

IOM Coordination Office for the Mediterranean – Liaison and Technical Cooperation

The Coordination Office for the Mediterranean oversees the activities of International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Italy and Malta and relations and representation to the Holy See. It liaises with United Nations Specialized Agencies based in Italy, participates in relevant inter-agency mechanisms, and supports regional and international processes and dialogues on migration relevant to Italy, Malta, the Holy See and the wider Mediterranean region. Moreover, IOM facilitates migration policy discussions and liaises with Governments, diplomatic missions, international and regional organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, academia, media, social partners, migrants and other stakeholders regarding the full range of IOM's services and activities to address different aspects of migration and mobility, identify areas of cooperation and provide recommendations for effective migration-related policy and programming. With 35 initiatives active in 2020 and a highly decentralized presence across Italy, IOM contributed to: facilitating regular migration; promoting the links between migration, integration and development; fostering social cohesion; assisting and protecting the rights of migrants, especially those in situations of vulnerability; raising awareness on migration issues; and building evidence on Mediterranean migration dynamics.

IOM supports the liaison with Italian authorities on development cooperation initiatives, as well as their migration-related dialogue and collaboration with origin and transit countries. In 2020, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation deliberated funds for 8 projects implemented by IOM in Burkina Faso, Chad, Iraq, Libya, Niger and Tunisia. Also, IOM coordinated the channelling of over 8.7 million EUR from the MFA Italy Migration Fund 2020 (former Africa Fund) for IOM in Libya, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, for activities ranging from protection and direct assistance to voluntary humanitarian returns, immigration and border management and empowerment of local populations.

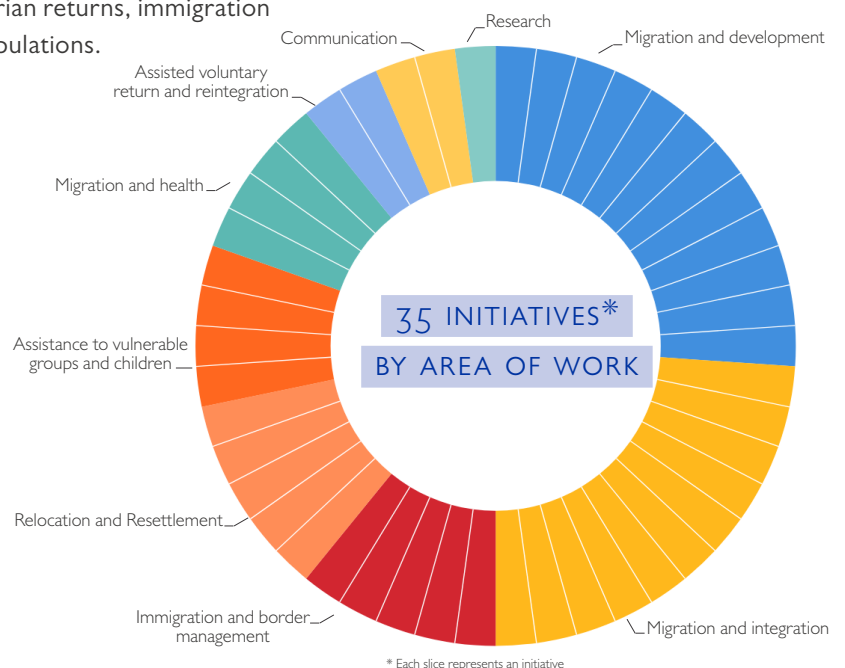
Italy's migration context

Migration trends in Italy have remained relatively stable in 2020. The overall resident population continued to slightly decrease for the fifth year in a row, reaching a total of 59.3 million people, while the foreign resident population remained stable at around 5 million people (8.4% of the total population).

