

**Summary Fondazione Migrantes  
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“Although the structure of the seventh edition of the Italiani nel Mondo (Italians in the world) Report remains unchanged, the report sets out a series of innovative statistical, socio-cultural, economic and pastoral contents. Compared to past editions, this report has been produced in a year in which the efforts undertaken to secure public finances have led, in 2012, to a further and substantial reduction of the budget of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs”.

These words are taken directly from the introduction to the report written by Mons. Giancarlo Perego, Director General of the Fondazione Migrantes. He goes on to refer to significant events that have taken place in the past, as well as to a range of issues regarding the current situation.

***EMIGRATION IN THE PAST***

Historically, out of all of the industrialised countries, Italy has made the largest contribution to international migratory flows, with more than 30 million people leaving the country from the time of Italian Unification to the present day. Of these 30 million, 14 million emigrated during the period from 1876 to 1915. Indeed, even the economic boom in the period 1896 - 1908, when GDP grew at an annual rate of 6.7%, was not sufficient to absorb all of the victims of the rural exodus. In 1913, slightly fewer than 900,000 Italians emigrated and this figure represented a real haemorrhage of our national population: the emigrants travelled overseas by boat or set off towards other European countries by train or on foot. In 1876, some 1,000 people left Sicily, but by the beginning of the 20th century, more than 100,000 emigrants had left the island. Today, Sicily is the leading region in terms of the number of emigrants leaving to go abroad. At the beginning of the last century, there were more residents of Italian origin in Argentina than there were Argentinians. Avellaneda (which is a name borrowed from the President of the Republic at that time), a small town in the North-East of the province of Santa Fe, was founded on 18 July 1879 upon the arrival of a small group of families from Friuli, who had been attracted by the benefits of the law on immigration and colonization, which granted each one of them 36 hectares of farm land; despite the passage of time, this community has remained cohesive and proud of its traditions.

In Brazil, which, historically, has always been another major destination for our emigrants, 44% of the residents of the State of San Paulo are of Italian origin. Italian emigrants have also been present in other countries for many years. In Peru, for example, the

Compagnia dei Pompieri Garibaldi, which is still active today, was founded in 1872. Antonio Raimondi, who arrived in the port of Callao in July 1850, is still famous today for his exploits as an explorer of the Andean Cordillera. In the countries of Latin America, Italian emigrants were quick to establish mutual help groups and associations and today there are 22 Italian hospitals and care centres abroad. South

America still accounts for the highest number of the 400,000 Italian pensions paid abroad, as well as the highest number of requests for citizenship (768,192 between 1998 and 2007).

There is also a significant Italian presence in North America. In the United States, 215,000 Italo-Americans are registered on the Aire (Register of Italians Living Abroad), whilst there are 15 million people of Italian origin in the entire country (5.6% of the overall population) and out of this total number, 2.7 million live in the New York metropolitan area.

A high number of Italians emigrated not only between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, but also after the second world war: 300,000 emigrated in the 1950s and 60s, 180,000 in the 1970s, 685,000 in the 1980s and lower numbers in the following years to a point where the figure is now below 50,000. As a result of the negative demographic trend, since the 1970s, the number of Italians returning to Italy has been higher than the number of emigrants leaving the country and foreign workers have begun to arrive in Italy.

#### ***EMIGRATION TODAY***

In 1861, there were 230,000 Italians abroad out of a resident population of 22,182,000 (1% of the resident population). On 1 January 2012, following an overall year on year increase of

93,742, the total number of Italian included on the AIRE (Register of Italians Living Abroad) stood at 4,208,977 (47.9% of whom are women), which is 6.9% of the total population resident in Italy. Furthermore, it is estimated that there are more than 60 million people of Italian origin throughout the world. By their very nature, these figures are approximate, since it is impossible to keep a record of all of those who continue to emigrate. Indeed, there are many young people who choose to turn their back on a precarious situation in Italy and prefer to go abroad (sometimes they move around from one country to the next and do not really have a definitive plan), mostly relying on family networks. At the beginning, they often do not have a good knowledge of the language spoken in the country they find themselves in, but they almost always have the qualifications necessary to enter the world of work or research. Their destination countries of choice tend to be Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, but there are also plenty of people who are prepared to travel to the more distant countries. In this way, the journey becomes a central part of their cultural and professional development.

