

**bureau69** architects

# ITALIAN / ENGLISH PROPERTY GLOSSARY

## Italian-English property glossary for foreign buyers in Sicily

A practical bilingual reference for property search, due diligence, purchase, renovation, permits, contracts, taxes and rentals.

*Prepared as a client resource by Bureau69 Architects*

### **A note from Max Strano**

This glossary is designed to help foreign buyers understand the professional language used during the search, purchase, renovation and management of property in Sicily. It is not written as a legal or tax substitute. It is written as a practical guide: clear enough to support better questions, better decisions, and more confident conversations with the right professionals.

**Max Strano**  
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## GUIDE NOTE

# How to use this glossary

This glossary groups the most useful Italian property and construction terms into practical sections. For each term you will find the original Italian expression, the closest professional English equivalent, a practical explanation, and a short note on why it matters in real decisions.

- the original term in Italian,
- the closest professional English equivalent,
- a plain-English explanation, and
- a short note on why the term matters in real decisions.

The aim is not literal translation. The aim is practical understanding. Many Italian property terms have no perfect one-word English equivalent, so this glossary is written as a professional bridge rather than a word-for-word dictionary.

***Important note: procedures, taxes, incentives and administrative routes depend on the specific property, municipality, technical facts and personal tax position. This glossary should be used as a decision-support tool, not as a substitute for case-specific professional advice.***

## OVERVIEW

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## SECTION 1

# Property search, market and agents

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Agenzia immobiliare</b>	Estate agency / real estate agency	A business that markets properties and introduces buyer and seller.	Foreign buyers often assume the agency also verifies everything technically; in reality, technical due diligence remains separate.
<b>Agente immobiliare</b>	Estate agent / real estate agent	The licensed intermediary handling viewings, negotiation support and introductions.	Useful for market access, but not a substitute for legal, tax or technical verification.
<b>Annuncio immobiliare</b>	Property listing	The published advertisement or sales listing for a property.	A listing is a sales document, not technical proof of legality, condition or feasibility.
<b>Mandato</b>	Agency mandate / sales mandate	The agreement under which an agency markets a property.	Helpful for understanding who represents whom and whether the agent acts exclusively.
<b>Esclusiva</b>	Exclusive listing	A sales mandate giving one agency exclusive marketing rights.	Important because it may affect how negotiations are handled and who receives commission.
<b>Provvigione</b>	Agency commission / brokerage fee	The fee due to the agent when the transaction is concluded under the applicable terms.	Foreign buyers should understand clearly who pays, how much, and when it becomes due.
<b>Richiesta economica</b>	Asking price	The price requested by the seller in the listing or negotiation.	It is only a starting point; it says nothing about technical quality, legality or future cost.
<b>Trattativa</b>	Negotiation	The negotiation stage between buyer and seller.	The strongest negotiations are based on written evidence, not

			only on emotion or urgency.
<b>Visita immobile</b>	Property viewing	The visit to inspect the property in person.	A viewing is essential, but visual impression must be separated from technical feasibility.

## SECTION 2

# Ownership, title and due diligence documents

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Visura catastale</b>	Cadastral extract	A cadastral record showing identifiers, category and other fiscal data.	Useful for identification and taxation, but not proof of planning legality.
<b>Planimetria catastale</b>	Cadastral plan	The cadastral drawing associated with the property unit.	Helpful for identification, but it does not by itself prove legitimate status.
<b>Foglio / particella / subalterno</b>	Sheet / parcel / sub-unit identifier	The cadastral references used to identify land and units.	These references must match the property actually being sold.
<b>Titolo di provenienza</b>	Title deed / source of title	The legal instrument through which the current owner acquired the property.	Important for reconstructing ownership and legal transfer history.
<b>Atto di compravendita</b>	Sale deed / deed of sale	The formal deed transferring ownership from seller to buyer.	This is central to the legal track and is typically handled by the notary.
<b>Stato legittimo</b>	Legitimate status	The legally provable authorised state of the property based on building/planning documentation.	This is one of the most important concepts for foreign buyers because renovation and permit strategy depend on it.
<b>Accesso agli atti</b>	Access to records / municipal records request	The formal request to inspect and obtain administrative records from the	Used to reconstruct permit history and clarify what was

		municipality.	actually authorised.
<b>Conformità urbanistica</b>	Planning compliance	Consistency between the actual property and the authorised planning/building documents.	A key due-diligence check before any serious commitment.
<b>Conformità catastale</b>	Cadastral conformity	Consistency between the actual property and cadastral records.	Useful, but it should not be confused with planning legality.
<b>Vincoli</b>	Constraints / protections	Landscape, heritage, hydrogeological, coastal or other rules affecting what can be done.	They do not automatically mean “no”, but they do affect scope, timing and approvals.
<b>Servitù</b>	Easement	A legal right affecting the use of a property, such as a right of way.	Essential when checking access, infrastructure and land feasibility.
<b>Diritto di passaggio</b>	Right of way	The right to cross a property to access another one.	Critical for rural properties and building plots.

### SECTION 3

## Legal, notarial and transaction process

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Notaio</b>	Notary	The public professional who formalises the deed and handles the legal transfer process.	The notary is central to transfer, but does not replace technical due diligence.
<b>Proposta d'acquisto</b>	Offer to purchase	The written purchase offer made by the buyer, often with conditions and timing.	Its legal and practical implications should be understood before signing or paying money.
<b>Caparra</b>	Deposit / earnest money	A payment made in connection with an offer or preliminary agreement.	Foreign buyers should understand exactly when it is due and under what conditions

			it is refundable or binding.
<b>Caparra confirmatoria</b>	Confirmatory deposit	A contractual deposit with specific legal consequences if one party defaults.	Important because it can change the risk profile of the negotiation.
<b>Preliminare di vendita / compromesso</b>	Preliminary sale agreement / pre-contract	The agreement that binds the parties before the final deed.	A major legal step; do not treat it as informal paperwork.
<b>Rogito</b>	Final deed / deed signing	The final notarial act transferring ownership.	This is the closing stage, not the moment to discover technical surprises.
<b>Parte venditrice</b>	Seller / vendor	The owner or party selling the property.	Important in the legal and negotiation context.
<b>Parte acquirente</b>	Buyer / purchaser	The person or entity acquiring the property.	Foreign buyers should ensure ownership structure and names are correct from the start.
<b>Trascrizione</b>	Registration / transcription	The formal registration of the deed in the public registers.	This gives legal effect and publicity to the transfer.
<b>Ispezione ipotecaria</b>	Mortgage / title search	A search of registered charges, mortgages or encumbrances.	An essential legal check before completion.
<b>Atto soggetto a condizione</b>	Conditional agreement	An agreement made subject to specific conditions.	Useful when due diligence must still be completed before full commitment.

## SECTION 4

# Finance, tax and incentives

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Mutuo</b>	Mortgage	A bank loan secured against the property.	Important for timeline, underwriting and conditions

			precedent.
<b>Delibera mutuo</b>	Mortgage approval	The lender's approval decision for the mortgage.	Buyers should understand timing and conditions before relying on bank funding.
<b>Perizia bancaria</b>	Bank valuation / lender valuation	The valuation commissioned by the lender.	This is for lending purposes and is not the same as technical due diligence.
<b>Imposta di registro</b>	Registration tax	A transaction tax applied under the relevant purchase regime.	Foreign buyers should obtain tax advice on which regime applies to them.
<b>Imposta ipotecaria</b>	Mortgage tax	A tax linked to registration in the property registers.	Part of the acquisition-cost framework.
<b>Imposta catastale</b>	Cadastral tax	A tax linked to the cadastral registration side of the transaction.	Another acquisition cost that should be budgeted properly.
<b>IMU</b>	Municipal property tax	The main municipal property tax applicable in relevant cases.	Owners should understand whether and when it applies to their use case.
<b>TARI</b>	Waste tax	The municipal waste charge.	Operational cost to understand, especially for second homes and rentals.
<b>Agevolazioni</b>	Tax reliefs / incentives	Benefits or relief regimes that may reduce costs where conditions are met.	Never assume eligibility; verify in writing for the specific case.
<b>Bonus Ristrutturazione</b>	Renovation tax incentive	A tax-relief framework associated with qualifying renovation works.	Attractive, but documentation and eligibility are crucial.
<b>Ecobonus</b>	Energy-efficiency incentive	An incentive regime tied to qualifying energy-performance improvements.	Useful only when confirmed in writing and integrated correctly into the project.

## SECTION 5

# Planning, urban rules and building titles

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Piano Regolatore</b>	Zoning plan	The planning rules that define what can generally be built or changed in an area.	Essential for land and development feasibility.
<b>Destinazione d'uso</b>	Use class / intended use	The legally relevant use category of the property.	Changes of use can affect permits, feasibility and taxation.
<b>Indice edificatorio</b>	Buildability index / development index	The planning parameter governing how much can be built on land.	A core concept when assessing land or rebuilding potential.
<b>Distanze e arretramenti</b>	Setbacks and required distances	The planning distances from boundaries, roads or neighbouring properties.	Critical for design feasibility and buildable volume.
<b>CILA</b>	CILA (works notice procedure)	A building procedure commonly used for certain contained works, depending on scope and context.	Foreign buyers should understand it as one possible administrative route, not as a generic label for any renovation.
<b>SCIA</b>	SCIA (certified start notice)	A broader declaration-based building procedure used where legally applicable.	The route depends on scope, constraints and legitimate status.
<b>Permesso di Costruire</b>	Building permit	The formal permit typically used for major works, new builds or substantial transformations.	One of the most important titles for serious interventions.
<b>Autorizzazione paesaggistica</b>	Landscape authorisation	The prior approval required in relevant protected landscape contexts.	A decisive issue in many Sicilian locations, especially visible external works.
<b>Vincolo paesaggistico</b>	Landscape constraint / landscape protection	A protected planning landscape context under the relevant framework.	Does not automatically block a project, but changes scope and approval strategy.
<b>Abuso edilizio</b>	Unauthorised building work	Works carried out without the required title	A major due-diligence issue that

	/ planning irregularity	or in conflict with it.	can affect purchase, permits and cost.
<b>Sanatoria</b>	Regularisation / amnesty route where legally available	A route to regularise certain irregularities where the law permits it.	Never assume it is possible; this must be verified case by case.

## SECTION 6

# Design, renovation and construction process

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Progetto di fattibilità</b>	Feasibility study / feasibility design	The early technical and strategic stage used to test whether the project makes sense.	Often the most valuable stage for foreign buyers because it reduces expensive mistakes.
<b>Progettazione preliminare / concept design</b>	Concept design	The phase where the design direction and spatial strategy are defined.	This should follow feasibility, not replace it.
<b>Progettazione esecutiva</b>	Detailed / executive design	The advanced design phase used for tendering and construction.	Important because clarity here affects cost control and quality.
<b>Computo metrico</b>	Bill of quantities / quantity survey	The measured list of work items and quantities.	A key tool for comparable pricing and contract clarity.
<b>Capitolato</b>	Specification	The written technical description of materials, standards and scope.	Critical for avoiding ambiguous quotes and low-quality substitutions.
<b>Impresa</b>	Contractor / building company	The company executing the works.	Good contractor selection depends on scope clarity, not only on price.
<b>Contratto di appalto</b>	Building contract / works contract	The contract governing execution of the works.	This should clearly define scope, payment logic and change-control rules.
<b>SAL (Stato</b>	Progress valuation / progress	The recorded progress stage used for	Useful for linking payments to

<b>Avanzamento Lavori)</b>	certificate	payments or reporting.	verified progress.
<b>Variante</b>	Variation / change order	A change to the agreed scope during the project.	Variations should always be priced and approved in writing before execution.
<b>Direzione Lavori</b>	Site supervision / contract administration	The professional role supervising execution and conformity during construction.	One of the most important protection tools for overseas clients.
<b>Collaudo / verifiche finali</b>	Final testing / close-out verification	The checking phase at or near completion.	Helps ensure that completion is not only visual but also technically documented.

## SECTION 7

# Professionals and roles

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Architetto</b>	Architect	The professional coordinating design, feasibility, permit logic and often wider project leadership.	For foreign buyers, the architect often becomes the key technical reference point.
<b>Ingegnere strutturale</b>	Structural engineer	The engineer responsible for structural design and structural checks where required.	Essential in seismic contexts and major interventions.
<b>Geometra</b>	Surveyor / building survey technician	A technical professional often involved in measurements, cadastral tasks and practical site matters.	Useful in the technical team, but role and responsibility depend on scope.
<b>Consulente fiscale / commercialista</b>	Tax adviser / accountant	The adviser dealing with tax position, ownership structure and applicable tax treatment.	Foreign buyers should involve this adviser early on relevant tax matters.
<b>Avvocato</b>	Lawyer	The legal adviser acting where legal support is needed beyond the notarial process.	Useful in more complex or contentious situations.

<b>Responsabile della sicurezza / coordinatore</b>	Safety coordinator	The professional handling site-safety coordination where required.	Important because safety is a real legal and operational system, not a formality.
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## SECTION 8

# Holiday rental and investment terms

Use this section when you want to understand the most common terms used in this part of the process.

Italian term	English equivalent	What it means	Why it matters
<b>Locazione breve</b>	Short-term rental / short let	A short-duration letting structure governed by the applicable national framework.	Foreign buyers should verify current rules before relying on this income model.
<b>Casa vacanze / holiday rental</b>	Holiday rental / tourist accommodation	A property used for guest accommodation on a short-stay basis.	Operational logic matters as much as purchase logic.
<b>CIN</b>	National identification code	The identification code required in the current national framework for relevant hospitality/short-let use cases.	A current compliance point that should be verified before launch.
<b>Allaggiati Web</b>	Guest reporting portal	The police guest-reporting system used in the applicable cases.	Operational compliance matters for foreign owners and managers.
<b>Tassa di soggiorno</b>	Tourist tax / accommodation tax	A local tax charged by certain municipalities on overnight stays in tourist accommodation. The amount, exemptions, payment method and reporting rules depend on the municipality.	For foreign buyers planning holiday rentals in Sicily, this is an operational and compliance issue to verify early.
<b>PayTourist</b>	PayTourist (digital compliance and tourist-tax management platform)	A digital platform used by many Italian municipalities to manage tourism-related obligations such as tourist-tax reporting and payment, accommodation compliance workflows, and in some cases integration with guest-reporting, statistical reporting	Whether it is used depends on the municipality.

		and local tourism administration processes.	
<b>Turistat</b>	Sicily tourism reporting platform	The web-based platform used by the Regione Siciliana / Osservatorio Turistico for the collection and processing of tourist-movement data relating to accommodation structures in Sicily.	It is part of the regional reporting and tourism-monitoring system and is relevant for operators who need to manage hospitality reporting obligations in Sicily.
<b>Rendimento</b>	Yield / return	The income performance of the property as an investment.	Projected yield should never be separated from compliance, maintenance and management reality.

## CLOSING

### Final note

For foreign buyers, confidence rarely comes from knowing every Italian word. It comes from understanding the structure of the process, asking better questions, and working with professionals who can translate local complexity into clear decisions.

If you would like help applying these terms to a real property or project in Sicily, Bureau69 Architects can support you with feasibility, due diligence, design strategy, permits, and project management.

**Need clarity on a real property in Sicily?**

Send a **WhatsApp message to +39 347 128 9727** or visit [bureau69.com/contact](https://bureau69.com/contact) for a first conversation.