



THE SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants
Executive Summary



20
20

For nearly a decade, the Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione (General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies) has aimed to provide a detailed and balanced account of the complex phenomenon of the presence of foreigners in Italy and to do so by setting forth the various distinct aspects of the question while analysing the characteristics noted and also anticipating today's trends. The directorate does so by means of its Rapporto nazionale sui migranti nel Mercato del lavoro italiano (National reports on migrants in the Italian labour market) (tenth edition), the Rapporti nazionali sulla presenza in Italia delle principali Comunità straniere (national reports on the main foreign communities in Italy) (ninth edition) and the Rapporti sulla presenza dei migranti non comunitari nelle 14 città metropolitane italiane (reports on the presence of non-EU migrants in the 14 metropolitan cities of Italy) (fifth edition).

The series of national reports on the presence of the main foreign communities aims to investigate and study in depth the presence on Italian soil of the more numerically significant non-EU nationals: Moroccans, Albanians, Chinese, Ukrainians, Indians, Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Moldovans, Nigerians, the Senegalese, Sri Lankans, Tunisians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians.

For each grouping, the main features from the socio-demographic and employment dimensions are considered, alongside presence of minors and their education, occupational integration and welfare policies. Each report starts with comparison among the various communities. The data used for the analysis relate to periods prior to the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus. Therefore, this edition of the reports does not provide for an overview of the effects of the pandemic crisis on the social and labour integration of migrants.

Again, this year we duly acknowledge the contributions of institutions and bodies that have provided information in their possession. These entities include the Italian National Institute of Statistics; the general statistical and actuarial coordination body of INPS (National Social Security Institute); the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture; the international political studies organisation, CeSPI; the trade unions CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL; and the Divisione Studi e Ricerca (study and research division) of ANPAL Servizi.

The full series of Rapporti Comunità (community reports), editions 2012 - 2020, can be accessed – in Italian and in the main foreign languages – in the section “Studi e statistiche” (Studies and Statistics) on the institutional website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – www.lavoro.gov.it and on the institutional portal www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it. These addresses also provide access to a statistical annex providing information that supplements the reports or that, within a comparative framework among the main national communities considered, enables in-depth study of the data analysed.


Within the ambit of the projects, *Assistenza tecnica per il Supporto alla governance integrata delle politiche migratorie tra lavoro e integrazione sociale (PR.Au.D. - Protezione, Autonomia, Dignità dal lavoro)* and *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi di origine*, ANPAL Servizi has drawn up and translated the 2020 edition of its Rapporti nazionali sulle principali Comunità straniere (National reports on the main foreign communities) – analytic reports provided in summary form.

Executive Summary



104.688
 Legally residing Sri Lankan citizens
Ranking eleventh for number of presences

2.9% of the total non-EU population



47,3% women

52,7% men

45,2% above the age of 40

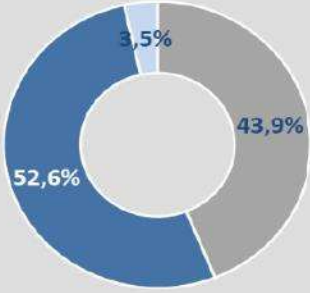


25.212
 Minors under the age of 18

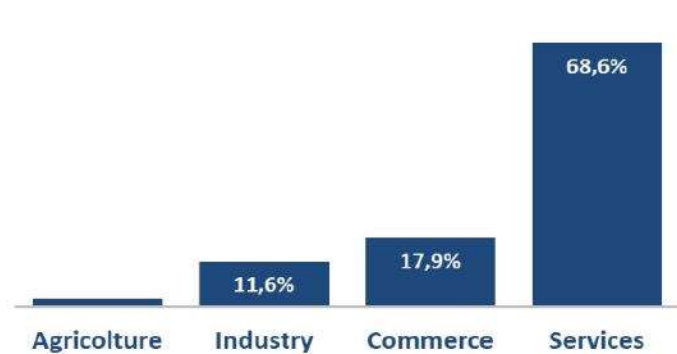
Present in:

- 31% Lombardia**
- 13,4% Campania**
- 12,8% Veneto**

66,1% long-term residents



- 33,9%** short-term permits
- Work (43,9%)
- Family (52,6%)
- Other reasons (3,5%)



66,7% employment rate
81,4 % male 49,6% female

39,6% female inactivity rate

58% employed 
 in personal services



Ranking 7th for volume of remittances
5,1% of total

266 million in remittances (-13,1%)

Demographic characteristics

As the community ranking eleventh in terms of numbers of residents, **104,688 Sri Lankan citizens** are holders of a residence permit valid as on **1 January 2020**, accounting for 2.9% of the non-EU citizens in Italy.

