

START GUIDE 2015

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Ispra, Varese and surroundings

*What a newcomer should know before, at arrival
and for daily life*



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A. INTRODUCTION

This Start guide is an initiative of Go-for-IT, a team that helps newcomers feel supported, feel well and enjoy their initial experience and journey towards integration.

Go-for-IT wants to inform, orient, and connect newcomers and their families before and during their first steps of integration in Ispra, Varese, and the surrounding areas.

Go-for-IT has its own website www.go-for-it.weebly.com where you can subscribe.

The Go-for-IT initiative is supported by the Welcome Desk of the Joint Research Centre located in Ispra. We are very grateful to them for their continued support.

We would like to mention that a part of this guide was taken from the Vademecum of the JRC. We want, in particular, to thank “Varese Francofolie”, a french activity group in the area for their approval to take information from their guide (edition 2013, original is in French) to further contribute to this start guide. A portion of the information was also taken from the start guide edited by the English welcome club of Varese, the “Benvenuto Club”.

And finally, we completed this guide by our personal, yet modest experiences.

The Go-for-IT team maintains this start guide to help inform newcomers about work and life in the area. Our goal is to keep this information timely and accurate. If errors are brought to our attention, we will do our best to correct them. However, Go-for-IT accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to the information in this start guide. This information is of a general nature only and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual or entity; not necessarily comprehensive, complete, accurate or up to date; sometimes linked to external sites over which the Go-for-IT has no control and for which Go-for-IT and its partners assume no responsibility; not to be considered as professional or legal advice (if you need specific advice, you should always consult a suitably qualified professional).

1. ITALY... OR LOMBARDIA?

Yes, you will arrive in Italy, BUT...

Lombardy is situated in the region of the 7 lakes at the borders of Switzerland and is well-known for its beauty and greenery. Lago Maggiore and Lake Como are surrounded by lovely villages where wealthy Milanese come to ‘breath’ during the weekends and evacuate their stress.

You will live in the northern part of Italy, a land with lakes and mountains. The ski pistes are right behind the corner with the Alps, the Monte Rosa.

If you thought you were going to the south, to the sun, then you have miscalculated... Varese is the city with the most rainfall yearly... called the “pissodrome/urinoir” of Italy... But in general the weather is not too bad. The palm trees may give a Mediterranean feeling but the climate isn’t.

The summers are really hot and humid with some terrible thunderstorms. The winters are often beautiful, cold and dry. We know two rainy seasons here: one from October until December, and another from March until May. The rain sometimes continues non stop until the water level in the lakes rises, sometimes very high (such was the

case in November 2014 when cities like Laveno and Cerro were partly under water). During autumn there is a lot of fog, but the springtime is just beautiful with all the plants and flowers becoming green and/or colourful!

Most of the expats are relocating between Varese and the Lago Maggiore.

Varese is a nice and chic little town of 80.927 habitants (source: Istituto Geografico de Agostani, 2013), where the salary per habitant is very high (you will notice it when shopping or looking for an accommodation) ! Varese is surrounded by many villages and there are activities everywhere... you will have to drive a lot !

The *Varesotti* are known to be not very open to “*stranieri*” (strangers) at first sight... it can be difficult to connect with them, but when you finally do, they are very great people! It just takes some time.

And now just a couple of initial tips to make your life here easier !

Buy a map of the area (or take one at the tourism office), ex. *Atlante Varese «Verbania e 171 comuni delle province»*, ed. *Cartografiche Milanesi*, ISBN 88-8151-108-8 *Ortello*.

Check your driver's licence before coming: is there an expiration date on it? If not, try to exchange it in your country for one with an expiration date, it will avoid a lot of problems here!

The electrical sockets are not all compatible with overseas appliances. You may need to use adapters. For countries like Belgium, France and Holland, adapters can be bought here at good prices. Please check this during the visit to your future home.

Try to not cancel your mobile phone contract in your home country because the delays in obtaining the telephone line can be quite long.

Check the validity dates of your ID (identity card or passport). If they soon expire, it is better to renew them before leaving because the approaches to the Consulates require a visit to Milan or to Rome (depending on where your embassy/consulate is located).

If you have pets, do not forget to bring their passports.

Remember to ask about the steps to engage in your home country before leaving if you are entitled to receive unemployment benefit. Agreements between the various European governments and the INPS (Istituto Nazionale Social Prevenzione) Italian: www.inps.it or other specific allocations type the French CAF, are made.

Specific case for the French expats with the status of "detached": If you are employed "detached" (special conditions including the continued payment by your employer of French social security contributions), you have at least two dependent children under age 20, inform with the inquire with the Caisse d'allocations familiales (www.CAF.fr) because you should fulfil the conditions for maintaining family contributions during your stay in Italy.

2. ITALIAN LANGUAGE

To enjoy your new life in this region, your first concern should be to learn the beautiful Italian language. It will help you in many ways towards integration and in everyday life.

- **Gavirate, CPIA - Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (former: EDA) (IT)**

From September Italian – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1/C2

Depending on the year: day and evening courses.

Also a conversation class.

Contact: Emmanuele (very kind and he speaks English) at the CPIA tel 0332 745527 - <http://www.istitutosup-gavirate.net/website/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CPIA-VARESE-sede-di-GAVIRATE-2014-2015.pdf>

Via dei Gelsomini 14, Gavirate (near the train station of Gavirate Verbano – not to be confused with Gavirate station).

Price: very low, only insurance (15€ in 2014), ad an additional cost, you can do the CILS exam (Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera), in December, and June.

- **Varese, CPIA (head centre) - Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (IT)**

From September Italian – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1/C2

Depending on the year: day and evening courses.

More info: <http://www.cpiavarese.eduva.org/>

via Brunico, 29 - 21100 Varese - Tel +39 0332 330 373

The first contact isn't great, but the courses are good.

- **Sesto Calende**

Free Italian lessons are offered to adult immigrants by the volunteers' group "Cittadini del Mondo" from October to May, 4 hours per week at different levels. Excellent quality of tuition and very friendly environment. Preparation for CILS exams (A1 – C2 LEVELS) is also offered for free. <http://cittadinidelmondo.wordpress.com/scuola/>

- **Ispra, Club Europeo at the ClubHouse**

Lessons are offered in many different languages from October to May by the volunteer teachers (professionals or not) of the Club. Specialised courses are also offered (Communication, Grammar, Culture etc.) For costs and enrolments consult www.clubeuropeo.it

- **Ispra, Biblioteca Comunale**

Piazza Locatelli, 25 tel.: 0332 7833150, biblioteca@comune.ispra.va.it

- **Ispra, Novara and Busto Arsizio**

- **Italian and many other languages** www.bilangcentre.com

- **Varese Corsi: Italiano per stranieri**

<http://www.varesecorsi.net/corsi.aspx>

- **Varese, Corsi di Lingue: Italiano per stranieri**

http://www.corsilingue.va.it/italiano_per_stranieri.html

3. COST OF LIVING

Although the general impression is that Italy is expensive, outside of touristic cities, you do not have to spend much money in order to enjoy a good quality of life.

The cost of living in Italy can vary greatly depending on whether you live in the north or south. The northern part tends to be much wealthier than its southern counterpart, and thus prices in big cities like Milan are considerably higher than those that expats will find in the rural areas.

As a general indication, monthly expenses for an average single person paying for housing, food, utilities, leisure, *transport*, health insurance and clothing can cost anything upwards of 980 EUR. A family of four will have to pay approximately 2000 EUR for the same expenses. Of course everything depends on your lifestyle and where you decide to settle. For example in the province of Varese it is possible to pay from 10 to 16 euros for a lunch meal in an inexpensive restaurant or 50 to 75 euros for a 2 person meal at a mid-range restaurant. Food and beverages have in general average prices. The price of a market basket of basic products such as milk, bread, rice, cheese, meat, fruits and vegetables is estimated between 30 and 45 euros. For clothing and shoes prices are neither low nor high. For example a pair of trousers can cost from 50 to 85 euros, whereas the price of a pair of leather shoes can vary from 110 to 150 euros.

Furthermore, the 25% of monthly budget will be spent in accommodation and monthly utilities. The rent of a one-bedroom apartment can vary from 450 to 600 euro, when that of a three-bedroom apartment is calculated from 900 to 1100 euro. Basic utilities (electricity, heating, water, gas, garbage) can vary from 150 to 175 euro per month.

In general, we've experienced that people coming from north Europe say that food is a little cheaper than in their country, but housing rental and selling prices as well as electricity and gas are much more expensive than in their countries.

Expats coming from southern Europe say that food is more expensive, as well as housing and energy costs.

B. BEFORE ARRIVAL

1. IMMO

Let's start to search for "*La Casa*", your new home.

If you have children who will attend the European School of Varese, you will first have to make a fundamental choice:

- To live near the European School in Varese or in the nearby neighbourhoods; this solution will have many practical advantages like shorter commutes for your kids, the proximity to the city and its facilities (shopping, medical care, public transport,...), less use of the car...OR
- To live in one of the villages that are serviced by the European School buses, mainly toward Lago Maggiore and Ispra (where the JRC is situated). This solution may provide a generally nicer living environment (the villages are very charming and beautiful in nice weather) However, it may be a less practical solution (longer school commutes for the kids, more driving, etc.)

a. SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION

The JRC Foresteria offers short-term accommodation (completely furnished) for newcomers of the JRC and the European School. The Foresteria contracts are limited to 6 months (extendible). Trainees can stay at the Foresteria for the whole duration of their traineeship.

