

Italy

December 2021

In 2021, **67,477 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, while **almost 9,400 arrived by land from Slovenia**. UNHCR staff regularly monitor the situation in both sea and land arrivals areas.

Following enhanced collaboration with UNHCR, in December, **five Italian cities formally committed to promote the inclusion of refugees** through the adoption of a document known as Integration Charter.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs committed to donate **21.5 million Euros to UNHCR to address the needs of the Afghan population** displaced in Afghanistan and in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.

KEY INDICATORS (DECEMBER 2021)

4,534

Total sea arrivals to Italy disembarked at different sites across the country (Source: Ministry of Interior)

2,424

Sea arrivals assisted and informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff following disembarkation (Source: UNHCR)

6,485

Inquiries received and followed-up through UNHCR partner ARCI toll-free number (Source: ARCI)

73

Individuals received medical assistance and psychosocial counselling from UNHCR partners (Source: MEDU and LHIVE-LILA)

Sea arrivals in 2021 by disembarkation site



Sea arrivals

POPULATION OF CONCERN

67,477

34,154

Jan-Dec 2021

Jan-Dec 2020

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior.

Sea arrivals by gender and age

POPULATION OF CONCERN

15%

Children Unaccompanied

5%

Children Accompanied

7%

Women

73%

Men

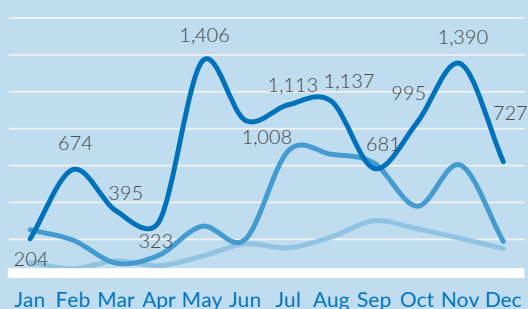
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% exactly.

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior. Gender breakdown for children is not available.

Sea arrivals of UASC

POPULATION OF CONCERN

— 2019 — 2020 — 2021



Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest available data.

- Access to territory (sea arrivals).**¹ In 2021, **67,477 persons arrived in Italy by sea**, including 10,053 children travelling on their own. This is almost double the sea arrivals recorded last year (34,154 persons; +98%) and an even greater increase compared to refugees and migrants disembarking in 2019 (11,471 persons; +488%). Most 2021 sea arrivals originated from Tunisia (23% of the total), followed by Egypt (13%) and Bangladesh (12%). **Iran was the fourth most common nationality of sea arrivals**, with just under 4,000 persons reaching shore in 2021, almost all of whom departed from Turkey. This is the highest number of Iranian sea arrivals on record since such data became systematically available some ten years ago and is consistent with the upsurge in the numbers of refugees and migrants setting sail from Turkey throughout 2021. Almost 13,000 sea arrivals in Italy departed from Turkey, exceeding the previous 10,500 record high registered in connection with the Syrian crisis in 2014. **In December, 4,534 refugees and migrants arrived by sea**, compared to 1,591 and 589 in the same month in 2020 and 2019, respectively. Most monthly sea arrivals originated from Tunisia (14%), Egypt (10%) and Afghanistan (9%). Approximately 46% of them departed from Libya, while 29% embarked in Turkey and 20% in Tunisia, confirming also a proportional increase in the numbers of individuals arriving by sea from Turkey compared to previous years. Sea arrivals reaching shore in Lampedusa, Sicily and Calabria usually observe quarantine on offshore ferries, with the exception of children travelling on their own and other vulnerable persons who observe quarantine onshore. Arrivals very often include vulnerable individuals such as single women, survivors of torture or persons with disabilities. **UNHCR staff** ensure they are provided with relevant assistance and regularly monitor the situation of arrivals and in quarantine facilities. Reception conditions in quarantine facilities remain critical, and protracted quarantine periods continue to be reported, often due to the unavailability of reception centres where persons can be transferred to after their quarantine.