On analysis of the main demographic characteristics of the Sri Lankan citizens legally residing in Italy as on 1 January 2020, we note:

- **a slight gender imbalance:** women make up 47.3% of this community, a value is slightly lower than the mean for legally residing non-EU citizens as a whole (49%)
- **a mean age higher with that of non-EU citizens as a whole:** the Sri Lankans in Italy are aged on average 35 (one year more than non-EU citizens as a whole: 34).

As to **geographic distribution**, we note that more than 1 out of 4 among Sri Lankan citizens reside in Southern Italy (26.2%), vs approx. 14.4% for non-EU citizens as a whole. Sri Lankan citizens reside especially in **Campania**, the second largest region for Sri Lankan presences (13.4%) and in **Sicilia** (11%). More than half of Sri Lankan citizens are settled in northern Italy (vs 61.1% of non-EU citizens as a whole) where we find the other two regions with the greatest Sri Lankan presences: **Lombardia** (31%) and **Veneto** (12.8%). Just under one in five Sri Lankan citizens resides in central Italy, especially in Lazio (11.5%).

Analysis of **residence permits** indicates this community's marked progress in the direction of stabilisation in Italy. The quotient of Sri Lankan **long-term residents** (holders of residence permits not subject to renewal) is higher than the mean value and stands at **66.1%** (vs 63.1%). Regarding short-term permits, those issued for **family reunification** reasons prevail, i.e., **more than** ½ of permits subject to renewal among migrant members of this community (52.6%, vs 46.7% of non-EU citizens as a whole). Work permits account for approx. 44% of the total (vs the 29.4% mean for non-EU citizens as a whole).

Current trends

For the first time, after years of stable number of presences, a sharp decrease (-2,7%) can be noted in the number of legal residents compared to the previous year. Indeed, the presence of non-EU citizens in Italy decreased by 101,580 units between 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2020. Such decrease concerns all the main foreign communities except for Indian and Bangladeshi communities which increased by 1.7% and 1.8% respectively. The most significant reductions can be noted in the Nigerian community (-8.2%), which went from ranking eleventh to ranking fourteenth, the Ecuadorian community (-6.2%) and the Chinese community (-5.3%).

Two main opposite factors affect the trends of presences: on the one hand, the new permits issued attesting to an inflow impacting the stock of legally residing members, and, on the other, the granting of citizenship (which latter practice entail a replacement effect in the statistics as those who become Italian citizens are removed from the stock of foreign citizens).

Turning to admissions, 2019 marks a negative record with approx. 177 thousand new residence permits, 26% less vs 2018; this is the most significant reduction recorded since 2012 and the first six months of 2020 seem to consolidate the negative trend, with a further decrease of 57.7% vs the same period of 2019¹. The reduction concerns all reasons for admissions, and it is particularly relevant for permits ascribable to the request or possession of a form of protection: -57.5%.

This is a value ascribable to the sharp reduction of the so-called "unexpected flows", with a sharp decline in the number of migrants landed on the Italian coasts: 11,471 in 2019, i.e., 51% less than 2018 and 90.4% less than 2017².

The growth trend in the quotient of new permits issued for family reunification consolidates, thus reaching 56.9% of admissions in 2019 (vs approx. 51% in 2018), while the percentage relating to the request or possession of a form of

¹ Istat, *Cittadini non comunitari in Italia*, Statistica Report (Non-EU citizens in Italy, Statistics Report), October 2020.

² http://www.libertacivilimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-12-2019.pdf

protection decreases: 15.6% of new permits³ vs 28.8% in 2018. The percentage relating to study reasons (11.5% vs 9.1% in 2018) and work reasons (6.4% vs 6% in 2018) is slightly on the rise. On the other hand, the failure to plan entry flows for job purposes, with the exception of seasonal work, has now led to a sharp decrease in new permits issued for this reason.

The Sri Lankan community ranks twelfth in terms of number of admissions. **3,576 new residence permits** were issued in 2019 to members of this community. The main reason for admission is family reunification (85.8%). 46% of those admitted for family reasons were minors: 1,426, i.e., 98.8% of those under 18 admitted during the same period. The possession or request for a form of protection follows as a reason for issuing new permits (8.4% of the cases). A mere 2.6% of new residence permits for Sri Lankan citizens were issued for work reasons, while permits granted for elective acquisition, religion and health reasons covered a quotient of 2.5% in 2019. Permits issued for study reasons represent a mere 0.8% of the total.

