



# THE SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy  
*Excutive Summary*



2016

The 2016 edition of the National Reports on the Main Foreign Communities Present in Italy renews the commitment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies – General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policies in a publishing project by now mature and original in the vast panorama of analyses and researches on immigration in Italy. A project furthermore peculiar owing to its complementary relationship with the Sixth National Report on Migrants in the Italian Labour Market.

This fifth edition of the National Reports on the Main Foreign Communities took into consideration the nationalities that have always been the most numerous on the Italian territory: Moroccan, Albanian, Chinese, Ukrainian, Indian, Filipino, Egyptian, Bangladeshi, Moldovan, Pakistani, Tunisian, Sri Lankan, Senegalese, Peruvian and Ecuadorian. Through the information provided by institutional and administrative sources, said communities were analysed with reference to their specificities, analogies and significant differences, all of which put in comparison with the related data on the total foreign population in Italy.

The five-year experience acquired with the International Labour Mobility Programme of Italia Lavoro (now Anpal Servizi) can be appreciated in this year's greater ability to synthesise information compared to the previous editions, notwithstanding the realisation of a broad mapping of the foreign communities' data. In particular, the reports provide information on the migratory phenomenon in its whole, as well as on the socio-demographic characteristics of each nationality, the presence of minors and related educational and training paths, employment, welfare policies and integration processes. Lastly, a specific chapter was devoted to the analysis of the general migratory picture in Italy comparing the various communities among each other, with reference to their main socio-demographic and employment characteristics.

Special thanks are owed to all Institutions and Agencies that provided their fundamental, well-established and effective collaboration: the Ministry of Interior – Central Directorate for Immigration and Asylum Civil Services and the Central Directorate for Civil Rights, Citizenship and Minorities; the Ministry of Education, University and Research – General Directorate for Students; the Ministry of Health – General Directorate for Healthcare Planning; INPS – Actuarial Statistics General Coordination; ISTAT – National Statistics Institute; INAIL – National Insurance Institute for Industrial Accidents; Unioncamere – Italian Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Agriculture; CESPI and trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL.

The complete series 2012-2016 National Reports on the Main Foreign Communities Present in Italy is available, in Italian and in the main foreign languages, under the sections "Paesi di origine e comunità" and "Rapporti di ricerca sull'immigrazione" on the institutional portal [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it).

The unabridged volumes of the 2016 Community Reports, as well as the statistical tables, are available upon request by writing to the following address: [infomobilita@anpalservizi.it](mailto:infomobilita@anpalservizi.it).

# Executive Summary

## THE COMMUNITY IN FIGURES

**REGULARLY RESIDING: 109,968**

**MEN: 54% - WOMEN: 46%**

**MINORS: 27,361 (24.9%)**

**EMPLOYMENT RATE: 65.7%**

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 14%**

**MAIN SECTORS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: PUBLIC SERVICES, SOCIAL SERVICES AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE (54.8%), HOSPITALITY (14.7%)**

**SETTLEMENT AREAS: LOMBARDIA (30.7%), CAMPANIA (14.4%) AND VENETO (12.2%).**

**MAIN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION: SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**CITIZENSHIPS GRANTED IN 2015: 2,295**

On the basis of the statistical analysis carried out, the main aspects characterising the **Sri Lankan** community in Italy are as follows:

**a substantially balanced gender distribution:** men represent 54% of the total population, while women cover the remaining 46%, a value about 3% lower than the non-EU average, whose female component is equal to 48.7%;

**an average age slightly above** that of the total non-EU citizens : in 2016, the average age of the Sri Lankan-born citizens was 33 years old, against the average age of 32 registered for the total non-EU population;

**a significant increase in presences** in the last years: a percentage more than double compared to that of the total amount of non-EU citizens (respectively +31.6% and +15.7%);

**a high presence of minors**, even if with a reduced insertion in the Italian educational system;

**a territorial distribution** according to which most of the Sri Lankan citizens (52.9%) are concentrated in Northern Italy, which in fact ranks first in terms of the community's chosen destination, with a value, nonetheless, 10% lower than what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens present in the Country. **Lombardia** hosts 30.7% of the Sri Lankan citizens regularly residing in Italy, thus representing the first Italian Region in number of presences (33,813), followed by a Southern Region, **Campania**, with 14.4% of the community's total presences, and another Northern region, **Veneto** (12.2%). Actually, the Sri Lankan community is quite present also in Southern Italy (27.5% of the Sri Lankan citizens), against a total presence of non-EU citizens equal to 13.1%. Of particular relevance, the community's presence in Sicily (11.5% against 2.9% of the total amount of non-EU migrants).

the **main sectors of economic activity** differ from those of the other communities: Sri Lankan workers are mainly employed in the sector of *Public services, social services and services to people*, with a value equal to 56%, a percentage 46% higher than what identified for workers coming from the same geographical area and 20% higher than what registered for Asian workers and the non-EU workers considered in their whole.

