



# THE PAKISTANI 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 Pakistani community in Italy

As of 1 January 2023, there were **138,884** Pakistanis legally residing<sup>1</sup> in Italy, accounting for 3.7% of all third-country nationals. This figure places the community in **ninth** position among the main non-EU citizens in numerical terms. In line with the general trend of non-EU settlements (+4.7%), the Pakistani community recorded a 4.3% growth compared to the previous year<sup>2</sup>.

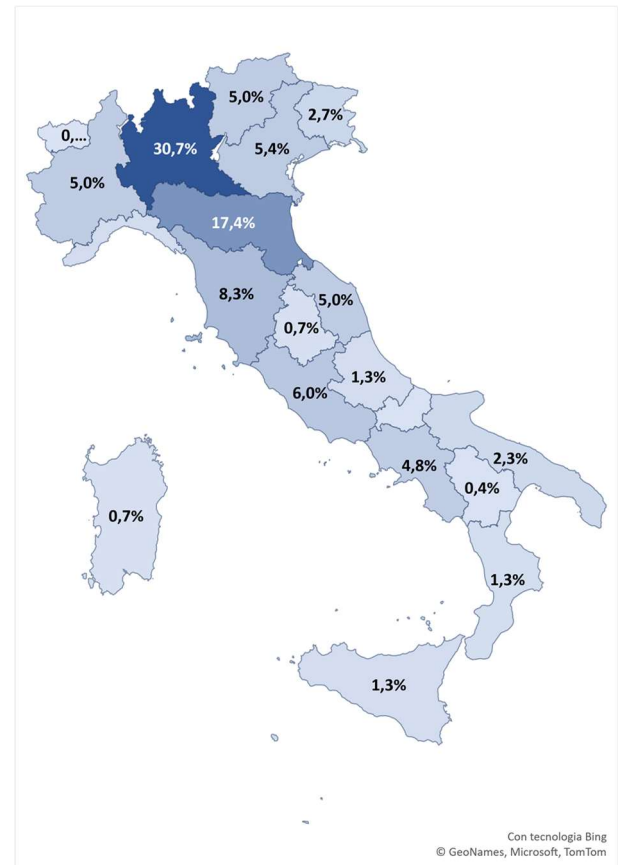
67.7% of Pakistani citizens in Italy are located in the north of the country. In particular, the first region of Pakistani settlement is Lombardy, which hosts 30.7% of the community (vs. roughly 26% of the non-EU community as a whole), while in second place we find Emilia-Romagna with 17.4% of the community's members. The third region of Pakistani settlement is Tuscany, which hosts 8.3% of Pakistanis legally residing in Italy. One in five Pakistanis are in central Italy, compared to 23.7% of non-EU nationals as a whole. Instead, 12.3% of the community is settled in the south, about 5% in Campania and 2.3% in Apulia, while in the other southern regions the percentage does not exceed 1.3%.

The Pakistani population in Italy is very unbalanced in gender terms: men make up almost three quarters (73.5%) of the community, women the remaining 26.5%.

Despite a slightly lower presence of minors than the average (19.8% vs. 20.6%), the Pakistani community in Italy has a more unbalanced distribution towards the younger age groups: under-30s represent 43.6% of the community, against approx. 37% for non-EU citizens as a whole. The 30-50 age group is also highly represented, accounting for roughly 47% of the community (39.5% for the non-EU population as a whole). As a result, while almost a quarter (23.5%) of third-country nationals in Italy are over 50, for Pakistanis the percentage is just 9.5%. The Pakistani community is characterised by the presence of very large households: the prevailing family type comprises 5-7 people and accounts for 43.6% of the total (vs. a non-EU average of 22.7%), followed by 3-4 person households (around 30%, vs. 47.5% for the non-EU population as a whole). Two-member households account for about 5% of the total, while a higher-than-average incidence emerges for one-member households (18.2% vs. 16.2%)<sup>3</sup>.