A third (1.5 million) of the foreign population in Italy is a citizen of an EU member state (mostly Romania, but also Poland, Bulgaria, Germany and France). Among third-country nationals (3.5 million people), the main nationalities are Albania, Morocco, China, Ukraine and the Philippines (ISTAT¹). *(continues on the next page)*



© IOM / Italy, October 2020

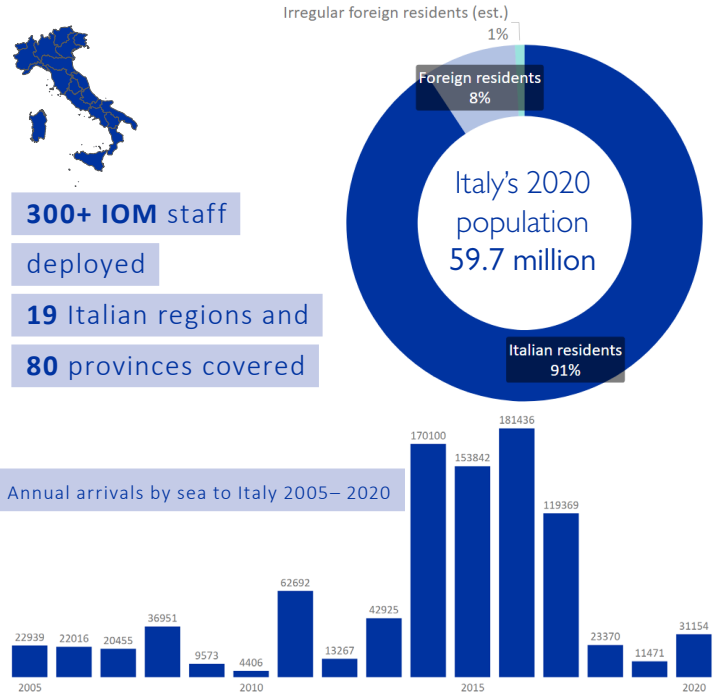




The Coordination Office for the Mediterranean oversees the activities of IOM in Italy and Malta and the relations and representation to the Holy See

Family reunification continued to be the main regular migration channel to Italy (57% of all new permits issued in 2020). Also, foreign children represent 11 per cent of the population below 18 years of age in the country, which denotes an increasingly diverse society. Overall, the structure of the national economy and labour market shape migrants' distribution across the territory (the share of foreign residents is higher than 10% in the most economically active Northern and Central regions of Italy), and across different sectors of the economy (male foreign workers tend to be concentrated in manufacturing and construction, while female workers are overrepresented in the service and care sectors).

The number of migrants and refugees arriving to Italy by sea through the Central Mediterranean was 31,154 in 2020. Moreover, at least 983 migrants have died or went missing in the Central Mediterranean Sea. Finally, between January and November 2020 almost 4 thousand people were officially reported to have crossed the Italian-Slovenian border, while some hundreds were detected while entering from France, Switzerland and Austria.²



COVID-19 AND IOM'S RESPONSE

The first country in Europe to be heavily hit by COVID-19, Italy registered over 2.1 million cases and 74 thousand deaths at the end of 2020. Confirmed cases in Malta were 12,500 with 215 deaths (WHO). Data disaggregated for nationals and foreigners are not available. In Italy, considering that migrants are concentrated in the Northern regions, which registered the highest numbers of cases and fatalities, it is likely that migrants have been significantly exposed to the risk of contagion, yet with a lower incidence of fatalities compared to Italians, owing to their younger average age.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed not only how essential migration is to the local economies,³ but also the extent to which migrants are disproportionately affected by interlinked health, protection and socioeconomic structural inequalities. The pandemic also affected mobility and migration to and from Italy and Malta. Procedures such as registration, assessment of asylum applications, processing of visas and permits were suspended or delayed for many months during 2020. Mechanisms such as family reunification, resettlement and relocation were delayed, with suspension of consular services in third countries and limited or no flights available. In Italy, the government launched a regularization scheme targeting migrant workers in the agricultural and care service sectors. Physical distancing and confinement hindered case management and information provision to all migrants, including vulnerable groups, at arrival and in reception.

