



THE TUNISIAN 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 ANPAL Servizi. 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 ANPAL Servizi. 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 and in the "Studies and Statistics" area of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies website - 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 ANPAL Servizi, in the framework of the project “START-Support to Integrated Multiannual Programming on Employment, Integration and Inclusion”.

The Tunisian community in Italy

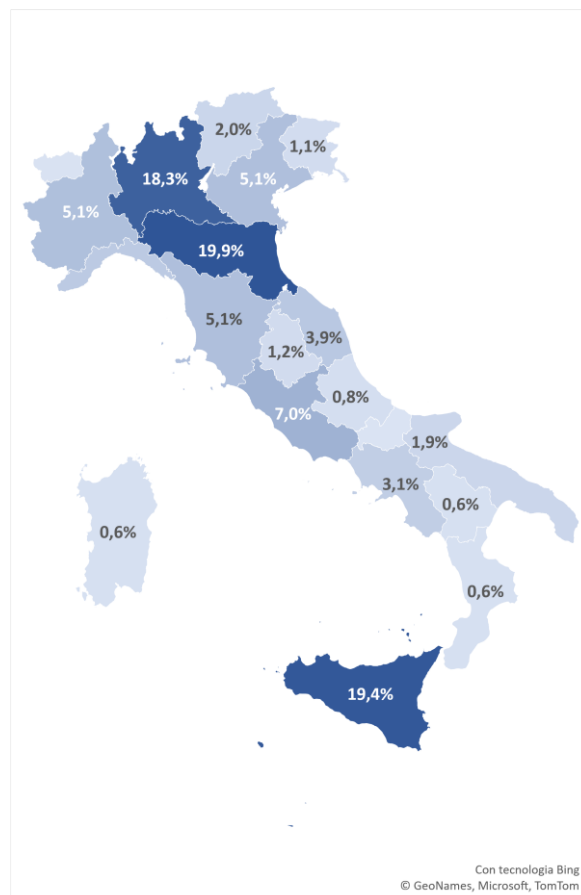
As of 1 January 2023, there were **98,243** Tunisians legally residing¹ in Italy, accounting for 2.6% of all third-country nationals. This figure places the community in **fourteenth** position among the main non-EU citizens in numerical terms. Contrary to the general trend of non-EU settlements (+4.7%), the Tunisian community recorded a 1.9% decrease compared to the previous year².

55.4% of Tunisian citizens in Italy are located in the north of the country. In particular, the first region of Tunisian settlement is Emilia-Romagna, which hosts around a fifth of the community (compared to 11.1% of the non-EU community as a whole), while in third place we find Lombardy with 18.3% of the community's total settlement. However, the community is characterised by an above-average presence in the South, and especially in Sicily, the second region of settlement - just behind Emilia-Romagna in percentage terms - with 19.4% of Tunisians legally present in Italy. For the sake of comparison, it is worth noting that just 3.2% of the total number of non-EU citizens as a whole are located on the island. Precisely because of this strong presence of Tunisians in Sicily, 27.3% of the community is recorded as being settled in the South (compared to around 15% for the non-EU population as a whole).

The Tunisian population in Italy is not balanced by gender: women make up 38.6% and men the remaining 61.4%.

The Tunisian community in Italy has a distribution by age group that is more unbalanced towards the younger age groups: the share of under-30s in the community is 37.2% (in line with 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 around 35 (for the non-EU population as a whole, the value is 35.6). There is a high presence of minors (at 25%), who represent the predominant age group in the Tunisian community (for non-EU nationals as a whole, the share drops to 20.6%). The proportion of over-50s is also slightly higher than that of non-EU nationals as a whole: 24.3% versus 23.5%, almost one in four Tunisians in Italy. In line with non-EU nationals as a whole, 71.7% of families have at least three members: the prevailing family type is three- to four-person households, accounting for about 39%. The incidence of single-person households is higher than the non-EU average (18.6%, compared to around 16% for the non-EU population), while the incidence of 2-person households is lower: 9.7% for the Tunisian community, compared to 12.6% for non-EU nationals as a whole. Also, higher than the average recorded for the non-EU population as a whole is the share of large families: within the community under review, almost one in three families (32.6%) has five or more members, while for the non-EU population the figure is 23.7%³.

