



THE MOROCCAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Migrant population annual report
Executive summary



20

22

Curated by the General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Annual Reports on the main foreign communities in Italy investigate and analyse the presence in Italy of the largest populations of non-EU migrants: Moroccan, Albanian, Chinese, Ukrainian, Indian, Filipino, Bangladeshi, Egyptian, Pakistani, Moldovan, Sri Lankan, Senegalese, Tunisian, Nigerian, Peruvian and Ecuadorian.

A key factor also in the 2022 edition is the contribution of the Institutions and Bodies that provided the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies with the necessary information, subsequently processed by the ANPAL Servizi Integration Services Area. Sincere thanks for consolidated and practical collaboration are due to ISTAT - National Institute of Statistics, INPS – General Statistical Actuarial Coordination, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University and Research, the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture; CeSPI, the CGIL, CISL, UIL, UGL trade union confederations and the Data Science Applications Operating Unit – ANPAL Servizi Studies and Research Division. The financial inclusion section was curated by Daniele Frigeri, Director of the National Observatory on Financial Inclusion of Migrants.

The unabridged volumes of the 2012 – 2022 editions of the Reports on the Main Foreign Communities in Italy are available, in Italian and in the main foreign languages, in the “Documents and Research – Reports by the Immigration and Integration Policies DG” area of the portal www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it and in the 'Studies and Statistics' area of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies website – www.lavoro.gov.it. A statistical annex is also available at the same addresses, containing additional information with respect to the reports, or with insights on the existing analysis, with a comparison between the main nationalities.

The 2022 edition of the National Reports on the Main Foreign Communities, the translation of the overviews into the main vehicular languages and the Monitoring Report were produced by the “Services for Integration Policies” Area of ANPAL Servizi, in the framework of the project “START-Support to Integrated Multiannual Programming on Employment, Integration and Inclusion”.

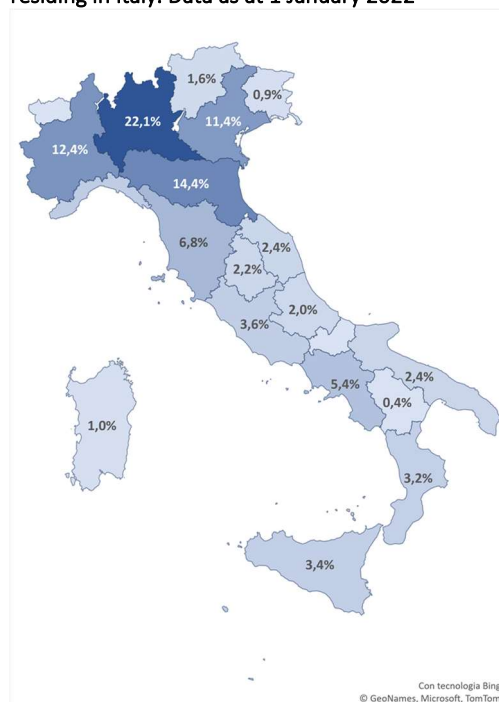
The Moroccan community in Italy

The Moroccan community is undoubtedly among the main non-EU communities settled in our country, and among those with the longest migration history, especially if we consider that the first arrivals from the north African country date back to the 1980s. Despite the fact that other European countries – France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium above all – had attracted Moroccan workers as early as the 1960s, it would be some twenty years before we can speak of real migratory flows from the Northwest Africa to Italy: it was in those years that Morocco experienced a traumatic economic crisis, the result of a high level of indebtedness, which was followed by a series of austerity measures that brought unemployment levels to a state of unsustainability for the population. Young Moroccan graduates, who believed themselves to be protected from the effects of this crisis, soon found that they were having to leave even the richest areas, and look for new countries in which they could put their skills to use. And so it was that Italy and Spain, which had hitherto very little experience of immigration, found Moroccan workers to be a skilled labour force motivated by the need to support their families at home. The migratory flows were initially composed exclusively of men and only later saw the presence of entire families. The Moroccan community was composed of **408,184** legal residents¹ in Italy as of 1 January 2022 (around 11.5% of the non-EU population of Italy). Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of 2.6% (total non-EU nationals increased by 5.6%).

More than two thirds of Moroccan nationals in Italy reside in the north of the country, in particular in Lombardy (the first region for Moroccan immigrants) – which hosts slightly more than 22%, compared to more than a quarter of non-EU citizens overall – in Emilia-Romagna, and in Piedmont, accommodating 14.4% and 12.4% of Moroccan immigrants, respectively. Although only 15% of the community resides in Central Italy, the figure for Tuscany stands out, hosting around 7% of the community's legally resident citizens.