Access to education in reception facilities has been a challenge owing to limited connectivity for online learning and overcrowding, leading to far less conducive learning environments.

Integration has been hindered as social interaction among migrant and local populations has been disrupted. Heightened risk factors such as increased poverty and food insecurity, disruption of community services and of peer and social support networks for migrants have had a detrimental effect on the mental health and psycho-social well-being, especially of the most vulnerable groups including women and unaccompanied children, exacerbating the risk of violence, abuse and neglect. The medium- to long-term consequences are likely to be more evident during 2021, in terms of increasing inequalities and deterioration of conditions of the most marginal and vulnerable groups, including among the foreign population.

In response, IOM developed [information materials](#) (leaflets, videos and audio recordings) in more than twenty languages on health prevention, containment and support measures adopted by Italian and Maltese authorities. IOM also carried out a survey among 25 European municipalities (8 in Italy, 1 in Malta) and a rapid needs assessment with over 32 diaspora representatives and migrant entrepreneurs in Italy to better understand the pandemic's effects on local communities. To scale up diasporas' grass-roots response, IOM co-funded six [diaspora-led emergency projects](#) to address emerging local communities' needs in Italy (e.g. food security, connectivity) and abroad (e.g. food security, information provision, in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Peru, Senegal and Somalia).

¹ ISTAT, Popolazione residente al 1° gennaio 2021. Since 2019, population data are consolidated with the permanent Census of the population.

² Data from the Italian MOI as reported by ISMU Foundation, [The Twenty-sixth Italian Report on Migrations 2020](#).

³ The share of migrant workers in key occupations, estimated on Eurostat data, is slightly below 20 per cent in Italy, with peaks of about 45 per cent in personal service, cleaning and care sectors. See Fasani and Mazza (2020) "[Immigrant Key Workers: Their Contribution to Europe's COVID-19 Response](#)", IZA Policy Paper 155.





IOM's activities

span across 9 different areas of work

to inform, protect, assist, and empower migrants

ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE GROUPS AND CHILDREN

IOM's work in this area comprises the provision of extensive protection, assistance and case management services to the vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied and separated migrant children (UASC) and migrants vulnerable to violence, abuse or exploitation.

In 2020, in the framework of a regional project involving 12 European countries, IOM carried out informative sessions with about 60 UASC in Apulia and Calabria, who were provided with child- friendly materials to raise awareness on sex and gender based violence (SGBV) risks and protection services. Moreover, IOM conducted family tracings and assessments in favour of 62 UASC in reception and their families at origin or in third countries. Also, in the framework of a regional project, IOM Italy has supported two pilot studies involving about 10 UASC on mindfulness training paths to be offered to UASC in several reception centres in Rome in 2021. IOM has also provided information to 1,062 UK nationals willing to secure and maintain their residency rights in Italy.

Finally, IOM together with UNHCR and UNICEF published a pocket guide, adapted to the Italian context, to provide basic information and support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in the context of migration and asylum, entitled [How to support survivors of gender-based violence when a GBV actor is not available in your area](#).

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

AVRR activities are part of the broader IOM migration management approach to the orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

Through the Italian Referral Network RE.VI.TA (20 focal points active around Italy), IOM carried out 165 informative and training sessions reaching out 1,009 social and legal operators and 76 advocacy sessions to inform migrants about AVRR options. The toll-free number RE.VI.TA replied to 1,538 queries on assisted voluntary returns over the year, and 545 migrants, potential beneficiaries of assisted return, were referred to the AVRR projects active in Italy.

#parolenuove

IOM's [campaign](#) fosters a deeper reflection on words we choose to speak about migration

5 videos, +7thousand interactions

COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS-RAISING AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

IOM takes part on the national and international media and social media channels in the debate on migration trends. In 2020, IOM Italy organized an exchange visit for 12 African journalists in Rome and produced many videos and live events to promote an accurate and balanced view on the complex issues related to migration and migration management.


