



# THE MOLDOVAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants  
*Executive Summary*



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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.

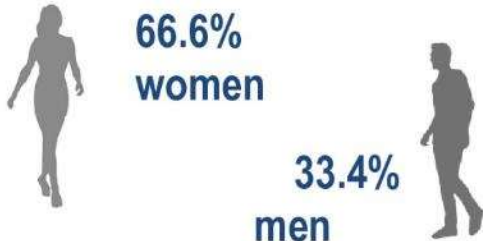
Within the ambit of the projects, *Assistenza tecnica per il Supporto alla governance integrata delle politiche migratorie tra lavoro e integrazione sociale* (PR.Au.D. - Protezione, Autonomia, Dignità dal lavoro) and *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi 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



**119,603** Legally residing Moldovan citizens  
*Ranking 10th for number of presences*

**13,979** “new Italians” in 2019 (3% are Moldovans)



**66.6%** women  
**33.4%** men

*39.3% into the 30-50 age group*

**21,258** Minors under the age of 18  
*Ranking 15th for number of unaccompanied minors*

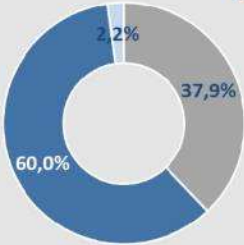


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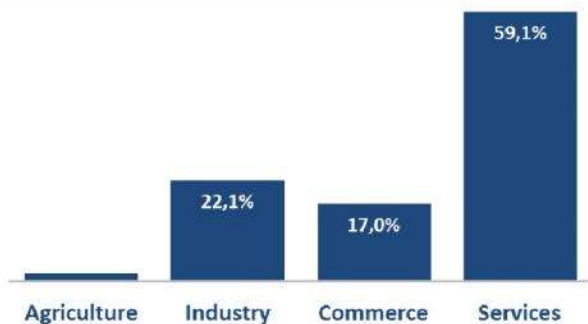
- 26.8%** Veneto
- 21.5%** Emilia-Romagna
- 16.1%** Lombardia

**80.5%** Long-term residents


**19.5%** Short-term permits



- Work: 37.9%
- Family: 60.0%
- Other reasons: 2.2%



**68.3%** employment rate  
*79.6% male 63.1% female*

**46%** employed in public, social and personal services 

**35%** unskilled manual workers



**11th position in sole proprietorship ranking (1.6%)**

**5,995** sole proprietors  
*31% Moldovan female sole proprietors*

**48.6%** sole proprietorship in the sector of **Construction**

## Demographic characteristics

**119,603 Moldovans** reside in Italy as on 1 January 2020, accounting for 3.3% of the legally residing non-EU citizens. The Moldovan community ranks tenth among the main foreign communities in Italy for the second consecutive year. From the socio-demographic perspective, the community in Italy is characterised as follows

- marked **gender imbalance** with women predominating, accounting for 66.6% of the members of this community (men: 33.4%);
- a **mean age** value that is once again higher than is noted for non-EU citizens as a whole (**37**, vs 34 for the non-EU population as a whole).

Turning to geographic distribution, approx. 8 out of 10 Moldavans reside in Northern Italy, which is the key area of settlement for this community (as for all control groups). The three main regions in terms of number of Moldovan residents are indeed Northern Italian: **Veneto** hosts more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Moldovan citizens (26.8%). **Emilia Romagna** accounts for 21.5%. **Lombardia** ranks third for presence of Moldovans (16.1%). The regions of Central Italy host 19.9% of this community (a value slightly lower than that for non-EU citizens legally residing in Italy as a whole, which stands at approx. 24%) especially in **Lazio** region (hosting 11.3% of this community).

Analysis of residence permits indicates an advanced **process of stabilisation** of the Moldovan community. This community ranks first in terms of quotient of holders of long-term residence permits in this community, which stands at 80.5% as at 1 January 2020 (over +17% vs non-EU migrants as a whole). Prevailing among the reasons for issuance of short-term permits are **family reunifications**, as key reason for residence (60% of cases, thus increasing by 4.3% vs the previous year). Work permits account for 38% of short-term residence permits granted as at 1 January 2020.

## Current trends

For the first time, after years of stability in the presences, we note a significant reduction in the number of legally residing members compared to the previous year: -2.7%. The presence of non-EU citizens in Italy decreased by 101,580 units between 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2020. The reduction concerns all the main foreign communities with the exception of Indian and Bangladeshi, which record increases of 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 main opposite factors affect the trends of presences: on the one hand, the new permits issued attesting to an inflow impacting the stock of legally residing members, and, on the other, the granting of citizenship (which latter practice entail a replacement effect in the statistics as those who become Italian citizens are removed from the stock of foreign citizens).

Turning to admissions, 2019 marks a negative record with approx. 177 thousand new residence permits, 26% less vs 2018; this is the most significant reduction recorded since 2012 and the first six months of 2020 seem to consolidate the negative trend, with a further decrease of 57.7% vs the same period of 2019. The reduction concerns all reasons for admissions, and it is particularly relevant for permits ascribable to the request or possession of a form of protection: -57.5%. This is a value ascribable to the sharp reduction of the so-called "unexpected flows", with a sharp decline in the number of migrants landed on the Italian coasts: 11,471 in 2019, i.e., 51% less than 2018 and 90.4% less than 2017.

