

## NON-EU CITIZENS IN ITALY | YEARS 2018-2019

### Decreasing migration inflows

➔ In 2018 242,009 new permits were issued, in 2017 262,770.

The decrease strongly involved the permits issued for asylum seekers (-41.9%); on the contrary the permits for work (+19.7%) and family reasons (+8.2%) grew.

The acquisitions of Italian citizenship by people with a non-EU origin continued declining, particularly those presented on the basis of “residence” (-37.2%).

At the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 the residents with acquired Italian citizenship were more than 1.340 million.

# -7.9%

**Decrease of the new issued permits**

The number of foreign students in Italy is increasing

# -23.8%

**Drop of acquisitions of Italian citizenship**

# -41.9%

**Decrease of the new permits issued for asylum applications**

The only exception were the Ukrainians with a growth of the residence permits for asylum seekers (+21.2%)

*www.istat.it*

**UFFICIO STAMPA**  
tel. +39 06 4673.2243/4  
ufficiostampa@istat.it

**CENTRO DIFFUSIONE DATI**  
tel. +39 06 4673.3102



## Decreasing migration inflows

In 2018, 242,009 new residence permits were issued, 7.9% less than the previous year. The decrease was largely due to the drop in permits issued for asylum applications which passed from almost 88.55 thousand in 2017 to less than 52.500 thousand in 2018 (-41.9%).

Permits for humanitarian reasons grew (+4%). Permits for other reasons also increased, in particular work permits (+ 19.7%), after many years of decreasing trend; these are short-term permits: 27% last six months or less; moreover, almost 22% of work permits were issued to US citizens (partially civil staff of NATO bases).

Also permits for study increased (+ 20%) - of them almost 21% were issued to Chinese citizens (over 4,500) - and permits for family reasons which, in relative terms, covered over 50% of the new documents issued in 2018. The incidence of the female component over the new permits was over 45%, against 39% in 2017; the percentage of women was particularly high (over 58%) for permits for family reasons.

## A new geography of destinations and origins

The new flows of non-EU migrants particularly involved the North of the country: almost 56% of the new permits were issued in northern Italy while only 23% of the new permits were issued in the South and the Islands. A very low percentage of permits for family reasons (15.8% of the total) and for study (7.5%) were issued in the South and the Islands. The situation completely changes if the permits issued for asylum and international protection are considered: in this case just over 42% were issued by North prefectures, while almost 41% from the South ones.

The decrease in new permits for humanitarian reasons and asylum request caused a substantial change in the countries of origin of the new migration flows towards Italy. Albania and Morocco are back at the top of the list. On the other hand, migrations from Nigeria decreased by more than 40%.

## INFLOWS OF NON-EU CITIZENS BY REASON OF THE PERMIT AND CITIZENSHIP (FIRST 10 COUNTRIES).

Year 2018, absolute values, percentages and percentage variation compared to 2017

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	Total		Reason of the permit									
			Work		Family		Study		Asylum / Hum. protection		Other reasons	
	var%2017	a.v.	var%2017	%	var%2017	%	var%2017	%	var%2017	%	var%2017	%
Albania	+17.3	23,479	+33.3	7.2	+13.3	67.4	+54.8	2.3	+82.6	2.6	+17.6	20.5
Morocco	+9.6	20,396	+43.0	5.2	+4.5	82.6	+83.2	1.4	+44.6	7.0	+27.7	3.7
Nigeria	-42.1	15,532	-30.9	0.2	+2.7	19.0	+67.5	1.3	-49.4	74.8	-12.7	4.6
India	+57.3	13,621	+68.5	20.0	+63.6	58.3	+43.7	13.8	+34.7	3.5	+14.1	4.4
Pakistan	-11.5	13,355	-36.0	1.0	+0.4	38.2	+26.3	2.4	-18.9	56.2	+6.9	2.2
Bangladesh	-7.3	13,189	-60.9	0.4	+46.5	47.1	-11.1	0.2	-28.3	50.3	-54.9	2.0
China	-5.5	11,367	+8.9	5.0	-12.0	49.6	+5.9	40.1	-43.5	2.2	-0.8	3.2
United States	+10.9	9,135	13.2	34.7	+3.5	35.0	+23.7	24.3	-33.3	0.0	0.0	5.9
Egypt	+13.1	8,807	-4.7	4.2	+24.4	81.9	+18.8	3.4	+14.9	6.1	-56.1	4.4
Ukraine	+2.9	7,951	0.0	4.4	-4.2	51.1	+7.6	2.8	+15.3	30.5	+7.9	11.1
Other	-14.9	105,177	+37.8	4.2	+2.0	45.5	+20.3	10.9	-39.3	31.7	-0.3	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>-7.9</b>	<b>242,009</b>	<b>+19.7</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>+8.2</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>+20.3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>-35.9</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>+0.5</b>	<b>7.3</b>

Source: Istat, data of Ministry of Interior

## The decrease of asylum seekers

For almost all the principal citizenships interested by international protection there has been a drop in permits granted for political asylum and an increase in permits issued for other protection issues.

