



# THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual report on the presence of migrants

*Executive summary*



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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, Ukrainian, Chinese, Indian, Bangladeshi, Egyptian, Filipino, Pakistani, Moldavian, Sri Lankan, Senegalese, Nigerian, Tunisian, Peruvian and Ecuadorian.

A key factor also in the 2023 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 Integration Services Area of Sviluppo Lavoro Italia. 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 the Data Science Applications B.U. - Studies and Research Division of Sviluppo Lavoro Italia. 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 – 2023 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 website [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 and a comparison between the main nationalities.

The 2023 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 Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, in the framework of the project “START-Support to Integrated Multiannual Programming on Employment, Integration and Inclusion”.

## The Indian community in Italy

The Indian community ranks fifth in numerical terms among the major non-EU communities. As at 1 January 2023, there were **164,419** Indians legally residing<sup>1</sup> in Italy, up 1.5% over the previous year, in line with the general upward trend of non-EU settlements (+4.7%).

The territorial distribution of the Indian population in Italy reveals a marked prevalence in the north, where 59% of the community resides. Lombardy ranks as the first region of Indian settlement, hosting 30.3% of the community. This figure represents just over a quarter of non-EU citizens as a whole. In third place is Veneto, with an incidence of 10.3%.

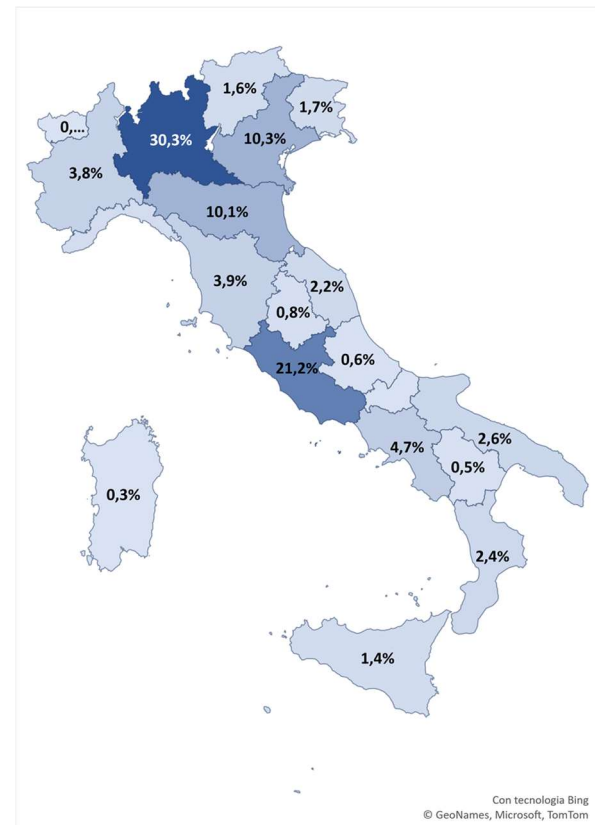
Approximately 28% of the Indian community resides in central Italy, particularly in Lazio, which ranks as the second region of Indian settlement (21.2%).

Analysing the figures by province, the Indian community appears to be particularly concentrated in the metropolitan city of Rome, which hosts the largest Indian community in Italy (over 20,000 people), followed by the cities of Latina and Brescia (approximately 13,000 people each). The concentration in the latter two areas is due to the cities' rather high demand for labour in the agricultural sector.

The Indian community shows a rather marked male predominance: men account for 58.7%, women the remaining 41.3%. This gender imbalance has been diminishing over the years and is less pronounced than for other communities from the Indian sub-continent. The Indian community in Italy is also characterised by a marked presence of 'young adults': 47.8% of legally residing Indians are between the ages of 25 and 44; this figure drops to 39.3% for the non-EU population as a whole. The proportion of over-60s is decidedly lower than for non-EU nationals as a whole: (5.8% vs. 10.8%). Minors represent the predominant age group in the community, with an incidence of 21.1%; a fact that can be linked to the growing presence of families and a high **birth rate<sup>2</sup> (14.5%, which is significantly higher than the 11.9% registered by the non-EU population as a whole).**