UNHCR staff delivers the *Comunicare da Protagonisti* communications training to ten refugees in Milan ©UNHCR

- Access to territory (land arrivals).** In 2021, **almost 9,400 refugees and migrants arrived by land through the Italy-Slovenia border**, reaching northern Italy's Friuli Venezia-Giulia region. Approximately 83% of them originate from three countries, namely **Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan**. As reported in previous months, significant numbers of persons who arrived in Italy by sea and land continued their journey to the town of Ventimiglia or Val di Susa, near the Italy-France border, with the intention of moving onward to other European countries. It is estimated that, at the end of December, some 300 refugees and migrants, including families with children, women, single mothers and unaccompanied children, were living in destitute conditions in Ventimiglia waiting to cross into France. **Pushbacks at the Italy-France border both near Ventimiglia and in Val di Susa** were reported, affecting also vulnerable adults, families travelling with children and children travelling on their own. Persons attempting to cross the Italy-France border from Val di Susa often walk along perilous mountain trails exposing themselves to significant risks for their life and safety, especially in the winter season when temperatures drop below freezing. Moreover, tightened controls in the Montgenèvre area and reinforced border patrols on more accessible mountain trails reportedly compelled refugees and migrants to take longer and more dangerous paths. UNHCR staff is in regular contact with non-governmental and civil society organizations working with refugees and migrants in areas near the Italy-France border to gather relevant information and monitor the situation. UNHCR reiterates that **pushbacks endanger lives and undermine fundamental human rights, including the right to seek asylum**.

¹ For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy page](#) of the UNHCR data portal.

- **Reception.** As of 31 December 2021, **78,421 persons were accommodated in reception facilities** across Italy, of whom 52,308 in first-line reception facilities, 25,715 in second-line facilities and 398 in hotspots.² **Delays in transfers of unaccompanied children**, including from the Lampedusa hotspot to other facilities, continue to be a concern: these are due to lack of places in facilities onshore, aggravated by an increase in arrivals of unaccompanied children this year. In 2021, 10,053 children travelling on their own reached Italian shores, compared to 4,687 in 2020 (+114%). In Milan, asylum-seekers who have not arrived in Italy by sea, including persons who have been returned from other European countries pursuant to the provisions of the Dublin Regulation, are reportedly experiencing **difficulties in accessing reception**, as the local system is working at capacity.
- **Asylum and statelessness.** In cooperation with the National Commission for Asylum, UNHCR developed **Standard Operating Procedures to ensure a gender-sensitive approach by authorities tasked with refugee status determination**, supporting asylum-seekers who survived or are at risk of gender-based violence (GBV) to disclose relevant information and receive adequate assistance. UNHCR partner [Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati \(CIR\)](#) developed [guidelines on refugee status determination of unaccompanied children](#), focusing specifically on Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Italy's northern region bordering Slovenia. The document, developed in the context of CIR's [project](#) aimed at strengthening the guardianship system in Sicily and legal information at the northeast border, is the result of CIR's and UNHCR's collaboration with the Territorial Commission, the Juvenile Court, social services and Immigration authorities in Trieste. It is meant to guide reception centres staff as well as voluntary guardians in addressing the needs of asylum-seeking unaccompanied children.
- **Community-based protection.** In 2021, **UNHCR assisted almost 400 persons through its open access front desk in Rome** and supported almost 2,800 asylum-seekers and refugees who approached the office for information, counselling, specific documentation or referral to partner organizations and other relevant stakeholders. Approximately 15% of those individually assisted by UNHCR were Afghan nationals, followed by Nigerians (12%), Eritreans (6%), Somali (3%) and Syrians (3%). In December, UNHCR ensured the successful delivery in Milan of its flagship [Comunicare da Protagonisti communications training for ten refugees](#), taking to 28 the total number of refugees who have benefitted from the two-day training covering media relations, public speaking, interview techniques and use of social media. In connection with the 16 days of activism against GBV campaign, an online training package on the UNHCR-IOM-UNICEF GBV pocket guide was launched, while reception centres staff continued to benefit from targeted in-person and online training. In the context of the Leaving violence, Living safe project, UNHCR partner D.i.RE. developed the first **list of cultural mediators specifically trained to support refugee and asylum-seeking women who have survived GBV**.³
- **Solutions.** In the second half of 2021, UNHCR established a working group with six Italian municipalities (Bari, Milan, Naples, Rome, Palermo and Turin) to strengthen engagement and collaboration to improve integration opportunities for refugees. In December, this collaboration led to the **approval of the Integration Charter** by five out of six municipalities (Bari, Milan, Naples, Rome and Turin). The Integration Charter is a formal and political document of engagement on integration. Through the Charter, municipalities commit to promote, inter alia, reception in small facilities, family-based reception, post-reception solutions, documentation, empowerment of refugees, and exchanges between refugees and local communities. The Charter also serves as a common basis to develop joint actions, such as the



