

# THE EGYPTIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants  
*Executive Summary*



For nearly a decade, the *Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione* (General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies) has aimed to provide a detailed and balanced account of the complex phenomenon of the presence of foreigners in Italy and to do so by setting forth the various distinct aspects of the question while analysing the characteristics noted and also anticipating today's trends. The Directorate does so by means of its *Rapporto nazionale sui migranti nel Mercato del lavoro italiano* (National reports on migrants in the Italian labour market) (tenth edition), the *Rapporti nazionali sulla presenza in Italia delle principali Comunità straniere* (National reports on the main foreign communities in Italy) (ninth edition) and the *Rapporti sulla presenza dei migranti non comunitari nelle 14 città metropolitane italiane* (Reports on the presence of non-EU migrants in the 14 metropolitan cities of Italy) (fifth edition).

The series of national reports on the presence of the main foreign communities aims to investigate and study in depth the presence on Italian soil of the more numerically significant non-EU nationals: Moroccans, Albanians, Chinese, Ukrainians, Indians, Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Moldovans, Nigerians, the Senegalese, Sri Lankans, Tunisians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians.


For each grouping, the main features from the socio-demographic and employment dimensions are considered, alongside presence of minors and their education, occupational integration and welfare policies. Each report starts with comparison among the various communities. The data used for the analysis relate to periods prior to the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus. Therefore, this edition of the reports does not provide for an overview of the effects of the pandemic crisis on the social and labour integration of migrants.

Again, this year we duly acknowledge the contributions of institutions and bodies that have provided information in their possession. These entities include the Italian National Institute of Statistics; the General statistical and actuarial coordination body of INPS (National Social Security Institute); the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture; the CeSPI (Centre for Politics and International Studies); the trade unions CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL; and the *Divisione Studi e Ricerca* (Study and Research Division) of ANPAL Servizi.

The full series of *Rapporti Comunità* (Community reports), editions 2012 - 2020, can be accessed – in Italian and in the main foreign languages – in the section “Studi e statistiche” (Studies and Statistics) on the institutional website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – [www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it) and on the institutional portal [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it) . These addresses also provide access to a statistical annex providing information that supplements the reports or that, within a comparative framework among the main national communities considered, enables in-depth study of the data analysed.

Within the ambit of the projects, *Assistenza tecnica per il Supporto alla governance integrata delle politiche migratorie tra lavoro e integrazione sociale* (PR.Au.D. - Protezione, Autonomia, Dignità dal lavoro) and *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi di origine*, ANPAL Servizi has drawn up and translated the 2020 edition of its *Rapporti nazionali sulle principali Comunità straniere* (National reports on the main foreign communities) – analytic reports provided in summary form.

# Executive Summary



**141,452**  
**Legally residing Egyptian citizens**  
*Ranking 8th for number of presences*

**3.9% of non-EU citizens in Italy**



**33.2%**  
**women**

**66.8%**  
**men**

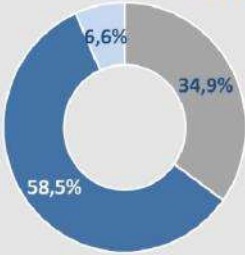


**47,847**  
**minors under the age of 18**  
*597 unaccompanied minors*

Present in:

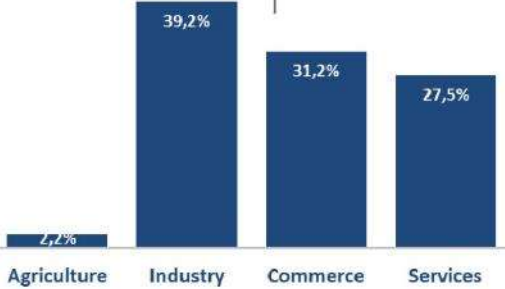
- 66.7%** Lombardia
- 14%** Lazio
- 6.4%** Piemonte

**65.9%**  
 Long-period residents




**34.1%** Short-period permit

- Work: 34.9%
- Family: 58.5%
- Other reasons: 6.6%




**61.7% employment rate**  
*85.2% male 7.5% female*

**26.2%**  
**Construction employed workers**



**34.2%** skilled manual workers



**6th position in sole proprietorship ranking (5.1%)**

**19,642 sole proprietors (+2.5%)**  
*6.5% Egyptian female sole proprietors (+5.7%)*

**40%** sole proprietorship in the **Construction** sector

## Demographic characteristics

**141,452 Egyptian citizens** are holders of a residence permit valid as on **1 January 2020**, accounting for 3.9% of the non-EU citizens in Italy. The Egyptian community ranks eighth for numbers of legally residing members and it is one of the foreign communities with the longest history of migration in Italy.

