



# THE MOLDOVAN 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, Moldovan, 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 Moldovan community in Italy

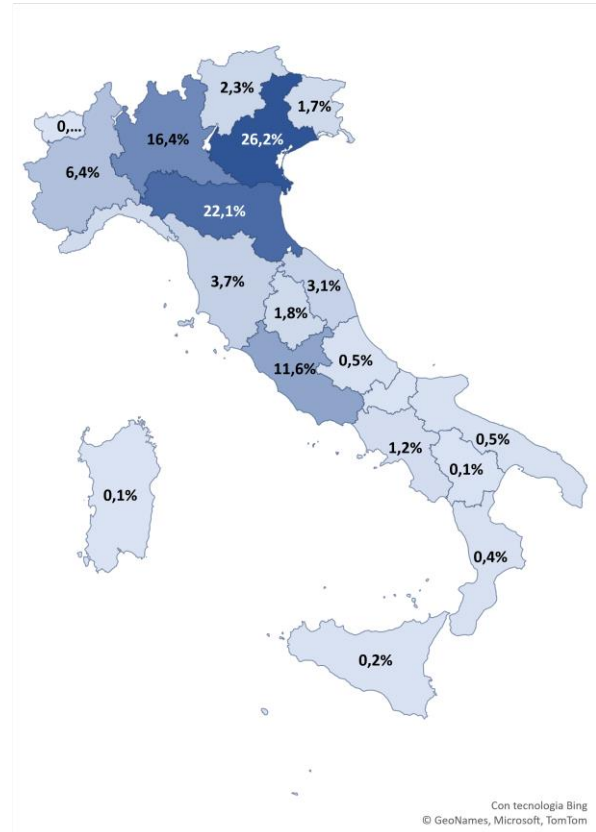
As at 1 January 2023, there were **107,377** Moldovans legally residing<sup>1</sup> in Italy, accounting for 2.9% of all third-country nationals. This figure places the community in **tenth** position among the main non-EU citizens in numerical terms.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the general trend of non-EU settlements (+4.7%), the Moldovan community recorded a 5.5% decrease compared to the previous year<sup>3</sup>.

The Moldovan population is heavily concentrated in the north of the country, where 76.7% of the community is located. The top three regions of Moldovan settlement are located in the North. In particular, the first region of Moldovan settlement is Veneto (26.2% vs. 9.5% for non-EU citizens as a whole), followed by Emilia-Romagna (22.1%) and Lombardy (16.4%). One fifth of the community is located in central Italy, with a significant presence in Lazio (11.6%). The south of the country, instead, accounts for a meagre 3% of the Moldovan population.

The Moldovan community is characterised by a strong **imbalance in favour of the female gender**: women account for 67.1% (a stable share compared to the previous year) and men for the remaining 33%. This can be attributed, on the one hand, to the history of Moldovan migration to Italy, which primarily involved women who came to Italy in response to a high demand for labour in the field of family care, and on the other, to the prevalence of a migration pattern focused on circular mobility: those who migrate maintain a strong link with the country of origin, where the family unit remains, and support its livelihood through wire transfers.

The Moldovan community is decidedly older than the non-EU population as a whole, with an average age of 39.6 (vs. 35.8) and a share of over-60s of 15% (vs. 10.8%). In particular, there is a significant concentration in the older age group: more than half are over 40 (vs. around 42% for non-EU citizens as a whole). The community is also, among the main non-EU communities, the one with the lowest incidence of minors, who-although they represent the prevailing age group- account for 16.4%, compared to 20.6% for non-EU citizens as a whole, a characteristic attributable to the low presence of family units. Indeed, the community is characterised by a high incidence of single-person households and couples, which is higher than that found among the non-EU population as a whole: 18.5% and 17.9% vs. 16.2% and 12.6%, respectively. Conversely, the

Distribution of the Moldovan 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> The presence of a strong Romanian community makes it difficult to have an exact estimate of the Moldovan community in Italy, due to the widespread phenomenon of dual citizenship.

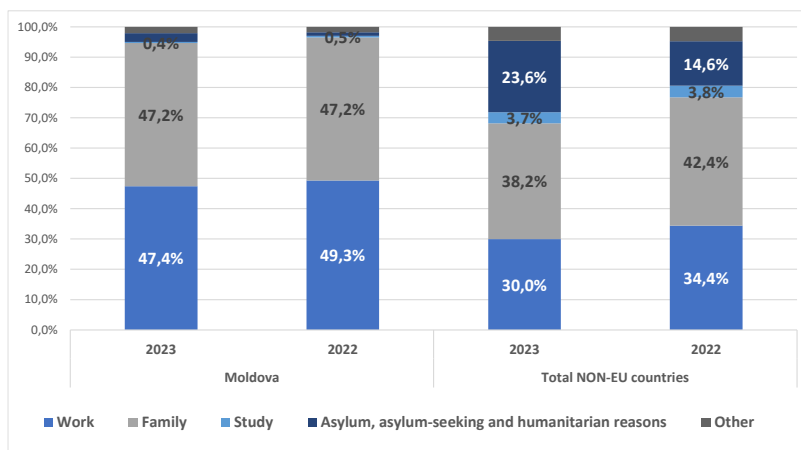
<sup>3</sup> This figure is most likely linked to acquisitions of Italian citizenship, which - as is well known - leads to a reduction in the statistics, since those who become Italian are no longer counted as foreigners.

shares of large families made up of 5 to 7 people (9.8% vs. 22.7%) and of more than 8 people (0% vs. 1%) are lower than those recorded for the non-EU population as a whole<sup>4</sup>.

