

Migration at the crossroads. The inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in the labour market in Italy

Beppe De Sario

Introduction

In recent years, Italian society has been the scene of different and interconnected migration processes. Italy is a country of regular legal immigration, in which migration into the country is concentrated on family reunification and, to a limited extent, for work reasons. People with a migrant background (either on their own account or arising from their parents' rights) continue to acquire Italian citizenship, a phenomenon that, in recent years, has reached peaks of 150,000-200,000 per year, not forgetting that hundreds of thousands of foreign minors born or raised in Italy still lack the recognition of citizenship. We should note that Italy is, as well, a country of emigration that, during the global economic crisis since 2008, has seen at least one million Italian citizens emigrate to other countries, in particular within the EU (Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, etc.).

The contribution of immigrant workers to GDP and also to the stability of the public pension system is considerable (Fondazione Leone Moressa 2019). Immigrants are also net contributors to social services and welfare benefits (De Sario and Ferrucci 2020), considering also the legal limits to which they are subjected.

The historical pattern of migration in Italy has changed recently, due to the wider factors affecting migration trends: the intensity of immigration has grown substantially, in particular between 2015 and 2017; and the main component of new arrivals is through asylum channels and international protection while the regular entry of workers has been very low (mainly for seasonal work and self-employment). This change has been strengthened over the last five years, and it does not seem that legislation and the system of services for immigration have adapted to this new scenario sufficiently to respond to the new needs of integration. In particular, social inclusion and the integration of legally-resident immigrants has not been supported by a solid national system of services and opportunities: reception services have been subjected to legislative restrictions and the cutting of resources, as well as to organisational stress.

This chapter examines the most recent migration of asylum seekers and refugees that reached Europe and Italy in the last five years and focuses on their labour market integration. Section 1 highlights the national context of migration in Italy, while section 2 analyses migration trends in recent years, in particular the peak of 2015-2017 in the context of the slight growth in immigration in the last decade overall. Section 3 focuses on the evolution of the legal framework, between constitutional guarantees and the politicisation of migration policies based on 'security' and 'emergency' concepts,

in the context of the public debate on immigration through the Mediterranean route. Section 4 outlines the characteristics of the reception system for refugees and asylum seekers, in terms of both positive aspects (quality services, especially at local level, and professional challenges for social cooperatives and NGOs) and the negative ones (bureaucratisation, centralisation and poor conditions for work in the large reception centres in particular). Section 5 presents the common guarantees of social rights for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the context of social policies and work legislation in Italy, and also considers the lack of strong active labour market policies (for both nationals and non-nationals). Section 6 highlights the role of trade unions in supporting migrants via ‘social negotiation’ with public institutions, especially at local level, and the participation of migrants themselves in terms of their strong levels of unionisation. Section 7 outlines the main elements of the level of inclusion of immigrants in the labour market compared with nationals, as well as the extent of segmentation, exploitation and lack of safety. Section 8 analyses labour force survey data and tries to define some characteristics of asylum seekers and refugees in the Italian labour market, focusing on those nationalities that show the highest rates of recognition in terms of international protection in recent years.

1. The national context of migration

As of 1 January 2019,¹ there were 5.26m foreign residents registered in Italy, approximately 110,000 more than one year before. In the preceding four years, between January 2015 and January 2019, the number of resident foreigners increased by only 4.8 per cent (+240,000). The substantial stability in the number of foreign residents includes the period between 2017 and 2018 in which the entire amount of the increase over the four years was concentrated. This is the phase in which the number of asylum seekers and refugees was, in terms of the consequences for residents, at its most intense. It is not a coincidence that this increase in non-EU immigration is almost entirely attributable to those countries of origin from which most asylum seekers in Italy have already come: Nigeria, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Recent analysis by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT 2019b) reveals that the demographic contribution of immigrants to Italian society does not compensate for the reduction in the number of national citizens residing in the country. The total number of residents in Italy continues to decline: on 31 December 2018 (ISTAT 2019a), there were 60.36m residents, 124,000 fewer than the previous year and around 435,000 fewer than on 31 December 2014.

In a nutshell, Italy finds itself in a condition of a demographic crisis that is not being effectively addressed either by policies to support the condition of workers and their families, by intervention in support of the birth rate or by migration into the country. The demographic crisis is concentrated on Italian citizens and appears primarily from

1. cf. <http://demo.istat.it/>

the negative natural balance (374,000 births as against 625,000 deaths in 2018) as well as from the number of citizens who have moved residence abroad, which is in the order annually of 120,000 in the most recent period. Moreover, according to Istat estimates, around one in four Italian emigrants is a recently-naturalised Italian citizen.

The distribution by nationality² of foreign residents in Italy highlights that the EU component of immigration is significant (about 30 per cent of the total number of foreign residents). Of these, around three-quarters (1.2m) are Romanian citizens. A further twenty per cent is represented by citizens from non-EU European countries. The remaining one-half of foreign residents come from non-European countries and this was the only growing component in 2017 and 2018: from 48.3 per cent to 49.8 per cent of the total, in particular from western Africa and central-southern Asia.

Table 1 Foreign residents in Italy (number, 2017-2019)

	2017	2018	2019
EU citizens (EU-28)	1,537,223	1,562,147	1,583,169
Europe (non-EU)	1,070,445	1,058,110	1,056,278
Other third-country nationals	2,439,360	2,524,183	2,616,056
Total foreign population	5,047,028	5,144,440	5,255,503
Total resident population	60,589,000	60,484,000	60,360,000

Source: Istat.

One of the factors that has mitigated the increase in the foreign population in Italy is represented by citizenship acquisitions. Between 2013 and 2018, around 870,000 foreign citizens obtained Italian citizenship. For the most part, this arises from duration of residence (44.9 per cent in the 2013-2018 period), while 14.5 per cent of new citizenships take place by marriage. The remaining 40.6 per cent is accounted for by miscellaneous other reasons, including requests for Italian citizenship by young foreigners reaching the age of eighteen, those who are able to acquire citizenship from Italian ancestors (most frequent in recent years concerning new citizens coming from Brazil) and the children of naturalised citizens who inherit Italian citizenship from their parents.

Table 2 Acquisitions of Italian citizenship per year (number, 2013-2018)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2013-2018
Acquisition of Italian citizenship	100,712	129,887	178,035	201,591	146,605	112,523	869,353

Source: Istat.

2. cf. <http://dati.istat.it/>

2. Migration in recent years

Between 2014 and 2018, the number of new residence permits issued to non-EU citizens varied between approximately 225,000 in 2016 and over 260,000 in 2017, at an average of around 243,000 per year. The most relevant element that has influenced the fluctuation in numbers is represented by residence permits granted for asylum and humanitarian reasons which, as Table 3 shows, increased from a share of 19.3 per cent of total residence permits in 2014 to a peak of 38.5 per cent in 2017, followed by a drop to 26.8 per cent in 2018. At the same time, there has been a continual decline in residence permits granted for work reasons, amidst constant – especially in absolute values, i.e. around 100,000 per year – numbers granted for family reasons (with the exception of the growth recorded in 2018).

If we widen our gaze to extend back to 2008, it is clear that the number of new residence permits granted to third-country nationals has been declining since 2011, with the sole exception of 2017. It can be noted that the period between 2008 and 2013 saw very limited numbers of entries on a humanitarian basis compared to the total: in 2011 they reached 11.8 per cent but they were decidedly lower in the other years.³

Table 3 Reason for the permit of residence (percentage and total number, 2008-2018)

	Reason for the residence permit					Total (No.)	Change on previous year (%)
	Work	Family	Study	Asylum/humanitarian reasons	Other*		
2008	50.7	35.5	4.3	6.4	3.1	286,242	
2009	63.8	28.3	4.0	1.9	2.1	393,031	37.3
2010	60.0	29.9	4.4	1.7	4.0	598,567	52.3
2011	34.4	38.9	8.7	11.8	6.2	361,690	-39.6
2012	26.9	44.3	11.7	8.7	8.4	263,968	-27.0
2013	33.1	41.2	10.7	7.5	7.6	255,646	-3.2
2014	23.0	40.8	9.9	19.3	7.1	248,323	-2.9
2015	9.1	44.8	9.6	28.2	8.3	238,936	-3.8
2016	5.7	45.1	7.5	34.3	7.3	226,934	-5.0
2017	4.6	43.2	7.0	38.5	7.4	262,770	15.8
2018	6.0	50.7	9.1	26.8	7.3	242,009	-7.9

Note: * For example: elective residence, religion, health, etc.