In 2022, **20,094 Pakistani citizens entered Italy**, up 36.1% over the previous year<sup>4</sup>. Entries linked to asylum-seeking or a form of protection were the most prevalent reasons for entry (around 42% of the entries of Pakistanis), with an increase of 38.4% over the previous year. The Pakistani community ranks second among

Distribution of the Pakistani 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.

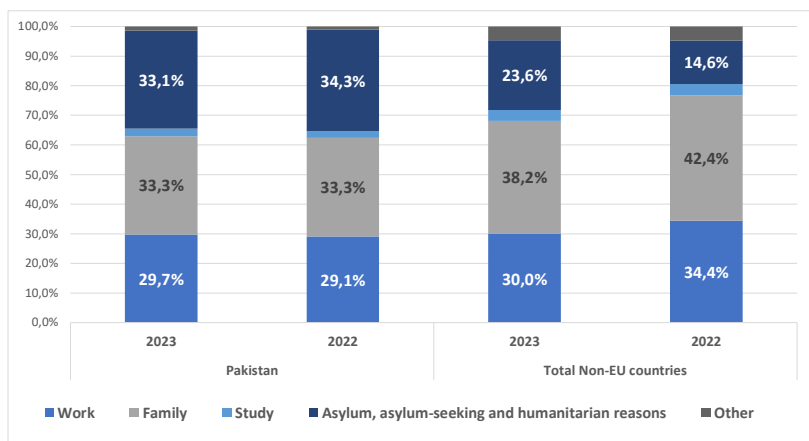
<sup>3</sup> Source: RCFL ISTAT - Year 2022.

<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 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.

the main non-EU communities in terms of the incidence of this motivation for entry into Italy. The community's second reason for entering Italy was work (27.2%, up significantly from the previous year: +111.6%).

The analysis of the types of residence permit held by Pakistani nationals shows a low level of stabilisation: **the share of long-term residents<sup>5</sup> within the community on 1 January 2023 is 47.5%**, more than 12 percentage points lower than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole.

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



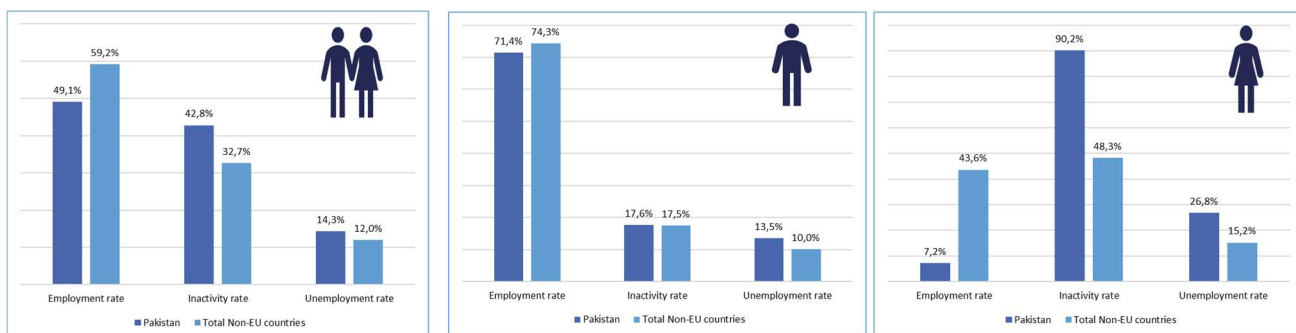
As far as short-term residence permits are concerned, family reasons represent the main reason for Pakistanis staying in Italy (33.3%), with *Asylum, asylum-seeking and humanitarian reasons* running close second, with an almost identical incidence (33.1% vs. 23.6% for the non-EU population). Compared to the previous year, the community's permits subject to renewal increased, for all reasons, by a total of 8.8%. There emerges, therefore, a low level of stabilisation for the community, with the majority of Pakistani citizens holding short-term residence permits and with a high incidence of holders of or applications for forms of protection, net, however, of the presence of very large families.

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

The predominant - though not exclusive - profile among Pakistani employed people is that of male worker employed in industry, transport and business services, mainly performing unskilled manual labour.

