

On the Growth of Italy's Drone Industry Driven by Agriculture and Service Sectors

**Assorpas (Italian Association for Light RPAS)
Nicola Nizzoli, President**

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Amid the rapid transformation of the European drone industry, Italy is emerging as a country of particular interest for its service-oriented drone ecosystem, centered on sectors such as agriculture and logistics. Rather than being limited to the sale of hardware, drone utilization is expanding across practical industrial applications—including agriculture, security, and logistics—leading to the formation of a new market structure that integrates both public and private sectors.

In particular, Italy has established strong competitiveness within Europe in terms of regulation, operational experience, and public-sector utilization, and is widely regarded as a country poised to play a significant role in the future global drone market.

In the May issue of Drone Magazine, we conducted an in-depth interview with Nicola Nizzoli, President of Assorpas (the Italian Association for Light RPAS), to gain insights into the current state and future outlook of Italy's drone industry, as well as the opportunities that Korean companies should take note of.

Could you please introduce yourself briefly prior to the interview?

My name is Nicola Nizzoli, and I am the President of Assorpas, the leading industry association in Italy representing manufacturers, operators, consultants, pilots, training centers, and the entire sector value chain. As Assorpas, we are members of JEDA, and I personally serve as a member of the Advisory



Assorpas Nicola Nizzoli, President (Photo: DronItaly)

Board of the Politecnico di Milano, a member of ENAC's Permanent UAS Technical Working Group (ENAC being the Italian Civil Aviation Authority), the President of the Scientific Technical Committee of DronItaly. I am a partner and the Commercial Director of FlyValue, a European aviation consultancy firm that operates comprehensively across both the manned and unmanned aviation sectors.

Could you kindly provide an overview of the current trends in the Italian drone industry? We would greatly appreciate your insights on the key characteristics that define the industry today.

The Italian drone market is expanding rapidly and continues to grow steadily. The civil sectors we focus on today are experiencing strong development in three main areas: Agriculture, where drones are increasingly used for monitoring, crop analysis, and advanced land-management activities.

Private security, with a growing use of aerial systems for surveillance, perimeter control, and operational support. Transport, both in the medical-health sector (delivery of medicines, biological samples, urgent materials) and for the transport of small goods.

The sector is also developing a strong public-private collaboration, in which public administrations rely on the private sector not only for purchasing drones but also for obtaining operational services, thus fostering a dynamic and rapidly evolving ecosystem.

Could you briefly outline the regulatory environment of the drone industry in Italy and highlight any areas for improvement?

As a member of EASA, Italy has fully implemented the European regulatory framework governing unmanned aircraft systems. This framework requires continuous updates and refinements, both because the underlying technologies evolve rapidly and because the expanding services market continually introduces new operational opportunities. Unfortunately, the current regulations are often overly restrictive and slow to adapt, which in turn hampers sector growth and discourages investment.



(Photo: DronItaly)



DronItaly 2026 (Photo: DronItaly)

Could you kindly explain which sectors account for the largest share of the drone industry in Italy, and which areas play a leading role within the sector?

In Italy, agriculture and logistics are rapidly gaining market share, but historically the use of these systems has been strongly linked to surveying activities and emergency operations. In the defense sector, investments are increasing significantly, especially with regard to anti-drone systems.

In your opinion, what forms of cooperation and key challenges need to be addressed to further advance the drone industry at both the European and global levels?

At the European level, it is essential to make it easier to operate across all EASA member countries in a simple and fast manner. Even though the regulations are harmonized, in practice specific authorizations from individual states are often still required. On the global market side, there is a clear need for stronger partnerships-particularly in the areas of battery development and the availability of diverse platforms, which today remain too dependent on a very small number of manufacturers.

In which areas do Italian drone companies demonstrate strong competitiveness? We would also appreciate your insights into their key strengths.

Italy was the first European country-before the introduction of a common EU framework-to establish its own national drone regulations. It was also the first in Europe to develop a five-year aviation development plan, recognizing the strategic importance of the UAS sector within its broader growth trajectory. Italy certainly demonstrates strong competitiveness in the operational use of these systems, thanks to its long-standing experience and the wide variety of services that have been developed over time.

What significance does the drone industry hold in Italy from your perspective?

The drone industry in Italy is strategically important, economically valuable, and increasingly central to both public and private innovation. It strengthens national capabilities, supports industrial modernization, and positions Italy as an influential player in Europe's evolving UAS ecosystem. Italy is positioning itself as a leader in Europe thanks to advanced regulations, including Europe's first U-space airspace, which supports complex operations such as BVLOS flights, logistics trials, and urban air mobility. This highlights the institutional recognition of drones as essential tools for modern public services.

What key changes have you observed in the Italian drone industry? We would also appreciate your views on its future direction.

The sector has finally begun to lay solid foundations for its development, making it increasingly attractive

for investment. The level of professionalism and training has improved, strengthening the entire value chain. The future will certainly depend on the ability to transform the experimental projects carried out so far into fully structured services: it will no longer be a matter of isolated use cases, but of consolidated, everyday operations.

In which areas do you believe Korean and Italian drone companies could achieve the greatest synergy? We would also appreciate knowing whether you are open to such cooperation.

I sincerely hope that a path of collaboration between Italy and Korea can begin. DronItaly, as the leading dedicated event in the sector, represents an excellent platform for fostering such cooperation. The most promising areas involve the development of new aerial platforms and sensor technologies: Italy has limited domestic production, and strong partnerships with countries that possess manufacturing capacity and technical know-how in these fields are essential.

What preparations should Korean companies make in order to collaborate with Italian drone companies or enter the Italian market?

They should focus on offering alternatives to the products that currently dominate the market, both in terms of UAS platforms and payloads. Italy suffers from a lack of diversified options, and as an end user it represents a very interesting market. We are the leading European country in terms of active and operational professional drone systems.

Could you share your impressions of participating in DronItaly 2026?

The eleventh edition of DronItaly in 2026 was widely recognized as the most successful edition to date. For the first time, ENAC - the national civil aviation authority - had its own exhibition stand. Numerous companies participated, and the events were consistently well attended. Many businesses were able to establish highly productive partnerships and collaborations.

What would you say are the key reasons for Korean companies to participate in DronItaly 2027?

There are many reasons, but the true value of participating in DronItaly lies in the opportunity to establish real collaborations and develop joint commercial initiatives. It is the only event in the sector that offers genuine business opportunities. Anyone looking to enter the industry-or to strengthen their presence within it-cannot afford to miss this event.

Lastly, if you have any additional thoughts or messages regarding the drone industry as a whole, please feel free to share them.

Italy represents a rapidly growing market, but it is particularly focused on services and has a strong need to find reliable and highly skilled partners in both hardware and software. Establishing relationships with such a fast-expanding market can be highly valuable 🇮🇹