Source: Istat.

During 2019, the migratory pressure on Italy was considerably lower than in the previous period, in particular compared with 2015-2017. In the first ten months of 2019, the Ministry of the Interior registered 31,136 applications for international protection, as Table 4 shows.⁴ At the same time, migrants arriving by sea (the so-called *sbarchi*)

3. Also considering that, between 2009 and 2011, regulations were issued on the normalisation of foreigners present in Italy, often already in work but without residence documents.

4. cf. <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/documentazione/statistica>. Source: Ministry of the Interior.

amounted to 11,471, of which a significant percentage will be applying for international protection. These figures show, above all, that *sbarchi* no longer represent the main route of entry into the country for foreigners applying for international protection. This is, instead, formed by other and different channels of entry: by land, across the eastern border with Slovenia; or through other forms of independent arrival. There is no doubt, however, that the Mediterranean route represented in previous years the main point of access for asylum seekers and refugees.

Table 4 **Asylum seekers, migrant arrivals (Mediterranean route) and new residence permits, by status (number, 2015-2019)**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*	2015-2019
Asylum seeker applicants ⁵	83,970	123,600	130,119	53,596	31,136	422,421
Migrant arrivals (Mediterranean route) ⁶	153,842	181,436	119,369	23,370	11,471	489,488
New residence permits (asylum/humanitarian reasons) ⁷	68,859	77,927	101,065	64,819	n/a	312,670
Number of resident immigrants for international protection on 1 January (refugees, asylum seekers) ⁸	118,020	155,177	197,234	243,577	262,444	+144,424

Note: * Up to October.

Source: Istat.

Overall, between 2015 and October 2019, applications for asylum and international protection amounted to 422,421, while entries by sea were about 67,000 higher (489,488). This difference can be explained by considering those who did not apply for protection or, at least, did not do so in Italy, choosing to continue the journey to other European Union destinations. Moreover, there are two distinct periods: in 2015 and 2016, the number of arrivals by sea was much higher than the total number of asylum applications. This is due to immigrants arriving in Italy who were registered in the asylum application system only with some delay, such that they were included in the following year's figures. For the most part, this indicates a significant share of migrants who have continued on the migration route to other countries. In 2017, the ratio between the two values was reversed while, in 2018, the number of asylum applications (53,596) was more than double that of arrivals by sea (23,370). In the first ten months of 2019, the number of entries by sea constitutes about 31 per cent of the total number of asylum applications.

As of 1 January 2019, the number of foreign residents with a residence permit granted for asylum, making a request for asylum or for humanitarian reasons was 262,444, representing an increase of just under 20,000 compared to 1 January 2018. This is the smallest annual increase in the 2015-2019 period, although the total number has

5. *ibidem*.

6. *ibidem*.

7. cf. <http://stra-dati.istat.it/>

8. cf. Istat 2016-2019.

more than doubled (from 118,020 on 1 January 2015). Over the four years from 2015 to 2018, new residence permits granted for these reasons amounted to 312,670 although the actual increase in foreign residents with permits granted in these categories was limited to 144,424. This may, in part, be due to the independent movement of a number of asylum seekers to other European countries but, to a large extent, it can be attributed to the transformation of some of those residence permits issued for ‘humanitarian reasons’⁹ into work permits or to the loss of legal residence status due to long-term unemployment.

With the continual increase registered in the previous four years, the number of foreign residents with permits granted for asylum, to make a request for asylum or for humanitarian reasons had reached, by 1 January 2019, a number that is difficult to stand by in the near future. Above all, this stems from the drastic increase in the number of applications being rejected (from around 60 per cent to over 80 per cent); essentially, this is related to the most recent legislative changes that have eliminated the category of ‘humanitarian protection’, with asylum being maintained only in a strict sense and even then only in connection with subsidiary protection (see further in next section). The number of foreign residents with permits related to international protection will probably be reduced without a substantial influx of new asylum seekers. This is even considering that, in recent years, at least two-thirds of the residence permits issued in a single year, regardless of reason, were temporary permits equal to or lasting less than twelve months, including permits for making a request for asylum and for temporary humanitarian protection.

3. The legal framework for immigration in Italy

The rules governing immigration in Italy are defined in the *Consolidated Immigration Act*,¹⁰ as subsequently amended at several salient points. The text focuses on the rights and duties of foreign residents and, of course, on entry and removal procedures to and from the national territory. The foreign resident is entitled to equal rights with Italian citizens as regards civil, social and labour affairs, also in observance of the Italian Constitution which, in Article 10, establishes that: ‘The legal status of foreigners is regulated by law in conformity with international provisions and treaties.’ In particular, concerning the right of asylum and international protection, the Italian Constitution states: ‘A foreigner who is denied the effective exercise of the democratic liberties guaranteed by the Italian Constitution in his or her own country has the right of asylum in the territory of the Italian Republic, in accordance with the conditions established by law.’

9. Up until 2018, they represented about two-thirds of residence permits granted to asylum seekers after applications had been examined and consisting usually of short permits for up to one year. The remaining portion consists of residence permits granted for asylum and subsidiary protection, both lasting five years (renewable).

10. Legislative Decree No. 286 del 1998, *Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell’immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero*.

The 1998 Consolidated Act established entry procedures related to the definition of an 'entry quota' programme, basically for work reasons and taking into account family reunification and international protection measures. In 2002, extensive changes were introduced through Law 189 (the so-called Bossi-Fini Law, named after the leaders of *Lega Nord* and *Alleanza Nazionale*, both right-wing parties). The Bossi-Fini Law introduced a tightening of the conditions for regular entry, with the obligation for the migrant to be in possession of an employment contract in order to apply for a residence permit. Furthermore, the Law permitted refoulement within extraterritorial waters based on bilateral agreements between Italy and other countries.

Specific legislation on asylum seekers and refugees has been a clear gap in the Italian legislation that was filled only in 2015 with Legislative Decree No. 142.¹¹ This Decree, in addition to incorporating European regulations and directives on the subject, systematises the Italian reception system into three levels: first aid and initial reception; first stage reception in the strict sense; and then second stage.

During the most acute phase of the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers by sea, the centre-left government issued the so-called 'Minniti Decree',¹² from the name of the prevailing Minister of the Interior. This Decree reduced legal rights by removing the second tier of judgment for asylum seekers looking to appeal against a denial of their application, abolished the option of a personal hearing¹³ and extended the network of detention centres for irregular migrants.¹⁴ The Minniti Decree also 'introduced' volunteering for asylum seekers in the local communities in which they are hosted, although it should be noted that such a concept was previously neither prohibited nor at all limited. The new Decree does not allocate resources; it only establishes that the prefectures (government territorial offices) must 'promote' such voluntary activities in agreement with the municipalities (which already had full authority). In essence, this represented more of a message in response to public opinion than an effective measure.