On analysis of the main demographic characteristics of the Egyptian citizens legally residing in Italy as on 1 January 2020, the following are noted:

- **moderate gender imbalance**, with women accounting for 33.2% of this community (vs 66.8% of **men**), which value is unbalanced when compared to non-EU legally residing members as a whole;
- **the mean age** for this community is **28.3** (**lower** than non-EU citizens as a whole, i.e., 34.2).

As to geographic distribution, this community favours Northern Italy, where more than 81% of the Egyptian citizens reside (+20% vs non-EU citizens residing in Italy as a whole). Accordingly, two of the regions with most Egyptians are northern: **Lombardia**, hosting 2/3 of the Egyptian residents (vs 1/4 of non-EU residents as a whole), and **Piemonte** (ranking third for number of Egyptian citizens) presents an incidence of 6.4% (this value parallels that of non-EU citizens: 7%). On the other hand, 17% of the Egyptian population resides in central Italy (-7% vs non-EU citizens as a whole). There is a marked presence in **Lazio**, where 14% of Egyptian citizens received or renewed their residence permit (vs. 11.2% of non-EU migrants as a whole).

The analysis of residence permits indicates this community's marked progress in the direction of stabilisation; as on 1 January 2020, the quotient of long-term permit holders (holders of residence permits that are not subject to renewal) among Egyptian citizens stands at 65.9% (vs 63,1% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Among short-term permits issued, **family reunification** permits prevail, accounting for 58.5% of the permits subject to renewal issued to Egyptian migrants (vs 46.7% for non-EU citizens as a whole); permits issued for work reasons, on the other hand, account for approx. 35% of the total.

## Current trends

For the first time, after years of stability in the presences, we note a significant decline in the number of legally resident members compared to the previous year: -2.7%; the number of non-EU citizens in Italy decreased by 101,580 units between 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2020. The reduction is noted in all the main foreign communities while the Indian and Bangladeshi communities increase by 1.7% and 1.8% respectively. The most significant reductions concern the Nigerian community (-8.2%), which from ranking eleventh now ranks fourteenth, the Ecuadorian community (-6.2%) and the Chinese community (-5.3%).

Two opposite factors are of greater significance in terms of trends displayed by number of presences. These factors consist in, on the one hand, the new permits issued attesting to an inflow impacting the stock of legally residing foreigners, and, on the other, in the granting of citizenship (which latter practice removes those who become Italian citizens from the stock of foreign citizens).

Turning to admissions, in 2019, 177,000 new residence permits were issued (approx. 26% less than in 2018, a negative record). This represents the most significant reduction recorded since 2012 and the negative trend seems to consolidate over the first six months of 2020, with a further decrease of 57.7% compared to the same period of 2019<sup>1</sup>. The reduction concerns all the reasons for admission, and especially for permits linked to the request or possession of a form of protection: -57.5%.

This figure is to be ascribed to the sharp reduction in so-called "unexpected flows", with a remarkable decrease in the number of migrants landed on Italian coasts: 11,471 in 2019, i.e., approx. 51% less than 2018 and 90.4% less than 2017<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Istat, *Cittadini non comunitari in Italia*, Statistica Report (Non-EU citizens in Italy, Statistics Report), October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.libertacivilimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto\\_statistico\\_giornaliero\\_31-12-2019.pdf](http://www.libertacivilimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-12-2019.pdf)

The growth trend in the quotient of new permits issued for family reunification consolidates, thus reaching 56.9% of admissions in 2019 (vs approx. 51% in 2018), while the percentage relating to the request or possession of a form of protection decreases: 15.6% of new permits<sup>3</sup> vs 28.8% in 2018. The percentage relating to study reasons (11.5% vs 9.1% in 2018) and work reasons (6.4% vs 6% in 2018) is slightly on the rise. On the other hand, the failure to plan entry flows for job purposes, with the exception of seasonal work, has now led to a sharp decrease in new permits issued for this reason.

The Egyptian community – with its 6,662 new residence permits issued above all for family reasons (81.7%) – ranks eighth for number of admissions, accompanied by a significant decrease vs the previous year (-24.14%).

As to granting of citizenship, in 2019 113,979 non-EU individuals were granted citizenship. The Egyptian community generates a approx. 1% impact on the total of acquisitions of citizenship for non-EU citizens.