The community has a slight gender imbalance (46.2% women vs 53.8% men) and a high concentration of the younger age group: 40% are under 30. The presence of minors, who represent the predominant age group in the community, is decidedly high and higher than the average for non-EU citizens: 27.7%, compared to around 21% for the non-EU population overall. The community ranks second among the main non-EU communities in terms of the share of minors. This fact is most likely due to the high level of stabilisation achieved, because a stable community is generally associated with a large number of family units; another likely factor is the high birth rate among Moroccan nationals in Italy. The more than 113,000 Moroccan minors were 15.2% of non-EU minors in Italy on 1 January 2022. Also the number of over-60s is slightly higher than among the non-EU population overall: 10.4% versus 10.2%. This figure can also be interpreted as a sign of stabilisation in the country: Moroccan immigrants in general are not linked to recent migrations (generally young people), but rather those who arrived with the first migratory waves, or who have been reunited with their families.

Distribution of the Moroccan population legally residing in Italy. Data as at 1 January 2022

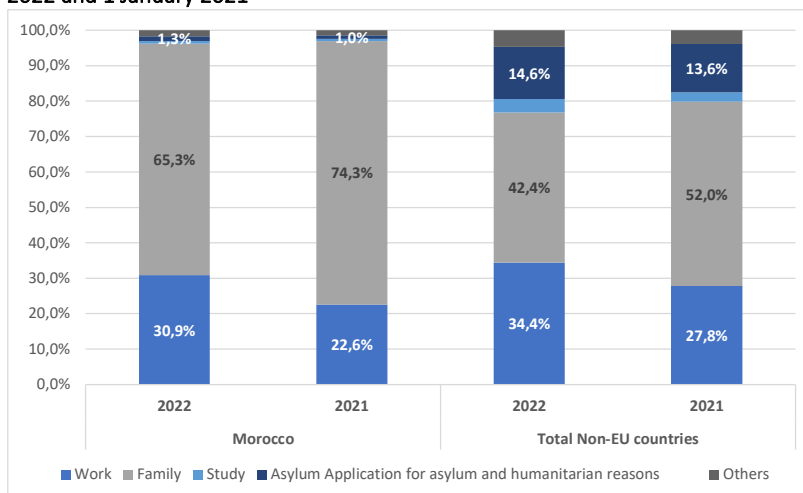


Source: Anpal Servizi SpINT Area analysis of ISTAT data

¹ Statistics on regularly residing non-EU citizens include all foreigners from non-EU countries in possession of a valid residence document (residence permit or long-term EU residence permit). Not all legally resident foreign nationals are including in the total count of residents in Italy: the statistical source employed therefore also includes foreign nationals who for whatever reason have yet to be awarded official residence in Italy.

Data on residence permits² confirm the advanced degree of consolidation in the country reached by the community, due to the high **percentage of long-term residents³ (72.6%)** – a higher percentage than that recorded for non-EU citizens overall by almost 7 percentage points – and the incidence of family reasons among short-term residence permits (65.3% compared to 42.4% recorded for the wider non-EU population). In 46.6% of cases, immigrants who arrived for family reasons are minors. Work is the second most important reason for residence, with an incidence of about 31% of short-term permits, more than 8 percentage points higher than in the prior year.

Short-term residence permits by type and citizenship (v%). Data as at 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2021



Source: SpINT Area analysis of Anpal Servizi on ISTAT-Ministry of the Interior data

In 2021, after the sudden drop recorded in 2020 due to the movement restrictions introduced globally to counter the spread of the SARS-COV 2 virus, there was a general increase in the issue of **new permits**, also due to the illegal labour emergence provision (legislative decree 34 of 2020) which allowed the regularisation of non-EU citizens already present in the country: new residence permits issued in 2021 to Moroccan citizens totalled **23,460**, with exponential growth compared to the previous year (+128.6%), in line with the overall trend of arrivals. In the majority of cases, Moroccan citizens who entered the country in 2021 did so for family reasons (around 73%), with an increase of just over 95% compared to the previous year. Of these new arrivals in the community, 10,450 were minors, around 61% of new permits for family reasons; for non-EU citizens overall the proportion of minors stands at 55.5%. Further underscoring the marked level of stabilisation, the community ranks first in terms of the number of **acquisitions of citizenship** during 2021 out of a total of 109,584 concessions for foreign nationals, 16,588 concerned citizens of Moroccan origin, i.e. around 15% of the total.

Although the community does not have a high **level of education** (the share of university graduates is 4% compared to 10.5% for the wider group of all non-EU nationals), has found a special place on the Italian labour market by specialising in manual labour, an area that notoriously lacks sufficient Italian nationals to meet the demand. The **prevailing** – though not exclusive – **profile** among Moroccan workers is that of a man employed in an unskilled manual job in the industrial sector, where 28% of the community's workers are employed, and in the *business services* sector (16%). Other employment sectors for the community are *commerce* (14%) and construction (just under 13%). Approximately 11% of Moroccan workers are employed in *public, social and personal services*, which is the first sector of employment for female members of the community, with 42.5%).