The most important regulation came in August 2017 with the introduction by the Minister of the Interior in the Gentiloni centre-left government of a code of conduct for NGOs engaged in search and rescue operations concerning migrants at sea. The provisions in the code of conduct are, in fact, based on an application of the so-called 'pull factor' principle in relation to relief operations being conducted by NGOs in this area. Furthermore, it questions their 'loyal cooperation' and requests that they play a

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11. Legislative Decree No. 142 of 2015, *Attuazione della direttiva 2013/33/UE recante norme relative all'accoglienza dei richiedenti protezione internazionale, nonché della direttiva 2013/32/UE, recante procedure comuni ai fini del riconoscimento e della revoca dello status di protezione internazionale.*
 12. Decree Law 17 of 2017, *Disposizioni urgenti per l'accelerazione dei procedimenti in materia di protezione internazionale, nonché misure per il contrasto dell'immigrazione illegale*, then converted into legislation by Law 46 of 2017.
 13. In the first instance, the ordinary procedure has been replaced with a chamber rite without a hearing in which a judge examines a video recording of an interview between the asylum seeker and the territorial commission without the right of challenge and without the judge being able to address questions to the asylum seeker presenting the appeal.
 14. Via the introduction of Permanent Centres for Repatriation (CPR), the creation of which was planned in every Italian region. Compared to the four centres operating in 2017, in the following two years only three additional centres were opened.

role somewhere between the humanitarian level and that of helping judicial and police activities in combating illegal immigration.¹⁵

Despite the sharp decline in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, the government established by the 5Star Movement and *Lega* in June 2018 placed strong legislative and administrative restrictions on the reception of migrants. The regulations introduced by Decree Law 113 of 2018 (the so-called ‘Security Decree’¹⁶) completed the stigmatisation of NGOs by imposing criminal and financial sanctions on rescue ships that are not operating in conjunction with the Italian authorities. Additionally, the Decree again reshaped the Italian reception system, excluding asylum seekers from secondary protection (SIPROIMI) and reserving this category only for the beneficiaries of international protection. In this way, the Decree abolished ‘humanitarian protection’, which represents about two-thirds of the residence permits granted for international protection in Italy and cancelled the registration of asylum seekers in the municipalities in which they are hosted. All this was accompanied by administrative measures to reduce the resources allocated to centres for asylum seekers and the consequent downsizing or elimination of socialisation activities, language training, legal support, mentoring, psychological and health assistance, etc.

In the meantime, several independent observers (NGOs, civil rights lawyers and trade unions) have complained about the negative consequences of the legislation in terms of the increase in irregular migrants. According to estimates there are around 500,000-700,000 migrants who do not have a residence permit (IDOS 2019; Fondazione Leone Moressa 2019), a growing number which also encompasses about 60,000 asylum seekers who, since October 2018, have lost their right to stay in reception centres, many of them as a result of the abolition of humanitarian protection.

The government installed in September 2019 (consisting of the 5-Star Movement, Democratic Party and *Liberi e Uguagli*, a left-wing party) has changed the decrees established by the previous government in December 2020.¹⁷

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15. Under the code, the Libyan SAR (Search and Rescue) area is requested to undertake ‘The commitment not to make telephone communications or send light signals to facilitate the departure of migrants.’ It is also required to undertake the following express commitments: ‘To receive on board, if necessary and for the time strictly necessary, at the request of the competent Italian authorities, judicial police officers so that they can collect information and evidence aimed at investigating migrant trafficking’; ‘To cooperate loyally with the Public Security Authority at the migrants’ planned landing location’; and ‘To declare [...] to the competent authorities of the State in which the NGO is registered all the sources of funding for their rescue operations at sea and to communicate this information to the Italian authorities upon request.’ NGOs present in the central Mediterranean area have also been urged to adhere to the code.
 16. Decree Law 113 of 2018, *Disposizioni urgenti in materia di protezione internazionale e immigrazione, sicurezza pubblica, nonché misure per la funzionalità del Ministero dell’interno e l’organizzazione e il funzionamento dell’Agenzia nazionale per l’amministrazione e la destinazione dei beni sequestrati e confiscati alla criminalità*.
 17. Law 173 of 18 December 2020 reintroduced humanitarian protection (called ‘special protection’, convertible into a work permit); made the rules for NGOs engaged in search and rescue operations less punitive; reformed the Italian reception system for both asylum seekers and refugees; and strengthened the role of local authorities.

4. The reception system and the integration of asylum seekers and refugees

The reception system for asylum seekers and refugees in Italy is articulated at different levels. After arriving by sea or by land, asylum seekers are assisted in particular hotspot areas,¹⁸ passing through initial reception and rescue centres, both first aid and reception (CPSA) and general reception centres (CDA). First-stage reception also includes CARA (Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers), in which migrants are identified and procedures for international protection started. The reception period should not exceed 35 days, after which the asylum seeker should receive a residence permit for six months, renewable up to the outcome of the asylum request. Capacity in the CARAs is around 4,000, and management is generally contracted to private companies, NGOs and consortia of social cooperatives. The lengthy time required for the definition of an asylum seeker's status by Italy's territorial asylum councils leads to the first-stage reception system being continually over capacity. Because of this, starting in 2015, national government prefectures have been authorised, in the case of the exhaustion of capacity, to activate Extraordinary Reception Centres (CAS), contracted directly to private companies or consortia of social cooperatives. Unlike CARA and CDA, which are stable and permanent structures, CAS units are activated according to need and are intended, by nature, to be temporary.

It should be emphasised that many contractors of CAS centres have been charged with corruption, the misappropriation of funds and the mistreatment of migrants while, as of 2015, 'extraordinary' reception had become the norm: by 31 December 2017, 186,681 migrants had been hosted in reception facilities during the course of the year although, by the end of 2018, their number had fallen to 135,858 and then to 96,862 by 31 October 2019. Out of this current total, 71,935 migrants are hosted in first-stage reception centres (CARA and CDA, but mainly in CAS), while 24,577 are the guests of ex-SPRAR, now SIPROIMI, facilities.

The decrease in guests in reception centres is certainly linked to the reduction in arrivals from the end of 2017. However, the largest drop (equal to a reduction of about 5,000 each month) was recorded in the six months following the elimination of humanitarian protection by the 'Security Decree' and the continuing increase in the rejections of applications for international protection.

Guests in the SIPROIMI centres are, in the main, recent holders of international protection participating in social inclusion programmes although some are asylum seekers awaiting response to a request for international protection (and who had already filed their claim before the new legislation came into force). The SIPROIMI system represents second-stage reception and constitutes a 'decentralised reception system' (each project has an average of twenty guests), coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior through the Central Directorate of Civil Services for Immigration and Asylum, and in which the Italian municipalities play a direct role. They adhere to the

18. There are four hotspot areas (Lampedusa, Trapani, Pozzallo and Taranto) set up to facilitate the provision of initial assistance, identification and information regarding procedures for requesting international protection.

SPRAR network, manage resources, often provide facilities and make agreements on their management with the social cooperatives and NGOs involved in assisting migrants. Hospitality is often organised in small reception centres and in apartments made available by associations, social cooperatives and even by individual citizens.

The local administrations (single municipalities or those which are jointly associated) are responsible for the management of the reception system and are in charge of the assistance and protection of unaccompanied migrant children. In addition to these commitments, the municipalities carry out integration activities through programmes and welfare services which are provided at territorial level. The Italian Constitution also assigns legislative powers to the regions regarding social services, welfare policies and integration, and it is the region that has the task of outlining integration strategies and policies and defining a system of interventions and services for its area. Therefore, the role of the regions is also present in initiatives towards the social inclusion of immigrants, starting from the definition of the regional regulatory framework up to the activation of projects based on European funds (the National and Regional Operational Programme within the Asylum and Migration Integration Fund).

Social cooperatives active in welfare services represent an important sector of the Italian economy and labour market: they employ around 400,000 people;¹⁹ of these, 294,000 work in 'type A'²⁰ or mixed (A+B)²¹ cooperatives. Social cooperatives are also a key player in the immigration services system, especially in former SPRAR projects where, in 2017, they employed 11,734 workers (12.2 per cent on a full-time basis, 60.1 per cent part-time and 25.1 per cent as consultants) (SPRAR 2018). The main activities were dedicated to reception, socio-economic integration and the provision of social and health assistance (17.3 per cent of the total), administrative staff (13 per cent), linguistic-cultural mediators (11.4 per cent), team coordinators (6.3 per cent), legal operators (5.9 per cent), social workers (5.4 per cent) and teachers (5 per cent). Some 58.8 per cent of the professionals employed in such projects are women. Moreover, women are concentrated in particular professions and tasks: they prevail in the roles of social worker (91.8 per cent), psychologist (80.4 per cent), teacher (71.1 per cent), administrative employee (64.6 per cent) and social assistance worker (64.1 per cent).

Taking into account those employed in the extraordinary reception centres, around 40,000 workers were employed up to 2018 across the entire reception system (first and second stages). However, unions of public workers have estimated that, due to the entry into force of the 'Security Decree', around 18,000 jobs could be cut.

From the point of view of national institutions, the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration operates within the Ministry of the Interior. Within the Ministry, the Central Directorate for Immigration and Asylum Policies deals with the definition

19. cf. Euricse, *Economia cooperativa. Rilevanza, evoluzione e nuove frontiere della cooperazione italiana*, Rapporto 2015.

