
Immigration. Caritas/Migrantes: “Fewer foreign nationals in Italy due to demographic decline and the pandemic”

The number of foreign nationals residing in Italy declined from 5,306,548 in 2020 to 5,035,643 today (-5.1%). The decline is reportedly the result of several factors that include overall demographic decline, mobility restrictions and the pandemic. International protection permits have also registered a decrease since 2019 (-5.6%), reflecting the stop in arrivals from abroad, migrant landings and border crossings. Of note is the drop in permits for foreign unaccompanied minors: from almost 18,000 in 2019 to 3,774 in 2020. The percentage of foreign nationals stands at 8.5%. The majority are women (51.9%), 80% of whom came from Ukraine, Georgia and Eastern European countries. Most immigrants live in the north of the country (58.5%), the north-east and central regions are both at around 24.5%, whereas 12.1% and 4.8% of foreign nationals reside in southern Italy and the islands respectively. Lombardy ranks first (with 22.9% of the foreign population in Italy), followed by Latium, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Piedmont. Rome remains the capital of immigration, with 10% of foreign nationals residing there, followed by Milan (9.2%) and Turin (4.2%). At this time in history, the health emergency has somewhat replaced the “migrant landing emergency” in media narratives. While migrants were initially regarded as potential coronavirus super-spreaders, nowadays “the narrative on migration has crumbled under the impact of a new enemy.” These are among the findings of the 30th Immigration Report published by Caritas Italy and Migrantes Foundation, entitled “Towards an ever greater us”. In particular, the publication analyses the health and social impact of Covid-19 and the impact of related measures on the lives of foreign citizens in Italy. **At global level.** In 2020 the number of people migrating for work or family reasons is estimated to have dropped by about 2 million worldwide (UN data) as a result of mobility restrictions. By contrast, forced displacement, primarily in the Middle East and South America, remains unchanged. The total number of people living outside their home country reached a new high of 280.6 million in 2020 (+8.4 million compared to the previous year) representing 3.6% of the world's population.

Europe remains the prime destinations of international migration, with almost 87 million migrants (many from the Schengen area).

North America ranks second with almost 59 million, followed by North Africa and the Middle East, with almost 50 million. The USA remains the leading destination, with 51 million migrants in 2020 (18% of the world total). India is the leading country of origin of international migrants, with 18 million Indian nationals living outside their home country in 2020. Mexican and Russian migrants ranked next, with 11 million respectively, followed by Chinese (10 million) and Syrians (8 million). **Italy.** In 2021, Italy's demographic downward trend (-6.4%, 987 thousand fewer resident citizens compared to the previous year) also concerned foreigners (-5.1%). The “pandemic effect” caused by a combination of various factors is gradually emerging, “including - first and foremost - mortalities caused by the virus, which hit a record high in Italy compared to the rest of Europe and at global level (128,000 deaths in Italy at the end of July 2021, out of a total of 4,095,924 deaths, corresponding to 3.1% of the global figure)” **The impact on labour.** Foreign nationals equally suffered a severe blow from the shutdown of many businesses, and were more exposed to exploitation risks. The unemployment rate of non-Italian citizens (13.1%) is higher than that of Italian citizens (8.7%), while the employment rate of foreign nationals (60.6%) has dropped lower than that of Italians (62.8%). Women are suffering the most, as always, “with a two-fold decline in their employment rate”. Hotel and restaurant jobs were most affected (25.2% of EU nationals and 21.5% of non-EU nationals) as were other collective and personal services occupations (27.6% of EU nationals and 25.2% of non-EU nationals). **Infection rates of foreign nationals.** There were 165,528 reports of Covid-related illnesses among Italian and immigrant workers in the period covering the outbreak of the pandemic

up to 31 March 2021, according to the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work - INAIL. Infected foreign workers were mostly from Romania (21.0%), Peru (13%), Albania (8.1%), Moldova (4.5%) and Ecuador (4.2%), which means that most of them were domestic workers that were infected inside employers' households. Workplace deaths, however, increased by 27.6% compared to the previous year (from 1,205 to 1,538) and over a third of those fatalities, according to INAIL, were caused by COVID-19.

Out of 1,538 fatalities, 224 victims were foreign nationals (14.6%), non-EU nationals accounted for 70% of all fatalities.

Social and economic impact. While in the pre-pandemic period extreme poverty in immigrant households stood at 24.4% (almost one in four), one in four households (26.7%) were living in extreme poverty during the Covid-19 crisis, as opposed to 6% among Italian-only households.

The number increased by 2.3 per cent in one year, which brings the number of impoverished immigrant households to 568,000.

Caritas' 2,663 outreach centres and services located in 193 dioceses have provided assistance to 106,416 non-nationals, 52% of the total, mostly from Morocco (18.5%) and Romania (9.1%).

School. In the 2019/2020 school year, the total number of pupils with non-Italian citizenship stood at 876, 801, representing 10.3% of all pupils, down from 2018. Remarkably, the number of foreign nationals enrolled in secondary schools is growing, reflecting the growth of second generation immigrants. By contrast, almost 25% of children of immigrants, aged 3-5, were not registered in nursery schools. **Vaccines.** The findings suggest lower vaccination rates among people born abroad compared to Italian nationals (50% vs. 60%), especially among adolescents and young adults (12-29 years of age). A total of approximately 2,131,000 persons born abroad holding a health card were vaccinated by 27 June 2021, while vaccinations of non-documented immigrants have just begun.

Religions. Muslim immigrants declined in 2021 (2% less, amounting to 27.1% of the total, 1,400,000 believers), while the Christian immigrant population increased (with 2.9 million believers, numbering 56.2% at the beginning of 2021, compared to 53-54% in previous years). Orthodox Christians accounted for the majority of Christian immigrants (57.5%, over 1.6 million), followed by Catholics (866 thousand, corresponding to 30.3% of Christian immigrants). As of January 1st 2021, the ISMU Foundation reported 144,000 Buddhist immigrants (2.8% of foreign residents in Italy), 102,000 Hindus (2.0%), 98,000 Sikhs (1.9%) and 47,000 people professing other faiths (0.9%). Atheists and agnostics account for approximately 461 thousand immigrants (9 %).

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