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



Source: Processing by SpINT, Anpal Servizi, based on ISTAT data

¹ 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.

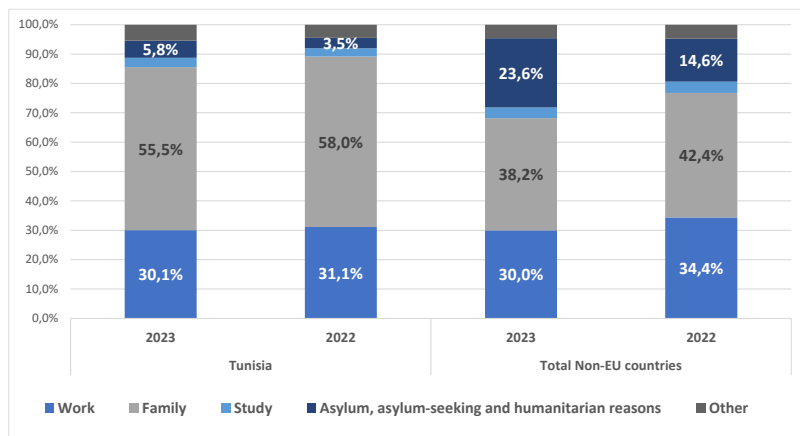
² This figure is most likely linked to acquisitions of Italian citizenship, which - as is well known - leads to a reduction in the statistics, since those who become Italian are no longer counted as foreigners.

³ Source: RCFL ISTAT - Year 2022.

In 2022, **8,633 Tunisian citizens entered Italy**, up 28.3% over the previous year⁴. Family reunification was the most prevalent reason for entry (47.5% of the entries of Tunisians), up 7.2% compared to the previous year. The community’s second reason for entering Italy was work (around 21%, up from the previous year: +64.4%).

The analysis of the types of residence permit held by Tunisian nationals shows a high level of stabilisation: **the share of long-term residents⁵ within the community on 1 January 2023 is 69.7%**, almost 10 percentage point higher 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



Source: Processing by SpINT, Anpal Servizi, based on ISTAT-Ministry of the Interior data

As far as short-term residence permits are concerned, family reasons are also the main reason for Tunisians residing in Italy (55.5%), further confirming the stabilisation of the Tunisian presence in the country, its incidence being more than 17 percentage points higher than that recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole (for whom family reasons are nevertheless the main reason). The second reason for seeking residence was work, with an incidence practically equivalent to that found in the non-EU population as a whole (30.1,% vs. 30% for non-EU nationals). Compared to the previous year, the community’s permits subject to renewal increased

for all reasons, by a total of 13.8%. As a result, the community shows a good level of stabilisation, due to the majority of Tunisian citizens holding long-term residence permits and to the presence of numerous family units.