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 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.

Like most communities, the Moldovan one also shows a drop in the presences vs 1 January 2019 (-4.5%). This reduction is probably ascribable to the **acquisition of citizenship**, which entail a replacement effect in the statistics (those who become Italian citizens are removed from the stock of foreign citizens).

The Moldovan community ranks fourth in terms of citizenships granted: in 2019, Moldovan migrants were granted 3,788 citizenships (3.3% of the total). Between 2012 and 2019, 22,879 Moldovan citizens acquired Italian citizenship. The incidence of citizens of Moldovan origin among the new Italian citizens proves the strong degree of settlement of the community in Italy and the following stabilisation process. In the vast majority of cases (63.1%), the acquisitions of citizenship by citizens of Moldovan origin are linked to naturalisation.

In 2018, 674 **marriages** were celebrated between Moldovan and Italian citizens (69.2% of the 971 marriages in which at least one spouse was of Moldovan nationality): 651 concerned an Italian husband and a Moldovan wife, 23 a Moldovan husband and an Italian wife.

### Minors and educational paths

As on 1 January 2019, there were **21,000** Moldovan **minors** in Italy (17.8% of the population of this community and 2.7% of non-EU minors as a whole). The Moldovan community ranks second for the lowest presence of minors among non-EU communities, followed by Ukraine.

As regards the number of the **children** of Moldovan citizens **born** in Italy, the downturn consolidates, with a decrease in births of -12%: from 1.367 in 2017 to 1.202 in 2018. Overall, between 2010 and 2018 almost 513,000 children with non-EU citizenship were born in Italy: over 14,000 of them (2.8%) having Moldovan citizenship.

Despite a lower incidence of minors compared to other non-EU communities, this community ranks sixth among the 16 countries of origin of non-EU students. Nearly all Moldovan minors attend Italian schools: **26,014 students of Moldovan origin** enrolled for academic year 2019/2020 (3.8% of the non-EU academic population as a whole). Moldovan students grew in number by slightly less than 1% vs the previous year, with a growth rate lower than that of non-EU students as a whole (+2.6%). The main increase in enrolments regarded primary schools (+3.8%), followed by junior secondary schools (+2.8%). Attendance in pre-school institutions experienced a downturn (-2.8%) as well as senior secondary schools (-0.6%). However, here the incidence of Moldovan students rose vs non-EU students as a whole (4.6%). On the other hand, attendance in universities is less relevant, where, with 2,484 students (3.3% of non-EU students as a whole), Moldova ranks ninth among the countries of origin of the non-European academic population.

The absolute number of young Moldovan nationals aged between 15 and 29 who are **NEETs** (Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training) is lower than the non-EU mean (more than 10,200: 30% of the Moldovans of this age bracket). The quotient reaches 36.8% among the female component of the community (vs 17.8% for males).

### Work and employment

Distribution of employed persons of Moldovan origin among the various sectors of the economy is greatly determined by the prevalence of the female component, and by a consequently marked sectoral skills in the *Other public, social and personal services* sector, where 46% of this community's workers are employed. The quotient of community workers in *Industry*, which employs 22% of Moldovan employees and in *Commerce and Catering* (17%) is also relevant.

The high incidence of employees within the population of female Moldovan workers and the predominant employment in the Services sector, less vulnerable to economic crisis and thus influencing employment levels, led to more encouraging labour-market performance ratings than were noted for the non-EU communities as a whole. **The employment rate** stands at **68.3%** vs 60.1% for the non-EU communities as a whole, +1.2% vs the year before. The unemployment rate for this community stands at 12.2%, as while the inactivity rate of Moldovan citizens stands at approx. 22.2% (8% lower than that of non-EU citizens as a whole). Distribution by gender of employed persons indicates the presence of a gender bias among Moldovan workers that runs markedly counter to that noted among non-EU migrants as a whole. Indeed, although a gap between the male employment rate (79.6%) and the female employment rate (63.1%) can be noted within the community, there is still a high incidence of female employees, which generates an overall index higher than the non-EU mean.

Since Moldovan citizens largely provide personal services and home help, which are sectors for which access to wage supplements is somewhat impeded, this community benefits little from **wage supplements**. 1,734 of non-EU

citizens benefiting from supplements are Moldovan. The beneficiaries are mainly granted CIGO (ordinary redundancy fund) payments (1,640), while 94 are granted CIGS (extraordinary redundancy fund) payments: a rather small incidence on the total of non-EU beneficiaries (3.1%) when considering that approx. 6% of the non-EU workforce belongs to this community.

Moldovan citizens account for 5.6% of non-EU citizens granted unemployment benefits. 26,446 Moldovans are mainly granted NASPI (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme) and 1,443 are granted agricultural unemployment benefits. As to gender, men benefit mainly from mobility allowances and agricultural unemployment benefits while women prevail as beneficiaries of NASPI (approx. 81%) while still showing a significant presence also among the beneficiaries of mobility allowances (20%) and agricultural unemployment benefits (34.7%).