IOM Italy is also directly engaged in informing potential migrants in target countries of origin and transit along the Central Mediterranean route on the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking. In 2020, the awareness-raising strategy was consolidated through the design, implementation and impact evaluation of information campaigns in 6 countries of West and North Africa reaching over 50,000 beneficiaries in rural and urban areas, producing about 60 sensitization media products, involving over 25 national and community radios and TVs and empowering over 330 local actors such as artists, journalists and civil society representatives. Finally, IOM Italy contributed to the IOM's global toolkit on [information campaigns](#) as well as to a [study on best practices](#) in irregular migration awareness campaigns commissioned by the European Commission.

Cultural mediation services provided

3 land border points 

4 air border points 

10+ sea border points 

80+ local immigration offices 

60+ languages spoken 

⁴ See for example IOM's GMDAC (2020), The Impact of Mobile Cinema Events on Potential Migrants in Guinea: Impact Evaluation Report, available at: <https://gmdac.iom.int/impact-mobile-cinema-events-potential-migrants-guinea-impact-evaluation-report>





In 2020, IOM worked to provide timely, effective grass-roots solutions to migrants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic...

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

IOM continued to support the Italian Border Police Department of the Italian Ministry of Interior (MOI) to respond more effectively to diverse migration and border management challenges. In 2020, over 200 well-trained linguistic and cultural mediators assisted law enforcement officials within local Immigration Offices and at the sea, land and air borders in 19 Italian Regions, supporting also the identification of 107 vulnerable cases. Following the approval of the Law Decree 34/2020 (so-called “Relaunch Decree”) in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, IOM staff was deployed in 106 local police offices to provide support in the regularization of migrant workers in agriculture, care and domestic work.

Since 2016, IOM continues to support the Italian MOI in the management of the Regional Development and Protection Programme for North Africa (RDPP NA), Italy being the leading Member State of the EUR 69 million European Commission Programme. This year, IOM supported the funding of projects worth almost 5 million EUR in its Missions in North Africa and the Sahel.

Finally, in 2020, IOM supported family reunification processes for 752 migrants and Italians of migrant origin in Italy by carrying out DNA tests for them and 1,316 members of their families in their countries of origin or residence. Main countries of origin involved are Nigeria, Kenya (supporting Somali beneficiaries) Ghana and Ethiopia.

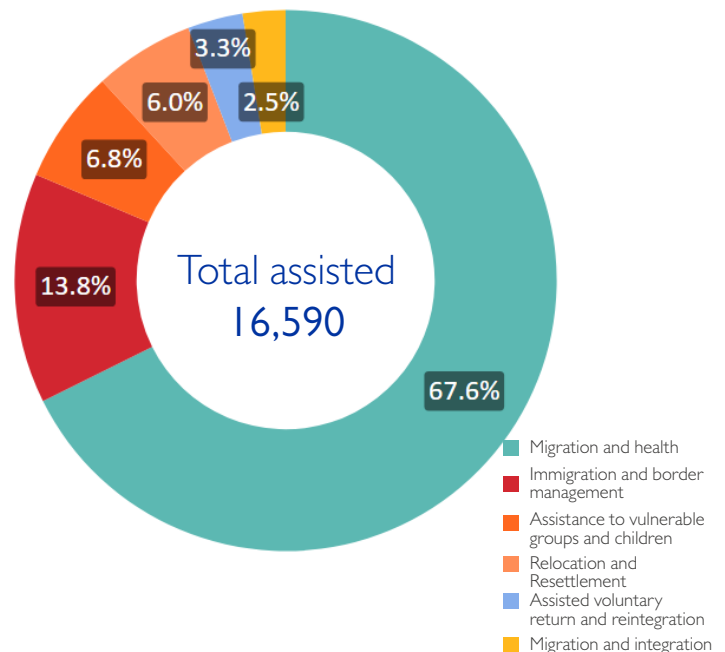
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

IOM contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda recognizing migrants’ agency and potential, and prompting the links between migration, integration and development by enhancing the migrants’ role in the social, economic and cultural growth of the countries they bridge, and capitalizing their competences and the circulation of resources and ideas. In 2020, IOM enhanced the capacity of 77 migrants’ associations (143 diasporas’ representatives) to design and implement transnational development projects, including by providing 31 awards or grants to support their implementation in Italy and 11 countries in Africa, Asia and South America.

