



# THE MOROCCAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual report on the presence of migrants  
*Executive summary*



20

23

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 Moroccan community in Italy

As of 1 January 2023, there were **399,146** Moroccans legally residing<sup>1</sup> in Italy, accounting for 10.7% of all third-country nationals. This figure places the community in **first** position among the main non-EU citizens in numerical terms. Contrary to the general trend of non-EU settlements (+4.7%), the Moroccan community recorded a 2.2% decrease compared to the previous year<sup>2</sup>.

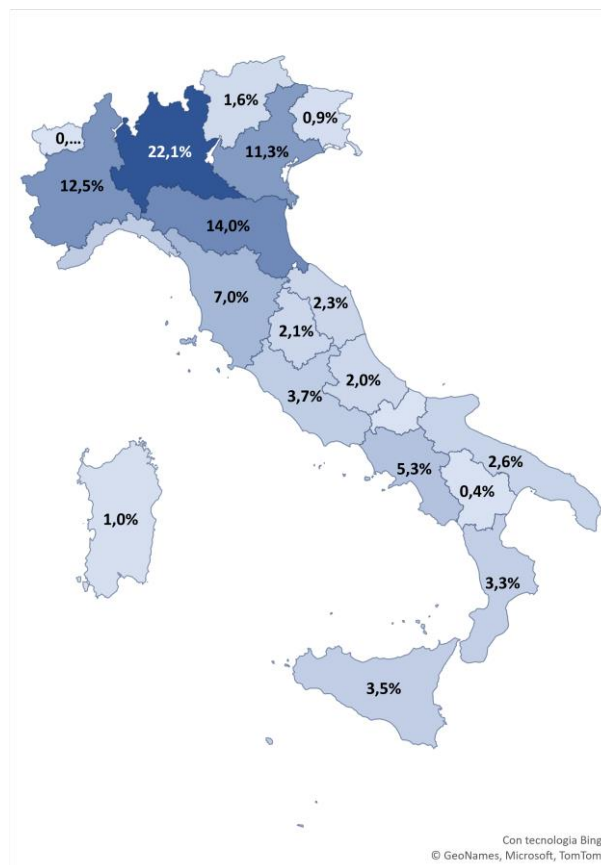
66.5% of Moroccan citizens in Italy are located in the north of the country. In particular, the first region of Moroccan settlement is Lombardy, which hosts over a fifth of the community (22.1%, compared to around 26% of the non-EU community as a whole), while in second place we find Emilia-Romagna with 14% of the community's total settlements. The third region of Moroccan settlement is Piedmont, with 12.5% of all Moroccans legally residing in Italy. On the other hand, 15% of the community is located in central Italy (vs. 23.7% of the total non-EU population), while 18.5% of the Moroccans legally residing in Italy have settled in the south and on the islands.

The Moroccan population in Italy is slightly imbalanced by gender: women make up 46.2% and men the remaining 53.8%.

The community has a distribution by age group that is more unbalanced towards the younger age groups: the share of under-30s is 38.8% (above the 37.1% recorded for the non-EU population as a whole, and as compared to the 26.7% recorded for the Italian population) and the average age is 34.7 (for the non-EU population as a whole, the value is 35.8). There is a high presence of minors (26.5%), who represent the predominant age group in the Moroccan community (for non-EU nationals as a whole, the share drops to 20.6%). The proportion of over-50s is slightly lower than that of non-EU nationals as a whole: 22.2% versus 23.5%, more than one in five Moroccans in Italy. A high incidence of large households stands out: 37.2% are made up of more than five people (vs. 23.7% for the non-EU population as a whole). However, the prevailing family type is the 3- to 4-person household, which accounts for 42.5%<sup>3</sup>.

In 2022, **24,259 Moroccan citizens entered Italy**, up 3.4% over the previous year<sup>4</sup>. Family reunification was the main reason for entry (around 66% of the entries of Moroccans), down 6.6% compared to the previous year. The community's second reason for entering Italy was work (24.2%, up from the previous year: +20.5%).