The decline in permits for asylum seekers has involved some citizenships more than others. In relative terms, the most significant decreases concerned Guinea (-63.4%), Ivory Coast (-61.2%), Gambia (-56.5%) and Senegal (-53.8%). The decrease was significant also for Nigeria both in relative (-53.2%) and in absolute terms, being the country with the highest number of new permits for this reason (-11,500 permits compared to the previous year). The only exception to the decrease was Ukraine, which showed a 21.2% increase in the number of permits issued in response to asylum applications.

The permits issued for other forms of protection are increasing, nevertheless they are not enough to balance the reduction in permits for asylum applications.

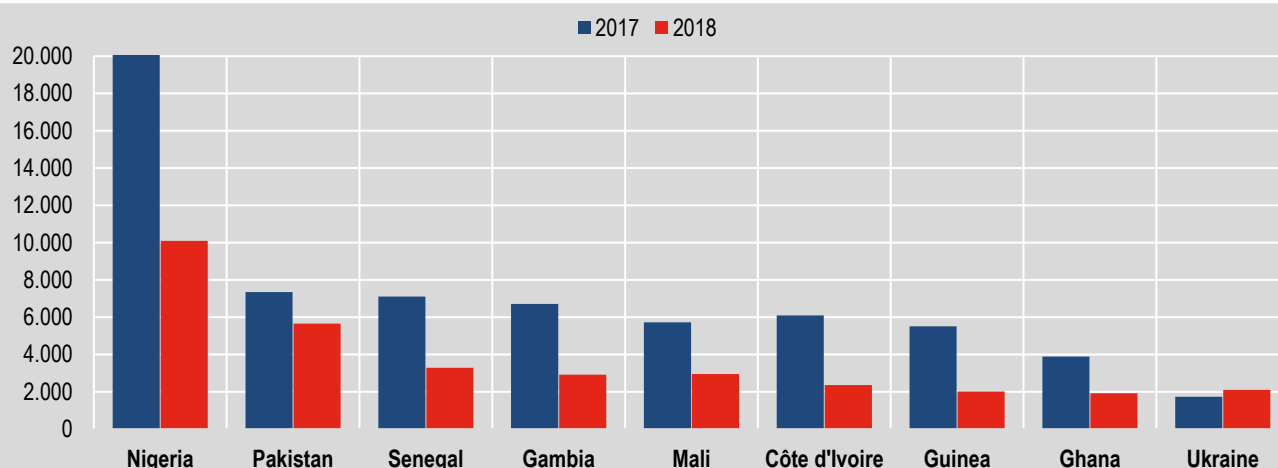
On the Italian territory the migratory flows of asylum seekers are characterized by less stability. More than 10% of the permits issued for this reason and expired in 2018 were not renewed during the year. In 2018 also almost 12,000 permits issued in 2017 expired without being renewed.

The share of new residence permits issued for asylum and international protection greatly varies depending on the provinces. In Caltanissetta, Enna, Crotone, Oristano, Agrigento and Cagliari over 70% of new permits have been issued for this reason, for Forlì-Cesena, Pistoia, Ravenna, Venice, Siena and Reggio Emilia less than 10% of the total of new permits.

## The number of non-EU citizens present in Italy is stable

The number of non-EU citizens in Italy however continues to increase, albeit slightly: on January 1, 2019 they were 3,717,406 (3,714,934 in 2018). Despite the increase in incoming flows, the decline in historical communities from Morocco and Albania continues, above all due to the acquisition of citizenship. Furthermore, between 2018 and 2019 there has been an increase in the size of the population from the Indian sub-continent: the citizens of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan as a whole have grown more than 4% from one year to the next. Comparing the ranking of the first ten citizenships of 2019 with that of 2018, the Indians exceed the Filipinos, the citizens of Bangladesh overcame those of Egypt and the Pakistanis left behind the citizens of Moldova.

**FIGURE 1. INFLOWS OF NON-EU CITIZENS IN ITALY FOR ASYLUM AND HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION BY CITIZENSHIP (FIRST 10 COUNTRIES).** Years 2018 and 2017, absolute values



Source: Istat, data of Ministry of Interior

Long-term residents - those with a permit not to be renewed - were 62.3% of the total; 11.7% of the valid permits were granted for family reasons and 11.7% for work reasons, only 7.1% for asylum or humanitarian reasons.