The only negative point here is that you can only have internet through a key, or you must have the internet installed yourself.

Of course there are also traditional hotels, and in some cities residence hotels (just look in the yellow pages for them).

Near the JRC in Ispra, in front of the newspaper shop (Il Globo) the residence Millennium offers apartments to rent by the month or by week, completely furnished, in the style of holidays apartments.

b. LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION

In general you should start researching accommodations as soon as possible because the process of completing the rental contract can be long.

You have to know that the general rent market in the region is quite limited, however it has improved in the last few years.

When looking for an accommodation, please keep in mind that gas and electricity costs are very high here. So look for rentals with double glass windows/doors and good insulation...it is worth it!

Be aware of the difference between “*residenza*” and “*domiciliato*” because in some countries it means exactly the opposite as it does here in Italy.

The “*residenza*” you can take when this is your main home address.

You can be “*domiciliato*” in a city, meaning to be registered at the town hall, but only have an address there. For example, when you keep your main address in your home country.

Some of the accommodations for rent (*affitasi*) or for sale (*vendesì*) are simply displayed with an advertisement on the houses/apartments themselves, but some are only offered by agencies (due to the bad economic situation in Italy during the last couple of years, private renters/sellers don't want to take risks and go through agencies).

There are many immo agencies, and they have a real power on the market. It can be difficult to negotiate between private persons, unless to talk about it around you... but at this stage this will be limited for you.

The real estate agency fees are high (for a rental: about 10% of the annual rent + VAT of 22%).

Watch out to never sign a paper after visiting a house/apartment, even if you are given an excuse to do so, in some cases people -without knowing- signed an agreement to rent...

Try to first look on the internet and on the webpages of agencies:

www.immobiliare.it

www.trovit.it

www.subito.it

Or look in free estate magazine (weekly or bimonthly) that you can find in the cities-- in different shops stores or food markets (for example: *Case e cose di casa*, *Attico*, *Il TuttoCase*, *Casa nuova*, *Cambio casa*. The newspaper *la Prealpina* also has estate ads on Thursdays.

For the JRC or European School employees/teachers, there is a list of accommodations which are available for rent in the area.

JRC employees can ask for more information at the Welcome desk. An updated list is published weekly on Ispranet.

For European School employees the list is with the secretary.

The external accommodation service of the JRC also provides general information about renting in Italy, contracts and real estate agencies, and they have a black list of landlords so don't hesitate to ask if your future potential landlord is on there. It can help you with rental procedures and in understanding your rental contract. Important note → no agency fees can be requested for houses or flats announced on this list – if you are requested to pay a fee, please refuse it and report it!

Everybody can subscribe on the Grantholder's mailing list of the JRC (works as a second-hand market, carpooling, suggestions exchange). To subscribe: send an email to Majordomo@jrc.ec.europa.eu with the following text in the message body: "subscribe gha" (without the quotes). Of course, you will then receive a lot of mail... be prepared!

Finally, other big companies offer also rental lists to their employees. Please inquire there.

Like in many countries, you may have problems with your landlord. For example, maybe refusing to repair things in the accommodation or giving you an unfair list of common costs that can't be verified. In this case you can ask for help at the union of tenants called SUNIA, Via Sieme, 3 in Varese - tel. 0332 333093. Email : suniavarese@libero.it – website <http://www.sunia.it/>

They require an annual quote of about 70€. They are very helpful!

It seems that if they are really investigating a case for you they might ask for more, however it is not clear if this is totally legal.

Another thing you could do (surely the best option!) is to take out a justice insurance for about 110€ per year. In that case, all legal fees are taken into charge, but of course you have to apply for the insurance before the problems come up. Example: www.das.it

If you have huge mould problems, and the landlord doesn't react in a reasonable time (or has a bad reaction) don't hesitate to let come the ASL (Agenzia Sanitaria Lombardia - www.asl.varese.it). They will come to check the problem and make a report. In case of future problems this is a real reference!

Attention: since January 2012, every rental contract or sale contract in Lombardy has to be annexed with an energy certificate, otherwise it can be considered as invalid.

The norm in Italy is to pay at the time of signing the contract, a rental guarantee equivalent to 3 months' rent and 3 months' rent in advance. The rental guarantee is placed on a savings account opened by the owner on his own name (ask for a

receipt). The rental guarantee must be returned to you, entirely or partially, as applicable at the time of departure.

But of course, you can try to negotiate it differently. Try to get minimum a monthly payment.

Watch out, « *il libretto di risparmio al portatore* » (the savings account on bearer) isn't allowed for an amount of 1000€ and more, neither a cash payment.

You will also have to pay 50% of the enrolment tax of the rental contract (the other 50% is for the landlord). You will have to pay this amount every year within the 30 days of the start date. Don't forget to ask for receipts for EVERYTHING you pay!

Try to obtain a “*contratto a cedolare secco*” (<http://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/wps/content/nsilib/nsi/home/cosadevifare/registrare/registrazione+contratti+beni+immobili/cedolare+secca/scheda+informativa+cedolare+secca>). This is a special contract where neither the landlord or the renter has to pay the annual enrolment tax, where the rent cannot be elevated during the first 4 years, and where the landlord pays less taxes on it. It's applicable on every private house if the landlord rents it as a private person and is not retired yet. So please ask for it or negotiate it!

However, a lot of landlords have understood that they have to put a kitchen and/or bathroom into their property. You still find some accommodations without a kitchen and/or bath when entering. Please, notice if this is mentioned in the contract--furnished with kitchen and bathroom if so when you visited it. If you need to put in a new kitchen, the following stores offer options at affordable prices: IKEA in Milano and in Lugano (open on Sunday), GRANCASA in Rescaldina (highway to Milano, exit Castellanza), or CONFORAMA (via Sempione à Vergiate, Tel. 0331 941422 ou 0331 941411). When you move out of your residence, try to negotiate with the new tenant, or even the landlord, to resell these purchases. If it doesn't work out, please take them with you, perhaps you can sell them online! Negotiating a kitchen into the contract can be very effective if you say that you will not rent the property otherwise!

Be very careful with the inventory when entering. In reality, you need to leave the accommodation in good condition including repainting. But if the previous renters didn't, please mention it into the contract including another damage or imperfections.

If there is (even a little) trace of humidity and mould when visiting, please mention it in the contract, that if it expands, the landlord has to treat it in a correct and definitive way, otherwise it could be a valuable reason to stop the contract immediately without any obligation.

Please note that in general rental prices are quiet high and varying geographically. Varese and the villages situated on the north part of the lake of Varese, along the way to Gvirate (“the golden way”) are usually more expensive (20 to 30% more). NEVER HESITATE TO NEGOTIATE! In Italy, rental and sale prices usually aren't fixed or definitive.

The villages on the border of Lago Maggiore aren't cheap either. If there is a direct access to the lake or a beautiful view on the lake, the prices increase even more!

If you have kids, inform the European school (Signora Contini, Tel. 0332 242092) if a school bus services the place. If you arrive in the middle of the year, check if there is still space on the bus.

Sometimes the creation of a new bus stop can be discussed (depending on place and number of pupils).

The insurance of your accommodation isn't a legal obligation, but frequently asked about by the landlord when signing the contract. If you have a theft insurance, don't forget to mention if you have an alarm system to the insurance company, because you will probably receive a discount.

A final piece of advice: try to obtain, perhaps from the previous renter or from the landlord, the information about the different services (water, gas, electricity, telephone, internet) including addresses and phone numbers. If possible, please avoid any stop of counters as the delays of getting a contract are long enough already.

Please note that there are some reliable real estate agencies specialised in expatriations that you could contact before your arrival. You can always ask the employer where you will begin work:

- Dominique Van Dingenen, from Reno (Lago Maggiore), Cell: (0039) 320 8846773 - dominiquvandingenen@gmail.com – languages: Italian, French, English, Dutch, German

c. REMOVAL

Choose the right removal company by doing some research before to find the most reliable ones! At each removal you unfortunately may expect some broken items...

2. EDUCATION

a. SCHOOLS

Here are a couple of interesting possibilities:

- **European school of Varese (Scuola europea di Varese)**

If you want to keep your child in their own language, then this school is a good possibility. With 5 sections (Italian, English, French, German and Dutch), you have the choice! If you're a JRC employee and have another mother tongue, your child will also have some lessons in his/her own language.

Here you have 2 classes of kindergarten (starting at 4 years old), 5 classes of primary school and 7 classes of secondary school (until 18 years old) and many different options.

From the 1st year of primary the students begin learning a second language (English, French or German) and from the 3rd year of primary a third language (Italian mainly). From secondary on, part of the lessons are given in their second language.

In the 7th year of secondary school, students can obtain the European Baccalaureate, which allows students to subscribe in European universities or important colleges, just like the national baccalaureates do.

Via Montello 118, 21100 Varese – Tel: 0332 806111 - <http://www.eurscva.eu/admin>
Parents association - Tel. 0332 789432 - E-mail: parents.association@jrc.ec.europa.eu - <http://www.agsev.it> (at the CCR in Ispra: 1st floor, permanence from Monday to Thursday 9-12.30h).

The “Buono scuola” : The Region of Lombardy www.regione.lombardia.it gives the possibility to families with kids in private or equivalent schools, to receive a scholarship (depending on salary). The request has to be sent before the end of the month of December of the school year. The parents association or the European school can provide information on this subject.