IOM also enhanced the leadership skills of 6 young Gambian nationals living in Italy aged 18-35 and the organizational development of 3 migrant associations engaged in development cooperation. Additionally, IOM explored and published a [report](#) concerning multicultural enterprises, and reached out and informed over 600 members of the Tunisian diaspora, including migrant entrepreneurs and civil society organizations, throughout Italy to promote diaspora investments and entrepreneurship. Finally, IOM identified 35 qualified youngsters from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia and 21 Italian enterprises willing to participate in a transnational internship program starting in 2021, fostering the engagement of private sector partners in facilitating the circulation of skills and regular migration.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS

-  Tunisia, Bangladesh, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria and Sudan: **top 5 assisted nationalities**
-  **+2 thousand** children assisted (43% F, 57% M) many of them unaccompanied
-  **550** international movements from/to Italy organized



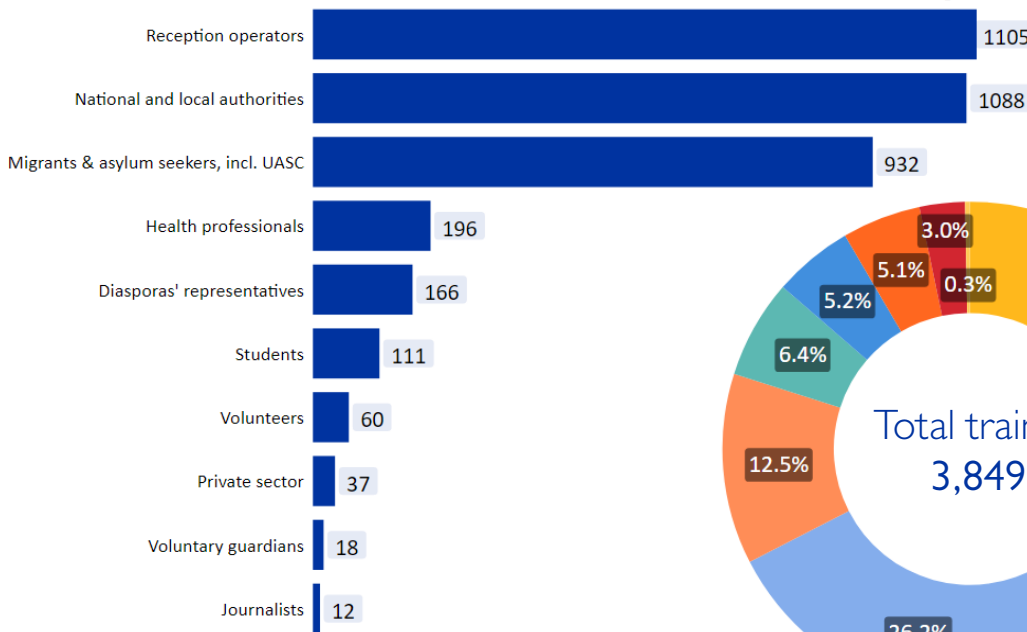


...to ensure

that migrants are

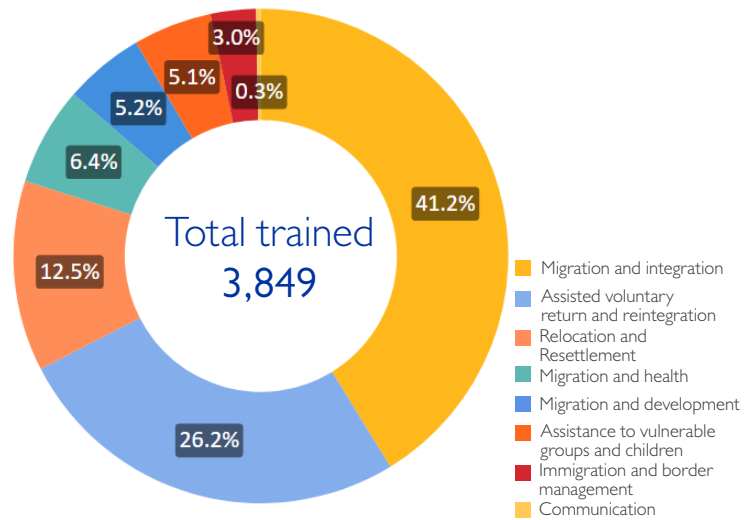
considered in recovery and health plans

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES



53% in person

47% online



MIGRATION AND HEALTH

IOM contributes to realizing universal health coverage by building the capacity of local health authorities to guarantee continuity of care and strengthen their intercultural competencies. In 2020, IOM was present at main landing points in Southern Italy and provided cultural mediation support for medical staff deployed on search and rescue vessels, supporting the rescue or landing of about 11,124 migrants and asylum seekers, including 79 medical evacuations. Also, 196 health professionals and about 30 representatives of local authorities were trained on psycho-social vulnerabilities in the context of migration, stress management and burnout prevention. IOM further conducted health assessments – including supporting the Local Health Services for X-Rays and COVID-19 swabs - in the framework of resettlement and relocation schemes.

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

IOM is engaged in facilitating migrants' full participation in the society and in fostering social cohesion at various levels. In 2020, IOM continued to support the implementation of the Italian government's integration priorities by building evidence on areas such as access to services, housing, labour market integration of international protection holders, integration models and social innovation.