The year 2022 marked a positive record for the total number of new residence permits issued: 449,118, up 85.9% over the previous year. This is the highest number of entries of non-EU citizens in a year in the past 10 years. This increase can be linked both to the war in Ukraine, which led to the entry of about 148,000 citizens fleeing the Eastern European country and granted temporary protection, and to the regularisation of citizens

**Distribution of the Indian population legally residing in Italy. Data as at 1 January 2023**



Source: Processing by SpINT, Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, based on ISTAT data

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

<sup>2</sup> Birth rate is the ratio between the number of births in a community or population during a period of time and the size of the average population in the same period per thousand.

already present in the territory based on Italian Leg. Decree 34 of 2020<sup>3</sup>, whose applications were largely examined in 2022. As for the Indian community, new residence permits issued during 2022 equalled 14,479 (3.2% of the total), up 14.2% over the previous year. Indian citizens who entered the country in 2022 did so predominantly for family reasons (44.1%), registering an increase of 7.3% over the previous year. Particularly significant, and higher than the non-EU population as a whole, is the share of new permits for work- (36.8% vs. 15%) and study-related reasons (12.4% vs. 5.6%); the Indian community comes second, after the Chinese, in terms of entries related to the latter reason. It should also be noted that the **5,196 Indian students** are present primarily in academia, where they account for 5.4% of non-EU university students, which puts the community in third place for the number of non-EU students.

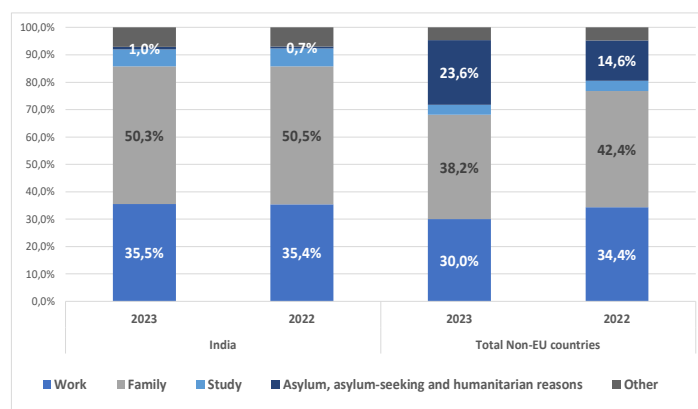
An overall analysis of residence permits relating to the presence of legally residing non-EU citizens confirms a relatively low stabilisation of the Indian community in Italy: **the share of long-term residents<sup>4</sup> within the community on 1 January 2023 is, in fact, 58.7%**, a lower percentage than that recorded by the non-EU population as a whole (60.1%) and down by 3 percentage points compared to the previous year, mainly due to the increase in permits subject to renewal as a result of the new entries.

With reference to the reasons for short-term residence permits, it is worth noting that the majority of the community's permits are linked to family reasons, with a higher incidence than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole (50.3% vs. 38.2%). Work is the second most important reason for seeking residence, accounting for more than a third of all short-term residence permits, a share more than 5 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole. The incidence of study-related permits is also higher, 6.2% vs. 3.7%, reaffirming the importance of this area for the community.

The **predominant** - though not exclusive - **profile** among Indian employed persons is that of **male unskilled manual worker**, mainly in the **agricultural sector**.

The employment rate of the Indian population aged 15-64 in Italy in 2022 was 59%, with a slightly positive trend compared to 2021 (+0.4%), but a smaller increase than that recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole (+2.7%). The community's **inactivity** rate is higher than that of third-country nationals as a whole: 35.5% vs. 32.7% (down 0.7% vs. 2021). The situation is reversed when it comes to **unemployment**: the share of jobseekers in the labour force stands at 8.4%, compared to 12% for the non-EU population as a whole. A decisive influence on the Indian population's levels of inactivity, which are higher than those recorded for the non-EU population as a whole, is the poor integration of the community's female component into the labour market: the share of inactive Indian women is decidedly higher than that of non-EU nationals as a whole (76.9% vs. 48.3%), and contributes to the indicator's rather high overall value. Furthermore, there is a distinctly large gap between the employment rate of Indian women and men: 18.4% vs. 84.9%, the latter figure being the highest among the main non-EU communities.