- **Le Lycée Français (Lycée Stendhal in Milano)**

For the French-speaking kids, this could be an option. The Lycée Stendhal situated in Milan has classes from kindergarten till the baccalaureate, and follows the French official programs. If you really want to follow these programs, this is a good option, however the commute to Milan is long.

Via Laveno 12 - 20148 Milan - Tel. 02 487961 - Fax: 02 48700566 - <http://www.lsmi.it/>

- **The Italian state schools**

Another alternative is –why not- follow the scholarship in an Italian public school. This solution is especially interesting for young kids who can adapt and learn a language quickly. Moreover, the kids won't have to take the bus, and can go in their own village/city. It's a great way to get involved in the Italian life!

The Kindergarten (from 2-5 or 3-6 years old) isn't obligatory in Italy, and most of these schools are private and at payment, but there are some state (free) schools too.

The best thing to do is to get information from the town halls which have a list. Or you can go to this website to have an idea: <http://cercaservizi.provincia.va.it/servizi.php?sys%5Bcid%5D=1>

From 6 years on, there are 3 cycles:

- Primary school (Scuola elementare -5 years),
- Middle school (Scuola media inferiore -3 years),
- High school (Scuola media superiore -4 years), at the end students pass their 'maturità', the Italian baccalaureate which then allows students to subscribe to Italian universities. It seems that some language high schools offer the possibility to pass the French baccalauréat ESABAC. To check in these 'liceo linguistiche' (also 2 state schools in Varese like Manzoni : http://www.liceimanzoni.it/wp_manzoni/esabac).

The school periods and holidays are the same for all the schools of the region of Varese. But the courses are organised by each school on its own responsibility. Some Italian children are going to school on Saturday mornings. The summer holidays are generally from the beginning of June (for kindergarten from the first of July) until the beginning of September (kindergarten usually starts on the first of September). In kindergarten the first two and the last two weeks are usually half days. Generally there are fewer school holidays during the rest of the year.

In Italy there are many *public* and *private* schools. Private schools are more common in bigger cities like Milan. In Varese there are fewer. Most of the kids follow their scholarship in the state schools which generally have a good reputation.

The private schools of Besozzo: these ones have a good reputation

- <http://www.istitutorosetum.it>
- **Sc.Mat.Non Stat.Marzotto** - Scuola materna (dell'infanzia) - Via Lago,89 - Cap: 21023 - Telefono: 0332 770293; Fax: 0332 771754

In Italian schools, in the primary and kindergarten, the kids have to eat a warm lunch at school, generally at 5€ each.

- **Scuola Rudolf Steiner Varese**

www.steinervarese.org

- **Scuola Montessori**

www.montessorivarese.it

b. CHILDCARE (ASILI NIDI OR NIDI D'INFANZIA)

- **JRC Childcare (only for CCR employees)**

JRC Ispra has a Crèche (nursery) and a Garderie (after school), which are located next to the Ispra Site, near the Foresteria apartments. These childcare services are reserved for the children of the officials and other servants of the European Communities and to the external members of staff who have a direct contractual link with the JRC in the form of a full-time employment contract of not less than six months duration. Availability is limited.

- **Occasional daycare**

The Halte-Garderie is an occasional day care service for children from 6 months to 4 years. It allows you to leave your child at the JRC nursery for a maximum of 12 hours/week. The occasional day care service is reserved for children of staff working at the JRC Ispra (officials, temporary agents, contractual agents, grantholders, trainees, visiting scientists, national experts on secondment) and where one of the parents is not employed.

The occasional daycare service is open during the school year.

- **Italian nurseries and pre-schools (asili nidi and nidi d'infanzia)**

In Italy there are public nurseries (organised by the city) and private ones.

There are fewer public ones and places are reserved for the children whose parents are working.

Therefore, the places in public nurseries are limited in Varese. There may be more availability in places in the surrounding villages. You can have more information about public nurseries at the Town hall of Varese.

Assessorato ai servizi educativi Via Cairoli, 6 21100 Varèse Tél: 0332 255001 Fax: 0332 255025 www.comune.varese.it.

The private nurseries are less full, but of course the prices are higher.

For example:

In Varese:

- Babylandia: Via Crispi 110 Varese Tel: 0332 820944
<http://www.asilonidobabylandiavarese.com>
- Bulli e Pupe: 5, V. Giovanni Nicotera Varese Tel: 0332 236568

In Barza (near to Ispra) :

- Peter Pan: Piazza Don Guanella, 19 21027 Barza Ispra Tel: 0332 987849
- Check out the internet (Pagine Gialle, rubrique nidi d'infanzia)

- **Nanny's**

These nannies are like babysitters, women who are not working or couldn't find a job, who are offering their services and skills in advertisements on the internet, in supermarkets (Campo dei Fiori Commercial Centre in Gavirate).

- **Toddler's groups**

- 1) **Budokai playgroups:** these playgroups are organised by the Budokai Club in cooperation with the Club Europeo. They take place in the Budokai Gym in the basement of the JRC Clubhouse, which is very nice, due to a soft floor and the size of the room. For information, please contact: ethel-maria@web.de ***Suspended for the time being – looking for volunteer to run it!***

You can come and try out, whenever you like, without signing in! For more kids activities and the inscription procedure see: www.clubeuropeo.it/en/club-budokai-ispra

0 years and older: open playing in the gym with lots of toys, balls and music! Since this group takes place in the afternoon, there are also bigger kids, up to school age, so it might get a bit wilder! For information contact: nora.schade@gmail.com

3 years and older – kids go wild: open playing in the gym with some structured games! This group is focusing on older kids, who need to get rid of some energy. Smaller brothers and sisters might be brought, but the mother has to protect them ☐ For information contact: barbara.heeb@gmail.com

- 2) **Whatsapp Group: "Mamme ad Ispra ed intorno":** organised to exchange information, arrange meetings and coffees around Ispra. For information contact Ms. Fabregat Maria: nereida28@gmail.com .
- 3) **Mums & Toddlers:** It's a quite new group (2015) of mums with babies/toddlers 0+ arranging weekly coffees/activities in and around the Varese area. Members from all over the globe, are welcome. It is a great way to meet other mums and get out of the house. Sometimes they do walks or other outings, a lot of the time the members who can, take turns hosting a few mums for coffee so the babies can play. Contact: alexandracasalini@gmail.com
- 4) **Deutsch Krabbelgruppe:** die deutsche Krabbelgruppe trifft sich jeden Donnerstag im Gemeinderaum der evangelischen Kirche in Caldana. Es werden zunächst deutsche Kinderlieder gesungen, im Anschluss wird gemeinsam gefrühstückt und gespielt. www.ecumene-online.com/gemeinde.php?lang=de. Für Informationen: melaniecitti@yahoo.de

- c. CHILDCARE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

For JRC employees, during summer, "Eurolandia" camps are organised for children aged 4 to 11 and many activities are organised around different themes.

A lot of other sport camps are organised as well, open to everyone (ex. tennis camp in Ispra, sailing camp in Cerro, dance summer camp in Comerio <http://www.dancepointvarese.com/#!classes/crer> , ...)

The Italians are used to taking their kids to the "oratorio" (place linked to the church where a lot of activities are organised). These oratorio organise many activities from June on, at a reasonable price. Please inquire at one near your home.

3. PETS

a. GENERAL

Don't worry, pets are welcome in the most places in Italy, and a lot of people do have pets, mostly dogs. So you will find enough veterinarians, veterinary clinics, shops selling foods and products, pet grooming, dog boarding places.

b. DOG REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Dogs must be registered at the local Anagrafe Canina. There are four offices in the area that can offer this service. Their exact locations, telephone numbers and open hours can be found at the following website: <http://www.asl.varese.it/distretti-veterinari/14/servizi/254#main>

Appointments may be necessary at some locations. Remember to bring with you documentation of the dog's microchip number issued by a veterinarian. Payment is required for the registration.

4. DRIVING IN ITALY

a. DRIVING LICENCE

The holder of a driving licence issued by a Member State of the European Union or the European Economic Area, without administrative limits of validity, already resident in Italy on 19 January 2013, must convert his/her licence before 19 January 2015 i.e. within two years from the date of entry into force of the new legislation;

At the following link you can find further information on this topic:

www.cislfir.org/home/archivio/patenti-comunitarie.html

You may also wish to have a look at the europa.eu websites that provide information in different languages:

1. Driving licence: Validity in EU countries

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/vehicles/driving/validity/resident_en.htm

2. New European driving licence for more security, safety and free movement

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-13-10_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-10_en.htm)

If you are a resident here and your driver's licence has no expiration date you risk a penalty of about 155€ and they take your driver's licence with them! So when you don't have an expiration date, change your driver's licence in your own country as soon as possible to one with expiration date!

b. PARKING RULES

Vary from place to place. Once you have found your parking space look around to see which rule you have to follow:

In general, in the white marks you can park for free, the yellow marks are only for inhabitants and in the blue marks you have to pay.

