



# THE SENEGALESE 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 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 U.O. Data Science Applications – 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 2021 – 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](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it) and in the 'Studies and Statistics' area of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies website – [www.lavoro.gov.it](http://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 Senegalese community in Italy

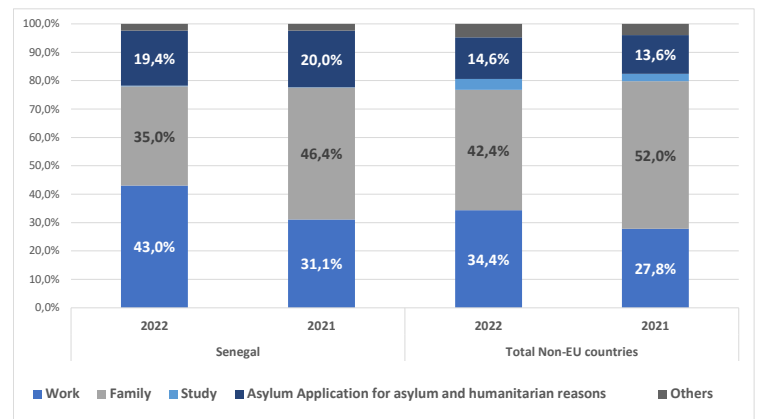
The Italian Senegalese community is the most representative in Europe and the largest sub-Saharan African community in Italy. Migration to Italy dates back to the early 1980s and intensified in the 1990s, making it one of the oldest immigrant communities in our country. Migratory flows from Senegal have been motivated fundamentally by economic and labour reasons which, through time, have increasingly involved the residents from large urban centres fleeing the severe economic crisis of the 1990s. In the 2000s, alongside the fishermen and unemployed youths of the first migration wave, there was a growing number of highly qualified professionals and educated single women seeking adequate salaries in relation to their qualifications. Another rising trend over the years has been that of arrivals for family reasons as a result of a gradual process of stabilisation of the community in Italy. A return flow has been recorded in recent years of emigrants who have reached retirement age, and working emigrants who had originally migrated with the intention of returning to their country of origin to invest in it.

There were **100,250** Senegalese<sup>1</sup> legally residing in Italy at 1 January 2022, a figure that places the community in twelfth place in terms of numbers (one place higher than in the prior year), among the main non-EU populations. Senegalese nationals account for 2.8% of the total non-EU population, in conjunction with population growth of 7.4% in 2021.

The age pyramid of the Senegalese community in Italy shows a more balanced age distribution than that of the Italian population with a decidedly younger profile. The Senegalese population in Italy is composed of a high proportion of young people, with 39.5% being under 30. Despite the high presence of minors, the main age group in the community, it remains slightly lower than the average for non-EU citizens: 19.5%, compared to around 21% for the non-EU population overall. The community ranks fifth from last of the main non-EU immigrant populations in terms of the percentage of minors. This figure is still a consequence of a reduced presence of family units, this being likely due to a circular mobility type migration pattern of the African community. Another significant factor is the share of over-50s, who account for about 23% of community presences (in line with that recorded for the non-EU as a whole). The community therefore has a low **average age** (35), and a major **gender imbalance** (women are only 27.5% of the community). In fact, the Senegalese community ranks third in the wider non-European community in terms of the highest level of gender imbalance, behind the Ukrainian and Pakistani communities<sup>2</sup>: 45%.

Analysis of the type of **residence permits** reveals growth in the stabilisation process of the African community and at the same time confirms a migratory pattern of a circular nature, which therefore shows a consolidation of the presence in the territory that is less stable than other communities with a long migratory presence. As of 1 January 2022, long-term residents among Senegalese nationals in Italy totalled 65%, just below non-EU citizen average of 65.8%.