The Pakistani community in Italy registers worse employment performance than the non-EU population as a whole: the employment rate in 2022 was about 49% (vs. 59.2% for non-EU nationals), the unemployment rate was 14.3% (vs. 12%), while the share of inactive people aged 15-64 was just below 43% (vs. 32.7%). In contrast to the non-EU population as a whole, the community under review showed a slight decrease in employment (-0.9% vs. +2.7% for non-EU nationals) and an increase in inactivity (+0.9% vs. -0.9%), while unemployment grew imperceptibly (+0.5% vs. -2.7%). Within the community, there is a large and persistent gap between the employment rate of men (71.4%) and women (7.2%), and this negatively characterises the community. The phenomenon of female inactivity is concerning, with the community holding the record among the 16 communities surveyed: (90.2%).

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



(\*) The female unemployment indicator for the community under review is not reliable  
 Source: Processing by SpINT, Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, based on RCFL - ISTAT microdata

<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.

With regard to the distribution of employed persons of Pakistani origin across different economic sectors, the community is characterised by a presence across most sectors: the first sector of employment is *Industry in the strict sense*, where just over a quarter of the community is employed (around 27%); among non-EU employees in general, the percentage is around 20%. The second sector is *Transport and other business services*, with an incidence of 21.2% (13.8% for non-EU employees), immediately followed by *Trade* (18.4%), which employs around 11% of all non-EU employees. 17.5% of Pakistani employees are employed in restaurants or hospitality facilities (11.4% for non-EU nationals), 8.3% in the primary sector (vs. 6.5%), 4.2% in *Other public, social and personal services*, and 2.2% in construction. Finally, 1.3% of Pakistani employees are employed in *PA, education and healthcare*.

The Pakistani community is quite active in the entrepreneurial sphere; coming in ninth in numerical terms, it ranks fifth in terms of the number of sole proprietors, after the Bangladeshi community and ahead of the Egyptian community. As at 31 December 2022, the number of sole proprietors of Pakistani origin was 20,600, or 5.3% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy. Compared to the previous year, the number of Pakistani sole proprietors grew significantly by 2.7%, in contrast with the slight drop recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole (-0.8%). In terms of sole proprietorships, too, an overwhelming male dominance emerges: 94.6% of Pakistani sole proprietors are male.

Data regarding the use of certain welfare measures, and in particular wage supplements, shows low integration of the Pakistani community into the Italian socio-economic fabric: around 2.8% of non-EU wage supplement recipients are Pakistani, net of a demographic weighting on the non-EU population as a whole of 3.7%. On the other hand, 14,058 recipients of the NASPI monthly unemployment benefit are of Pakistani nationality, accounting for 3.5% of the total. The incidence of Pakistani recipients of welfare pensions on the total non-EU population is also low (about 2%): specifically, for Disability allowances the community's incidence on the total is 2.4%, while in the case of Social security retirement benefits and allowances it falls to 0.6%. The latter piece of information, in particular, highlights a rather low integration of the community under review in Italian society: although it is a measure reserved for people in poor economic conditions, the requirements to benefit from it include a long-term residence permit and stable, actual, ongoing residence in the country. Lastly, the 1,088 recipients of Constant attendance supplements and the like represent 2.6% of the total number of non-EU recipients of this measure. In light of the above data on welfare pensions (there is too little data on Pakistani citizens for IVS - invalidity, old age, survivors - pensions to be taken into account), the Pakistani community is worse off than the non-EU population as a whole, whose levels of integration in this respect are higher. As far as the use of family assistance measures is concerned, this data further confirms the community's low stabilisation, especially when we consider maternity allowance: the absence of data is explained by the aforementioned low participation of the community's women in the Italian labour market. More encouraging is the share of recipients of parental leave (approx. 4%) and family allowances (approx. 3%). Finally, in the Pakistani community, 4,667 families receive a basic income (Reddito di cittadinanza) or basic pension (Pensione di cittadinanza), accounting for 2.6% of non-EU recipients.