- **Disco orario (hour disc):** needs to point the hour of your arrival
- **Biglietto :** Ticket to be taken from the street machines located under a big blue P
- **Biglietto da grattare:** Those are tickets that you can find in *tabacchi* that you have to scratch with the correct date and time. A bit like lottery game ticket but in this case no chance to win millions 😊

c. GENERAL DRIVING RULES

Italy has a reputation for having bad drivers. However, everything is relative. Driving here is not like the challenge of Naples or the south of Italy. It is true that Italian drivers aren't the friendliest towards pedestrians. Many don't respect the speed limits, and most don't even know blinkers exist! Again, everything is relative. Expats from northern Europe do think Italians drive badly, but Southern European expats are used to this type of driving.

d. CITY DRIVING RULES

Each city has its own rule – no surprise – we are in Italy. Nevertheless, they share the same basic purposes:

- to limit the pollution in the city's atmosphere
- to limit the access of old and especially diesel cars to certain days or even banish them from its city centre
- to limit the traffic in the city centre (either during the week or during the week-end in case of a touristic area)

To access Milan city centre you can pre-pay on the internet the Area C ticket valid 24 hours on www.areac.atm-mi.it

Other option: **parking out of Milano** and then getting into the centre by metro.

Parking: www.atm-mi.it/it/ViaggiaConNoi/Auto/Pagine/ParcheggiSosta.aspx

Metropolitana: www.atm-mi.it/it/ViaggiaConNoi/Pagine/SchemaRete.aspx

e. SPEED LIMIT

In cities and towns, the speed limit is 50 km/h. (31.25 m.p.h.). On other roads, the speed limits are as follows:

- 90 km/h (56.25 m.p.h.) on main roads and local roads for all cars and motor vehicles;
- 110 km/h (68.75 m.p.h.) on motorways for all cars and motor vehicles up to 1099 cc;
- 130 km/h (81.25 m.p.h.) on motorways for all cars and motor vehicles over 1100.

Be very careful when driving in Italy; it is sometimes difficult to know the speed limit of a specific road and cameras have been installed in many places around the Ispra site.

The maximum speed on the Superstrada SS 329 Besozzo-Vergiate is 90 km/h, except where 60 km/h is clearly indicated. Respect the speed limit: there are several speed cameras on the Superstrada!

f. WINTER TYRES AND LIGHTS

In the Province of Varese, drivers need to have their car equipped with winter tyres or have snow chains on board from 15 November to 15 April and during any snowfall periods outside such dates.

In Italy, outside the city centres you need to drive with your day lights on.

5. ACTIVITIES

a. SOCIAL: GETTING CONNECTED > EXPAT GROUPS, CLUBS & NETWORKING

• **Go-for-IT**

Where: Every month the Go-for-IT will let you discover another place in the area during their meeting (during the week)

Website: www.go-for-it.weebly.com

Email : through the contact form/or meeting form on the website

Membership: free

Activities: A core team of six enthusiastic expats voluntarily started this project in order to support newcomers and share information regarding the expat life around Ispra and Varese in the north of Italy. Their goal is to help you before and at arrival in this beautiful region. They are supported by the Welcome Desk of the JRC (Joint Research Center) in Ispra, but are open to all newcomers arriving in the region. They organise a monthly meeting (you can subscribe on the website for more information about these) sometimes including an activity.

• **Club Europeo**

Where: Club House Via Esperia - 21027 Ispra, open on Tuesday and Thursday 10h-12h

Website: www.clubeuropeo.it/en/

Email : clubeuropeo@ext.jrc.ec.europa.eu

Membership: approx. 35 euro/year for family of employees at JRC. You are welcome to join if you are not affiliated with the JRC if there is still space and at double the price.

Activities: This club, which was created for partners of JRC employees offers language courses, thematic Cafés, cultural and touristic visits, organised outings for theatre performances, operas, galleries and exhibitions, monthly newsletter etc.

The first annual meeting takes place end of September/start of October.

All nationalities are represented.

• **The Clubhouse**

Where: Via Esperia - 21027 Ispra (close to Foresteria apartments), open from Monday till Saturday from xh till xh.

Activities: the Clubhouse is a private JRC structure, which offers some sports and leisure activities, as well as the following facilities to JRC staff:

> Conference room and meeting room (free of charge upon reservation)

> TV/Video system

> A heated multi-purpose sports hall

> A football pitch

> Wi-fi point

• **Benvenuto Club (EN)**

Where: Villa Ponti – Piazza Litta 2 – Varese for the coffee mornings

Website: www.benvenutovarese.org

Email : president@benvenutovarese.org

Membership: approx. 65 euro/year (for 2014-2015) + activities at payment

Activities: this English-speaking welcome group is open to all nationalities. It offers excursions, cultural visits, cooking classes, coffee mornings each second Wednesday of the month, charity activities, regular activities (bridge, tennis, Nordic walking, walking, conversations groups in different languages like French, German..., English library,...), toddler group for young mums, a monthly newsletter with all the proposed activities...

- **Varesefrancofolie (FR)**

Where: Palace hotel – Varese for the coffee mornings

Website: -

Email : varesefrancofolie@yahoogroupes.fr

Membership: free, only some activities at payment

Activities: This French-speaking welcome group is open to all nationalities. It offers excursions, cultural visits, cooking classes, coffee mornings each first Wednesday of the month, walking, tennis, cine-club. You must subscribe to the yahoo group to get all the information regarding activities and other stuff.

- **Sangria Club**

Where: Ispra

Website: -

Email : sangriacub@outlook.com

Membership: free, of course you take a beverage

Activities: this group of volunteers organises an after-work coffee and aperitivi. They send out their dates (usually on Thursday evening from 19h30) through the gha-mailinglist.

- **JRC Cultural Committee**

Where: Via Enrico Fermi, 2749 - Bld 1, TP 014 - 21027 Ispra (VA) - Tel: 0332 78 9764

Website: www.comitato-culturale-ccr.eu

Email : jrc-ispra-comitato-culturale@ec.europa.eu

Membership: an annual registration and the issue of a personalised membership card

Activities: The Cultural Committee organises trips to interesting shows and events and runs libraries for books, CDs, DVDs and videos. This club is only for JRC employees and their families.

- **JRC clubs**

JRC Ispra (only for JRC employees) has a wide range of sports and other social/cultural clubs that organise weekly training sessions, events and excursions.

Joining a club is also a good way to meet new people!

Further information about the clubs is available on Ispranet

- **Milan Accueil**

Where: Viale Ranzoni, 17 – Milan Tél : 02 48 71 25 19

Website: www.milanaccueil.com

Email : milan.accueil.ma@gmail.com

Membership: 47€ in for a family in 2014-2015

Activities: This French speaking welcome group offering a wide range of activities focused on the region of Milan (visits, forums of job searching, conferences,...) and published a practical guide of living in Milan with good addresses etc.

- b. CULTURAL

- See JRC cultural committee, Benvenuto Club, Varese Francofolie, Milan Accueil

- c. SPORT

There are many possibilities for sports around the lake such as swimming (including courses for children in Sesto Calende, Ispra, Brebbia, Besozzo, Varese and Gavirate to name only a few). It is usually not a problem to find places, for example, at the JRC ClubHouse for soccer (*calcio* or *calcetto*), basketball, golf, rowing or general fitness/gyms or horse riding (*scuola di equitazione*).

If you do not know how to find them, check the yellow pages: www.paginegialle.it (*palestre, piscine, fitness and /or swimming*) or come to one of our meetings and we can find somebody to help you.

- **Budokai (budokai.it)**

Where: JRC Clubhouse in the "Lotus Flower" room in via Esperia 467 at Ispra (Varese)

Website: www.budokai.it

Email : info@budokai.it

Membership: see website > for JRC and external persons

Activities: Budokai is a non-profit Martial Arts Association organised into different sections with Qualified Instructors. The Club has an affiliation with UISP - Unione Italiana Sport per tutti, a Sport Promotion Association recognised by CONI, the Italian Olympic Committee and is registered in the Italian Registry of Sport Clubs.

These are the Budokai sections:

Aikido, Fencing, Judo, Karate, Tai-Chi, Yoga, Gym, Qi-Gong, Pilates

The first time you can try a class for free. Once you've chosen what's best for you, you need to visit the Budokai office (they share rooms with Club Europeo at the first floor of the Club House), pay the relevant fee to become a member and then pay the annual subscription for each class. There are some classes that don't have an annual fee and are free for the Budokai members. For these classes you only need to pay the Budokai membership fee when you initially subscribe. Because you are going to need a health certificate in order to join any of these activities, it is advisable either to bring a very recent one with you from your home country, get one from your family doctor here, or if you don't have one yet, contact the doctor cooperating with Budokai (his name is on the Budokai website above) and arrange an appointment with him at the Club House. Please make sure you are aware of the language spoken by the instructors before you join any activities. Some speak Italian only therefore if you are a newcomer it might be difficult for you to follow. Generally there is a tendency for the morning classes to be monolingual Italian and the evening classes to be bilingual, but that is not an absolute rule. Even if you enrol in an activity in which only Italian is spoken don't lose heart. The sports related vocabulary tends to repeat itself, so you might find yourself understanding what's going on better and faster than you would think.

- **other clubs liked with JRC: Tennis Club www.tennisclubccr.it, Triathlon www.oxygentriathlon.it , etc...) linked with JRC**

- **Paragliding in Laveno**

<http://wefly.gibi.info/en/il-volo>

<http://www.icaro2000.com/Club/Club.htm>

- **C.A.I. – Club Alpino Italiano www.cai.it**

Walking and skiing in the Alpine mountains. There is an annual fee to pay to become a member, and then the adherent sleeping places are much cheaper.