Minors and educational paths

On analysis of the Sri Lankans residing in Italy, the incidence of **minors** is found to be higher than the mean: **25,212** Sri Lankan citizens, making up 24% of the total, vs 22% noted for non-EU citizens as a whole.

Admission of Sri Lankan minors into the Italian schooling circuit is fairly low: with 13,293 students of Sri Lankan origin enrolled for academic year 2019/2020 (1.9% of the non-EU schooling population as a whole), Sri Lanka is the sixteenth country of origin of non-EU students. The students from this community increased with a higher growth rate than that noted for non-EU students as a whole (+11.4% vs +2.6%). The number of enrolling nationals increased above all in junior secondary schools (+14.3%) and senior secondary schools (+12.1%). The incidence of students belonging to this community vs non-EU students as a whole is highest in preschool institutions, in which 2.3% of the enrolling students are Sri Lankan, falling to 1.7% in senior secondary schools. Sri Lankan nationals enrolling to attend university courses in Italy in 2019 totalled 374 (+12.7% vs +8.5% of non-EU university students as a whole).

This community presents with a number of young people not engaged in education, employment or training that is below the mean value for non-EU communities: out of 100 young Sri Lankan nationals aged between 15 and 29, approx. 31% are NEETs (Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training), vs the mean value of 33.1%. The exclusion from the job market and training mainly concerns the female component of the community, which shows a NEET rate of 40.1% vs 19.2% for males. However, we note that the female NEET rate recorded in the community is slightly lower than that non-EU population as a whole (43.5%).

Work and employment

The distribution of employees of Sri Lankan origin in the economic sectors reveals the strong engagement of Sri Lankan workers in **Public, social and personal services** (including both employment in the *public administration, education and health and other public services, social and personal services* with a quotient in *Other public, social and personal services* of 58%), which represent the main sector of employment with a double incidence compared to that recorded for the total non-EU population as a whole (60% vs 30%) The second sector of employment is *Commerce and catering* which employs 18% of Sri Lankan workers, vs 24% of non-EU workers as a whole. The involvement of Sri Lankan workers in the industrial sector (12% vs 27% of non-EU workers), in *Transport and business services* (9%) and in the Primary sector, where only 2% are employed, stands decidedly below the mean of Sri Lankan workers.

The strong engagement in *Public, social and personal services* have positive effect in terms of employment: an analysis of the data available on the labour market shows that the **employment conditions** of the Sri Lankan community in Italy are **better** than those relating to non-EU population as a whole, with a higher quotient of employed and lower levels of inactivity and unemployment. Accordingly, the **employment rate** for the community stands at

³ In all likelihood, the reduction in the number of permits linked to the possession of a form of protection is affected by the entry into force of the decree-law no. 113/2018 from 5 October 2018, converted with amendments by Law no. 132/2018, which abolished the residence permit for humanitarian reasons, replacing it, only under certain specific conditions, with some residence permits for "special circumstances".

66.7%, a value over +6% than that recorded for all non-EU citizens. However, on analysing the employment trend we note a contraction vs the previous year by more than 3% (vs the stability recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole).

In regard to the **unemployment rate**, this community presents with a **12.3%** quotient of jobseekers in the workforce. This value is slightly lower than that noted for non-EU citizens as a whole (13.8%). The **inactivity** rate of Sri Lankan citizens stands at **23.9%** (over 6% lower than the value for non-EU citizens as a whole).

The female component of the Sri Lankan community, above all, was a factor that was decisive in the emergence of the positive trends as per the main labour market indicators. Accordingly, the female employment rate stands at 49.6%, and although clearly lower than the male quotient of the community (81.4%), it is higher than that recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole (46.5%). Female inactivity rate is also lower than the non-EU mean (by more than 4%) and stands at 39.6%. The gap recorded in relation to the female unemployment rate is instead positive: the quotient of jobseekers is 17.5% for Sri Lankan citizens vs the overall 16.7%.

Within this community, there are **9,960 beneficiaries of unemployment benefits**, with men prevailing, who almost exclusively benefit from NASPI (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme) payments. 2.1% of beneficiaries of non-EU unemployment benefit are Sri Lankan citizens.