Women represented 48% of the non-EU resident population, while minors 21.8%. It is a rather high percentage of young people if we consider that the incidence of minors on the Italian resident population is 15.6% and that, net of citizenship acquisitions, it could be even higher (see the following paragraph).

## Drop of acquisitions of citizenship

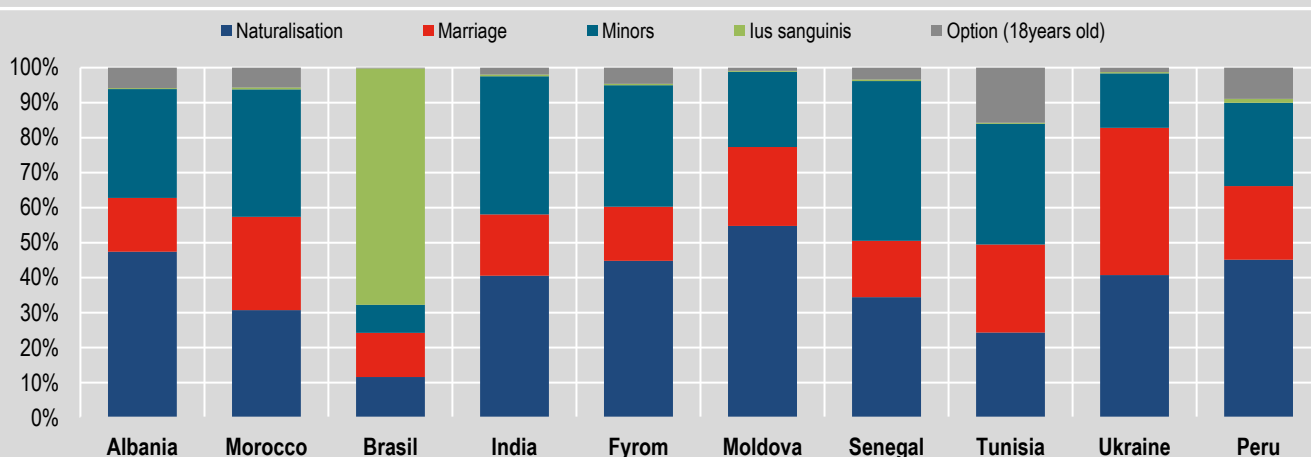
The foreign citizens who acquired the Italian citizenship in 2018 were 112,523, of which 103,478 from a non-EU country. Compared to 2017, they decreased by 23.8%, in contrast to the continuous growth of recent years, which brought the value back to a level close to that of 2013.

The acquisitions by residence and those due to transmission by parents have been interested by the most significant decrease compared to the previous year: the decrease was evident both in absolute (-21 thousand and -14 thousand approximately) and percentage terms (-37.2% and -31.9%). The highest number of acquisitions by residence and transmission remained in the regions of the North.

Acquisitions for marriage grew, albeit slightly (+2 thousand, +8.8%). Also the acquisitions for *ius sanguinis* increased: in 2016 there were about 7 thousand individuals - equal to 3.8% of all acquisitions of non-EU citizens - which rose to 8,211 in 2017 (6.1% of the total) and reached almost 9 thousand units in 2018 (8.6% of the total) (Figure 2). The acquisition for *ius sanguinis* was particularly relevant in the southern regions, which were the homeland of abroad emigration flows in the past.

Mainly women acquired citizenship in 2018 (53.6% of the total). In particular, in the case of acquisitions for marriage, 85 out of 100 acquisitions were women, who in 38.4% of cases become Italian in this way. Men instead obtained Italian citizenship mainly by residence (58%).

**FIGURE 2. ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP OF NON-EU CITIZENS BY REASON AND CITIZENSHIP (FIRST 10 COUNTRIES).** Year 2018, percentage values



Source: Istat, data of Ministry of Interior

Also in 2018, in line with the previous years the largest number of acquisitions involved Albanians (21,841) and Moroccans (15,496), both historically present on our territory and covering more than 36% of citizenship acquisitions in the year. However, between 2017 and 2018 for the Moroccan community the drop in citizenship acquisitions was well above the average (-31.6% against -23.8%). Brazilian citizens are now ranked in the third position (+ 7.3% between 2017 and 2018), in 67.6% of cases, the acquisitions were by *ius sanguinis*.

### The new citizens: above all Moroccan and Albanians

At 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, over 1.340 million people who have acquired Italian citizenship resided in our country; of these, around 1.97 million (81.6%) were non-EU citizens and women were 52.6%. Albanian and Moroccan were highly interested in taking the Italian citizenship, while - for example - the Chinese showed a very low propensity in becoming citizens.