- **Skiing**

- JRC club – www.sci-club.eu

- www.sciclubcamodeifiori.it (a real Italian club)

- **Dance classes**

- Danza Scuola di Siebbeles Marijke in Ispra, Via Enrico Fermi 615/4, tel. 0332 781326 (also power pilates)

- Contemporary Dance: Club Europeo Dance Club JRC

- Comerio (Ballet, Jazz, Hiphop, theatre, Modern, Belly Dancing, Pilates and Yoga, Summer Camps): <http://www.dancepointvarese.com/#!/classes/crer>

- Varese Corsi: <http://www.varesecorsi.net>
 - Hiphop: Varese: (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides - <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/ActRobur2014.pdf> and Barasso: www.cfmbarasso.it
 - **Fitness and pilates**
 - Comerio (Ballet, Jazz, Hiphop, theatre, Modern, Pilates and Yoga, Summer Camps): <http://www.dancepointvarese.com/#!classes/crer>
 - Varese Corsi: <http://www.varesecorsi.net>
 - Varese: (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides – <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/ActRobur2014.pdf>
 - **Badminton**
 - Badminton for families in the ClubHouse on Sundays from 11-12
 - **Mini-Basket**
 - Varese: (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides – <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/ActRobur2014.pdf>
 - **Judo**
 - Gavirate: Via dei Gelsomini 14
 - Varese: (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides – <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/ActRobur2014.pdf>
 - **Ginnastica**
 - Gavirate: Via dei Gelsomini 14 - <http://www.gymforlife.it/dovesiamo/>
 - Varese: (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides – <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/ActRobur2014.pdf>
 - **Swimming**
 - Brebbia: Sport & Benessere: www.sbbrescia.it
 - Ispra: 12 Sport: www.sportclub12.it
 - Besozzo: www.centrosportivostadium.it
 - Varese (via Padre Marzorati, near European school): Robus et Fides - <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/PisRobur2014.pdf>
 - **Horse riding**
 - Poney riding in Italian at La Betulla, Via Brugherascia 5, Ispra (VA)
 - Cocquio Trevisago, Motto dei Grilli, contact Serena 339 6371541
Mainly Italian speaking, but there are instructors and learners who speak English.
 - Morosolo: Agriturismo
 - Mustonate
- d. LEISURE
- **Also check out Varese Corsi:** <http://www.varesecorsi.net>
 - **Ceramics:** Ceramics Club located near Club House in Ispra
 - **Painting:** Club Europeo
 - **Theatre – JRC theatre club, Benvenuto Players (EN) and in Varese: teatro Santuccio**

- **Movie theatres**

- **Castelletto Ticino: Metropolis Multisala** www.metropolis-area.com/index.htm
- **Taino: Un Lunedì Mai Visto** www.quellicheilcinema.it Special screenings of international films in original language with Italian subtitles organised by the Commune Culturale di Ticino
- **Travedona:** Cineclub once or twice a month. Programme is posted on www.santamanzio.it
- **Gavirate: CineClub Immaginario in Sala Garden** offers also the Cineopera sessions and birthday parties that can be organised around a film www.immaginario.org
- **Varese:** www.filmstudio90.it/home.asp Films in original language versions

- **Pregnant women:**

Receive information in Varese at via Padre Marzorati (near the European school): Robus et Fides - <http://www.roburetfides.com/Oggetti/PisRobur2014.pdf> for pregnancy swimming

- e. **MUSIC**

- **Associazione culturale *Giocare con i suoni* Via A. Binda, 2 Travedona Monate (VA), tel: +393334000241**

- **Orchestra looking for musicians (violin, violoncello):** www.concentus-europae.wg.vu

- **Music School**

- Carlos Duarte Scuola di Musica in Besozzo: www.varesemusica.org
- CFM in Barasso : www.cfmbarasso.com
- Museocasanova in Laveno (Suzuki method) : http://www.museocasanova.it/index_files/Page372.htm
- Music and singing school in the centre of Varese (teatro Santuccio, Via Luigi Sacco 10, in front of Giardini Pubblici): www.solevociacademy.it

- **Music classes for kids**

- Associazione Culturale "Musica Musica", Via E. Fermi 569, Ispra (VA), www.musicamusicaweb.org
- Associazione culturale "Giocare con i suoni", Via A. Binda, 2 Travedona Monate (VA), tel: +393334000241
- Carlos Duarte Scuola di Musica in Besozzo: www.varesemusica.org
- CFM in Barasso : www.cfmbarasso.com
- Museocasanova in Laveno (Suzuki method) : http://www.museocasanova.it/index_files/Page372.htm
- In the European school (but quite expensive)
- Music and singing school in the centre of Varese (teatro Santuccio, Via Luigi Sacco 10, in front of Giardini Pubblici): <http://www.accademia.solevoci.it>

- **Choir**

- Europea Cantores Coro: Choir of the JRC, in Gavirate (English, Italian)
- Many Italian classic choirs to check on the internet
- Also a Gospel Lab (info on <http://www.accademia.solevoci.it>)

- **Kids'Choir**
 - Blooming Kids, Pop Up and a group for kids from 4 years on in the centre of Varese (teatro Santuccio, Via Luigi Sacco 10, in front of Giardini Pubblici): <http://www.accademia.solevoci.it>
 - Piccolo Coro Arcobaleno a Pois (quite expensive) in Varese: info@arcobalenoapois.com
- **Djembe Workshop:**
at the Club House. For children and adults, www.ispra.afropeanmusic.com

6. JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Without a good knowledge of the Italian language, you may have much difficulty finding a job. In this difficult economic situation even Italians have difficulty finding employment in the region.

If you want to have more opportunities, maybe you could look in Milan or even in Switzerland. However, even there the rules have changed, especially towards the frontier workers. They now risk paying double taxes.

When searching for a job, don't expect an answer on an application if you are not chosen. Usually you will not receive a response. For finding a job, networking is more important than your actual Curriculum Vitae. Fortunately there are, of course, exceptions on this rule.

It is also good to know that salaries here are generally not as high as you may expect. If you are seeking a secretary or administrative job, or want to work in the tourism/hotel sector, expect 800-1000€ net as a normal salary.

If you are a mum, just know that Italian mothers who are working are generally very supported by the grandparents as a babysitter would cost you much of what you earn. If you can afford an au-pair, the situation would be different.

7. VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

You can always volunteer in Italy: in schools, proloco, club alpino,... When we hear of some opportunities, we will share them at our monthly meetings.

C. AT ARRIVAL

1. ADMINISTRATION OF PERSONS

a. APPLICABLE FOR EVERYONE WHO'S COMING TO LIVE IN ITALY

The **Codice Fiscale** (tax code) identifies citizens when dealing with Italian authorities and administrations.

You will need the code in order to carry out various administrative or commercial procedures in Italy such as registering as a resident, buying a telephone or a car, etc.

For JRC employees, the HR services of JRC Ispra will request the code for you before your arrival. You should receive it during your first days at the JRC. For the family members, please inform at the Welcome Desk, because they all also need a Codice Fiscale.

For those not affiliated with the JRC, you can easily go to the tax centre, 'Agenzia delle Entrate' by yourself, and after a certain waiting time, you receive the codice fiscale (which is free). It is the first thing to do at your arrival.

Website: <https://telematici.agenziaentrate.gov.it/VerificaCF/Scegli.jsp> . Documents to bring: ID papers and photocopies, and a document to fill in in the office.

If you have had any problems in relation to your card, go to one of the following tax offices:

Agenzia delle Entrate

Via Don Luigi Crosta, 3

21026 **Gavirate** (VA)

Tel: 0332 1696100

Fax: 0332 1696150

Agenzia delle Entrate

Via Frattini, 1

21100 **Varese**

Tel: 0332 1767111

Fax: 0332 1767315

b. IF YOU ARE A NON-EU NATIONAL

and plan to stay in Italy for a period exceeding three months, you must apply for a permit of stay (permesso di soggiorno) at the police office (Questura di Varese) Piazza della Libertà, 2 Tel. 0332 801111 – <http://questure.poliziadistato.it/Varese> , Foreigners office (Ufficio stranieri) -Tel : 0332 801733 <http://questure.poliziadistato.it/stranieri/?mime=1&lang=IT> that are open on Mondays, and from Wednesdays to Fridays from 8h30 till 10h (information) 13h (appointments) and from Tuesdays to Thursdays from 14h30 to 16h30. We suggest you to arrive really early and to inform after the days dedicated for making new permits or just renewals (otherwise you lose your time ! Documents to furnish:

- Fill in a document that you will receive once there, and don't forget - if applicable- to mention your children ;
- Passport and/or national ID card that is still valid (+ 2 photocopies);
- An official family composition document (Stato di famiglia) or family booklet, 3 ID photographs (color) per person to subscribe;
- If you are employed : your work contract, or certificate with payslip, or revenue certification;
- If you are married to an Italian : your wedding certificate;
- Rental contract and eventually your proof of residence.

The presence from either the mother and father are requested for the subscription of children till 14 years on the permit of the parents. From 14 years on, a residence permit is delivered personally to each child who has to make the demand.

Students have to bring the proof of their university subscription and furnish a certificate that he/she is supported by a third.

If you are looking for a job, you will receive a residence permit with mention that you are a job seeker (in attesa di lavoro) valid for 5 years.

If it is your first time in Italy, your finger prints will also be taken.