IOM Italy organized some 17 international peer-to-peer virtual exchanges involving 25 European municipalities, and established an online community of practice among 33 cities in 7 EU countries. In Italy, IOM strengthened the capacities of 414 representatives of Italian local and regional authorities to deliver more inclusive services. Also, it empowered tertiary education students to build more cohesive societies facilitating their participation in public and online debates, and supported the implementation of student mentorship schemes in 10 Italian universities, welcoming and training 82 new mentors to facilitate the integration of students with a migratory background in their academic communities.

Moreover, IOM informed about 5,000 migrants in 10 regions of Italy about their labour rights and fair recruitment mechanisms, COVID-19 prevention measures and access to regularization processes, and supported 484 inspections of local Labour Inspectorates to identify and refer for further support some 1,800 migrant workers victim of labour exploitation in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Finally, IOM trained 580 reception operators, local authorities and private sector representatives on safe reception standards and prevention of sexual and labour exploitation of migrants.





IOM also worked to ensure

that migrants can receive

information in a language they speak...

INFORMATION, AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS
AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



RELOCATION AND RESETTLEMENT

IOM is active in the resettlement of refugees and in the relocation of asylum seekers from Italy to other European countries. IOM provided direct assistance, including medical screening, pre-departure orientation (PDO), language training as well as transportation for 21 refugees from Sudan and Libya to Italy. IOM also facilitated the relocation of 550 asylum seekers from Italy to Ireland, France, Finland, Germany, Portugal and Spain, and supported the reunification of 8 unaccompanied children with their relatives in the United Kingdom.

Moreover, 60 volunteers were trained to become mentors of resettled refugees in Italy, and more than 450 persons in Europe participated to online events discussing the IOM training toolkits and guidelines for practitioners on [mainstreaming gender](#) and [youth perspectives](#) in PDO activities.