According to recent surveys (Eurispes 2012), almost 60% of the Italians aged between 18 and 24 say that they are prepared to make a life from themselves abroad. Those aged between 25 and 34 are even more disenchanted by the opportunities provided in Italy and this is particularly the case amongst women and is a sentiment felt more in the North and Centre of the country than it is in the South and the Islands. This perception is also widespread amongst the very young and the level of disenchantment increases the higher the level of qualification held. Therefore, in order to establish a complete overview of the phenomenon of mobility, it is necessary to consider the traditional flows and the new flows, which may be stable or commuter-based, as well as the flows of seasonal workers (there are 59,000 in Switzerland alone) and internal migration, which is still relatively high (109,000 people have moved from the South to the North and Central regions).

### ***THE ANNIVERSARIES OF ITALIAN EMIGRATION***

The publication of the latest Migrants Report coincides with the end of the official celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Italian Unification, which led to the review of some of the themes that are emerging from the studies on migration, notably the integration (looking beyond the regional and local dimension) of the Italian identity and the contribution made to Italy, the homeland, by its Diaspora. The return of 150,000 expatriates to Italy to take part in operations during the First World War is a prime example of this contribution. This, and other anniversaries, which have also provided the opportunity for reflection, helps us to assess the overall relationship between Italy and its emigrants.

The Associazione Bellunesi nel Mondo celebrated its 45th anniversary on 12 November 2011 and in doing so it remembered the far-sighted people who were instrumental in setting it up, including Bishop Gioacchino Muccin and Vincenzo Barcelloni Corte. The Association was created against the backdrop of the wave of emotion generated by the Mattmark tragedy in Switzerland (30 August 1965), when a building site was hit by an avalanche which claimed many lives (including 17 victims from the Belluno region) and made the whole of Italy consider the hard life led by its emigrants. The Libreria Italiana (Italian Bookstore) celebrated its 50th anniversary in Zurich, Switzerland, in December 2011. The Bookstore was founded by Sandro and Lisetta Rodoni and, for many years, it served as a refuge for people with left-wing views, which were not well received at the time. Many people visited the Bookstore, including famous people such as Carlo Levi and Leonardo Sciascia. The writer, Saverio Strati, who moved to Switzerland in 1964, began writing his fifth novel, *Noi lazzaroni* (1972), by setting it in the Bookstore itself.

Our fellow countrymen had to put up with many things, including the various referenda which took place between 1965 and 1974 against the so called *Ueberfremdung* (process of foreigners taking over Switzerland), which were organised because many people considered the presence of so many foreigners in their country to be excessive, despite the important, and not solely economic, contribution being made to Switzerland by these immigrants.

There have also been a number of centennial celebrations, such as that of the highest railway in the world. On 1 August 1912, following the work that had begun in 1896 and after the collapse of the final barrier in the tunnel leading to the highest station in Europe, (3,454 metres on the Jungfrauoch, a pass in the Bernese Alps), the cog railway carried its first passengers along its 9.34 km route. This bold, and ultimately successful, investment in tourism (it attracted 765,000 tourists in 2011) was made possible by the hard work carried out by the Italians who built the railway line (45,321 out of just over 70,000 workers), who found themselves virtually alone in carrying out the arduous excavation works. The last tunnel was excavated by 200 Italians, who were well paid but also confined to living at 3,400 metres for four years, connected to the rest of the world by only a telephone and an electricity line, exposed to temperatures that were constantly below zero and the extremely dangerous use of dynamite. Over the course of 16 years of work, close to 100 workers were injured and 30 died (with just one exception, all of them were Italian) and this led the Bishop for emigrants, Geremia Bonomelli, to state, without any exaggeration whatsoever, during a visit to the site, that, , “Without your huge contribution, this giant-sized project could never be completed”. This belief was also shared by the contractor. This is a story of nameless heroes who helped to make Italian emigration great.