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

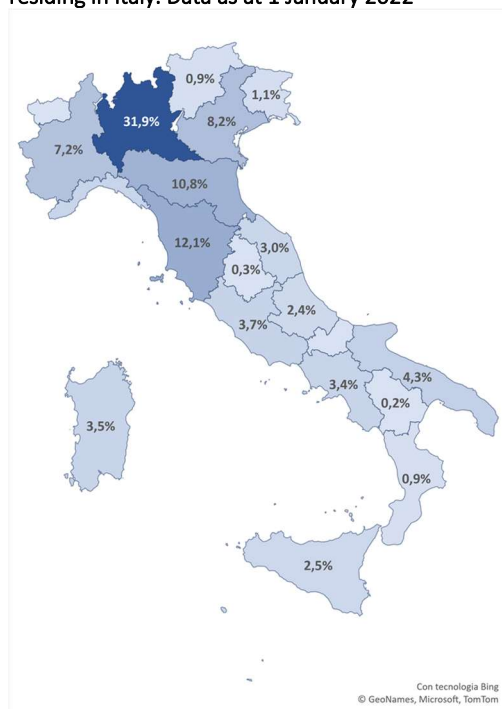
<sup>1</sup> Statistics on legally residing non-EU citizens include all nationals from countries outside the European Union who are in possession of a valid residence document (residence permit or EU long-term residence permit) as well as minors under the age of 14 who still appear on an adult's permit (Note: since 2016, minors can no longer be included on their parents' residence permit). Not all legally resident foreign citizens 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.

<sup>2</sup> The degree of gender imbalance is calculated based on the difference between the percentage incidences of the two genders.

Among **short-term residence permits**, work reasons are the main motivation for residence in Italy (43%), with an incidence almost 9 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU citizens overall (for whom work reasons are the second motivation), while family reasons are only the second motivation for immigration (35% of residence permits). Residents for family reasons are minors in 44% of cases. The number of permits issued for asylum, application for asylum and other forms of protection is also significant, accounting for 19.4% of permits issued to Senegalese nationals.

In 2021, after the drastic 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 regularisation of non-EU citizens already residing in Italy without formal recognition. In the clear majority of cases, Senegalese citizens who entered the country in 2021 did so for family reasons (61.3%), an increase of almost 90% over the prior year. There was a very significant increase in new work-related permits versus the prior year: +188%. Work related motives account for 24.3% of the new permits issued to Senegalese nationals.

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



In terms of **geographical distribution**, 63.4% of Senegalese nationals in Italy reside in the north, particularly in Lombardy, the first region for the number of Senegalese immigrants, which hosts around 32% of the total (compared to around 26% of the non-EU population overall). This is followed by Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, which account, respectively, for 12.1% and 10.8% of the total number of Senegalese citizens in Italy<sup>3</sup>. Numbers are also significant in southern Italy, where 17.4% of Senegalese nationals have applied for or renewed their residence permit, with a higher concentration in Apulia (4.3%), Sardinia (3.5%) and Campania (3.4%).

**Data on the labour market<sup>4</sup>** show that the community has a strong presence in the strictly industrial sector, which overall employs almost half the Senegalese working population in Italy (47.1%). Involvement of the Senegalese community is also high in the *Commercial* sector, which employs about 13% of the community's workers, and in the *Hospitality, Transport and Business Services* sectors (both with an incidence of 11.9%).

An analysis of the main indicators on the labour market reveals good **employment performance** of the Senegalese community compared to the overall non-EU population: the employment rate is higher (61% vs. 58.4%) and the inactivity rate is lower (25.8% vs. 32.8%); in contrast, the share of jobseekers in the labour force is higher (17.9% vs. 13%). However, the low

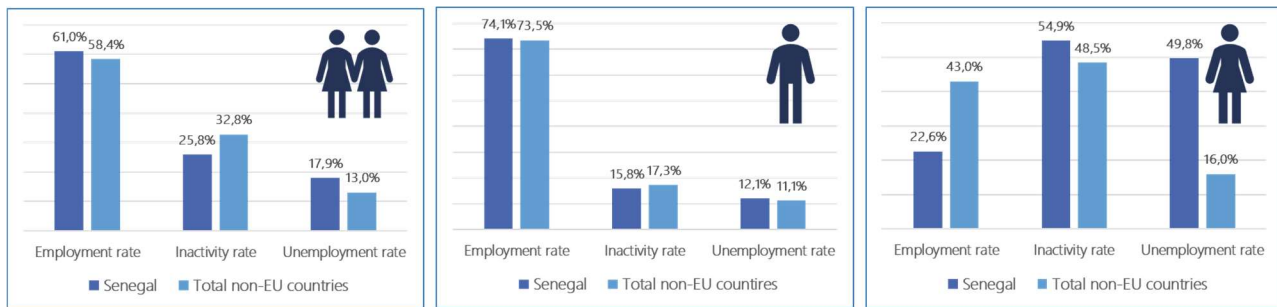
engagement of women in the community in the labour market remains evident, as reflected in the wide **gap** between **male** (74.1%) and **female** (22.6%) **employment** rates.

