

Religious belonging and participation among foreign citizens

Years 2011-2012

In the years 2011 and 2012 56.4% of foreign citizens aged 6 and over and resident in Italy are Christians (2 million and 56 thousand people out of 3 million and 639 thousand of foreign citizens aged 6 and over resident in Italy). Among them Orthodox are 27%, Catholics 25.1% and Protestants 2.7%. Whereas Muslims are 26.3%, Buddhists are about 3% and 7.1% are atheist.

Most of Orthodox are among Romanians (62.2%), as well as Buddhists are mainly Chinese (63.8%). Muslims are mostly among Moroccans (34.8%), Albanians (15.3%) and Tunisians (8.3%). Catholics are mostly among Romanians (11.7%), Albanians (10.7%), people from the Philippines (10.2%), Polish people (8.9%), Peruvians (8.1%) and Ecuadorians (7.1%).

The gender diversity of the main foreign communities in Italy is also reflected in religious belonging. There is a prevalence of Muslims among men (33.1% of men compared to 20.4% of women) whereas women are mostly Orthodox (31% compared to 22.2% of men) and Catholics (28% compared to 21,8% of men). About half of 6-24 year old foreign young people are Christian. Mostly are Catholics and Orthodox (23.2% of young people aged 6-17 years are Catholic and 25.6% of people aged 18-24 years are Orthodox). Among younger people the Muslims are about 30% of total. Whereas among older foreign citizens there are many Christians (59.2% of people aged 25 years and over), most of them are Catholics and Orthodox, above all among people aged 45 years old and over (Catholics are 29% and Orthodox 28.5%).

One foreigner out of two considers religion very important in the life, with an average score in terms of importance of 7.7 on a maximum score of ten. 58.7% of foreign citizens give higher scores (between 8 and 10). The highest score in terms of importance of religion is given by the Muslims (8.2 is the average score). On the contrary, religion is considered less important by Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants (average scores between 7.3 and 7.5) and Buddhists (mean score 6.3).

Among Muslims it is more common to pray in private out of religious rites (52.2% pray several times a week). Catholics mostly pray out of religious rites once a week (23.1%) or less frequently in a month (13,8%). The religious participation in public religious places is most common among Catholics (84.1%), instead the percentage is lower among Protestants (72.2%), as well as Orthodox (70.8%) and Muslims (59.4%).

30.4% of foreign citizens comply with the religious diet required by its own religion, men more than women (37% compared to 32.9% of women). Muslims are the most observant (67.7%).

FIGURE 1. FOREIGN CITIZENS (AGED 6 YEARS OLD AND OVER) FOR RELIGIOUS BELONGING.
Years 2011–2012, Percentages.

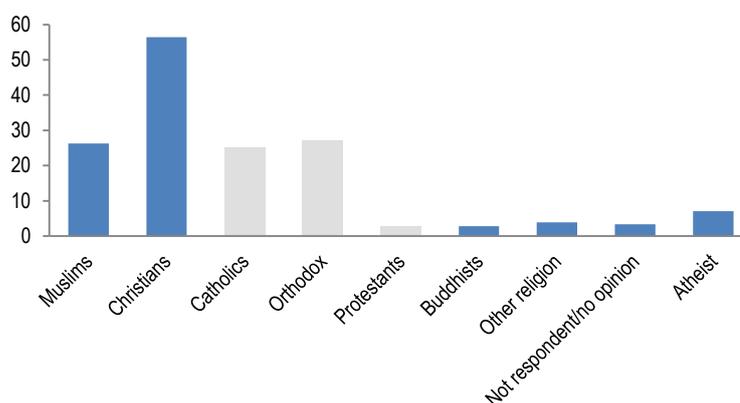


TABLE 1. FOREIGN CITIZENS (AGED 6 YEARS OLD AND OVER) FOR RELIGIOUS BELONGING, GENDER, AGE AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA. Years 2011–2012, Percentages.

	Religious belonging									Total
	Atheist	Muslims	Christians	Catholics	Orthodox	Protestants	Buddhists	Other religion	Not respondent/ no opinion	
Gender										
Males	7.6	33.1	48.2	21.8	22.2	2.7	2.7	4.6	3.8	100.0
Females	6.7	20.4	63.7	28.0	31.0	2.8	2.8	3.3	3.1	100.0
Age										
6-17 years old	8.2	30.6	46.7	23.2	19.6	2.4	3.6	4.2	6.6	100.0
18-24 years old	9.6	29.0	51.2	22.5	25.6	1.5	2.0	4.9	3.3	100.0
25-34 years old	6.8	28.0	56.0	23.5	28.8	2.2	2.6	3.3	3.3	100.0
35-44 years old	6.5	25.4	59.0	25.6	28.4	2.8	3.0	3.8	2.4	100.0
45-54 years old	6.0	23.8	60.8	27.2	28.2	3.9	2.8	4.3	2.2	100.0
55 years old and over	7.1	16.8	67.2	32.0	29.1	4.3	1.8	3.5	3.6	100.0
Geographical areas										
North-West Italy	9.1	28.4	53.2	27.4	20.7	3.1	2.6	4.6	2.1	100.0
North-East Italy	6.5	30.5	53.4	20.2	28.7	2.8	2.7	3.6	3.3	100.0
Centre Italy	6.5	20.2	62.7	27.1	31.2	2.8	2.9	3.1	4.7	100.0
South and the Islands	4.7	23.4	60.1	25.3	31.5	1.8	3.1	4.0	4.7	100.0
Total	7.1	26.3	56.4	25.1	27.0	2.7	2.8	3.9	3.4	100.0

For more details please refer to the Italian version

Contact persons:

Monica Perez (perez@istat.it)

Francesca Dota (dota@istat.it)

Socio-demographic and environmental statistics directorate

Istat – National Institute of Statistics

Viale Liegi 14 – Rome 00198 Italy

phone +39 06 4673.7227