Wolfsburg, in Germany, is another emblematic city for Italian emigration and in 2012 it is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Italians, the majority of

whom came to work in the Volkswagen plant. Although they were originally considered to be guest workers (Gastarbeiter), the Italians have integrated well in this city and now actively participate in the works council of the famous automobile company, the municipality, the political parties, the associations and other socio-cultural organisations. Today, throughout Germany, Italians are recognised for their contribution to local development and they are no longer considered to be foreign.

“Emigration has been a school for internationalism and fraternity between peoples, composed of minorities who, rather than being forgotten, should be celebrated, since they have conquered new moral horizons that go beyond nationalisms”.

(Peter Kammerer, Lecturer at the University of Urbino, on 9 November 2011, at a Conference promoted by the Museum of Italian Emigration on “The role of Italian emigration within national unity”).

The days when a restaurant in Saarbrücken felt the compelled to put up a sign saying “Eintritt für Italiener verboten!” (translated even more imperiously into Italian as “strictly no Italians allowed”), are now well and truly over. This collection of anniversaries cannot fail to mention the many anniversaries celebrated by the Italian Catholic Missions, which were run by priests who, with a great sense of duty and courage, lived in solitude and poverty, as was the case in the Scandinavian countries, another area in which emigrants settled. The 2012 Migrants Report also refers to the 50th anniversary of the Kreuzlingen Mission in Switzerland, as well as the Institute of the Scalabrini Missionaries, which was founded in 1961 in Solothurn. The celebration of this particular anniversary was attended by more than 400 people from 33 different countries.

When contemplating this long history of emigration, we should ask ourselves whether there is a risk that this moment of historical maturity may lead to an accentuation of the crisis that exists in the relationship between the emigrants and Italy.

#### ***A TALE OF HUMBLE WORK AND SUCCESS STORIES***

The conditions in which the emigrants had to settle into their new homes were often extremely difficult, even in the countries in which the Italian communities are now well integrated. In 1971, the famous photo-reporter, Jakob Riis, counted 1,324 Italians living together in cramped and crowded conditions in just 132 rooms dotted around the neighbourhood blocks on Mulberry Street or Bayard Street in New York. Although things were tough at the very outset, the majority of emigrants worked hard and with great dedication for the benefit of their own family and even managed to gain recognition for their own country by becoming its humble and effective ambassadors.

In the past, it was not unusual for Italians to emigrate to Eastern Europe, not just as labourers, but also as builders and stonemasons. This happened between the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s at the time when the Trans-Siberian railway was being built. Its 9,288.2 km route made it the longest railway in the world and it was a project that attracted a great number of foreign workers, including a hundred or so from Friuli, notably from Vito d’Asio, Clauzzetto, Osoppo and Montenars.

France has always been a long-standing destination for Italian emigrants. In an interview with the Migrants Report, the singer-songwriter Gianmaria Testa spoke about the hardships endured by those who emigrated to France. One of his most dramatic pieces of work, *Ritals*, recalls the derogatory term used to refer to Italians, and in his musical message he teaches us that those who do not consider history have no future of their own.

Italian emigrants should quite clearly not be forgotten, but by the same token, they are called upon to remember Italy.

The 2012 *Italiani nel Mondo* Report describes a series of success stories that are an indication of the high esteem accorded abroad, not only to the wide range of made in Italy products (furniture, mechanical automation, apparel, food), but also to the many famous Italian businessmen and women, architects, archaeologists, men and women involved in cultural activities and social and political figures. For example, the royal palace, parliament and other public buildings in Bangkok were all designed and built in the 1920s along the lines of similar buildings in Turin, by Corrado Feroci (1892-1962) from Florence. Similarly, the sculptor, Francesco Riccardo Monti (1888-1958), from Cremona, worked on the most prestigious monuments in Manila in the 1930s. The more than 4 million Italians living abroad represent an extremely diversified group, composed of those who are content to live abroad on a stable basis and those who intend to do so only temporarily, from sailors to circus performers, to mention just two categories that often overlooked. Some of the emigrants still require support and help, whilst there are others who are settled and are in a position to help their homeland: the most pressing task is to establish networks with both of these categories of emigrants. They are all called upon to work in this way, together with Italian society, the members of parliament elected abroad, the General Council of Italians Abroad, the Committees of Italians Abroad and the Associations engaged in the field of emigration.