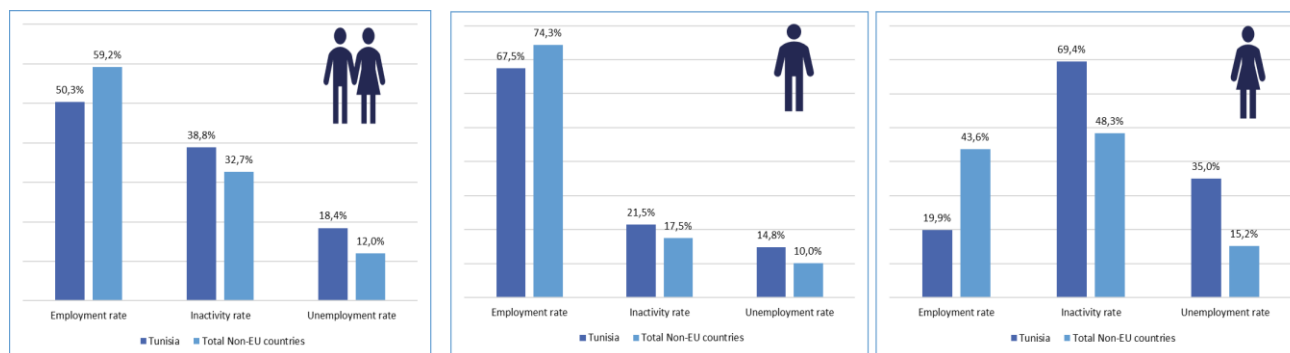
The predominant - though not exclusive - employment profile among Tunisian workers is that of specialised manual worker, often employed in agriculture and in the fishing sector, as well as in the industrial sector. The Tunisian community in Italy registers worse employment performance than the non-EU population as a whole: the employment rate in 2022 was 50.3% (vs. 59.2%), the unemployment rate was 18.4% (12% for non-EU nationals), while the share of inactive people aged 15-64 was 38.8% (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, albeit net of an increase in inactivity. Compared to 2021, the employment rate rose by 2.3% (vs. +2.7% for non-EU nationals), inactivity increased by 3.3% (vs. -0.9% for non-EU nationals), while the share of jobseekers fell by 7.4% (vs. -2.7% for non-EU nationals). Within the community, a large gap persists between the employment rate for men (67.5%) and that for women (around 20%), although the trend between 2021 and 2022 still shows growth in both rates.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 reference to economic sectors, the aforementioned concentration in the primary sector stands out particularly: almost a quarter (23.4%) of those employed in the community work in this sector, compared to 6.5% of non-EU nationals as a whole. The second largest sector is *Industry in the strict sense*, with an incidence of around 18%, closely followed by *Transport and business services*, whose significant incidence is higher than that recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole (15.2% vs. 13.8%).

The Tunisian community ranks ninth in terms of the number of sole proprietorships: as at 31 December 2022, the number of sole proprietors of Tunisian origin was 13,186 (mostly men, around 90%), or 3.4% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy. Compared to the previous year, the number of Tunisian sole proprietors decreased by 6.7%, in contrast with the substantial stability recorded for non-EU nationals as a whole. In the entrepreneurial sphere, there has been a shift in the community towards the construction industry, in which around half of Tunisian sole proprietorships operate, accounting for 7.3% of non-EU sole proprietorships in the sector.

Data regarding the use of certain welfare measures, and in particular wage supplements, shows reasonable integration of the Tunisian community into the Italian socio-economic fabric: around 4% of non-EU wage supplement recipients are Tunisian, a percentage that rises to 7.7% in the case of the ordinary redundancy fund in derogation (CIGD). Indeed, this measure also addresses workers in the primary sector, which - as we have seen - concerns the community significantly. The incidence of Tunisians among non-EU recipients of old-age pensions is rather low (1.4%); conversely, the community is particularly represented among the recipients of invalidity pensions, with 7.4% of non-EU recipients being Tunisian. Also, in line with the demographic weight of the community on the overall non-EU population is the incidence of Tunisian recipients of welfare pensions (3%), a figure that rises to 4% in the case of Disability allowances and falls to 1.7% in the case of Social security retirement benefits and allowances. As far as maternity allowance is concerned, only 1.7% of the non-EU recipients are Tunisian nationals: this figure is mainly explained by the aforementioned low participation of the community's female component in the Italian labour market. The share of recipients of parental leave, on the other hand, is 3.4%. Within the community, there were 10,274 recipients of family allowances in 2022, accounting for 3.7% of the total number of non-EU nationals. Finally, in the Tunisian community, 7,985 families receive a basic income (Reddito di cittadinanza) or basic pension (Pensione di cittadinanza), accounting for 4.5% of non-EU recipients.