In 2019 there were 42,573 **new employment relationships** involving citizens of Moldovan origin, 1.7% less than in 2018. Confirming the involvement of women in the community in the labour market that is much higher than that of men, the data of the *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) show that 67.4% of new involving this community concern the female component, a quotient more than double that recorded for non-EU citizens as a whole (31.3%). Most of the new subordinate and para-subordinate jobs began during 2019 by Moldovan workers, i.e., a quotient of approx. 82%, are in the Services sector. However, gender analysis indicates that only approx. 61% of the employment contracts activated for Moldovan men cover this sector, while for women in the community the incidence exceeds 90%.

Among the Moldovan employed, manual labour prevails, involving 60% of the employed in the community. In particular, we note a strong prevalence of *unskilled manual labour* involving 35% of community workers, while 25% is employed in *skilled manual labour*. However, the quotient of persons employed in *offices, sales and personal services* is also relevant (34%).

The involvement of the Moldovan component in the **world of entrepreneurship** is not very relevant. With 5,995 sole proprietorships as at 31 December 2019, it covers 1.6% of non-EU sole proprietorships in Italy, although compared to 2018 the number of Moldovan sole proprietors grew by 8.7% (+479 units). Construction is the sector where most investments take place, with 2,911 enterprises (49.6%), followed by that of *Commerce and Transport*, albeit with a much lower incidence than that recorded on enterprises run by non-EU citizens as a whole (12.8% vs 43%).

### Socio-economic conditions

Among Moldovan workers, we note a slightly higher **mean salary** vs non-EU workers as a whole. For home-helpers, the remuneration is fairly in line with the non-EU mean (+44 euros), while we note a greater gap for employees (+117 euros) and agricultural workers (+220 euros). However, we note that in this community the relevance of home-helpers is much higher than the average for non-EU citizens and that the average monthly salary for home-helpers is almost half that of employees. This therefore negatively affects the total average income of the community, although it remains higher than the non-EU one. We also note a high gender pay gap in employment, with an average monthly salary for men exceeding the salary granted to women by 580 euros and, in the context agricultural work, by over 270 euros.

Among Moldovan citizens employed in Italy, a medium-high level of education prevails. Unlike the data concerning non-EU citizens as a whole, about 38% of workers belonging to this community hold a senior secondary school leaving certificate and 19% hold a higher education certificate. Within the community, women have higher levels of education than men: 23.2% of employed women hold a university degree vs 11.6% of men.

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 (in 43% of such cases), followed by survivors' pensions (37.4%); 19.8% are granted disability pensions. As regards the Moldovan community, old-age pensions prevail with an incidence of 50.7%, followed by survivors' pensions (36.6%), while a quotient of 12.7% is covered by disability pensions.

Overall, with 2,926 IVS pensions, the Moldovan community accounts for 4.4% of the total of non-EU citizens who are granted these benefits. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of IVS pensions paid to Moldovan migrants increased by 27%. In particular, the beneficiaries of old-age pensions increased by 42.7%.

The level of **social assistance measures** provided by INPS (solely welfare services for the most vulnerable, due to age conditions reached or civilian invalidity) granted to Moldovan citizens is low: 2,672 (2.6% of those intended for non-EU migrants). In 42% of cases, these are attendance allowances, in 30.5% constant attendance allowances, while 27.4% are social benefits. Among Moldovan citizens, the beneficiaries of old age pensions also increased (+10.6% vs the previous year).

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, i.e. – 3.1% vs the previous year). The beneficiaries of maternity benefits of Moldovan citizenship, in the same period, were 1,991 (more than 7% of the non-EU beneficiaries). As regards the Moldovan community, the number of beneficiaries of maternity benefits decreased by 9.7% vs 2018. The number of beneficiaries of parental leave also decreased: 299,028 in 2019 (-10.3% vs 2018), 7.2% of which of non-EU origin (21,564). 1,119 Moldovan citizens benefited from this measure in 2019 (5.2% of non-EU citizens), a number on the rise for the Moldovan community, vs the year before (+ 3.3%). A greater number of people benefit from family allowances: In 2019, there were 2,446,795 beneficiaries, - 13.8% vs the previous year. 12.5% of beneficiaries are non-EU citizens (305,000, i.e., 13.5% less than in 2018). Within this community 11,397 benefited from family allowances in 2019, with an incidence on the total of non-EU citizens of 4% and a decrease of 14.8% vs the previous year.

Overall, the incidence of beneficiaries from the Moldovan community granted all forms of family assistance is not very relevant. However, the high quotient of Moldovan women granted maternity benefits (7.2%) is noteworthy and it is probably due to the high levels of Moldovan women in the workforce and hence to a high incidence of entitlement within this community.

As to transfers made by the Moldovans in Italy to their country of origin, Moldova ranks fourteenth as nation of destination of **remittances** sent from Italy in 2019 (approx. 107.7 million euros), accounting for 2.1% of the total outgoing remittances (+6.7% vs 2018).