#### ***ITALY'S DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS DIASPORA***

The high culture of the 19th and 20th century only gave partial or episodic consideration to Italian emigration and, despite the involvement of some important writers, most of the time this took the form of a view from on high. Later on, there was an increase in the specific interest expressed in Italians throughout the world, as demonstrated by the large number of works dedicated to them. Indeed, whilst it was quite clear that there existed a greater sense of empathy for them in the 1960s (Italo Calvino, for example), over the course of the last 20 years it would seem that literature has rediscovered the phenomenon of migration and the memory of the past. It is also difficult to take stock of the situation from the point of view of training and education. In Italy, emigration has never been accorded a great deal of importance on school curricula, not even in the initial post-war period when there was still a significant number of Italians emigrating abroad. The person who wrote the preface to *I figli del Sud* (Fabbri, Milano, 1973), a photo-reportage on the internal and international migration of Italians, by the journalist and expert on all matters relating to the Meridione (southern Italy), Giovanni Russo, laconically raises the following issues, which are still relevant today, "How is it possible that millions of people are currently experiencing the trauma of emigrating from the agricultural regions in the South to the industrial areas in the North and yet our children's books make no mention of this. In talking to one another, children at school have to overcome barriers related to the fact that they may speak different dialects, they have different sensitivities, customs and family income, and yet our schools do not possess the instruments required to explain the reasons behind these issues [...] How is it possible that schools fail to address the danger of a discriminatory, if not racist, attitude being developed when the children are able to witness, first hand, that workers from the South are flooding into certain trades and crafts, as well as into certain neighbourhoods in the city, and that their immigrant school mates from the South are flocking into their classrooms?" (pp. 5-6).

Another issue is the image that people abroad have of Italy, and this is not just related to the fact that our country is struggling to emerge from the current economic crisis. Italy is often represented by the foreign media as being a country riddled with conflict, a country which struggles to finish what it has started and a country that carries precious little political and social weight. Our communities can only be disappointed by this attitude. Indeed, the popularity of Italian authors abroad has fallen, as indicated by the Index Translationum, a sort of international bibliography of books that have been translated, which is managed by Unesco and was computerised in 1979 and which tracks information recording the publishing industry and translations over the last 30 years. There is not a single Italian amongst the top ten most translated authors. The list of the top 10 Italian authors published abroad includes the authors of the classics, the “Supreme Poet” (Dante) and two religious figures (Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, Dante Alighieri, Emilio Salgari, Carlo Collodi, Alberto Moravia, Gianni Rodari, Carlo Maria Martini, Niccolò Machiavelli and John Paul II). Another interesting list has been compiled by a further education institution in Lecce ([www.costa.clcio.it](http://www.costa.clcio.it)). Their list of “150 Italie più conosciute nel mondo” (The 150 best known Italians/all things Italian in the world) is indicative of the attention accorded to various aspects of Italian life (history, cinema, sport, fashion, music, sport). The list does not feature one single post-war politician, important piece of legislation or university.

#### ***THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AS A LINK***

The general situation of Italians abroad is fraught with issues, as discussed in several chapters of the 2012 Migrants Report: restructuring and downsizing of the diplomatic representation and consulate network, the lack of resources to promote the Italian language and culture, as well as the lack of support for the Italian production system and the activities of the Committees for Italians Abroad. The State budget for Italians abroad has fallen from 58 million Euros in 2008 to 16 million in 2012 (-72%). But not only is there a shortage of financial resources, there is also a lack of ideas for future developments.

For example, Italy and its language continue to be attractive to people in the United States. But if efforts are not made to support the teaching of the Italian language, then there is a risk that it will lose its position in American society. This situation is a cause for concern for emigrants, their family, the associations, the Church and other structures working in this area. Whilst we understand that there is a need to introduce certain measures that are required to relaunch the economy in this period of recession, we should never lose sight of the fact that our presence abroad is a resource: it is not just a question of investment but also, and perhaps more importantly, of mentality.