20. Social welfare, social health and educational services cooperatives.

21. 'A+B' (mixed) and 'Type B' cooperatives operate to assist people belonging to disadvantaged groups (people with mental disabilities, former drug addicts, the disabled, etc.) and can be engaged in providing employment in various sectors but especially in gardening, catering, cleaning, warehousing, etc.

of the government's migration policies and the analysis and planning of migration policies through territorial immigration councils established in every prefecture. The Directorate manages the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and also participates in the coordination of activities carried out in the implementation of the legislation on immigration and asylum, coordinating, in particular, the activities of the prefecture-level one-stop offices for immigration (see below).

Also part of the Ministry of the Interior is the Central Directorate of Civil Services for Immigration and Asylum, which is responsible for the reception and assistance of immigrants arriving without a residence permit and for whom it is necessary to provide first aid. With respect to asylum, the Directorate manages activities related to the assistance and reception of asylum seekers and those who have already obtained international protection. This also includes the management of the National Fund for asylum policies and services, out of which the Ministry allocates funds to those local authorities that have activated reception and integration services for the applicants and holders of international protection within the SIPROIMI system.

The National Commission for the Right to Asylum operates in the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration and has the task of directing and coordinating the territorial councils.

The prefectures operate one-stop offices for immigration. Here, foreign nationals may apply for certificates of employment (in relation to fixed-term, permanent and seasonal contracts) within the quotas established annually; for authorisation of the entry of foreign citizens for family reunification purposes; and for the conversion of residence permits granted originally for study or training purposes or for seasonal work into work permits.

Applications for international protection are received at the *Questura* (police and public security headquarters at territorial level) or by the border police, via the completion of a 'C3' form containing the personal details of the applicant, family context and origin, the reasons for the request and the initial specifics useful within the procedure for international protection. This procedure is carried out by the civilian and public security personnel of the *Questura*, usually assisted by cultural mediators.

From the perspective of the Ministry of Justice, particular attention is paid to unaccompanied migrant minors in order to guarantee their protection. The establishment of the Committee for Foreign Minors²² meets the requirements of the 1998 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and is composed of nine representatives from various ministries, bodies and associations operating in the sector, including the Ministry of Justice. The Juvenile Justice Department links up with the Directorates of the juvenile justice centres in the territories.

22. According to Article 33 of the Consolidated Immigration Act, Legislative Decree No. 286 of 1998.

5. National and local policies on the social rights and integration of migrants

Access to work for asylum seekers is regulated by Legislative Decree No. 142/2015.²³ The residence permit granted to allow an applicant for international protection to make a request for asylum allows that person to be legally employed sixty days from the date of submission of the application. There are no legal limits for access to the labour market for holders of international protection provided they have a valid residence permit. At the same time, there are no dedicated services, provided in a structural and permanent manner, targeted at the inclusion into the labour market of asylum seekers and holders of international protection. They can, however, make use of the active policy tools aimed at 'weak' labour market subjects as well as avail themselves of public services for work, social benefits and allowances provided for all workers legally employed in Italy.

Active labour market policies and, in general, policies and services assisting labour inclusion are, according to the Italian Constitution, within the competence of the regions. Through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS), however, the national government promotes projects and tenders usually on the basis of AMIF and ESF resources. Among these, the most recent is the PUOI (Protection allied to Integration) project.²⁴ This is based on the activation of individual social and work placement capabilities for people regularly residing in Italy who are characterised by vulnerability or who, according to the current legislation, are citizens with international and humanitarian protection, holders of other residence permits for special protection and citizens who have entered Italy as unaccompanied minors. The PUOI project is focused on no fewer than 4,500 employment paths and seeks to involve public and private operators in the labour market. Courses provide access to a series of integrated services for social and work placement (which include, among others, tutoring, guidance and job search support, and skills assessment) and to a six-month internship. Additionally, attention towards young migrants is present in the PERCORSI project (Pathways to the training, work and integration of young migrants), promoted by the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies within MLPS, as a means of promoting the social and work integration of unaccompanied foreign minors in transition towards adulthood as well as of young migrants up to 23 years of age who entered Italy as unaccompanied foreign minors.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is also a resource provider when it comes to AMIF and ESF applications in the shape of territorial-level proposals for job placements and training provided under regional programmes. Calls for training also envisage access for asylum seekers and the holders of international protection, who are considered to fall within the categories of citizens at greatest risk of social exclusion. The regulatory framework is uniform at national level, since the guidelines regarding internships were defined in an agreement between the national government and the

23. See note 11, *infra*.

24. In Italian, the literal meaning of the acronym is 'you can'.

regions in 2017.²⁵ However, the effective participation of asylum seekers and refugees in internships and work placements depends on the commitment and conviction of the different regional and local administrations. Also in this area there are territorial programmes which can propose various support measures. For example, in 2018 the Emilia-Romagna region authorised 29,378 training and professional internships, carried out by young people, the unemployed, people with certified disabilities and disadvantaged people; these included 1,758 places for asylum seekers or holders of international protection. Internships are generally a job placement tool which, in the case of asylum seekers, is frequently managed by the municipalities in accordance with the paths created by social cooperatives and other project management bodies within SIPROIMI.

Italian language courses for foreigners are offered by the public system in Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA). These are educational institutions that offer services and activities for education and functional literacy and are aimed at Italian and foreign citizens over the age of 16. Courses in literacy and language learning last on average 200 hours, of which 180 are for teaching and 20 for reception and orientation activities. At the end of the course and following the passing of a final test, a certificate is issued that is valid in obtaining or renewing a residence permit (this is a condition of Integration Agreements²⁶ as well as EU long-term residence permits).

Of course, there are also many initiatives by associations and NGOs committed to defending the rights of migrants, especially those included in the reception centres.

Access to welfare services and benefits is generally open to legally-resident foreigners and also to asylum seekers and the holders of international protection. Nevertheless, especially at local level there are measures which have a discriminatory effect, or which discourage access by immigrants: the length of residence criterion for access to social housing or childcare services; the request for special documents to account for assets owned in the country of origin before accessing social benefits; etc. A registered residence is a necessary condition for obtaining any kind of social benefit, starting with access to the National Health Service. In Italy, the right to health protection for people outwith European Union citizenship, even if not in compliance with the rules for entry and stay, is guaranteed by the Consolidated Immigration Act. The right to healthcare has also been extended to foreigners present in Italy under conditions of legal irregularity (Temporarily Present Foreigners – STP), guaranteeing them essential, continuous and preventive medical programmes in addition to emergency treatment. Almost all the regions have regulated access to health services, similarly to STPs, through a code of conduct (European Non-Member – ENI) which gives universal coverage consistent with the Italian Constitution. There are also specialised services

25. *Accordo tra il Governo, le Regioni e Province autonome di Trento e Bolzano sul documento recante Linee guida in materia di tirocini formativi e di orientamento*, 25 May 2017.

26. The Integration Agreement is a pact set out at the time an application for a residence permit is submitted. The Italian State undertakes to provide the tools for the acquisition of the principles of the Italian Constitution and of the bases of Italian culture and language; while the immigrant undertakes to adhere to the courses and initiatives proposed and, in particular, to achieve A2 level knowledge of the Italian spoken language and to comply with the obligation of education for minors.

that focus on foreign beneficiaries: including volunteering and social activities but also public services (from local clinics to structures such as the National Institute for Health, Migration and Poverty (INMP) in Rome).

The regulations introduced by Law Decree 113 of 2018 (the ‘Security Decree’) deprive asylum seekers of the right to register with the municipalities in which the reception centres where they are resident are located. The ‘Security Decree’ makes access to welfare services and other opportunities particularly complex, even without establishing specific prohibitions. This legislative intervention places asylum seekers in a grey area that is a source of unease, delay and contradictions of administrative practice since asylum seekers in possession of a residence permit to make a request for asylum are not uniformly recognised as regards access to employment services, schooling, private financial services, etc. Moreover, various court rulings²⁷ have established the right of asylum seekers to register with the municipalities in which they reside, even if these judgements will not have general application until the Constitutional Court has pronounced on the ‘Security Decree’ that withdrew this requirement of asylum seekers. In addition to the anticipated judgement of the Constitutional Court and individual judicial rulings, various interventions by local administrations have allowed the registration of asylum seekers. At regional level, Tuscany has issued Regional Law 45 of 2019, which defines *Provisions for the protection of the essential needs of the human person*. This Law establishes that all those residing on the territory of Tuscany, foreign or otherwise, have equal right of access to essential medical care, nutrition, social assistance, temporary housing, education and childcare. These rights are, therefore, now explicitly recognised even in respect of those who do not have a residence permit.