## Demographic characteristics

The **Sri Lankan community in Italy ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among non-EU citizens in number of presences.**

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, Sri Lankan-born migrants regularly residing in Italy amounted to 109,968, equal to 2.8% of the total amount of non-EU citizens, with a 2.3% rise compared to the previous year. It is a community characterised by a male prevalence: in fact, men amount to 59,938, equal to 54% of the community's total population, while women amount to 50,630, corresponding to the remaining 46%. Against the trend of many other foreign communities in Italy, the Sri Lankan population has become more numerous. In fact, the number of Sri Lankan presences has increased by 2,463 units, passing from 107,505 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 109,968 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, corresponding to a +2.3% rise. Also with reference to the total amount of non-EU citizens regularly residing in Italy, the percentage of the community under exam has progressively increased, passing from 2.4% in 2008 to 2.8% in 2016.

A historical analysis shows that the community under exam passed from 83,567 presences in 2010 to 109,968 in 2016, doubling its percentage compared to the total amount of non-EU citizens (+31.6% against +15.7% respectively). Although the trend underwent a sudden drop of presences in 2011, it went back to rising significantly reaching a positive 2.3% rise also during the past year.

In parallel with the increase of the Sri Lankan population in Italy, the community has been experiencing a **stabilisation process**, so much so that, in 2016, the percentage of EU long-term residence permits held by Sri Lankan citizens regularly residing was equal to 56.3% (+2.3% compared to the previous year), while 43.6% held a residence permit subject to renewal.

These values are nonetheless below those of the total amount of non-EU citizens present in the Country, highlighting the Sri Lankan community's more recent migratory history compared to other communities. In fact, the amount of EU long-term residence permits issued to Sri Lankan citizens is 3% lower than what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the main motivation for residence permits subject to renewal held by Sri Lankan citizens resulted to be **work reasons**, involving more than half of said permits (52.9%). Permits issued for **family reasons** amounted to 21,639, equal to 45.1%. Comparing these data with those of the previous year, it is evident that there has been a 16% decrease in residence permits for work reasons, while those for family reasons have increased by almost 18.4%, confirming a common trend for many communities, according to which residence permits for family reasons have increased and those for work reasons have decreased.

## Current trends

During the last years, many communities have experienced a reversal: after years of a continuous rise in presences, there has been a drop in the number of regularly residing citizens. This datum is very likely due to two parallel phenomena: the reduction of new entries on the one hand, and the increase of Italian citizenship acquisitions on the other. In fact, in these last years there has been a constant and relevant increase in Italian citizenship acquisitions. From 2012 to 2015, the total amount of citizenships granted to non-EU citizens rose above 165%, passing from 60,059 to 158,891. In particular, against a drop in citizenships acquired by marriage (-18%), there has been a significant and analogous increase in acquisitions of citizenship due to naturalisation, election at the age of 18/transmission of citizenship from parents (about +240%).

However, against the above mentioned trend, the Sri Lankan community has experienced an increase in presences, passing from 107,505 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 109,968 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, corresponding to a 2,463 unit rise (+2.3%). Compared to the total amount of non-EU citizens regularly residing, the community under exam has thus experienced a progressive increase, passing from 2.4% in 2008 to 2.8% in 2016.

The Sri Lankan community, 12<sup>th</sup> among the non-EU citizens in terms of presences, does not rank among the first ten in citizenships granted. In 2015, out of 158,891 citizenships granted to non-EU citizens, those issued to

Sri Lankan-born citizens amounted to **2,295**, equal to **1.4%** of the total, registering a significant increase when considering that in 2012 they amounted to 626. In line with what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens, the rise is to ascribe exclusively to citizenships acquired by transmission/election, with an increase of 264% and 346% respectively.