18 Flow Monitoring Reports on Mediterranean migration flows

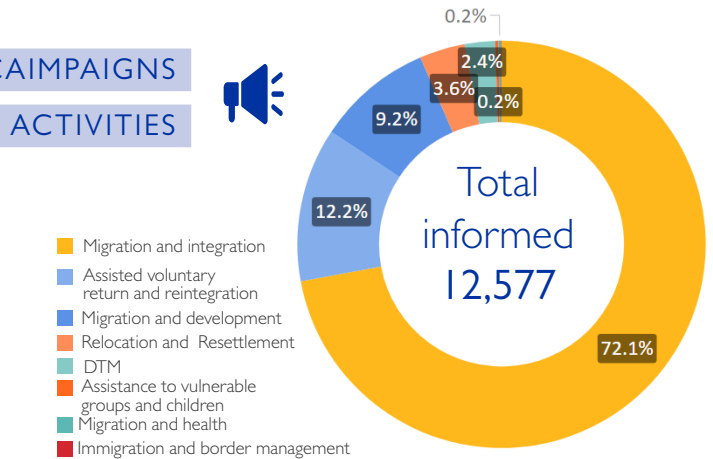


Operational status of 74 Points of Entry monitored in Italy and Malta

Malta's migration context

Malta's population trends have been quite dynamic in recent years. The population has increased by 14 per cent from 450,415 inhabitants in 2016 to 515,564 in 2020 (Eurostat). Over the same period, the foreign population has more than doubled and now represents about 20 per cent of the total (103,180). More than half of the migrants regularly residing in Malta are EU citizens.

Malta is, after Italy, the main arrival country for migrants crossing the [Central Mediterranean Sea](#). In 2020, 2,281 migrants and refugees disembarked in Malta under operations coordinated by the Armed Forces of Malta (33% more compared to the 3,405 arrivals in 2019). Main reported nationalities are Sudan, Bangladesh and Eritrea, which represent together more than half of all arrivals. The proportion of children on total disembarked is high (610 children, 88% of them registered as UASC pending confirmation upon age assessment procedures).



RESEARCH

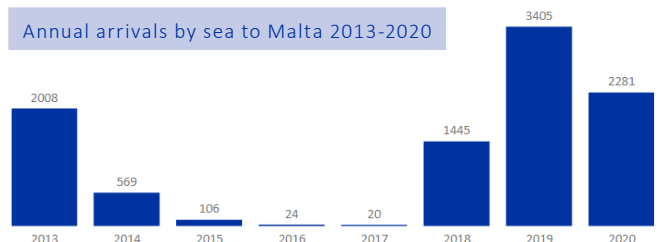
IOM regularly collects data and information on the migrant population and on migration trends in Italy and the [Mediterranean region](#), including by conducting 299 flow monitoring surveys on profiles and vulnerabilities of newly arrived migrants in Sicily and Apulia, and by monitoring [mobility restrictions](#) due to COVID-19. Through its data, information management and research activities, IOM enhanced the understanding of the complexity of migration by contributing to 54 reports and pieces on different topics, either published by IOM or featured in reports and books of partner agencies and organizations.



IOM regularly participates to initiatives and technical fora involving government agencies, other international organizations and NGOs in Malta.

In 2020, IOM attended several meetings to foster collaboration and information sharing on issues related to migrants at the local level and build new synergies, including the Integration Roundtable led by UNHCR and the public consultation on the National Action Plan Against Racism and Xenophobia.

Annual arrivals by sea to Malta 2013-2020





...to orient them

when dealing with administrative practices

related to their stay and work in Europe

ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE GROUPS AND CHILDREN

IOM has supported national authorities to combat trafficking in persons in Malta since 2007, promoting a holistic approach, supporting the development of procedures and building capacity of relevant actors. In 2020, IOM trained law enforcement authorities, social services, the private sector, migrants' associations and civil society organizations to identify, refer, protect and assist victims of trafficking, with a focus on children, including by supporting investigation and prosecution cases.