When the whole procedure has been completed, you will receive an appointment to collect your electronic permit of stay at the police station 'questura'.

The electronic permit of stay is a magnetic card similar to a credit card. It has a microchip and a machine-readable magnetic stripe which contains the card holder's personal information, photograph and finger prints in a digital format.

Renewal:

If you are already in Italy and your residence permit is about to expire, you must apply for a renewal at the latest:

- 90 days before the expiry date if your residence permit is valid for 2 years;
- 60 days before the expiry date if your residence permit is valid for 1 year;
- 30 days before the expiry date in all other cases.

To know more about immigration procedures in Italy, consult the website of the Italian Police: www.poliziadistato.it

Permit of stay for family members

The members of your family can apply for a permit of stay (called Family Cohesion Procedure), provided that you hold a valid permit of stay for work.

c. IF YOU ARE A CITIZEN FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

you don't need a residence permit.

If you stay more than the half of the year in Italy, you should register your new Italian residence. If you are in your 'home country' more than 6 months, you don't have to register.

A couple of advantages if you register:

- You have the right to register to the ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale). If you are a JRC employee, don't let tell you that you don't have the right, because in fact you have: <http://www.asl.varese.it/distretti-socio-sanitari/1/servizi/30#main>
- You can obtain a discount petrol card valid in a lot of petrol stations

A couple of disadvantages:

- You have to change your car plates and insurance within 6 months after registration.
- If you decide not to register as a resident, however you should register for the bin taxes (called TARSU).

JRC Contract Agents and Officials can choose to register as a resident in Italy, request the European Commission Special Identity Card, or do both.

Special ID Card: European Commission statutory Staff members and their families are not obliged to register as residents in order to stay in Italy, provided that they fulfil some conditions. However, if you do not register as a resident, you must request the Special Identity Card (SIC), issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, within 30 days.

NOTE: JRC Grantholders must register at the municipally as soon as possible in order to enrol in the Italian health care system!

When you register your residence at the town hall (*comune o municipio*), you will need to present documents (please take a lot of time for this, and don't worry if you have to return a couple of times):

- Passport or valid ID card of each member of the family
- Codice fiscale of each family member
- a copy of your marriage certificate/children's birth certificates (legalized and with official translation into Italian or a multilingual version including Italian)

Some documents and certificates issued by certain countries may need an "apostille" or "legalisation" stamp in order to be considered valid.

- Document to fill in there
- Your work contract with payslip or a revenue certification
- Rental contract

Within a few days after you have submitted your request to the municipality, the local police will visit your home to confirm your address. You should therefore make sure that your name is on the doorbell and on the post box.

Please remember to inform your municipality when you are leaving Italy.

Once you did the registration at the town hall in the population Register, you can subscribe to the Azienda Sanitaria Locale (ASL) of your town:

<http://www.asl.varese.it>

If you have the right to benefit from the Italian coverage (ASL), this step will give you access to the medical coverage. Everything depends on your contract. Please inquire at your company. These are the documents to provide (please take some photocopies):

- Registration document
- Certificate of residence,
- An official family composition document (Stato di famiglia) delivered by your town
- Demand for the choice of a Generalist or a Paediatrician that is connected to your residence town (list available at the ASL)
- Codice fiscale of each family member
- Certificate of payments of contributions to the Italian state by your employer.

NB: As mentioned above, JRC employees and European school detached teachers and personnel can adhere to the ASL and benefit from free medical coverage (however, without any choice of doctor and sometimes long waiting lists). They can also choose to only take advantage of the Private European coverage (depending of the contract).

To check to which zone your “*Distretto*” belongs, go to www.asl.varese.it . The head office in Varese can also provide this information by phone or by mail V. le Monte Rosa 28, 21100 VARESE Tel. 0332 235423, Email: urp@pec.asl.varese.it.

d. ID CARDS

If you are a resident, you can ask for an Italian ID card on presentation of your passport and 3 ID pictures. This ID card can make things easier in daily Italian life but is not usable outside of Italy.

e. FORMALITIES FOR CHILDREN BORN ON ITALIAN TERRITORY

- Birth declaration to do in the town of residence within the 3 days after birth, presenting the birth certificate given by the maternity;
- If you have a residence permit, go to the Police office (*questura*) to document it on one or both permits, but you need to have an ID picture of the baby with his eyes open... not easy!
- Demand for a Codice fiscale;
- If necessary : Subscription to the ASL;
- For each country: check what to do to register your child in the population of your country (for example: France: transcription of the certificate at the consulate of Milan within 3 months after birth, possible by letter)

f. POPULATIONS REGISTERS IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY

Inquire at the official embassy of your home country how to remain in the population registers (or not) of your home country.

Also, inquire about obtaining an official reference address in your home country, to sometimes facilitate administration if you don't have a residence any more in your home country.

2. ADMINISTRATION OF CARS

a. CAR ITSELF

After 6 months of residency in Italy, you have to matriculate your car in Italy (*targa*), you can only avoid this if you keep your principal residence in your home country. You can obtain information at the 'Ufficio Provinciale Motorizzazione Civile' that you can find in every head city of a Province.

Ufficio Provinciale Motorizzazione Civile E Trasp.

21100 Varese (VA) 8, Via Ca' Bassa tel:0332 345111 Fax 0332 335749

The procedure to follow is long. You can also ask agencies specializing in this matter (*pratiche automobilistiche*) or to dedicated driving schools (*autoscuola*), paying an amount for the procedure. In total you have to expect a price of around 1000€ to import your car.

The matriculation in Italy can be done with the presentation of next documents:

- certificate of residence
- certificate of original matriculation accompanied by an official and certificated translation in Italian
- certificate of conformity with an official and certificated translation in Italian
- Declaration of technical properties (to ask to the manufacturer) with an official and certificated translation in Italian
- Fiscal stamps

The vignette for property is called *Bollo*. This can be paid in the little "tabac shops" (*tabaccaio*), in the post offices, or at the l'Automobile Club d'Italia (ACI) in Varese or in Gallarate. It is an annual payment or can be split for some categories of vehicles and can only be done from the 1st day of the month after the expiry date: for example, if the expiry date is the 31 of August, you only pay from the 1st September on. Please watch out: they won't send you a reminder, it's your own responsibility. If you don't respect it, you may pay a late penalty. The expiration date is the date of the first registration of your vehicle.

On the website www.aci.it "servizi on-line" "calcola il bollo", by completing with the matriculate number of your car, you will be informed of the price of the tax and the date for payment.

NB : It's not mandatory anymore to put the "bollo" on the windscreen.

The importation of a car from another European country generally isn't a problem as the technical standards are the same. But if the car is coming from outside of Europe, it would be better to contact the department of road traffic (*Ufficio Provinciale Motorizzazione Civile*) to help you for the relocation of the car. Moreover, you will have to respect a delay before selling your car.

b. DRIVING LICENCE

Check your driver's licence before coming: is there an expiry date on it?

If not, try to exchange it in your home country against one with expiry date, it will avoid a lot of problems here!

So, if you have a driving licence issued by a country in the European Union and in the European format, this shouldn't be changed to an Italian driving licence, but this is only valid if you have an expiration date! To be sure (because rules are often changing in Italy, please check your driving licence at the circulation office of Varese (*UFFICIO PROVINCIALE DELLA MOTORIZZAZIONE CIVILE*)).

There you can also register your driving licence. This is not obligatory, however, in case of theft or loss of your driving license, they can easily deliver a duplicate. If you think you will avoid the Italian points system because you don't have it in your home country, you are wrong! If your traffic violations are going over 20 points during the first year, you won't have the right any more to drive in the Italian territory for 2 years. If you are above 20 points within the first 2 years you won't have the right to drive on Italian territory during 1 year, and if you have this score within 3 years, you will have 6 months of punishment.

- *Patentino*: for a couple of years, the minor drivers of motor cycles until 125CC have to have the "*Patentino*". This document can be obtained by passing a theoretical exam regarding the traffic rules. Courses can be followed at the driving schools, or at the school of your kids. Website: www.patentino.it

c. CAR INSURANCE

Regarding the car insurance, the civil responsibility is obligatory! The insurance vignette has to be put on the windshield. Car insurance in Italy is very expensive, especially the "all-in-one". You must have it (but not the all-in-one) when you have Italian plates.

d. THE TECHNICAL EXAMINATION AND THE EXHAUST GASSES CHECK

The revision of your car has to be done 4 years after the first matriculation and from then on every 2 years. This can be done in some authorised garages :

http://lombardia.paginegialle.it/lombardia/mi/revisioni_auto_officine_autorizzate.html

Please beware that you will not receive a notification, you have to remember by yourself. It's important to keep safely the papers/certificates received by the garage.

e. THE FUEL REDUCTION CARD (*CARTA SCONTO BENZINA*)

For a couple of years now, the region of Lombardy gives a discount on fuel prices in towns in the neighbourhood of Switzerland for cars matriculated in Italy. To get this advantage, you have to present your card of (*regionale servizi*) and the (*libretto di circolazione*) at your Municipio. Please note that all members of a same family can subscribe all cars of the family members resident on the same address on their personal card.

3. HEALTHCARE

There are 3 options:

- 1) You get become a member of the Italian health system ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale),

<http://www.asl.varese.it/distretti-socio-sanitari/1/servizi/30#main>

Check the part “Administration of persons” for more info.