² Ministry of Interior, [Cruscotto statistico al 31 dicembre 2021](#) (in Italian, last access 11 January 2022). An English summary is also available here (last access 11 January 2022).

³ See also UNHCR, [L'invisibilità della violenza subita da donne richiedenti asilo e rifugiate. D.i.Re e UNHCR rafforzano il ruolo delle mediatrici culturali attraverso il progetto Leaving violence. Living safe](#), 9 December 2021 (in Italian, last access 11 January 2022). This [video](#) illustrates how the D.i.RE. network antiviolence centres provide support to refugee and asylum-seeking women through the involvement of cultural mediators.

One-Stop-Shop approach, mentoring and community matching programmes, common tools to monitor arrivals and reception, and initiatives focusing on particularly vulnerable individuals, including women with children and unaccompanied children.⁴ In early December, a two-day event was held to celebrate the end of the fourth edition of UNHCR-Intersos run PartecipAzione programme, an **innovative and creative project which promotes refugee integration by engaging refugee communities** and enabling refugees to actively participate in society. In 2021, seven refugee-led and community-based organizations were awarded small grants through the programme: C.U.C.I.R.E., Fuori Mercato, Il Faro del Borgo, Circolo Culturale Arci RadioAttiva, Sotto il Baobab, Smiling Coast of Africa e le associazioni Genitori Scuola Di Donato/Rifugiati Sudanesi di Via Scorticabove.⁵ Furthermore, in 2021, a new component called “PartecipAzione in rete” was added to the programme to support organizations that took part in previous editions with project management regarding employment, access to secondary and tertiary education, and business development.⁶



- **Community engagement.** In UNHCR Representative, Ms. Chiara Cardoletti, spoke at an event on UNHCR’s **Manifesto for an Inclusive University** bringing together many **Italian universities that have committed to promoting refugees’ access to tertiary education**, including through the **University Corridors for Refugees – UNICORE** programme. By the end of 2021, 53 Italian universities had signed the Manifesto, that is over half of all universities in the country.⁷ In December, UNHCR delivered two trainings to a total of 162 journalists and journalism students and supported the presented of the annual **Carta di Roma** report on Italian media coverage of migration and asylum issues.
- **Fundraising.** In December, UNHCR raised **3.2 million Euros from private donors** in Italy, totalling 24.2 million Euros since the beginning of the year. The major private donors in Italy contributing to UNHCR operations worldwide this month were Enel Cuore Onlus, Fondazione Mediolanum, Ms. Pesenti and Pirelli & C. S.p.A.. In December, Coop launched the **#coopforafrica campaign to raise funds to promote COVID-19 vaccinations in Africa**, alongside UNHCR, Community of Sant’Egidio and MSF.⁸

Italy donates to respond to the Afghanistan emergency



On 16 December, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed its commitment to donate **21.5 million Euros to fund UNHCR operations** engaged in the response to the recent crisis in Afghanistan. Italy’s support will help UNHCR carry out its work to assist and protect internally displaced people in Afghanistan and refugees in Iran and Pakistan. Click [here](#) to read the Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release.