38,911 Sri Lankan citizens were **hired** in 2019 (approx. 2.5% of new employment relationships with non-EU citizens). Indicating that women from this community are drawn to the labour market to a decidedly lesser extent than men, the data provided by the *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) reveal that that only **28.7%** of the contracts relating to Sri Lankan citizens **concern the female component** of the community (vs 31.3% recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole). Almost all new contracts activated with Sri Lankan workers, i.e., 93.3%, fall within the *Services* sector, which represents the first sector of reference also for the total of non-EU workers, albeit with a decidedly less marked incidence (58.6%). The second sector for number of contracts activated with Sri Lankan citizens is *Industry*, with a quotient of 3.8%, vs 9.8% of non-EU citizens. An analysis of the hiring qualifications confirms the involvement of the community in the *Public, social and personal services* sector: the new contracts for *unskilled workers in cleaning services of offices, hotels, ships, restaurants, public areas and vehicles, unskilled workers in the field of home help and skilled workers in personal and similar services* cover 64% of the total contracts activated with Sri Lankan workers.

In regard to typologies of work, **61%** of Sri Lankan workers are **unskilled manual workers**, a value almost doubling that for non-EU workers as a whole (36%). $\frac{1}{4}$ of workers are engaged in the sector of *office workers, sales staff or personal services*: these typologies of work both present with incidences that are lower than those noted among workers from non-EU countries as a whole (30%). The level is also lower – less than $\frac{1}{2}$ – for the Sri Lankans employed engaging in *skilled manual work* (11% vs 28% of workers from non-EU countries as a whole). A quotient of 3% of employed Sri Lankans are managers or professionals in intellectual and technical fields. The incidence among non-EU workers doubles that value (6%)

Socio-economic conditions

According to data provided by INPS (the National Social Security Institute) on **remuneration** of workers, the mean earnings of Sri Lankan workers as a whole are **in line with those of non-EU workers as a whole**. However, a gender analysis shows critical situations both with regard to employees and home helpers: the gender pay gap is in fact quite strong, with a mean monthly salary for men exceeding that of women by approx. 550 euros in the first case and by approx. 45 euros in the second case.

Among the Sri Lankan citizens employed in Italy, a **medium-low level of education prevails**. 72.4% of the workers belonging to this community obtained at best a junior secondary school leaving certificate. This level is approx. 13% higher than that for non-EU nationals as a whole. 25.3% obtained a senior secondary school leaving certificate, while a mere 2.3% are also holders of a higher education certificate (vs 11.4 of non-EU national as a whole). Within this community, women have slightly higher levels of education than men: 3.6% of employed women hold a degree vs 1.6% of men; however, this is a significantly lower value than that recorded for the non-EU female population as a whole (16.3%).

The quotient of **IVS (disability, old-age and survivors') pensions** that are made over to non-EU citizens has always been rather small. In 2019, this quotient stood at 0.5% of the total (out of almost 14 million pensions, 65,926 regard

non-EU citizens). Non-EU citizens receive old-age pensions (in 43% of such cases), followed by survivors' pensions (37.4%); 19.8% are granted disability pensions. Within the Sri Lankan community, we note a distribution between the different types of social security measures in line with that recorded for non-EUR migrants as a whole: old-age pensions prevail, reaching an incidence of 48.6% (vs 42.8% of the total of non-EU citizens), followed by survivors' pensions (27.2%) and disability pensions (24.2%). Overall, with 1,264 IVS pensions, the Sri Lankan community accounts for 1.9% of the total of non-EU citizens granted these benefits. Between 2018 and 2019 the number of IVS pensions paid to migrants from Sri Lanka recorded a lower increase vs non-EU citizens as a whole (+9.8% vs +12.3%). Within this community, the beneficiaries of old-age pensions increased by 13.1% (vs 17.1% for non-EU citizens as a whole).

1,657 **social assistance pensions** were provided to members of the Sri Lankan community in 2019 (1.6% of those provided to migrants of non-EU origin). In 40.3% of the cases, the benefits took the form of pensions and social benefits; 31.1% were attendance allowances and 28.5% were constant attendance supplements.

In 2019, there were 304,465 beneficiaries of maternity benefits, 9.1% of which non-EU citizenship (27,714, i.e., -3.1% than the previous year). Sri Lankan beneficiaries were 559, -4.6% vs the previous year, and make up 2% of non-EU women. A greater number of people benefit from family allowances: in 2019 there were 2,446,795 beneficiaries (-13.8% vs the previous year). 12.5% of the beneficiaries are non-EU citizens, (305,000) -13.5% vs 2018. Within this community, there were 9,377 beneficiaries of family allowances in 2019, with an impact on the total of non-EU citizens of 3.1%.

As to transfers made by the Sri Lankans in Italy to their country of origin, **Sri Lanka ranks seventh as nation of destination of remittances sent from Italy in 2019** (approx. 266 million euros), accounting for 5.1% of the total outgoing remittances (-13.1 million vs 2018).