6. The role of trade unions in promoting the rights and social inclusion of migrants

There are initiatives undertaken by trade unions which have also produced results at territorial level. For example on the territory of the Association of Municipalities of the Reno Lavino and Samoggia Valleys²⁸ (part of Emilia-Romagna) an agreement was signed in February 2019 ‘With regard to Security Decree No. 113/2018’ between the association of local administrations and the CGIL, CISL and UIL trade union confederations. In line with this agreement, the public administrations have undertaken to set up a ‘register’ for asylum seekers (and those appealing against rejection decisions by the territorial asylum councils), so as to guarantee them access to administrative procedures, public health and the social benefits of local welfare services.

The participation of trade unions in such institutional initiatives and agreements is part of a very original practice among the Italian trade union confederations: so-called

27. In spring 2019, the courts of Florence and Bologna accepted the appeal of asylum seekers who, because of the ‘Security Decree’, had been denied the possibility to register with the municipality even though they held residence permits to make a request for asylum.

28. This is an association of municipal administrations that share services and jointly carry out some municipal functions (local police, registry offices, childcare services, social services, urban planning and environmental planning, etc.).

‘social negotiation’. This is negotiation activity carried out by CGIL, CISL and UIL with local administrations, the Association of Municipalities, public health care agencies, consortia of providers of social services, etc. Social negotiation is not part of collective bargaining – it does not establish contracts but agreements, shared objectives and protocols – and it is asymmetrical because public administrations control the policies and functions that realise the content of such agreements. In 2018, social negotiation involved around 1,000 Italian municipalities to the benefit of a population that can be estimated at around 15 million (80 per cent concentrated in the regions of northern Italy in which some 60 per cent of immigrants reside). The result of these negotiations takes the form of agreements that define some aspects of municipal financial budget lines, applied levels of taxation and tariffs, services and the performance of local welfare.

Immigrants, both directly and indirectly, are among the growing beneficiaries of social negotiation agreements. Data from the CGIL and SPI Observatory on Social Negotiation (CGIL *et al.* 2019) show that, in 2018, agreements that defined interventions in favour of immigrants stood at 28.4 per cent of the total. These agreements focused on the territorial services intended for the reception of migrants (CAS, SPRAR, etc.); assistance to unaccompanied foreign minors; and interventions concerning family care and assistance workers (most of whom are foreigners). Alongside this, in recent years a greater number of agreements has emerged on immigration issues, especially regarding integration: combating racism and xenophobia; intercultural initiatives; integration measures aimed at foreign minors attending primary and secondary schools; language courses; and adult education. Moreover, social negotiation can be linked to collective bargaining, especially in economic sectors that are of particular importance in respect of the social and labour rights of foreign workers, i.e. where immigrants are present to a very significant extent in these fields, with such initiatives resulting in agreements on contractual regularity; health and occupational safety; and undeclared work, especially in public procurement contracts. The commitment of trade union organisations to migrants is also carried out through information campaigns and projects in collaboration with NGOs.²⁹

An important resource for social inclusion and the protection of immigrant workers’ rights is trade union membership. Membership trends among foreign workers have been positive for several years, and this is something which has not been affected by the large number of acquisitions of citizenship (which, if anything, may have positively affected Italian unionisation rates). In 2018, the figure for foreign members in CGIL, CISL and UIL surpassed the symbolic threshold of one million members for the first time: a total of 1,016,095 (De Sario 2019). Compared to 2017, there has been a growth of over 40,000 foreign members in the three confederations; and about 90,000 compared to 2016. In percentage terms, foreign workers represent nine per cent of the total number of affiliates of the three unions: CGIL had the highest share, at 9.6 per cent in 2018 (compared to 8.9 per cent in 2017), followed by CISL with 8.4 per cent (+ 0.4 percentage points) and UIL (stable at 8.4 per cent). If we consider the share

29. See the recent *Io accolgo* campaign, promoted and sponsored by CGIL, CISL and UIL, Arci, Save the Children, Action Aid, Médecins Sans Frontières, Caritas and many others. <http://ioaccolgo.it>

of foreigners among active workers only (i.e. excluding pensioners), the incidence is much higher and approaches 15 per cent (for CGIL, 15.7 per cent; CISL, 13 per cent). Again focusing only on active workers,³⁰ the concentration of immigrants among trade union members is particularly significant in specific sectors, albeit that there are some differences between the confederations: construction (between 25 per cent and 30 per cent); trade and services (22-23 per cent); agriculture and the food processing industry (16-27 per cent); and the industry sector (15-16 per cent).

7. Immigrants in the Italian labour market

The focus of this chapter is the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees, particularly in the wake of the 2015/2016 migration levels in Italy, but a background to the general picture regarding the employment of immigrants in Italy is presented here as a point of departure for what we will describe in section 8.

The employment of foreigners in Italy is strongly characterised by fragility, uncertainty and elements of inequality above all because of the place they occupy in the labour market: over one-third of foreign workers are employed on involuntary part-time or temporary contracts; 32 per cent of occupied immigrants work in unskilled professions (compared to about ten per cent of nationals); and, as regards industry sector, more than one-quarter work in personal services (mainly family care and assistance) while a further quarter are in hotels and restaurants, transportation, warehousing and construction. Furthermore, the pay gap is significant and delineated by an average net wage for Italian citizens of €1,530 (full-time) and €825 (part-time) compared to €1,188 and €675 for foreigners (Ferrucci 2018). This is not only due to limited professional mobility but also to the violation of contractual rights and the underemployment of foreign workers.³¹

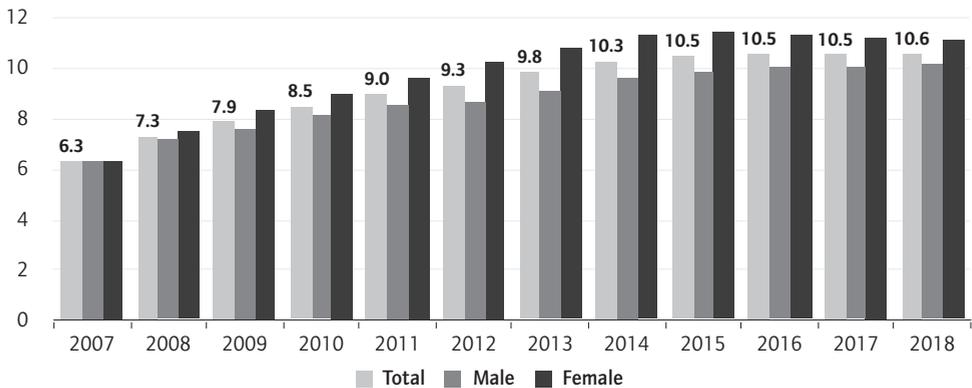
The active population of foreign citizens in Italy (i.e. employed and unemployed people looking for a job) comprised 2.86m foreign citizens in 2018, representing 11.0 per cent of the total. This percentage has been stable since 2015 following the significant increase registered in the previous eight years (+4.5 percentage points). The employed population comprises 2.46m foreign citizens, 10.6 per cent of the total; this percentage increased significantly between 2007 and 2015 (+4.3 percentage points) but it has not changed significantly since (Figure 1).

The share of foreigners in female employment grew considerably between 2007 and 2015, at which point it reached an all-time high of 11.4 per cent, consistently exceeding the share of immigrants in male employment.

30. Peculiarly, each of the main Italian trade union confederations is structured along the lines of industry federations and pensioner associations. The pensioner associations are, essentially, composed of former active workers but whose affiliation to the confederation is as pensioners with no connection with industry origin.

31. The values presented in this paragraph and in the following ones are our own elaborations (Giuliano Ferrucci, Fondazione Giuseppe Di Vittorio) of Istat data (the Continuous Labour Force Survey – CLFS).