- 2) You keep your home country national health insurance (mutuality), because you return to your home country a minimum of every 3 months. Therefore don't forget to ask at your mutuality for the “European card of Health Insurance”, also called **CEAM** (see website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559&langId=en>) that replaces E111 E110 and E128 forms. This card is yearly and you specifically have to ask for it. It stays valid as long as you stay at your health insurance. All medical costs are taken into charge in next countries : France, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Roumania, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Cyprus, Hungary, Estonia, Lettony, Lithuania, Poland, Malta, Slovenia, Slovakia and Tchech Republic.
- 3) If you are an internal employer of the JRC (not a grantholder) or detached from your government to the European school of Varese (no local contract), you are covered by JSIS (Joint Sickness and Insurance Scheme), the European Cassa Malattia. Please inquire at the Welcome desk or Club House or Secretary to have more details.

Moreover you can take an extra insurance that covers your costs when you have to be hospitalised. Of course at an additional cost (and there are 2 types of insurances), but it's really interesting. The link to the additional hospitalisation insurance especially for the European institutions employees is:

<https://www.eurprivileges.com/afiliatys/hospitalisation-insurance>

If you want to subscribe to this or one of the other advantages especially for the employees of the European Agencies, you can subscribe through this website:

<http://www.afiliatys.eu>

They ask only 5€ forever (so not every year, you pay just once and are a member forever).

4. URGENCIES

- One number for all emergencies: 112
- EMERGENZA SANITARIA Pronto soccorso (urgency): 112
Ospedale di circolo AZIENDA ASL della Provincia di Varese via O. Rossi, 9, Tel. 0332 277111 Ufficio relazioni con il pubblico (welcome desk), Tel. 0332 277500
- PUBBLICA SICUREZZA (public security) Polizia municipale (city police): 0332 283000 Polizia stradale (traffic police): 0332 251611
- PREVENZIONE (prevention) Telefono azzurro SOS per la prevenzione dell'abuso all'infanzia (prevention of violence against childs): 19696
- Guasti acqua (water damages): 0332 335035
- Gas: 0332 335035
- Luce (electricity, light): 800 023451 Luce pronto ENEL: 800 900102
- Telefono (telephone): 182



- Soccorso stradale ACI (breakdown assistance): 803116 Soccorso stradale EUROP: 803803

5. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

a. MOBILE PHONES

The main companies are:

TIM – Vodafone - Wind - Tre

The majority of people choose a plan where they have to pay a certain amount for x numbers of minutes to call, internet GB and a number of sms.

You can recharge that amount every month by buying prepaid cards in the supermarkets or bar tabacchi.

Depending in which town you are living, one company can be more interesting than another (because some of them don't have good service everywhere).

b. FIX TELEPHONE LINE

Telecom Italia is the most common one, but also inquire at: Infostrada and Eolo (satellite), for example.

c. INTERNET: ADSL, CABLE, SATELLITE

Various solutions exist from USB key connections to radio transmissions. The best option depends on where you are located. It is always better to ask your neighbours what they use and their level of satisfaction.

Please keep in mind that generally your speed will be around 4Mb, and your upload under 1Mb-for example, Telecom Italia, Infostrada, fastweb, Eolo (satellite).

Please keep in mind that, in general, no after service is very cooperative. You will have long waiting times everywhere.

Only in a part of the city of Varese can you have high speed internet through the cable (fibra ottica).

d. TV

If you have normal Italian TV through the antenna, you will have more than 200 channels, and a few even have transmission in English and Italian (there is an annual TV tax that everybody receives for this).

You can also choose a contract with Sky and install a satellite on your roof.

And then depending on from which country you are, you can put a satellite dish and a decoder (usually bought in your own country), but there are some internet solutions too. Please inquire with people from your nationality.

6. INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take fire and theft insurance for your house/apartment. As this is an area with many expats, theft does sometimes happen. Always secure your house when you are away.

D. EVERYDAY

1. TRANSPORTS: MOVING IN THE AREA

a. PRIVATE CAR

This is without doubt the easiest way to move in Italy. A car is your freedom, but expect that little car scratches are part of everyday life here.

b. CAR SHARING

The car sharing system 'e vai' that started two years ago in Milan has spread throughout Lombardia and is now available in Varese (12 stations!), Malpensa, Linate Travedona Monate and Laveno! Like its big brother 'Cambio' in Belgium and Germany, the system is rather simple: you need a car? Enroll, book, and use the car. You pay only the effective use/time and kilometres. A perfect new car whenever you need it without additional costs for taxes, insurances, repairs etc. Quite tempting, isn't it? More info: <https://www.e-vai.com/web/evai/home>

c. CARPOOLING

www.blablacar.it
www.autostradecarpooling.it

d. PUBLIC BUSES

Good connections for moving around in the area. CTPI – Consorzio Trasporti Pubblici Insubria. <http://www.ctpi.it/>
 For the line between Varese and Laveno it is bus nr N20.
 You need to buy your tickets in nearby bars, pasticcerie, tabacchi...

e. TRAINS

www.muoversi.regione.lombardia.it/planner

to Milan	good connections from Varese, Gavirate, Besozzo, Sesto Calende, Laveno www.trenitalia.com
to Malpensa Aeroporto	The regular train from Bellinzona stops at Laveno Mombello, Besozzo, Travedona. You can buy the ticket on board, it is around 7 € but much cheaper if you buy it before. Not in Besozzo, the station is closed. You have to buy the ticket in the 'Tabaccaio' next to it. Tickets can be purchased in advance. To check the timetable go to Trenitalia and select the option <i>tutti i treni</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TILO – A swiss train which stops in Laveno Mombello (<i>ferrovie dello stato</i> station), Besozzo and Travedona Monate and goes directly to Malpensa airport www.tilo.ch • www.muoversi.regione.lombardia.it – a useful link to easily find train, metro and bus connection in the Lombardy area
to Switzerland, France, Germany	Many fast international trains stops in Stresa.
From Switzeland Ticino -	http://www.tilo.ch

How to get from Ispra to Milan Malpensa airport:

With a private car you can park at one of the many cheap parkings in the neighbourhood, best is to book your parking in advance: http://www.myparking.it/parcheggio_aeroporto_malpensa.php

If you do not have a private car, you can reach Malpensa airport by taxi, or by public transportation using one of the following options:

- From Autolinee Varesine bus stop in Ispra (Agip petrol station) take a bus to Sesto Calende and then a train to Milan. You can reach Malpensa Airport from the Milan Central Station with the Malpensa Shuttle service (bus) or Malpensa Express (train).
- From Autolinee Varesine bus stop in Ispra (Agip petrol station) take a bus to Besozzo rail station and then a train to Gallarate (direction Milano). Outside Gallarate railway station you can take a bus (S.A.C.O) to Malpensa Airport (you can buy tickets on board).

- From Besozzo or Travedona train station, you can take a TILO train (Treni Regionali Ticino Lombardia) directly to Milan Malpensa Airport.

For information on the **Malpensa shuttle services**, visit:

www.malpensashuttle.it

www.malpensaexpress.it

f. PLANE

- Milan airports: Milano Malpensa and Milano Linate

The first one is the closest one to the Varese area.

www.sea-aeroportoimilano.it/it

- Bergamo airport : Orio al Serio airport

You can take the Orio Shuttle from the Central Train Station in Milan.

For information on tickets and timetables, see the website:

www.orioshuttle.com

g. FERRIES

Boat and Ferry-boat: crossing the lakes: www.navigazionealaghi.it

You can use the ferries from Angera, Ranco, Eremo di Santa Catarina in Leggiano and Ispra to go to Arona, Stresa, the Borromeo islands, as well as many other places around the Lago Maggiore. The boats are more frequent during the summer.

There is also a car ferry from Laveno to Intra.

h. BICYCLES

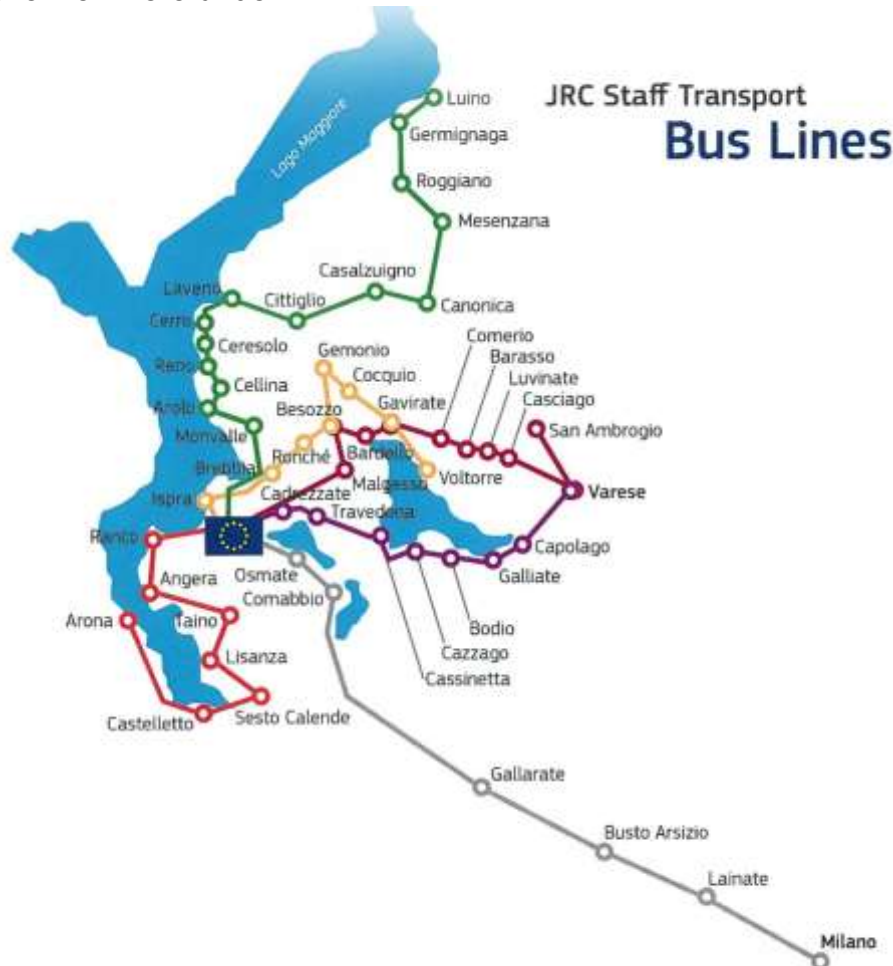
In Italy it is rare that you can find bicycle lanes. Cars don't pay much attention to them on the road. The line between Varese and Gavirate (northern part of the lake of Varese) is very dangerous and every year there are some deaths on that road.