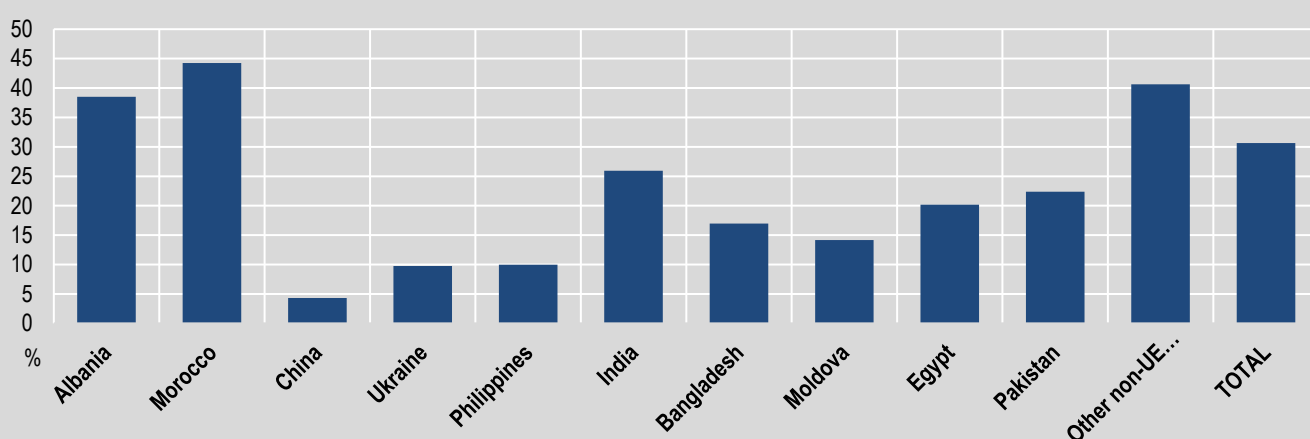
The presence term also has a significant weight, especially in the case of acquisition by residence which, for non-EU citizens, requires at least ten years of stay in our country. Relevant is also the fact that many Countries don't recognize the dual citizenship origin. Residents who obtained the citizenship were in the most cases Moroccan (16.8%) and Albanians (15.5%). In particular, for every 100 Moroccan foreigners there were 44 Italians of Moroccan origin; for every 100 Albanians 38 Italians of Albanian origin.

Moroccans and Albanians represent 12.3% and 11.6% respectively of foreign residents, but considering the population of foreign origin (foreign residents + Italians for acquisition) they represent about 13%.

There are 257 thousand minors, 23.5% of all residents who have acquired citizenship, of these 78.8% were born in our country.

A share of 20.4% of new citizens are Italians as a result of marriage with an Italian. The highest percentage of new citizens for marriage is from the Russian Federation (44%), the lowest from Pakistan and India.

**FIGURE 3. INCIDENCE OF NON-EU CITIZENS WITH ACQUIRED ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP OVER THE TOTAL FOREIGN RESIDENTS OF THE SAME CITIZENSHIP OF ORIGIN.** Year 2018, percentage values



Source: Istat, data of Ministry of Interior

# Glossary

**Non-EU citizens holding a residence permit:** all foreign citizens holding a regular residence permit and the children registered on the permit of an adult are included.

**Non-EU citizens holding a long-term residence permit:** This permit is permanent and can only be claimed by those who have a residence permit for at least 5 years. The applicant must give proof of sufficient income and, in case the applicant is requiring the residence permit also for his/her family members, depending on the number of applicants, the annual income varies and doesn't have to be lower to the parameters established by law.

**Inflows of Non-EU citizens:** all the new permits issued during the year are registered, regardless whether the permit is still valid or expired at the end of the year, Documents are accounted for and not persons. A person who has obtained two new permits in the same year is counted twice.

## Methodological note

Since the early '90s until 2007, Istat has disseminated data on residence permits on the basis of the data supplied by the Ministry of Interior. Since 2008, Istat has been disseminating a new series on non-EU citizens in which the EU citizens are no longer included, and among them the "new" EU citizens (Romanian, Bulgarian), for whom, since 27 March 2007, the residence permit is not to be issued. Since the enforcement of Regulation (EC) 862/2007 concerning Community statistics on migration and international protection. Istat is also collaborating with the Ministry of Interior to improve the quality of data collected and disseminated on the basis of residence permits. This led, in recent years, to a review of criteria for data processing, based on the guidelines provided by Eurostat. Data about acquisitions of citizenship are the result of estimation procedures.