## Minors and educational paths

**Sri Lankan-born minors amount to 27,361** and represent **2.9%** of the total amount of non-EU minors. Following the community's positive trend in total presences, there has been an increase also in the amount of minors: +1,291 units, equal to a 5% rise compared to the previous year. **Sri Lankan minors represent 24.9% of the community in its whole**, a value slightly above the non-EU average, equal to 24.2%. The minors' male component is equal to 51.2%, while the female presence is equal to 48.8%, percentages basically analogous to those of the total non-EU minors. The mentioned data thus highlight a more balanced gender distribution among minors than in the adult population, where the female presence amounts to 46%.

With reference to the **educational system**, it is important to highlight that the presence of foreign students in the Italian schools is by now a structural datum that involves all orders and grades. Currently, the non-EU students represent 7.8% of Italy's student population (from early childhood education to upper secondary education). The most represented nationalities are the Albanian and Moroccan, while the less represented are the Senegalese and Sri Lankan. In fact, Sri Lankan-born students enrolled in school year 2015/2016 amounted to 8,673 representing 1.4% of the total amount of non-EU students. Compared to the total of non-EU students, the percentage of Sri Lankan students is higher in the lower education with 1.6% enrolled in the early childhood education, and 1.4% in the primary education and lower secondary education.

With reference to **university enrolments**, the Sri Lankan's percentage of university students over the total amount of non-EU students is equal to an exiguous 0.4%. Sri Lankan university students enrolled in academic year 2015/16 in biennial or triennial degree courses amounted to 231. In line with the non-EU citizens in their whole, the number of university students belonging to the community under exam results to have increased in the last four years, passing from 197 to 231, corresponding to a 17.3% rise.

Lastly, similarly to the Italian youngsters, also the foreign youth falls within the phenomenon of youngsters who do not work, do not study and do not undergo training – NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training). With reference to the community under exam, Sri Lankan youngsters between 15 and 29 years of age that do not study or work amount to **4,069**, equal to 1.6% of the total non-EU NEETs.

## Work and employment conditions

The employment rate of Sri Lankan citizens between 15 and 64 years of age is equal to 65.7%, a value 2% higher than what identified for migrants coming from Asia considered in its whole, nearly 9% higher than what registered for the total amount of non-EU citizens, and 14% higher than what identified for migrants coming from Central-Southern Asian Countries. Moreover, the community shows relevant differences between the male employment rate (78.6%) and the female employment rate (44.6%).

**The inactivity rate** of the community under exam is equal to 23.5%, a value 8% lower than what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens, whereas it is 6% lower than what registered for Asian migrants (29.6%), and about 17% lower than what identified for citizens coming from the rest of the Central-Southern Asian Countries (40.4%).

The Sri Lankan **unemployment rate** is equal to 14%, in increase compared to the previous year by about 3%. Nonetheless, said value is 16.7% lower than what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens; on the other hand, the value results to be 13.1% higher than what identified for citizens coming from the same geographical area and 9.5% higher than what registered for migrants coming from Asia considered in its whole.

The Sri Lankan community is characterised by a prevalence of **non-qualified manual labour**, involving 69% of the Sri Lankan workers, against 40% of the total amount of non-EU workers. Following, for numerousness, the community is characterised by employees, sales assistants and personal services assistants (21%). The qualified manual labour is equal to 10%, a value considerably lower than what identified for the other groups compared.

In 2015, the employment relationships entered into with Sri Lankan-born citizens were equal to **32,617**, an amount **3.2% higher than the previous year**. Most of the new “subordinate” (economically dependent employed work) and “parasubordinate” (also known as economically dependent self-employed work) jobs employing Sri Lankan workers in 2015 concerned the *Services* sector, with a value equal to 93.4%. This is the first sector of reference also for the total amount of non-EU workers, even if with a percentage definitely lower than what registered for the community under exam (60.4%). The second sector in terms of number of employments, although with a very different percentage compared to the first sector of reference, is given by the *Industry* sector involving 4% of the employment relationships entered into with Sri Lankan citizens, in particular the *Industry sector strictly speaking*, employing 3.5% of the community's population. However, these values are considerably lower than what registered for the total non-EU citizens. Lastly, employments in the *Agricultural* sector amount to 2.5%.

With reference to the types of contracts entered into by Sri Lankan workers **in 2015, there is a prevalence of indefinite contracts, equal to 52.5% of the new employment relationships entered into**, a value higher than what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens (39.6%). Whereas, 43.2% of the community's employment contracts were fixed-term, against 55% identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens.

