



Immigration in Italy in 2014. The main aspects

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In 2015, according to the latest projections, migrants worldwide are at least 237 million, and their number is constantly growing especially in Europe and North America. The extreme inequalities in the world affect such a migration phenomenon: 48.0% of global wealth and assets is owned by the richest 1.0% of the world's population, another 46.5% is owned by one-fifth, whereas the remaining 5.5% is divided among the four-fifths of the world population.

Economic inequalities are obviously exacerbated by political, military and environmental crises. In 2014, forced migrants reached the record number of 60 million (8 million more than in 2013), including internally displaced persons (two-thirds of the total), asylum seekers and refugees (respectively 1.8 and 20 million). In particular, asylum seekers find many obstacles in their path - often being in contrast with international regulations, as proven by the construction or planning of at least 65 walls and barbed-wire fences along the borders of several countries.

The Italian and European situation must be read in the light of this global data: in 2014 there were 33.9 million foreign citizens residing in the Eu (6.7% of the entire population), of whom 20 million were third-country nationals whereas 14 million were from other Eu Member States. Asylum seekers amounted to 626,710.

Italy is one of the main countries of immigration in Europe, with 5,014,000 foreign residents at the end of 2014 (+99,000 compared to 2013) - whereas the Italian citizens residing abroad are now 4,637,000 (+150,000 compared to 2013). The incidence on the Italian population (8.1%) continues to be higher than the European average. Moreover, the *Statistical Dossier on Immigration* has estimated the total foreign presence in our country in 5,421,000 people, including non-Eu residents awaiting registration in the Italian registry office.

The majority of foreign nationals residing in Italy (more than 2.6 million) are European citizens. Slightly less than 30% of them come from an Eu Member State (1.5 million). Romanians are the largest foreign community in Italy (1,131,839), followed by Albanians (490,483), Moroccans (449,058), Chinese (265,820) and Ukrainians (226,060). According to the estimates of the *Dossier*, Christians (2.7 million) and Muslims (1.6 million) are the major religious groups, whereas other religious groups are much smaller.

In 2014, 30,906 irregular immigrants were intercepted by the police (data of the Ministry of Interior) and 50.9% of them (15,726) were repatriated. Refugees and other migrants arrived by sea amounted to 170,000. Asylum applications were 64,625 in 2014 and 30,545 in the first 6 months of 2015. In June 2015, the accommodated migrants were 78,484, of which 19,716 within the System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Sprar) and the remaining part in temporary or first reception centres.

In 2014, 129,887 foreign nationals obtained the Italian citizenship (+29% compared to 2013, when a strong increase, compared to the previous year, had already been recorded). Mixed marriages slightly decreased (18,273 or 9.4% of the 194,097 marriages registered in 2013), whereas marriages between foreign nationals were 3.8% of the total (7,807 marriages).

In 2014, the number of children born in Italy during the same year from both foreign-born parents remained almost stable (75,067, i.e. 14.9% of the total births). Out of the more than 1.1



million foreign minors, 814,187 were those enrolled in the school year 2014/2015, that is 11,343 more than in 2013 (the highest increase regarded minors born in Italy: +8.4%), whereas the Italian students continue to decrease (8,886,076, -0.6%). The 26,626 foreign students with disabilities represent 11.5% of the total number of disabled students.

In 2014, foreign workers employed in Italy were 2,294,000 (1,238,000 men and 1,056,000 women), accounting for more than one-tenth of the total number of employed persons (10.3%) - that is a slight increase in their employment rate. Non-Eu citizens with disabilities registered in the provincial employment offices were 13,108 (1.9% of the total, as at December 31, 2013). Due to the economic crisis, 154,686 residence permits - mainly for work and family reasons - were not renewed (29.3% more compared to 2013): this implied the consequent obligation for the persons concerned to leave Italy. Non-Eu citizens beneficiaries of a pension for invalidity, old age and survivors amounted to 35,740 (0.2% of all the beneficiaries), whereas those beneficiaries of a welfare pension were 51,361 (1.4% of the total).

Tax and pension contributions paid by immigrant workers totaled 16.6 billion euro in 2013, whereas the total expenditure of the State for them was 13.5 billion, with a positive balance of 3.1 billion euro. Moreover, in 2013 the Gdp contribution produced by immigrants was equal to 123,072 billion euro (that is 8.8% of Italy's Gdp).

Also interesting is the fact that in the period 2004-2013 the total number of criminal complaints rose from 692,000 to about 897,000: but while the complaints against Italians increased by 28.0% (from 513,618 to 657,443) - despite a slight decrease in the native population -, those filed against foreign citizens decreased by 6.2% (255,304 vs. 239,701) - despite such a population more than doubled during the same period.

Unfortunately, cases of ethnic and racial discriminations persist: out of a total of 1,193 complaints received by Unar during 2014, 990 were considered relevant. The mass media are mainly responsible for these discriminations, with 291 confirmed cases (29.4% of the total): a fact that proves the absolute importance of an unbiased and proper information in our country.

Certain key elements will help summarize the contents of the 2015 *Statistical Dossier on Immigration*: a slow but steady growth of the immigrant population; an important improvement of processes of inclusion (acquisitions of citizenship, school enrollments, employment and birth rates); a continuously positive balance between State expenditure and revenue; improvement of criminal statistics; increasing difficulties in overcoming discriminations and properly framing the future immigration scenario.