IOM Malta was engaged in the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by strengthening existing SGBV support services to more effectively include the migrant population, building the capacity of relevant professionals, raising awareness and empowering migrant communities. As part of a regional project also involving Italy, IOM conducted 3 trainings on SGBV for 69 professionals, and informed 22 representatives of migrant communities in Malta.



ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

IOM implements AVRR activities in cooperation with Maltese authorities since 2009, addressing all stages of the process. These consist of outreach, information dissemination, counselling, pre-departure assistance (facilitating travel arrangements, issuance of travel documents, purchase of tickets, arrangement of transit and arrival assistance, medical/operational escorts if needed), departure and reintegration assistance for returnees. In 2020, 41 migrants applied for AVRR from Malta and 7 (all adult males) were assisted to return to India, Ukraine, Tunisia, Senegal, Iraq and Ghana.

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Within the framework of a regional project to enhance the capacity of local governments to develop inclusive services for migrants, IOM Malta organized online training sessions held by the Law Clinic of the University of Malta for 27 members of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services in 2020; supported the organisation of three meetings of the

Interfaith and Integration Forum hosted by the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) and the participation of HRD to a monitoring and evaluation course offered by the ITC-ILO; organized a virtual peer exchange between Maltese and Polish authorities of the city of Wroclaw which helped identifying common interests in the field of prevention of racism and xenophobia and of migrants' integration in local communities.

IOM Malta also conducted a research on improving the services offered by the Maltese Serbian Community, a non-profit organisation which supports third country nationals. Finally, IOM provided technical support to the Migrant Learners Unit of the Ministry of Education and Employment to improve the inclusion of migrant learners within mainstream education curricula.



273 migrants relocated from Malta, main nationalities: Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Bangladesh

RELOCATION

Despite the many challenges presented by the outbreak of Covid-19, including logistical challenges and increased health concerns, IOM supported the voluntary relocation of 273 migrants from Malta to Germany, France and other 4 European countries during the year. PCR tests were carried out for all beneficiaries, who were also provided with personal protective equipment





IOM's activities contribute to achieve the



Main
publications
and training
toolkits

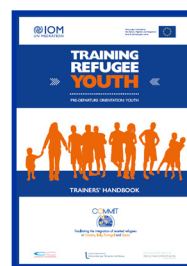
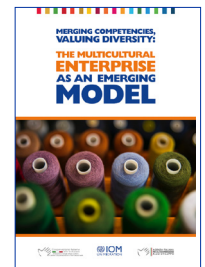


About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and is the United Nations Migration Agency since 2016. Established in 1951, it has currently 173 member states, a further 9 states holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits societies.

IOM's action is guided by the [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#). The framework sets out three objectives and three principles which, if fulfilled and enacted, form the basis for an ideal approach to migration governance.

The three pillars of IOM's [Strategic Vision 2019–2023](#) – resilience, mobility, governance – set out a series of strategic priorities based on an assessment of what the next decade will bring in terms of migration dynamics and migrant needs.



Data Sources

Reported data come from official sources (Istat, Eurostat, World Health Organization, Italian Ministry of Interior, Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement) and to IOM activities carried out in Italy and Malta in 2020. They do not consider beneficiaries of projects implemented in other countries.

Photos

Page 1: IOM staff in Southern Italy providing information to agricultural migrant workers.

Page 7: A diaspora association provides food parcels to vulnerable groups during COVID-19 pandemic.

Page 8: Senegalese, Ivorian, and Nigerian journalists visiting Italian newsrooms as part of the IOM activities with the media.



IOM's Coordination Office for the Mediterranean – Liaison Mission for Italy, Malta and the Holy See

IOM Italy – Via L.G. Faravelli snc – 00195 Rome, Italy
researchiomitaly@iom.int – <http://www.italy.iom.int>

IOM Malta – Apt. 2, De Vilhena Residence, Trejget il-Fosos – 1182 Floriana, Malta
iommalta@iom.int – <https://malta.iom.int/>