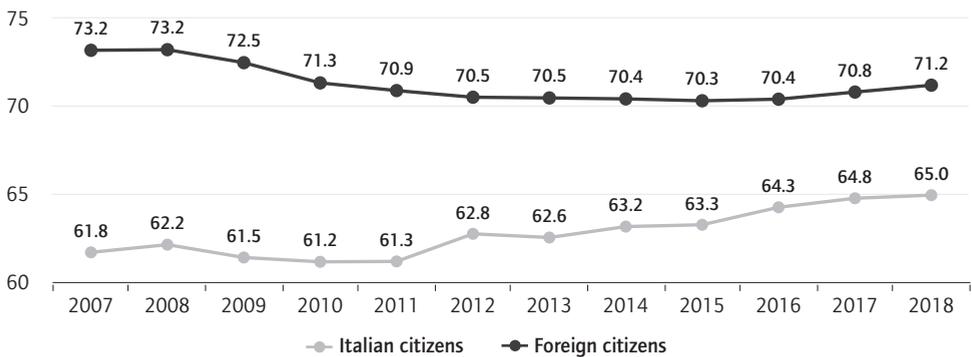
Figure 1 Foreign workers in employment as percentage of total employment (2007-2018)



Source: Fondazione Giuseppe di Vittorio elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

The contribution of foreign citizens to the labour force is particularly significant in Italy where, unlike in other European countries, their activity rate has been higher than that of nationals (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Activity rates (15-64 years) of Italian citizens and foreigners (percentage, 2007-2018)

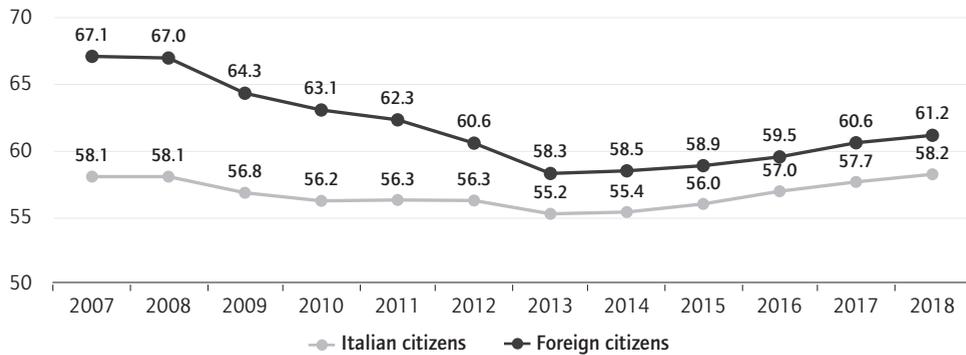


Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

Despite a decrease in the activity rate of immigrant males in the years of the crisis (from 88.3 per cent in 2007 to 81.3 per cent in 2014) – determined at least in part by their over-representation in those sectors most affected by the recession (such as construction) – the participation of all immigrants (both men and women) remains more than six percentage points higher than that of Italians, as Figure 2 shows.

While the employment rate of foreign citizens is also higher (+3 percentage points compared to the employment rate of Italians in 2018; see Figure 3), the difference on this measure has significantly decreased over the last eleven years (in 2007, it was +9 percentage points). This narrowing gap is not so much due to an increase in employment among Italian citizens as to a considerable fall in the employment rate for

Figure 3 Employment rates (15-64 years) of Italian citizens and foreigners (percentage, 2007-2018)



Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

foreigners, mostly driven by the sharp drop in the employment rate of male foreigners (-15.4 percentage points between 2007 and 2014; not shown in Figure 3) due to the first and, more so again, the second recession.³²

The difference between the employment rates of foreigners and Italians is clearly attributable to the high rates among all male immigrants as well as among women from EU countries. The occupational situation of women of non-EU origin is more problematic and it is this which exerts a significant weight in compressing their employment rate and increasing the rates of unemployment and inactivity. Despite the difficulties we have mentioned, the presence of women among employed migrants is significant. For example, women represent 44 per cent of immigrant blue collar workers but two-thirds of immigrant white collar employees (+11.5 and +9.5 percentage points compared to the share of women in the same groups who have Italian citizenship), as well as 46.7 per cent of freelancers (+11.8 percentage points compared to the Italian figure).

Another distinctive aspect of the employment of foreign citizens in the labour market is age: 29.7 per cent of foreign workers are under 35 (26.9 per cent of EU workers and 31 per cent of non-EU workers), a very high share when compared to the 21.1 per cent for Italian citizens.

As regards territorial distribution, employees with non-EU citizenship are concentrated in northern regions (60.7 per cent), in particular in the north-west (36.5 per cent). Those coming from other EU countries are more likely to work in central regions (31 per cent). Finally, the south has only 15.2 per cent of EU employees and 16.7 per cent of non-EU ones, compared to 27.9 per cent of Italian citizens.

³² It must be said that the absolute number of employed immigrants of working age (1564 years) never decreases from one year to the next but, in the years of the crisis, it increased proportionally less than the reference population (foreign residents aged 1564).

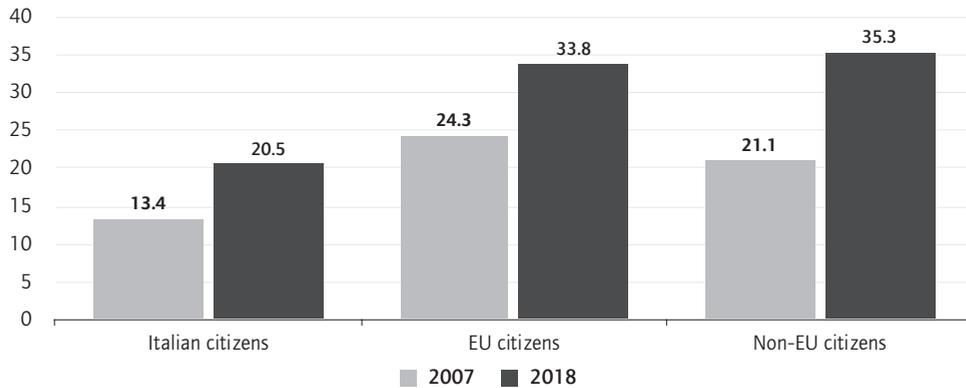
Turning next to educational qualification, the share of EU and non-EU foreign employees with lower secondary education or below is higher than the percentage estimated for Italians (respectively, 33.2 per cent and 58.6 per cent vs. 28.6 per cent), while the percentage of graduate foreign workers is far below that of the Italian population. Furthermore, from an analysis of data by workers' level of education and the skill level required by occupation, it is possible to estimate the rate of over-qualification of those in employment; in other words, the percentage of people with a university degree who are carrying out work requiring only intermediate or a low level of skill (OECD 2018).³³ The fraction of foreign graduates employed in a low or intermediate skill profession is very high, rising as far as 63.1 per cent (46.2 per cent among EU citizens and 73.6 per cent among non-EU citizens) compared to an estimated 17.5 per cent for Italians (MLPS 2019).

On top of this, the migrant labour market is characterised by a profound segmentation of jobs: only 1.2 per cent of those in employment are in a managerial position compared to 7.8 per cent of Italian citizens; additionally, 76.8 per cent are workers compared to 31.4 per cent of Italians. The Italian economy has, in the last twenty years, followed a development trajectory that has rewarded specialist and cognitive professions to the detriment of tasks requiring intermediate qualifications, such as office clerks, artisans and specialised workers, or those engaged in semi-skilled activities in commercial activities (Ferrucci 2018). Between the first half of 2007 and the first half of 2018, the number of workers in occupations not requiring qualifications increased overall by almost 30 per cent (+563,000 employees), with a preponderant contribution of the foreign component (+408,000, equal to 70 per cent of that increase). In the first half of 2018, one in three foreign workers were working in occupations that did not require a qualification (25.1 per cent of EU and 36.6 per cent of non-EU workers), compared to just 8.1 per cent of Italian workers. The presence of immigrant workers is also significant in 'qualified occupations in commercial activities and services' (where they represent 14.8 per cent of employment) and among artisans, specialised workers and farmers (14.6 per cent).