The **entrepreneurial activity** results to be not very relevant for the community under exam: in fact, on 31 December 2015 the Sri Lankan-born owners of individual enterprises amounted to 0.7% of the non-EU entrepreneurs present in our Country. However, compared to the previous year, the number of individual enterprises owned by Sri Lankan citizens has increased by 15.5% (+352 units). The Sri Lankan community, 12<sup>th</sup> among non-EU citizens in number of presences in Italy, ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in terms of individual enterprises owned. The first settlement Region, similarly to the total non-EU entrepreneurs, is **Lombardia** which hosts 620 enterprises (23.6% of the total), followed by **Campania** with 554 (21.1% of the total), and **Sicilia** with an amount equal to 19.8%.

## Socio-economic conditions

The Sri-Lankan-born citizens employed in our Country show a prevalence of a **medium-low education**. In line with what identified for the total amount of non-EU citizens, but with a higher percentage, more than half of the workers belonging to the community under exam have, at the most, a lower secondary education (66%). This value is 2% higher than what identified for workers coming from Central-Southern Asia and 5% higher than what identified for the total amount of workers coming from Asia in its whole. Whereas, 34% of the community's workers have, at least, an upper secondary education (3% also achieved tertiary education), a value 2% lower than what identified for the total amount of workers coming from other Central-Southern Asian Countries, 5% lower than what registered for workers coming from Asia in its whole, and 13% lower than what identified for the total amount of non-EU workers.

With reference to the Sri Lankan-born employees' **income**, only 5.5% of the community's workers receive a monthly pay above 1,200 euro, a percentage significantly below what registered for the other groups compared: in fact, it is 23% lower than what registered for the total amount of workers coming from Central-Southern Asian Countries, 11% lower than what registered for workers coming from Asia in its whole, and 19% lower than what identified for the total amount of the non-EU citizens. Similarly to the other groups compared, the first salary class is the one ranging between 800 and 1,200 Euros, involving 36% of the community's workers, while the second is the one up to 800 Euros, involving 59% of the community's workers.



The Sri Lankan community, 12<sup>th</sup> among the non-EU citizens in number of presences, does not rank among the first ten communities in terms of **citizenships granted**. In 2015, out of a total of 158,891 citizenships granted to citizens coming from Third Countries, those involving Sri Lankan-born migrants amounted to 2,295, equal to 1.4% of the total amount granted. Moreover, with reference to the motivations for citizenship acquisitions, the community under exam highlights a different distribution compared to the total amount of non-EU citizens. In fact, the first motivation for citizenship acquisitions is **transmission from “new” Italian parents or birth in Italy**, which involves a little more than half of the new Sri-Lankan-born citizens (1,157, equal to 50.4% of the total). Whereas, citizenships acquired by **naturalisation** amount to 47.4%, while the remaining 2.2% concern citizenships acquired by marriage with an Italian citizen.

During the last year, the number of “new” citizens belonging to the community under exam has significantly increased, registering a value equal to 78.3%; against a considerable increase in citizenships acquired by transmission from parents or election at the age of 18 (+97.1%) and by residence (+81.6%), those acquired by marriage registered a particularly significant drop (-50.5%).

Lastly, with reference to **financial flows exiting Italy**, in 2015 the Sri Lankan community sent 175.5 million Euros to Sri Lanka, equal to 4.2% of the total amount of exiting remittances (+2.2 million Euros compared to 2014). Therefore, in the period examined, the amount of this community’s remittances increased by 121.8%, passing from 79.1 million Euros in 2010 to 175.5 in 2015.

Although the comparison with the data concerning the Italian adult population (87%) highlights foreigners’ greater vulnerability in accessing financial tools, the number of foreign adults holding a bank account results to be in significant increase, passing from 61.2% in 2010 to 73.1% in 2015 (+0.2).

However, the Sri Lankan community shows a lower **bank account rate** compared to the foreign average at national level: in fact, the percentage of bank account holders for this community is equal to 63.1%, (+4.4% compared to the previous year). With reference to this datum, 37% concern bank accounts held with the same bank for more than 5 years (banking stability index), which is below the foreign average at national level (39%). Finally, the number of bank accounts held by Sri Lankan women is below average: 37% against 45% of the total amount of non-EU female bank account holders.