Distribution of the Moroccan 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> This figure is most likely linked to acquisitions of Italian citizenship, which - as is well known - leads to a reduction in the statistics, since those who become Italian are no longer counted as foreigners.

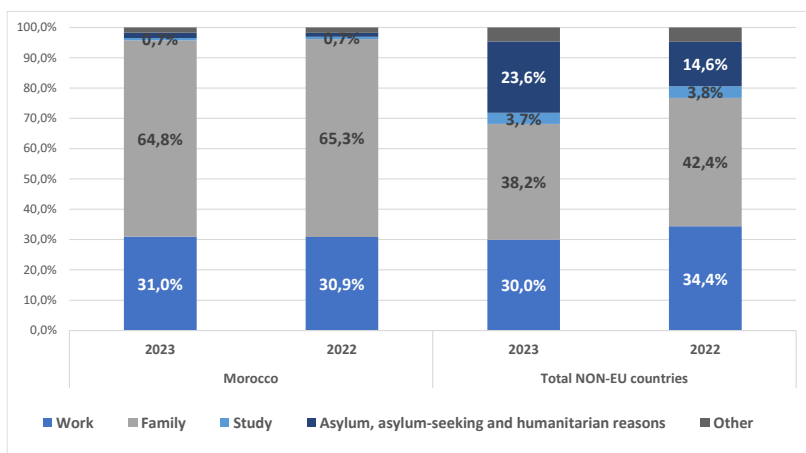
<sup>3</sup> Source: RCFL ISTAT - Year 2022.

<sup>4</sup> The increase recorded for the non-EU population as a whole was 85.9%, a figure that can be linked both to the war in Ukraine, which led to the entry of about 148,000 citizens fleeing the Eastern European country (mainly with temporary protection permits), and to

The analysis of the types of residence permit held by Moroccan nationals shows a high level of stabilisation: **the share of long-term residents<sup>5</sup> within the community on 1 January 2023 is 69.5%**, over 9 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole.

As far as short-term residence permits are concerned, family reasons are also the main motivation for Moroccans residing in Italy (64.8%), further confirming the stabilisation of the Moroccan presence in the country, its incidence being almost 27 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole (for whom family reasons are nevertheless the main motivation). The second reason for seeking residence was work, with an incidence practically identical to that found in the non-EU population as a whole (31% vs. 30% for non-EU nationals).

**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

population as a whole: the employment rate in 2022 was about 48% (vs. 59.2%), the unemployment rate was 14.3% (12% for non-EU nationals), while the share of inactive people aged 15-64 was 44.1% (vs. 32.7%). In line with the non-EU population as a whole, the community under review also recorded an increase in employment and a decrease in unemployment and inactivity: compared to 2021, the employment rate rose by +4.8% (vs. +2.7% for non-EU nationals), inactivity increased by 0.9% (exactly like for non-EU nationals), while the share of jobseekers fell by 7.1% (vs. -2.7% for non-EU nationals). Contributing to the community's worse employment conditions is the low inclusion of women in the labour market. Within the community, there is still a large gap between the employment rate of men (68.8%) and women (23.5%). The gender gap is also significant in terms of inactivity and unemployment: the latter, for Moroccan women, stands at around 25%, while for men it is 10.6%; in terms of inactivity, the difference is greater, with a figure of 68.7% recorded for women and 23% for men.

Compared to the previous year, the community's permits subject to renewal increased, for all reasons, by a total of 8.7%. Overall, the data shows a good level of stabilisation, due to the majority of Moroccan citizens holding long-term residence permits and to the presence of many family units.