UNHCR Representative, Ms. Chiara Cardoletti, with Italy’s Vice Foreign Affairs Minister, Ms. Marina Sereni.

⁴ See also Comune di Bari, [La giunta approva la carta per l'integrazione delle persone richiedenti asilo e rifugiate in rete con i Comuni di Milano, Roma, Torino, Napoli e Palermo](#) (in Italian), 3 December 2021 (last access 11 January 2022)

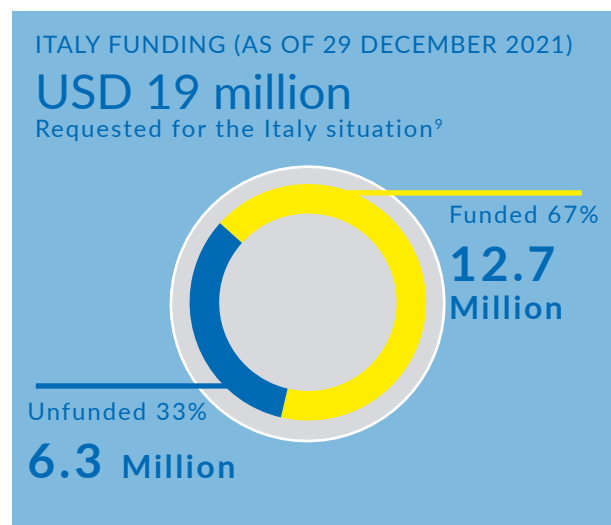
⁵ See also UNHCR, [Rifugiati: si chiude la quarta edizione di PartecipAzione, programma innovativo per l'integrazione](#), 30 November 2021 (in Italian, last access 11 January 2022); Youtube/UNHCR Italia, [Partecipazione, programma innovativo per l'innovazione](#) (last access 11 January 2022). Other useful resources: UNHCR, [Promising practices from working with refugee-led organizations in Europe](#), September 2021; Erasmus+, [Training Kit for Empowering Refugee-Led Community Organisations National Report on the status of refugee-led community organisations in Italy](#), December 2020 (last access 11 January 2022).

⁶ Further information on PartecipAzione in Rete is available [here](#)

⁷ For further information on the Manifesto for an Inclusive University you can access the new [website](#). For further resources on refugees studying at university in Italy, see also UNHCR, [I rifugiati hanno bisogno di studiare per ricominciare a sognare. La storia di Jules](#), 8 December 2021 (in Italian, last access 12 January 2022) and this [video](#) featuring a University Corridors student studying in Venice.

⁸ For further information see UNHCR, [Vaccinazioni COVID-19 in Africa, al via campagna Coop](#), 3 December 2021 (in Italian, last access 12 January 2022)

Financial information



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

Germany 29.7 M | **United States of America** 17.2 M | **Private donors Australia** 11 M | **Private donors Germany** 3.5 M | **Private donors Korea** 2.5 M | **Norway** 2.3 M

Japan | Luxembourg | Norway | Spain | Private donors

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 M | **Private donors Spain** 75.9 M | **Sweden** 75.4 M | **United Kingdom** 40.4 M | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 38.8 M | **Netherlands** 36.1 M | **Denmark** 34.6 M | **Private donors Japan** 30.9 M | **Germany** 26 M | **Japan** 23.4 M | **France** 20.2 M | **Private donors Italy** 19.6 M | **Private donors Sweden** 16.9 M | **Switzerland** 16.4 M | **Ireland** 12.5 M | **Belgium** 11.9 M | **Italy** 10.7 M | **Private donors USA** 10.6 M

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines (the) | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore |

CONTACTS

Elisabetta Dolzan, Senior Reporting Assistant, dolzan@unhcr.org

Cristina Franchini, External Relations Associate, franchin@unhcr.org

LINKS

[UNHCR data portal](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [LinkedIn](#) - [Global Focus](#)

⁹ Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. The contributions earmarked for Italy shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking.