



General Information



Population

58 986 023 (World Bank 2024)

58 971 230 (STAT IT 2024)



Immigration

439 658 (STAT IT 2023)



Emigration

3 258 831 (UN Emigration
Stock 2020)

158 438 (STAT IT 2023)



Working-age population

37 446 049 (World Bank 2024)

37 428 227 (STAT IT 2024)



Unemployment rate

7.6 % (World Bank 2023)

5.7 % (STAT IT 2024)



GDP

2 372 774 547 793.1 current
prices USD (World Bank 2024)

1 946 479 100 000 current
prices EUR (STAT IT 2022)



Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

312 849 (UNHCR 2024)

Asylum Seekers

207 278 (UNHCR 2024)

56 388 (STAT IT 2021)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2024)

5 (STAT IT 2023)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Years of Residency

6-10 (GLOBALCIT 2024)



Territory

301 340 km² (CIA World
Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Interior

Line Ministries

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Labour and Social Policies

Agencies

Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration

Directorate for Immigration and Asylum Policies

The Register of Italians Residing Abroad (A.I.R.E.)

Directorate for Immigration and integration policies

National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI)

Key Policy Documents

[Decree Law 286/1998](#), Consolidated text of provisions concerning immigration regulations and norms on the status of foreigners

[Decree 189/2002](#), Amendment to immigration and asylum law

[Decree Law 140/2005](#), transposition of EU Directive 2003/9

[Decree Law 251/2007](#), transposition of EU Directive 2004/83

[Decree Law 25/2008](#), transposition of EU Directive 2005/8

[Decree Law 24/2014](#), transposition of EU Directive 2011/36

[Decree Law 142/2015](#), implementing the EU Directive 2013/33 and 2013/32

[Decree Law 46/2017](#), provisions for the acceleration of international protection proceedings, as well as for the fight against illegal immigration

[Decree Law 113/2018](#), Urgent provisions on international protection, immigration and public security

[Decree Law 77/2020](#), Urgent measures on health, labour and economic support, and social policies related to the epidemiological emergency from COVID-19

[Decree Law 130/2020](#), Urgent provisions on immigration, international and complementary protection

Italy is a long-standing country of emigration, while immigration has become a demographically significant phenomenon only in the early years of the 21st century. In 2006, the share of the foreign population in Italy exceeded 5%. Since then, the growth has slowed down, and the number of resident foreigners has remained virtually unchanged since 2013.

The Italian population, of about 60 million in 2022, is increasingly older, less fertile and characterized by a new phase of emigration, and thus declining. In 2022, approximately 160,000 people left Italy, of these only 25% were foreigners. Over the past 15 years, the stock of Italians living abroad has increased by over 82%, from around 3 million in 2006 to more than 5.6 million in 2020, representing 9.5% of the total population. Most of them live in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, Germany and France, or America, with United States, Argentina and Brazil as key destinations. They are mainly young and highly educated.

As of January 2021, the total foreign resident population in Italy was 5.1 million. Including irregular migrants and naturalized persons, an estimated 6.3 million foreigners lived in Italy in mid-2020, corresponding to some 10% of the total population. The largest community comes from Romania, representing 16% of foreign residents. Non-EU nationals, including the UK ones, account for 70% of the total share, with the most populous groups coming from Albania, Morocco, China, Ukraine and India. In 2020, over 54% of foreigners residing in Italy were women. Many female migrants, predominantly employed as domestic workers, originate from Romania, Albania and Ukraine. Meanwhile, irregular migrants arriving from Africa and Asia are mostly men. Longer-standing communities, such as Albanian, Moroccan and Chinese, are more gender-balanced due to reunifications and family migration. Over 58% of immigrants live in the Northern Italian regions, especially Lombardy, followed by the Southern regions of Lazio and Emilia Romagna.

Located at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea and bordering the Balkans region, Italy is a natural entry point to Europe from different routes. Thousands of asylum seekers and irregular migrants from Africa and Asia land on Italian shores or are rescued in the Sicily Channel every year. In 2021, 67,477 persons disembarked in Italy, almost doubling the number of arrivals of 2020. They come mainly from Tunisia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sudan and Eritrea, and about 15% of them are unaccompanied minors. Most irregular migrants arriving in Italy are transiting to other European countries, such as France, Switzerland and Germany. In 2021, the number of third country nationals found to be illegally present on Italian territory was 24,985, of these 11,095 were ordered to leave. In 2020, 2,815 persons were returned from Italy to their country of origin.

As of June 2021, Italy hosted 134,500 refugees and 53,686 asylum seekers. Most of them come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tunisia. In the course of 2021, 56,000 people applied for asylum in Italy and nearly 53,000 applications were processed, with 29,673 decisions made on initial applications. The number of negative decisions decreased from 75% in 2020 to 56% in 2021. Meanwhile, the share of those who received refugee status or subsidiary protection grew exceeding 16,000 people in 2021. Also, the positive response of the Commissions for granting special protection for humanitarian reasons increased significantly reaching 6,000 people. Since 2019, over 2,000 people of concern have been relocated to Italy and France from Jordan, Lebanon, Niger, and Ethiopia via the Humanitarian Corridors programme.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 and until mid-August, 158,800 displaced people from Ukraine have entered Italy, including 110,429 adults and 46,310 minors. Of these, about 150,803 applied for temporary protection.

At the end of 2020, a total of 247,526 new residents were registered in Italy. Of these, about 54% have citizenship in other European countries and 22% are Italians. As of January 2021, there were 3.3 million active residence permits of non-EU citizens. About two thirds of all permits are long-term, allowing people to stay for more than two years, and have been issued mainly for family-related and work reasons. After the decline in flows in 2020, Italy registered an upswing in the granting of new residence permits in 2021, issuing 242,000 new permits (up 127% compared to 2020) and 31,000 new asylum documents (up 129% compared to 2020).

Overall, non-EU nationals comprise 7.1% of the labour force in Italy. Non-EU migrants, especially those in irregular situations and low-skilled, are more likely to be precarious workers. They have a high rate of unemployed, in particular among the youth and women. Each year, Italian government establishes entry quotas for non-EU foreign through an ad-hoc decree (Flows Decree). Separate entry quotas are set in the decree for seasonal workers, self-employed workers and non-seasonal employed workers. Quotas are also set for converting residence permits issued for study purposes into work or for converting residence permits issued for seasonal work into non-seasonal employment. In 2021, the decree set a maximum entry quota of 69,700, including 42,000 reserved for entry for seasonal labour and 14,000 quotas for the agricultural sector alone.

The 2020 economic crisis, generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, led to a general decline in employment and a further increase in inactivity among the non-EU population. Some 12% of enterprises in 2020 represented foreign-run businesses operating mainly in wholesale, retail and construction sectors, which were particularly affected by the pandemic. In 2021, there were about 180,000 seasonal and migrant workers at risk of forced labour. The main challenges faced by immigrants and ethnic minorities are language proficiency, cultural barriers and access to services, including public employment services, welfare and public housing. In response to COVID-19, new measures allowed the possible regularisation of foreign workers, present in Italy before March 2020 and working in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries and related activities or in domestic work or caregiving services. Depending on the duration of the job contract, applicants can receive a renewable one or two-year residence permit. By August 2020, 207,000 applications were received from employers and 13,000 from unemployed irregular migrants. However, by June 2021, only 11,000 permits had been issued, with 86% still pending. Moreover, the first National Plan to Address Labour Exploitation and Illegal Recruitment in agriculture was adopted in 2020, addressing prevention, protection and enforcement.

Over the years, the Italian legislative system has transposed many European directives and most of the international conventions, including the UN Human Rights treaties, the Fundamental and Governmental Conventions promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Global Compact on Refugees. Italy concluded several agreements to facilitate collaboration with relevant

ministries, community and religious organizations, universities in non-EU countries and other partners such as UNHCR. In line with the recent EU Directives on international protection, Italy reformed its approach to prevention and repression of trafficking in persons and protection of the victims, to reception standards concerning asylum applicants, as well as common procedures for the recognition and revocation of the international protection status. In 2017, the country has introduced a comprehensive regulation concerning the protection and treatment of unaccompanied minors.

The legal framework was recently modified in 2018 and 2019, by the two “Security Decrees”, introducing several amendments to the regulation of both immigration and the right to asylum, including the removal of special protection for humanitarian reasons. In 2020, a new Law Decree restored the single system for the reception of applicants and holders of protection, which entrusts reception and integration to local authorities, and the third protection status in addition to the right to asylum and subsidiary protection, granted for humanitarian reasons.

latest update: 30 October 2022

Relevant Publications

Conflict in Ukraine, UNODC

Fondazione ISMU, Beneficiari di protezione internazionale ed integrazione in Italia – NIEM National Report 2022 (in Italian)

Fondazione ISMU, Profughi dall’Ucraina: permessi di soggiorno e nuove buone pratiche di accoglienza (in Italian)

Fondazione ISMU, The Twenty-seventh Italian Report on migrations 2021

Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2021 (in Italian)

Fondazione Migrantes, XXX Rapporto Immigrazione 2021 (in Italian)

Fondazione Migrantes, Report “Italiani nel Mondo” (in Italian)

ISPI, Migrations Fact-checking 2021

MOI, Department of Public Security, Trafficking in humans in Italy (in Italian)

Ministry of Labour, XI rapporto annuale: gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia, (in Italian)

Ministry of Labour, XI rapporto annuale: gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia, (in Italian)

OECD, Education at a Glance 2021

IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends

WHO, ApartTogether survey. Preliminary overview of refugees and migrants self-reported impact of COVID- 19

UN, Policy brief - COVID-19 and People on the Move

Caritas Europe, Access to services by vulnerable groups: barriers, obstacles and good practices; Italy Country Profile