Precariousness and uncertainty are increasingly widespread among foreign workers. In 2018, some 4.96m people aged 15-64 years were engaged in temporary work because they could not find a stable job, or were in a part-time job because they could not find a full-time one. These form the so-called 'hardship segment' of the labour market, which includes 839,000 immigrant workers (16.6 per cent of the total), of which one-third were from the EU and two-thirds from other countries. The 'hardship segment' grew progressively from 2007 to 2018 (an increase in this period of no less than 58.2 per cent), while the share taken by foreigners grew by seven percentage points (from 9.9 per cent to 16.9 per cent). The 'hardship rate' – that is, the ratio between those employed in the 'hardship segment' and all in employment – was much higher for foreigners (34.7 per cent in 2018) than for Italians (20.5 per cent), with an increase, respectively, of 13.1 and 7.1 percentage points on 2007 (see Figure 4). In particular, the increase is much more significant for non-EU foreigners, whose share grew from 21.1 per cent to 35.3 per cent.

33. The overqualification rate is the percentage of employees with education between ISCED 5 and ISCED 8 not employed in professions classified in ISCO 1, ISCO 2 or ISCO 3.

Figure 4 **Hardship rates (15-64 years) among Italian citizens and foreigners (percentage, Q1 2007 and Q1 2018)**



Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

These characteristics of the immigrant labour market are reflected in statistics on poverty. In 2018, the number of immigrants in absolute poverty was estimated at more than 1.5m, i.e. 30.3 per cent of foreign residents, while the rate for Italians was 6.4 per cent (MLPS 2019). Considering families, the incidence of absolute poverty is 25.1 per cent among households containing at least one foreigner (27.8 per cent for those composed only of foreigners), but 5.3 per cent among families consisting only of Italians.

The condition of poverty also affects those who are in work: due to the characteristics of employment, salary gained and family situation, the worker may not have the necessary resources to purchase essential goods and services. Among employed Italians the incidence of absolute poverty affects 3.5 per cent of families, but more than one-quarter of households consisting only of migrants, despite one or more family members being in work, is affected by poverty.

8. Access of asylum seekers and refugees to the Italian labour market and their working conditions

Currently, there are no reliable and available statistical sources regarding access to the labour market for asylum seekers and refugees. The Continuous Labour Force Surveys (CLFS) carried out by Istat do not include information on type of residence permit and, therefore, only refer to the status of 'foreigner', as expressed by nationality. Administrative data does exist which refer to the 'mandatory communications' that employers are required to make at the time of the activation or modification of an employment contract; in such a case, the residence permit of the worker is also recorded. Nevertheless such data, although in the possession of the information system of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, are not made available to the public although these would allow a processing of the stock of work contracts as well as the number of workers.

In order to provide some general insights into the inclusion in employment of asylum seekers and refugees, we have based our work on the 2018 CLFS. We selected the nationalities of non-EU citizens where residence permits issued for international protection constitute at least fifty per cent (and in many cases even eighty per cent) of the total number of residence permits issued between 2015 and 2017 to people from such nationalities. Through this identification of immigrant groups with a high rate of international protection (IGHIP), we can attempt to identify asylum seekers and refugees, as far as the available data allow, and compare this with other non-EU foreigners and EU foreigners present in Italy.

Obviously, within these nationalities there is a significant portion of migrants who have residence permits other than for reasons of international protection. This proportion naturally increases with length of stay in Italy due to the gradual transformation of permits from humanitarian and international protection reasons to ones of work or family reunification. This dynamic should be taken into account in the analysis of the data attributable to IGHIP, but it is likely that, among immigrants residing in Italy for up to three years, as well as from between four and six years, the group who are asylum seekers and holders of international protection is, in any case, likely to be significant.

Overall, these nationalities represented, in 2018, 504,000 people,³⁴ out of a total number of foreign residents of over 5m, as Table 5 shows. Meanwhile, Table 6 provides information on the composition of immigrants by country group and duration of stay, as of 2018.

Table 5 Immigrants in Italy by citizenship (number in thousands and percentage, 2018)

	N	%
IGHIP	504	0.84
Other non-EU citizens	2,995	4.98
EU citizens	1,539	2.56
Italian citizens	55,135	91.62

Note: IGHIP stands for Immigrant Groups with High rate of International Protection.
Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

Table 6 Distribution of immigrants by years of stay in Italy (in percentage, 2018)

	IGHIP	Other non-EU citizens	EU citizens
Years of stay	%		
Up to 3 years	15.9	6.9	4.0
4-6 years	14.0	10.9	7.5
7-10 years	26.9	21.2	20.3
More than 10 years	43.3	61.0	68.2
Total	100	100	100

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

34. These are the citizens of Bangladesh, Senegal, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Guinea, Gambia.

When looking at the labour market situation, the IGHIP unemployment rate is significantly higher than for other groups: 17.8 per cent compared to 13.7 per cent (non-EU foreigners) and 13.5 per cent (EU foreigners), as Table 7 indicates. Gender differences are also significant: as much as 34.9 per cent of IGHIP women are unemployed compared to 16 per cent of other non-EU women. It is interesting to note that the unemployment rate differs according to years spent in Italy. Among those people we have classified as falling within IGHIP, it is 31.4 per cent for those with up to six years in Italy; among other non-EU foreigners it is similarly high for those with up to three years residency (28.5 per cent) before falling significantly among citizens present in Italy from between four and six years (18.4 per cent). Therefore, even if IGHIP foreigners do share high unemployment rates with non-EU citizens during the initial period of their stay in Italy, their inclusion into employment seems to be comparatively slower over time.

Table 7 Employment and unemployment rates (in percentage, 2018)

	Employed	Unemployed
IGHIP	56.3	17.8
Other non-EU citizens	60.7	13.7
EU citizens	63.5	13.5
Italian citizens	58.2	10.2
Total	58.5	10.6

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data

Similarly, the IGHIP employment rate is lower compared to other non-EU foreigners and EU foreigners: 56.3 against, respectively, 60.7 per cent and 63.5 per cent. It should be noted that these rates are, in any case, close to the employment rate of Italian citizens (58.2 per cent). The IGHIP figure is particularly affected by low female employment rates, which amount to just 23.6 per cent compared to 49.4 per cent among non-EU foreign citizens. Inclusion in the labour market is thus particularly slow for those in the IGHIP group, similar to other non-EU foreigners of recent arrival: just one-quarter of both groups are employed among those who have recently arrived in Italy (03 years of stay).

Occupational and social inclusion is undoubtedly also a reflection of the type of contract that is offered to foreign workers. Among those nationalities which fall among the general IGHIP group, the figure does not differ significantly from other non-EU and EU foreigners: about one-half are employed on the basis of a stable full-time contract (see Table 8). The presence of employees on part-time employment contracts and temporary workers is significant for all groups, but highest for IGHIP (22 per cent). The differences appear clearer when comparing the groups by years of stay: for those with up to three years in Italy, those in IGHIP who work under a permanent full-time contract are just 30.1 per cent, against 40.6 per cent for non-EU foreigners and 49.3 per cent for EU foreigners. At the same time, the situation seems to worsen among the IGHIP group present in Italy from four to six years, i.e. in the period, presumably, of transition from forms of international protection to ordinary residence permits: only 20.8 per cent are permanently employed in full-time jobs. Similarly, the number of temporary workers increases, reaching 40 per cent of employed people in IGHIP present in Italy from

four to six years, while they halve to values of about 20 per cent among other non-EU foreigners. Self-employment (16.1 per cent) is also more widespread among those in the IGHIP group, both with respect to EU and non-EU foreigners.