In 2022, **3,913 Moldovan citizens entered Italy**, up 4.9% over the previous year<sup>5</sup>. Family reunification was the prevalent reason for entry (51.5%), up roughly 10% compared to the previous year. The community's second reason for entering Italy was work (although the figure fell significantly over the previous year:-18.8%).

The analysis of the types of residence permit shows a high level of stabilisation: **the share of long-term residents<sup>6</sup> within the community on 1 January 2023 is 85%**, around 25 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole. This figure places the Moldovan community in first position among the main non-EU citizens in terms of the number of long-term residents.

#### 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

Among the reasons for permit renewals, work-related reasons prevail, with an incidence of 47.4% compared to 30% for the non-EU population as a whole. These are followed by family reasons, with an incidence that is 9 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole (for whom they are the predominant reason). An analysis of demographic data and residence permits reveals a specific pattern to Moldovan migration to Italy. On the one hand, a good level of stabilisation emerges, with a clear majority of Moldovan citizens holding long-term residence permits. On the

other hand, this stability does not always translate into family reunification, highlighting the difficulties encountered in this regard by women in family services, who maintain close ties with their country of origin and with family members residing there, often minors.

The **predominant**- though not exclusive- **profile** among Moldovans involves **employment in clerical, sales and personal service roles** in the **Personal services** sector.

The Moldovan population in Italy is well integrated in the labour market, performing better in employment terms than third-country nationals as a whole. The **employment rate** is **66.2%** (vs. 59.2% for the non-EU population as a whole), the **inactivity rate** is **25.9%** (vs. 32.7%), while the **unemployment rate** stands at 10.8% (vs. 12%). However, in contrast to the overall non-EU population of the country, the community under review is seeing an increase in the share of jobseekers (+1.3%), mainly due to the dynamics involving women in the community, whose exit from inactivity is not fully absorbed by employment, leading to an increase in unemployment. In any case, the community shows a decidedly higher employment rate for women than non-

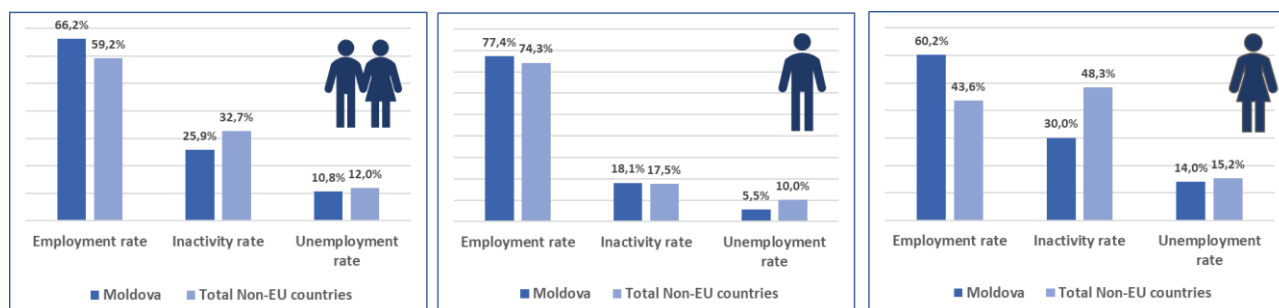
<sup>4</sup> Source: RCFL ISTAT - Year 2022.

<sup>5</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 special protection permits), and to 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>6</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.

EU women as a whole (60.2% vs. 43.6%), confirming the high presence of Moldovan females on the Italian labour market.

#### 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

The distribution of employed people of Moldovan origin across different **economic sectors** is concentrated primarily in the *Public, social and personal services* sector, accounting for almost two-fifths of Moldovans employed in Italy, compared to one-quarter of non-EU nationals as a whole. The second largest sector is *Transport and other business services*, which employs 16.7% of the community's workers, closely followed by *Industry in the strict sense* with an incidence of 15.1%. The community's presence in the construction sector is also significant (11.6%), while all other sectors register shares below 10%.

As at 31 December 2022, the number of **sole proprietors** of Moldovan origin was 7,720, or 2% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy. While the number of non-EU sole proprietors decreased slightly (-0.9%), the number of Moldovan entrepreneurs increased by about 9% over 2021. Although the community is characterised by a predominance of women, there is a clear majority of men (70.1%) among sole proprietors. There is also a strong sectoral specialisation of Moldovan-led companies: almost half (48.8%) operate in the construction industry.

In contrast to the non-EU population as a whole, the Moldovan community makes particular use of old-age pensions: in line with the age composition of the community, which, as seen, sees a rather strong presence of the older age groups, the proportion of Moldovans among the non-EU recipients of old-age pensions is significant (6.5%). Also contributing to the community's good level of integration in the Italian economic and social fabric is the high incidence of recipients of family assistance measures. In particular, despite a reduced presence of minors, the strong presence of Moldovan women in the labour market is reflected in a large percentage of maternity allowance recipients<sup>7</sup>: 6.2% of non-EU women benefiting from this measure are of Moldovan nationality.

<sup>7</sup> Otherwise known as "compulsory abstention allowance", this is a form of income support in lieu of salary and is paid to female workers for maternity leave and childbirth for a total of 5 months.