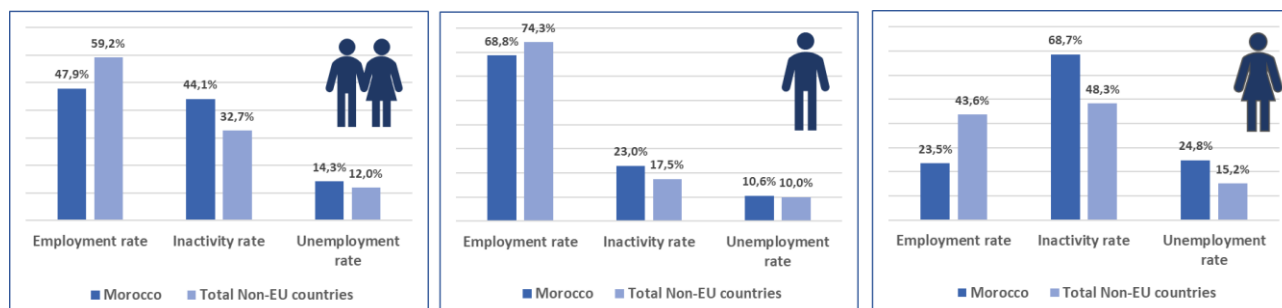
The prevailing - though not exclusive - occupational profile among Moroccan workers is that of men employed mainly in industry, transport and business services, and trade, mainly in specialised manual jobs.

The Moroccan community in Italy registers worse employment performance than the non-EU

the regularisation of citizens already present in the territory based on Italian Leg. Decree 34 of 2020, whose applications were largely examined in 2022.

<sup>5</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.

## 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

With regard to the distribution of employed persons of Moroccan origin across different economic sectors, the aforementioned concentration in *Industry in the strict sense* stands out particularly: almost a quarter (26.1%) of those employed in the community work in this sector, compared to around 20% of non-EU nationals as a whole. The second most important sector is *Transport and other business services*, with an incidence of 15.5% (13.8% for non-EU nationals as a whole), immediately followed by *Trade*, which achieves a higher incidence than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole (15.2% vs. 11.2%). The share of Moroccan employees in Construction (12.3%) and in Services (around 12%) is also significant.

With regard to employment, there is a strong weighting of Moroccan nationals among agricultural employees: 15.4% of non-EU labourers are Moroccan. The incidence drops to 10.8% among corporate employees, and reaches a minimum of 5.8% in domestic work. With regard to self-employment, the Moroccan presence is very significant: the 13,450 plus artisans belonging to the community represent 9.5% of the non-EU artisans in Italy. In the trade sector, the share of Moroccan self-employed workers over the total is even higher (18% of non-EU traders), with a male incidence of 83.7%<sup>6</sup>.

The Moroccan community ranks first in terms of the number of sole proprietorships: as at 31 December 2022, the number of sole proprietors of Moroccan origin was 59,734, or 15.3% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy. Compared to the previous year, the number of Moroccan entrepreneurs fell significantly more than the number of non-EU entrepreneurs as a whole (-4.9% vs. -0.8%). Sole proprietors from the Moroccan community are men in a clear majority of cases (86.4% of the total). In the entrepreneurial sphere, the community focuses on *Sales and Transport*, in which around 67% of Moroccan sole proprietorships operate, accounting for almost 37% of non-EU sole proprietorships in the sector.

The proportion of Moroccans among non-EU recipients of old-age pensions is rather small (6.7%). Conversely, the community is particularly represented among the recipients of invalidity pensions (15.6% of non-EU recipients are Moroccan citizens) and among non-EU recipients of welfare pensions, with around 17% of the recipients belonging to the community; this figure rises to 18% in the case of Constant attendance supplements and the like. Moreover, in the Moroccan community, 34,623 families receive a basic income (Reddito di cittadinanza) or basic pension (Pensione di cittadinanza), or almost one in five non-EU households (19.5%). The community's high incidence in this area is most likely linked in part to the high proportion of large households.

<sup>6</sup> Source: INPS - General Statistical Actuarial Coordination - Year 2022.