These differences became more pronounced between the first half of 2021 and the first half of 2022, due to the more pronounced reduction in employment recorded for women: -2.5% compared to -0.3%. The low engagement of the Senegalese female population in the labour market is a contributory factor in producing less stable employment statistics.

<sup>3</sup> For information on the distribution and concentration of the foreign population in the major metropolitan areas, refer to the Reports on the presence of migrants in Metropolitan Cities, available in the "Documents and Research - Reports by DG Immigration and Integration Policies" area of the portal [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it) and in the "Studies and Statistics" area of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies website - [www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it).

<sup>4</sup> Labour market data were provided by ISTAT RCFL at H1 2022.

## Main job market indicators by gender and citizenship (v.%) H1 2022



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

Despite lacking a high **level of education** (university graduates are 2.4% compared to 10.5% of all non-EU citizens while school diploma holders are 17.5% compared to 32.8%), it has managed to secure its own specific position on the Italian labour market through specialisation in manual work, an area that is notoriously unable to attract sufficient resources among Italian nationals to meet labour demands.

With regard to **occupational types**, in fact, manual labour was the predominant type of work for the community in the first half of 2022, involving more than 80% of Senegalese job-holders: *skilled manual labour* accounts for 44.9% of the community's workers, while *unskilled manual labour* concerns around 34%. 21.2% of Senegalese workers are in *clerical, sales and personal service jobs*, while the incidence of *executives and professionals in the intellectual and technical fields* is zero.

The Senegalese community, which has always played an important role in Italy's entrepreneurial fabric, saw a drop in the number of sole proprietorships in 2021, slipping from fifth to eighth position in the ranking of the main nationalities non-EU entrepreneurs. There were 18,242 sole proprietors of Senegalese origin as of 31 December 2021, or 4.6% of non-EU business owners in Italy (-2.7% compared to 2020). Men account for 89.5% of **Senegalese sole proprietorships**, although women run businesses increased by more than +5% compared to the prior year. With reference to the sectors of economic activity, there is an overwhelming channelling of the community's businesses in the *Commercial and Transport* sector which, with a share of 85%, is absolutely prevalent: this level of specialisation is a characteristic feature of the community, which accounts for 9.5% of non-EU businesses in the sector.

In relation to the adoption of **welfare measures**<sup>5</sup>, data on the use of certain assistance provisions and wage subsidies in particular show that 3% of non-EU wage subsidy recipients are Senegalese nationals, a figure that rises to 3.8% in the case of the ordinary redundancy fund (CIGO), and to about 7% in the case of the extraordinary redundancy fund (CIGS), a statistic that is also to be considered in relation to the community's extensive integration in the industrial sector. The community figures particularly highly in terms of unemployment benefits, especially if we consider that 4% of social employment insurance (NASPI) recipients are Senegalese nationals. With regard to *IVS pensions*, there is a small share of beneficiaries among Senegalese nationals, mainly due to the prevalence of youth workers in the community. The percentage of persons receiving *welfare pensions* is also low (2.1%), although rising to 2.4% for *pensions and social allowances*.

Money transfers to Senegal account for 5% of the total volume of financial resources sent from Italy to the rest of the world. Senegal is the second ranked destination of cash transfers from Italy to African countries and the sixth ranked country on the national level. This flow of resources grew by 77% between 2016 and 2021, although it eased by 11% in 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Source: National Social Security Institute (INPS) - General Statistical Actuarial Coordination as at 2021.