**Short-term residence permits by type and citizenship (v%). Data as at 1 January 2023 and 1 January 2022**



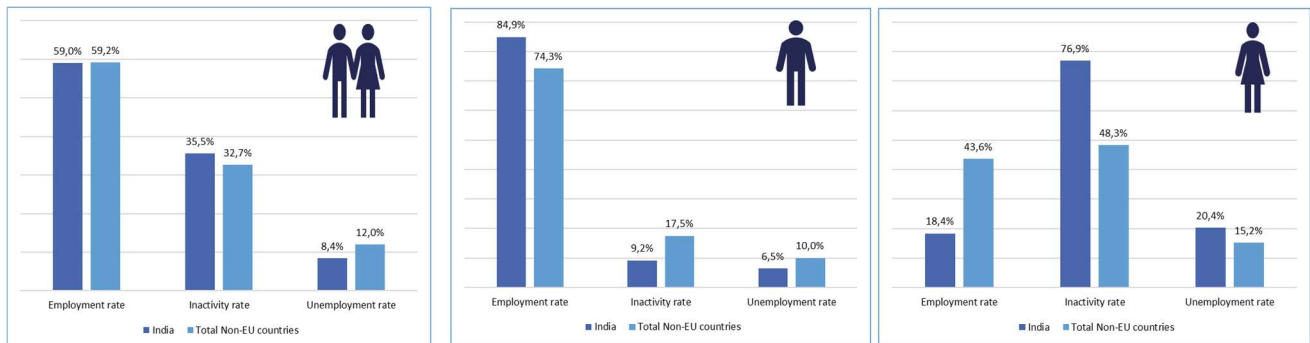
Source: Processing by SpINT, Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, based on ISTAT-Ministry of the Interior data

<sup>3</sup> Art.103 of Italian Leg. Decree no. 34 of 19 May 2020 introduced an illegal labour emergence provision in the following sectors: agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, fishing and aquaculture and related activities, personal care, domestic work to support family needs.

<sup>4</sup> A long-term EU residence permit may be issued to foreign nationals who have held a valid residence permit for at least five years, provided they can prove that they have a minimum income of no less than the social allowance calculated annually.

The gender distribution of people employed confirms a low presence of Indian females on the Italian labour market: the female share of employed Indian nationals is around 12%, compared to a female incidence among all legal residents of 41.3%.

#### Population (15 years and over) and main labour market indicators by gender and citizenship (v.%) Year 2022



Source: Processing by SpINT, Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, based on RCFL - ISTAT microdata

An analysis of the sectors of employment highlights a very clear channelling of employed people of Indian origin towards the **agricultural sector**. This is the prevalent sector of employment, accounting for **36.5%** of the Indians employed in Italy. Reiterating the important role played by the community in this sphere, it is worth noting that approximately one in three non-EU employees in this sector is an Indian citizen. The incidence of *Industry in the strict sense* is also very significant: 32.6% of Indians are employed in this sector. Indeed, this sector has seen the most significant increase in importance among the Indian workforce, +8.6%, at the expense of the share of employment in agriculture (-6.8%) and in *Transport and business services* (-3.4%).

Manual labour, both skilled or unskilled, involves more than 82% of the Indian workforce. In particular, there is a slight prevalence of *unskilled manual labour* (42.5%), while *skilled manual workers* reach an incidence of 39.6%. Decidedly lower than the non-EU population as a whole is the share of employees in *Clerical, sales and personal service roles* (12.1% vs. 30.3%), while the share of *Executives and professionals in the intellectual and technical fields* is 5.8% (the relative share for the non-EU population as a whole is 6.7%).

In terms of self-employment, there is a strong concentration in the primary sector: the 285 independent farmers belonging to the community represent 9.4% of the non-EU population as a whole.

The Indian community is not particularly active in the entrepreneurial sphere: registering fifth in terms of the number of legal residents, it ranks eleventh in terms of the number of sole proprietors. Indeed, the 7,667 Indian sole proprietorships as at 31 December 2022 represented 2% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy.