But it can be very nice to go with your mountain bike into Campo dei Fiori (natural park) and preferably with a helmet!

i. JRC BUS SERVICE

The JRC has a bus service for its staff, which they can use free of charge for home-work related transport.

Most of the towns in the area are covered by this service. Information on the lines and the timetables are available on Ispranet under “Transport”. But please find an overview here under.



j. EUROPEAN SCHOOLBUS

Please inquire at the European school which are the lines and costs.

2. POST, BANK: HOURS, PROPOSED SERVICES

Bank account

It is not mandatory to open an Italian bank account, but you may wish to have one. To open a bank or post office account, you need the Codice Fiscale and a copy of your passport or Identity Card.

The Italian Bank BNL has an office at the entrance building to JRC Ispra, without any obligation.

You can also set up a free account (but generally with limited services) or on the internet (for ex. Post) or by looking good in an Italian bank.

3. HOUSE HELP

The best recipe for this is the mouth-to-mouth talking, and the gha-mailinglist.

4. SHOPPING

Open-air markets:

Where?	When?
Arona	Tuesday morning
Laveno	Tuesday morning
Luino	Wednesday morning (the second largest open air market in Europe)
Sesto Calende	Wednesday morning
Angera	Thursday morning
Besozzo	Thursday morning
Gavirate	Friday morning
Intra	Saturday
Varese	Monday, Thursday, Saturday all day long, on Friday morning in front of soccer stadion>little market with only local products

5. FOOD

There are plenty of supermarkets in the region: Coop, Esselungha, Tigros, Familia, Iper, Penny market...

6. SIGHTSEEING

- Please go regularly to the tourist office of Varese - Informazione e Accoglienza Turistica
Via Romagnosi, 9 - Tel +39.0332.28.19.13 and 28.60.56 - Fax +39.0332.23.78.44
Site web: www.varesecittagiardino.it Email: iatvaresecitta@provincia.va.it
Or : Agenzia del turismo della provincia
Viale ippodromo Tél. 0332.252.071
Site: www.vareselandoftourism.it Email: agenziaturismova@gmail.com
- Please subscribe to the newsletter of Attività Promozione del Territorio
Tel. +39 0332 255.432 - Fax +39 0332 255.336 – Via Sacco n. 5
21100 Varese - www.comune.varese.it - www.varesecittagiardino.it
For newsletter, please send a mail to: promozione.territorio@comune.varese.it asking *‘Potrei ricevere la newsletter settimanale sulle attività a Varese per favore?’*
- **FAI** (www.fondoambiente.it) Fondo Ambiente Italiano, usually referred to in English as the Italian National Trust. Lombardia is the region in Italy where the FAI has most properties. If you take an abonnement, the tariffs are not exaggerated especially for families. Moreover, you are helping keep history alive. After 2 or 3 visits it's practical to have the card as you can freely enter important monuments throughout Italy.
<http://ricordiamocidisalvarelitalia.it/iscriviti-al-fai>

- Lago Maggiore – where to go?
 - ✓ Rocca di Angera: panorama, dolls' museum
 - ✓ Isole Borromee (Isola Bella, Isola Madre, Isola dei Pescatori)
 - ✓ Santa Caterina del Sasso: monastery – fantastic view on the lake – beautiful scenery
 - ✓ Verbania – Pallanza: Saturday market, Verbania – Intra: Villa Tarranto (botanic garden)
 - ✓ Ascona e Locarno: festivals
 - ✓ Sesto Calende: Parco del Ticino
 - ✓ Very useful guides: *Always Sunday and At Home:*
www.lagomaggioretop.com/en/engels/travel-guides/information.html

- Surroundings:
 - ✓ Lago d'Orta,
 - ✓ Varese (Villa Panza and garden, Sacro Monte),
 - ✓ Como and its lakeside,
 - ✓ Lugano and lake,
 - ✓ Milan: always interesting
 - ✓ Turin: most underrated

- Family trips:
 - ✓ Cento Valli (Locarno): railway combined with a boat trip from Angera to Locarno;
 - ✓ Mottarone: giardino botanico Alpina, skiing, Alpyland, summer bobsleigh track
 - ✓ Baveno: Adventure Park,
 - ✓ Campo dei Fiori (Varese) Regional Park;
 - ✓ Stresa: Parco di Villa Pallavicino;
 - ✓ Malpensa: Volandia – aeronautic museum – reduction for FAI members; bike hiring for enjoying the very close Parco Ticino;
 - ✓ Ranco and Castelletto: Musei di Trasporto;
 - ✓ Oleggio (NO): Safari Park (halfway from Arona to Novara);
 - ✓ Casale Litta di Bernate
 - ✓ Cascina Pasque!: didactic farm with playgrounds and restaurant

- Cycling:
 - ✓ around Lago di Varese (28 km): starting from Biandronno;
 - ✓ around Lago di Comabbio (10 km): starting from Comabbio or Ternate.

7. USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES AND INTERNET ADDRESSES

All emergencies – numero unico emergenze	112
Police – Polizia di Stato	113
Fire brigade – Vigili del Fuoco	115
HOSPITALS	
Hospital in Angera	0331-961111; Pronto Soccorso Tel. 0331 961249
Hospital in Cittiglio	0332-607111
Hospital in Luino	0332-539111
Hospital in Varese www.ospedativarese.net/prontosoccorso	Ospedale di Circolo e Fondazione Macchi - Varese - Tel. 0332 278111
Hospital in Busto Arsizio	0331-699111
Niguarda Hospital in Milan – Niguarda: centro antiveleni: www.ospedaleniguarda.it/struttura/centro-aniveleni	02-64447053

**GUARDIA MEDICA – DURING WEEKENDS
AND HOLIDAYS, DURING THE NIGHT
(FROM 20:00 TO 08:00)**

Luino	0332-535553
Cittiglio & Gavirate	0332-603000
Varese	0332-831073
Sesto Calende, Angera, Travedona Monate & Ispra	0331-960260

Some hints for children emergencies:

- ✓ The small hospitals around here do not have all specialists on site on weekends or holidays but rather will have somebody on-call. This is the case, for example, for paediatricians.
- ✓ If your child has a high fever and you do not know where to go, call the nearest hospital ask for the paediatrics department and then ask for advice. They will usually give you basic advice i.e. what medicine to use and tell you if the paediatrician is in and until when so that you know where to go to.
- ✓ The only 24 h emergency unit for paediatrics are at the hospital of Gallarate and Varese at Ospedale F. Del Ponte <http://www.ospedalivarese.net/ospedali/delponte-varese/>
- ✓ Should that not work or in case you would like to have your child seen immediately, go directly to the nearest ER (*pronto soccorso*) near your place of residency.

Interesting sites, brochures and books

- www.go-for-it.weebly.com
- JRC living in Ispra brochure pdf available on: www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/downloads/jrc_living_in_ispra.pdf
- Books “Always Sunday” and “Varese at home” from Liesbeth Paardekooper, available in English, Italian and Dutch. A good book to get to know very nice places in the region, even with kids! Look on facebook at the groupe “Varese at home” to find how to get it
- Cap sur Varèse guide in french – varesefrancofolie@yahoo.fr
- (EN-IT-FR-DE-SP-RU-Chinese) www.vareselandoftourism.it
- (EN - IT) www.vareseturismo.it
- (IT) www.vareseturismo.altervista.org
- (IT) www.lagomaggiore.net
- (IT) www.lagodicomo.com

And don't forget: the JRC-Welcome Desk is here to help JRC employees.

The Welcome Desk is your first point of contact and a great information source at JRC Ispra. The Welcome Desk can help you with various procedures such as:

- opening a bank account
- registering as a resident
- signing up with the Italian health system (for grantholders)

The Welcome Desk can also provide guidance to your family members in obtaining the official documents they will need in Italy.

JRC Ispra - Welcome Desk

Via Enrico Fermi 2749 I - 21027 Ispra (VA) Italia Tel. +39 0332 78 6464

e-mail: jrc-welcomedesk@ec.europa.eu

Please call/write if you wish to have an appointment for specific issues/consultations.