Table 8 Types of employment by citizenship (percentage, 2018)

	IGHIP	Other non-EU citizens	EU citizens	Italian citizens
Full-time employee	48.0	49.4	53.5	52.8
Full-time self-employed	16.1	10.0	8.0	20.4
Part-time employee (voluntary)	1.8	4.9	4.6	6.1
Part-time employee (involuntary)	11.1	16.3	13.1	7.2
Temporary employee	22.0	18.6	19.4	12.4
Workers in co-operatives	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

Table 9 Economic sector destinations of the employed by citizenship (ATECO 2007, percentage, 2018)

	IGHIP	Other non-EU citizens	EU citizens	Italian citizens
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	6.3	6.0	7.0	3.5
Industry (excl. Construction)	32.5	16.2	17.1	20.3
Construction	1.7	9.0	13.5	5.6
Wholesale and retail trade	19.1	10.8	6.8	14.6
Hotel and restaurants	12.8	11.8	8.1	5.8
Transportation, warehousing	7.2	4.3	6.0	4.8
Information and communications services	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.8
Financial services	–	0.2	0.4	3.1
Real estate, renting and business services	8.1	7.1	7.5	11.8
Public administration and national defence, compulsory social assurance	0.0	0.1	0.0	6.0
Education, health care and social care	2.6	4.0	7.2	16.2
Other social and individual services	9.4	30.3	25.4	5.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

The position of people within the IGHIP group in the main economic sectors seems to reflect the segmentation of the migrant labour market by nationality, as Table 9 illustrates. This is confirmed for specific sectors: in fact, for IGHIP the share of the construction sector is almost irrelevant (although it is, in contrast, highly significant for other non-EU foreigners and for EU ones, in particular for immigrants from eastern Europe). The same is true among those supplying personal care and assistance services (which are mainly delivered by workers from eastern Europe and Latin America). The concentration of the IGHIP group in industry in the strict sense (32.5 per cent, falling to just 18.9 per cent among those with up to three years in Italy), as well as in commerce

(19.1 per cent), is more accentuated and correlates to ethnic/national origin,³⁵ with percentages roughly twice as high as other non-EU and EU foreigners.

However, these average figures do conceal some aspects of interest considering years of duration of residence in Italy (and, presumably, the share of asylum seekers and refugees within the IGHIP group). Among foreigners present in Italy for up to three years, as much as 13.7 per cent of the IGHIP group are employed in agriculture or in seasonal fruit and vegetable harvesting compared to 8.8 per cent of other non-EU foreigners and 4.6 per cent of EU foreigners. Unsurprisingly, the sector for the initial entry into the labour market of people among the IGHIP group is precisely the one presenting the highest health and safety risks to workers, characterised by contractual insecurity, illegal practices and control by criminal organisations.

We have already observed that the pay gap between foreign workers and Italians is very significant, i.e. around 20 per cent in favour of the latter. Within foreigner communities, further differences are evident. At the average value in 2018, as Table 10 shows, the gap between IGHIP and other non-EU foreigners is not relevant in respect of full-time contracts (average net income levels of around €1,100 in both cases) although EU foreigners saw slightly higher levels of around €1,260. The pay gap between those who have recently arrived in Italy, on the other hand, is clear: the average full-time remuneration of foreigners residing in Italy from four to six years is around €953 for IGHIP, €1,104 for other non-EU foreigners and €1,202 for EU foreigners.

Table 10 Average net income of employees by citizenship and by working time (€, 2018)

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
IGHIP	1,151	662	1,057
Other non-EU citizens	1,161	663	1,020
EU citizens	1,257	678	1,120
Italian citizens	1,533	835	1,399
Total	1,495	809	1,358

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

The effectiveness of public employment services for job searching in Italy is characteristically very low for all workers but in particular for foreigners. Only 2.4 per cent of Italians found their current job through a Public Employment Centre, compared to less than one per cent among foreigners (see Table 11).

Job search channels are, in contrast, mainly based on the personal initiative of workers (see Table 12). The characteristics of job search on the part of those we have classified as falling within the IGHIP group partly coincide with those of other foreigners, above all for the relevancy of the role played by friends, relatives and acquaintances (36.5 per

35. See the reports of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies) on the Nigerian, Pakistani and Sri Lankan communities in Italy (MLPS and ANPAL 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

cent found a job through this channel). Even so, this particular channel – revealing the extent of the social networks among foreigners – is much less used than among other non-EU foreigners (49 per cent) and EU foreigners (46.7 per cent), with those in the IGHIP group showing a greater propensity to start up an independent business (16.3 per cent, compared to 9.8 per cent and 7.4 per cent of non-EU and EU foreigners, respectively).

Table 11 ‘Did you find this job through a Public Employment Centre?’
Job search by citizenship (percentage, 2018)

	Yes	No/Don't know	Total
IGHIP	0.4	99.6	100
Other non-EU citizens	0.7	99.3	100
EU citizens	0.7	99.3	100
Italian citizens	2.4	97.6	100
Total	2.2	97.8	100

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

Table 12 ‘How did you find this job?’ (If not by Public Employment Centre):
job search by citizenship (percentage, 2018)

	IGHIP	Other non-EU citizens	EU citizens	Italian citizens
Responded to newspaper announcements, internet, bulletin boards, etc.	1.8	2.2	2.9	4.0
Approached the employer directly	22.8	18.8	21.3	15.7
Contacted directly by the employer	7.4	6.6	6.5	5.7
Relatives, friends or acquaintances	36.5	49.0	46.7	29.5
Public recruitment	2.5	3.7	4.6	16.2
Public structure other than a public employment centre	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.4
Private employment agency	6.9	3.8	3.9	2.8
School, university, training centres	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.3
Previous experience (internships, short-term jobs) in the same company where interviewee works today	3.1	3.5	4.2	5.3
Beginning a self-employed activity	16.3	9.8	7.4	18.0
Other	.	0.1	0.1	0.8
Does not know	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Fdv elaborations of Istat CLFS data.

9. Conclusions

At the time of the enactment of the *Consolidated Immigration Act* (in 1998), there were about one million foreigners legally resident in Italy. Subsequently, foreigners reached a figure of 1.34m in 2000, two million in 2003 (after the major regularisation of undocumented immigrants ordered by the Bossi-Fini Law), 3.4m in 2007, 4m in 2009 and 5m in 2014. After this rapid growth, at the start of the second half of the decade Italy experienced a concentrated period of intense migratory pressure which, nevertheless, fell within a phase of a relative stabilisation of immigration. As a result, the number of foreigners residing in Italy has remained at around 5m. There is a stable share of EU citizens (currently about thirty per cent of the total number of immigrants in Italy); two-thirds of non-EU foreigners hold EU long-term residence permits; over one million foreigners were naturalised in the 2010s; more than 850,000 foreign students attend Italian schools (from childhood to upper secondary school); and the rate of unionisation of foreign workers is higher than that of Italians. These are all indicators of integration processes that are ongoing, not emerging suddenly but progressively over time; and yet they are not adequately supported by immigration policies and services.

To a large extent, immigration policies have indeed not taken note of this stabilisation and its characteristics. Yet, there is no doubt that the peak of arrivals of asylum seekers and refugees, despite not having significantly affected the total number of foreign residents, has catalysed over years the political and public debate on immigration – and in some ways is still doing so. The 2010s would have required – and would have facilitated, at least up until the peak of asylum seekers and refugees in 2015-2017 – a root-and-branch review of a legislative framework which had clearly become outdated. On the contrary, however, the few legislative and regulatory interventions were focused on tinkering with the regularisation of undocumented immigrants (certifying the inadequacy of regular entry channels) and did not take account of the contrasting trends in migration (and were therefore focused on the contingent situation, not the overall one). All this often took place within public security interventions and a debate over illegal immigration and the criminality, if not terrorism, connected with it.

Moreover, the system of integration – with the exception of the decentralised, but partial, reception of asylum seekers and refugees in SIPROIMI centres – has proven to be inadequate to address emerging issues including the integration of second generation immigrants, poverty within the immigrant population and the segmentation of the labour market. The stalemate and the progressive degradation of public immigration services, characterised by large gaps and underfunding as well as by occupational disqualification, unsatisfied occupational training needs and, in some cases, worker precarity (De Sario 2018) have all contributed to feeding the narrative of a country under pressure and in a condition of presumed permanent emergency.

Conversely, the inclusion of migrants in the Italian labour market demonstrates a series of particularly critical points which have been stable over a period of years. This includes uncertainty, a lack of safety, hardship conditions, low wages and the weak opportunities offered by the active labour market policies which are emphasised for

asylum seekers and refugees. The window of opportunity for change has narrowed – from a political point of view – because of the priority given to the relative peak of asylum seekers and refugees during 2015-2017; at this point Italy lost its chance to improve its systems of reception and integration for asylum seekers and refugees as well as their subsequent degree of inclusion in the labour market.

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