## Minors and educational paths

As on 1 January 2020, the **Egyptian minors** in Italy totalled **47,847** (6% of non-EU minors as a whole). Furthermore, many of these minors were born in Italy, i.e., 2,704 in 2018 (approx. 5.4% on non-EU children born in the same year). Between 2010 and 2018, more than 21,000 Egyptian children in all were born in Italy

**Admission of minors of Egypt origin to the Italian schooling circuit is quite high.** 28,943 students of Egyptian origin enrolled for academic year 2019/2020 (4.2% of the non-EU student population as a whole). Egypt is the fifth country of origin of non-EU students. Compared with the previous year, the students from this community increased in number by 10.7%, presenting with a decidedly higher growth rate than that noted for non-EU students as a whole (+2.6%). The number of enrolling students rose above all in secondary schools – junior secondary schools (+13.2%) and senior secondary schools (12.4%). The incidence of students from this community vs non-EU students as a whole is higher in preschool institutions (4.9% of the enrolled are Egyptian citizens) and is lower in senior secondary schools (falling to 3%). A fairly significant number of university students is noted (with its 1,914 students, Egypt ranks twelfth as country of origin of the non-EU academic population).

The quotient of young people aged between 15 and 29 belonging to this community who are out of the education and training circuits and who are also unemployed (**NEETs**) is significantly higher than the mean for the non-EU population as a whole. They total 6,789 (39.5% of young Egyptians in this age bracket). An analysis by gender reveals a worrying situation for the female component of the community, the quotient of NEETs among young Egyptians stands at 73.6%, vs 11.4% for males.

## Work and employment

The Egyptian community in Italy shows a strong **presence of the male component**, mainly employed in the industrial sector for unskilled manual labour. The gender polarization characterising this community is therefore also shown in the analysis of the world of employment, which clearly shows the channelling of Egyptian workers towards the industrial and construction sector. In these sectors, we note a higher incidence vs non-EU citizen as a whole (39% vs 27%). In *Commerce and catering* sector, 31% of Egyptian workers are employed (vs 24% of non-EU workers). The data available on the labour market indicate that the employment conditions of the Egyptian community in Italy are better than those of non-EU workers as a whole. Conversely, a much worse situation is noted for the female component of the community: the **employment rate** stands at **61.7%** vs 60.1% recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole. The **inactivity** rate is slightly higher than the mean and, among Egyptian citizens, stands at 31.4%. Finally, the **unemployment** rate stands at 10.1% (vs 13.8% for the non-EU population as a whole).

The situation for Egyptian women is quite different: the employment rate stands at 7.5% (vs 85.2% for the male component of the community), the inactivity rate stands at 83.5% and the unemployment rate at 54.3%.

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<sup>3</sup> In all likelihood, the reduction in the number of permits linked to the possession of a form of protection is affected by the entry into force of the decree-law no. 113/2018 from 5 October 2018, converted with amendments by Law no. 132/2018, which abolished the residence permit for humanitarian reasons, replacing it, only under certain specific conditions, with some residence permits for "special circumstances".

Within this community, only 2,560 people benefited from **wage subsidies**, in almost all cases men (99.8%). These are mainly CIGO (ordinary redundancy fund) beneficiaries (2,508), while only 52 people benefited from CIGS (extraordinary redundancy fund). The Egyptians beneficiaries of wage subsidies account for 4.6% of the non-EU beneficiaries as a whole. On the other hand, 2.3% of non-EU beneficiaries of **unemployment benefit** are Egyptian: 10,660 beneficiaries mainly benefiting from NASPI (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme). Men are the prevailing gender among the beneficiaries of any type of benefit.

During 2019, **53,532 new employment relationships** were activated for citizens of Egyptian origin (6% more than the previous year). Indicating that women from this community are drawn to the labour market to a decidedly lesser extent than men, the data provided by the *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) reveal that only 4.2% of Egyptian citizens recruited are women (vs 31.3% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Most of the new subordinate and para-subordinate jobs that began during 2019 for Egyptian workers were in the Services sector (57%). However, an analysis by gender indicates that the incidence of contracts activated in 2019 in this sector rises to 93.4% for Egyptian women.

For the Egyptian community, we note the prevalence of *skilled manual workers* (34.3% of the Egyptian workers vs 28% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Numerically speaking, we then note those engaged in *unskilled manual workers* (33%). This latter value is slightly lower the level for non-EU citizens as a whole (36%). 26% of employed Egyptians are engaged in *sales and personal services*, while the incidence for *managers and professionals in the intellectual and technical fields* stands at 7%.

