some workers.
- **The size and type of companies matter.** Milan's large companies have led the adoption of remote work, supported by better technology and resources. In Italy, **96% of large enterprises had stable remote work arrangements in 2024**, while adoption among SMEs was declining.
- **Urban structure is adapting.** Milan's polycentric development and emerging business districts support flexible offices, co-working and mixed-use environments.
- **Quality of life and flexibility are increasingly important.** Remote work allows employees to reduce commuting and improve work-life balance. **Younger workers also increasingly value flexibility, sustainability and better workplace environments**, while housing affordability and access to amenities continue to shape choices.

Looking ahead

Remote work is likely to remain part of Milan's working landscape, but its effects will continue to vary across sectors and areas. The focus ahead will be on adapting office spaces, improving connections between Milan and surrounding areas, and responding to changing housing and workplace needs.

For more information:

- Visit the R-Map website: <https://r-map.eu/>
- Follow R-Map Project on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [BlueSky](#), and [YouTube](#).

The findings presented here are based on research conducted within the R-MAP project, including desk research, expert interviews and the R-MAP Use Case Milan Citizen Survey (2025).

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