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Italy weighs a tax credit for bars that buy draft beer

The proposal in the 2027 budget would offer €5 per hectoliter, capped at €500 a venue, subject to parliamentary approval

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Italy is considering a tax credit aimed at encouraging bars and restaurants to buy more draft beer, under a proposal attached to amendments to the country’s 2027 budget bill.

Beverfood, an Italian trade publication, reported on Monday, November 23, that the measure was presented by the party Forza Italia and signed by lawmaker Raffaele Nevi. The proposal would give qualifying hospitality businesses a tax credit of €5 for every hectoliter of beer bought in kegs during 2027, with a ceiling of €500 a year for each establishment.

The measure would apply to bars, restaurants and other venues that have draft systems and serve beer on tap. At the proposed rate, the maximum credit would be reached at purchases of 100 hectoliters, or 10,000 liters, of beer. The plan sets aside a total of €5 million for the program.

The proposal is designed as a tax benefit for operators rather than a direct discount for consumers. In practice, it would partially offset purchasing costs for venues that buy keg beer for on-premise service. Businesses that operate more than one location could benefit separately for each site, provided each venue has its own draft system and meets the eligibility rules described in the amendment.

If total claims go beyond the funds available, the credit could be reduced on a proportional basis. That means the full amount would not be guaranteed if demand exceeded the program’s budget.

The proposal comes as Italian bars and restaurants continue to face pressure from operating costs and close scrutiny of margins. Draft beer is an important sales channel for the hospitality trade, and the measure appears aimed at supporting that part of the market rather than retail sales in bottles or cans. For brewers, distributors and logistics providers, any incentive that helps venues maintain keg purchases could provide support to a segment that depends heavily on restaurants, pubs and bars.

The draft beer channel also carries wider significance for Italy’s brewing industry. Beverfood said the proposal is meant to strengthen links between the production chain and the Horeca market, the industry term for hotels, restaurants and catering. A targeted incentive for keg purchases could modestly reduce procurement costs for operators while helping sustain order flow through wholesalers and delivery networks tied to on-premise consumption.

According to estimates cited by Assobirra, the Italian beer supply chain generates about €10 billion in added value and supports roughly 100,000 jobs. The industry group has previously backed measures to encourage keg beer and returnable packaging, including on sustainability grounds.

Still, the proposal is not yet law. The tax credit would have to survive the parliamentary process for amendments to the 2027 budget package and then be included in the final Budget Law. Its fate will depend on government decisions, negotiations over spending priorities and the availability of financial coverage in a budget process that typically attracts many competing proposals.

That leaves several practical questions unresolved, including the final wording of the measure, how businesses would apply, what documentation they would need to present for keg purchases, and whether any additional limits or compliance conditions would be added before final approval. Until the budget text is completed, bars and restaurants cannot rely on the credit as an active benefit.

Even so, the proposal signals that Italian lawmakers are looking at draft beer as a category that may warrant specific support. In a market where on-premise sales remain central for many beer brands, a relatively small tax credit could matter less for headline consumer prices than for the economics of venue operators deciding how much keg beer to stock and serve.