Involvement of this community in the world of entrepreneurship appears to be very high, involving **19,642 sole proprietorships**, (5.1% of non-EU sole proprietorships in Italy). The construction sector is the sector within which most investment takes place, where approx. 40% of enterprises operate (approx. twice as much as non-EU sole proprietorships as a whole, i.e., approx. 21%).

### Socio-economic conditions

Despite the professional specialization in the industrial and construction sectors, workers from this community earn **monthly salaries** that are on average lower than those of non-EU workers as a whole (1,033 vs 1,191 euros: 158 euros lower than the mean monthly remuneration). In the case of agricultural workers, the gap shows a positive value: Egyptian workers are those granted the best wages, 923 euros vs 625 recorded for EU agricultural workers as a whole.

Among employed Egyptian citizens in Italy, a medium-low **level of education** prevails. 55.5% of the workers belonging to this community received, at best, a junior secondary school leaving certificate. This value is 4% lower than that for non-EU workers as a whole. 28.2% hold a secondary school leaving certificate and 16.2% are also holders of a higher education certificate (vs a lower quotient among non-EU employees as a whole: 11.4%). Within this community, women have higher levels of education than men, 26.2% of employed women hold a degree vs 15.9% of men; this is a significantly higher value than that recorded for the non-EU female population as a whole (16.3%).

The quotient of IVS (disability, old age and survivors') pensions granted to non-EU citizens has always been rather small. In 2019, this quotient stood at 0.5% of the total (out of almost 14 million pensions, 65,926 regard non-EU citizens). Non-EU citizens receive old-age pensions with an incidence of 43%, followed by survivors' pensions (37.4%); 19.8% are granted disability pensions. In the Egyptian community, the distribution of the various typologies of social security provisions is significantly different, with a prevalence of old-age pensions (36.8%), followed by invalidity pensions (33.5%), and survivor's pensions (29.7%). Overall, with its 1.354 IVS pensions, the Egyptian community accounts for 2.1% of the total for non-EU citizens who receive such benefits. Between 2018 and 2019, the numbers of IVS pensions provided to Egyptians rose less markedly than was noted among non-EU citizens as a whole: +7% vs +12.3%. The Egyptians receiving old-age pensions rose by 13.4% (vs a 17.1% rise noted in the non-EU population as a whole).

In 2019, the **social assistance pensions** granted to citizens belonging to the Egyptian community were 2,450 (2.4% of those granted to non-EU migrants). In 42% of cases, these are attendance allowances, 39.5% are constant attendance supplements while just over 18% are pensions and social allowances.

Also among Egyptian citizens, the number of beneficiaries of social assistance pensions increased (+5.1% compared to the previous year), with a 7.4% increase in the case of constant attendance supplement, 3.9% for social allowances and 3.5% for attendance allowances.

With reference to **monetary transfers to families** (maternity benefits, parental leave and family allowances provided by INPS), in 2019, there were 304,465 beneficiaries of maternity benefits, 9.1% of which non-EU citizenship: 27,714, 3.1% less than the previous year. With reference to the Egyptian community, the number of beneficiaries, given the very low percentage of employed persons, is very small. Indeed, it is not recorded in disaggregated form in the INPS databases and, therefore, a specific analysis cannot be provided. On the other hand, the number of beneficiaries of parental leave decreased: in 2019, they were 299,028, - 10.3% vs 2018, 7.2% of which of non-EU origin (21,564). 511 Egyptian citizens benefited from this measure in 2019, (2.4% of non-EU citizens). Also for this community, we note a decrease, stronger than that for non-EU citizens as whole, vs the year before: -11.3%. Family allowances are the family assistance measure granted to a greater number of people: in 2019, there were 2,446,795 beneficiaries, (-13.8% vs the year before). 12.5% of the beneficiaries are non-EU citizens (305,000, i.e., -13.5% vs 2018). Within this community, we note 12,816 beneficiaries of family allowances in 2019, with an incidence on the total of non-EU citizens accounting for 4.2%. Also for the Egyptian community, their number decreased by 9.7% vs 2018.

Concerning to transfers made by the Egyptians in Italy to their country of origin, Egypt is not among the top 20 destinations of remittances outgoing from Italy. In 2019, these totalled approx.47 million euros (a mere 0.9% of the total outgoing remittances, value higher vs 2018).