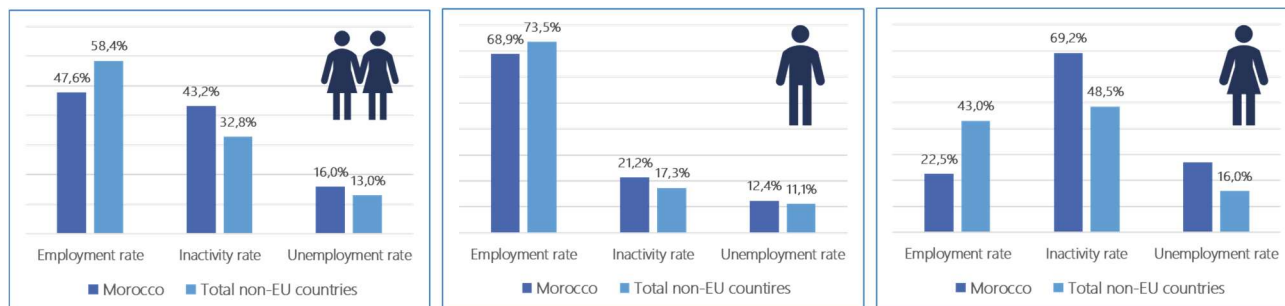
An analysis of the main indicators on the labour market reveals less positive employment performance than that recorded for the non-EU population as a whole, despite positive signs with respect to the first half of 2021: the **employment rate** is around **47.6%** (compared to 58.8% recorded for the non-EU population overall), the **inactivity rate** is **43.2%** (for the non-EU population as a whole the indicator is around 33%), while the **unemployment rate** stands at 16%, compared to 13% for the non-EU population overall. This situation is partly due to the reduced integration of Moroccan women into the workforce; there is a large gap between the male employment rate (around 69%) and the female rate (22.5%), and women in the community display

² The report shows the stock figure for the total number of foreign nationals authorised to reside in Italy in the reference year.

³ The EU long-term residence permit may be issued to a foreign national who has held a valid residence permit for at least five years, provided the person can prove that they have a minimum income of no less than the social allowance calculated annually.

very high levels of inactivity (around 69%). These differences, which became acute during the pandemic, were partially bridged by the subsequent recovery, as the male employment rate increased by about 5 percentage points compared to the previous year, while the female employment rate increased by around 7%.

Main labour market indicators by gender and nationality (v.%). H1 2022



Source: SpINT Area analysis of Anpal Servizi on RCFL - ISTAT microdata

The community's prominence in the **business sphere** is significant, where it ranks first - among non-EU countries - in terms of the number of sole proprietors. There were **62,787 sole proprietors of Moroccan origin** as of 31 December 2021, or about 16% of non-EU business owners in Italy, a number that is, however, 1.6% lower than in 2020. Analysis of the business world also confirms the significance of the *commerce and transport* sector, where 68.6% of Moroccan sole proprietorships operate: as seen above, this level of specialisation is a distinctive feature of the community, to which 26.1% of non-EU sole proprietorships in the sector belong. The second largest investment sector for Moroccan companies is construction, although with a lower percent incidence than that recorded for non-EU citizens overall (15.2% compared to 22.4%), while a 4% share operates in the *Business Services* sector.

The high level of integration of the Moroccan community is also reflected in the widespread use of certain **welfare measures** and of wage subsidies in particular: 8.8% of non-EU wage subsidy recipients are Moroccan, a percentage that rises to 13.6% in the case of use of the ordinary redundancy fund (CIGO). In contrast to the non-EU population overall, the community is also particularly dependent on welfare pensions: 17.3% of non-EU beneficiaries are Moroccan nationals. This percentage rises to almost 17.4% for *social pensions and allowances* and 17.2% for *civil invalidity* pensions, further highlighting the deep roots of the community in Italian society. A further sign of the community's level of integration in the Italian economic and social fabric is given by the incidence of *parental leave and maternity allowances*, which are indicative of the presence of family units: 15.3% and 10.4% of non-EU recipients respectively are Moroccan. There were 61,016 family allowance recipients in the community in 2021, with an incidence of 17.6% of all non-EU nationals.

The incidence of non-EU family units is also partially reflected in relation to Basic income (Reddito di cittadinanza) or Basic Pensions (Pensione di cittadinanza). With regard to the Moroccan community, 42,886 families are beneficiaries of Basic income or a Basic pension (19.3% of non-EU recipients), the figure having decreased with respect to the previous year.

With almost 7% of the total volume of remittances sent from Italy to the rest of the world (566.7 million), Morocco is the first ranked recipient of financial flows from Italy, and the highest ranked in Africa, with a steady increase in volumes since 2016.