One idea that has been proposed in order to maintain our communities' sense of belonging and to help spread Italian culture and the language is that, within a new legal framework, the Italian Cultural Institutes could expand their areas of expertise and management capacities in order to assume responsibility for the coordination of activities in the sector and to become self-financing, along the lines of similar foreign institutes, such as the Alliance Française, the Cervantes Institute or the Goethe Institut. This is an area in which there is no room for failure and that is why, in an article written under the extremely significant title of “Eutanasia della diaspora italiana nel mondo” (“Euthanasia of the Italian Diaspora abroad”), the Scalabrini priest, Graziano Tassello, wrote that, “rather than being vessels to be filled, young people are torches waiting to be lit,” and they can only experience a sense of unity

with their country of origin through language and culture, (Corriere degli Italiani, 15 February 2012).

#### ***THE CONTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS ABROAD***

The huge increase in exchanges has made the concept of sovereignty relative and has also served to highlight the importance of human mobility. Even for Italians who have decided to live abroad on a stable basis, their attachment to their own cultural origins raises the question of the contribution one would like to see them make to Italian society, thereby providing the benefits of a “return on emigration” (although not necessarily in a physical sense). This is an opportunity made possible, in a globalised world, by our widespread networks, even though we must be aware of the fact that the results achieved thus far are not particularly satisfactory. However, this transnational experience represents a real opportunity for Italy. Speaking about this issue in an interview with [www.lombardinelmondo.com](http://www.lombardinelmondo.com).

it, Riccardo Campa, a lecturer at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, said, “I have the impression that, because we are in direct contact with what is happening in other countries and since we are always striving to maintain a strong link with our homeland, then, as Italians living abroad, we are better informed and better placed to understand the situation that Italy currently finds itself in than people who have never set foot outside Italy.”

Maurizio Molinari, the author of *Gli italiani di New York* (Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011), has asserted that, “I firmly believe that each and every Italian in America has the knowledge, the skills and a determination to get things done, which could become an important driver of development for our country.”

Indeed, this approach forms the basis for the programme launched in April 2012 by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in order to create a web-based platform (crowdsourcing) with the involvement of 22 IT experts working in our embassies and consulates, with a view to enabling our talented expatriates to remain in contact with Italy and to support the efforts being made to emerge from the current crisis and to promote economic growth.

The Fondazione Migrantes’ 2012 *Italiani nel Mondo Report* calls upon the Italians who have stayed in Italy to include the presence of Italians abroad on educational, training and cultural programmes and calls upon the Italians who are living abroad to demonstrate a greater sense of attachment to what is happening in Italy. The latter group should also take every opportunity to make specific suggestions during the many meetings organised by the government, the regions and the associations. According to the Banca d’Italia, in 2011 more than 70 million people from abroad entered Italy (including a large number of Italians), either in transit towards other countries or in order to spend several days in our country, thereby providing further opportunities to forge stronger links with foreign countries.

*Figures regarding Italians living abroad (01.01.2012):*

*Total number: 208,977*

*Total number expressed as a percentage of the population of Italy: 6.9%*

*Breakdown according to gender, age, civil status etc.*

*Women: 2,017,167 - 47.9% of the total number registered on the AIRE*

*Minors: 664,666 – 15.8% of the total number registered on the AIRE*

*Aged over 65: 797,619 – 19.0% of the total number registered on the AIRE*

*Single: 53.7%*

*Married: 38.9%*

*Registered as expatriates: 54%*

*Registered at birth: 38.3%*

*Percentage of those who have acquired citizenship: 3.2%*

*Main Regions of origin and destinations for our emigrants*

*Top five destination countries:*

*Argentina (664,387), Germany (639,283), Switzerland (546,614), France (366,170) and Brazil (298,370).*

*Top five Regions of origin: Sicily (674,572), Campania (431,830), Lazio (375,310), Calabria (360,312) and Lombardy (332,403).*

*Top five Provinces of origin: Rome (289,556), Cosenza (147,601), Agrigento (142,985), Salerno (115,822) and Naples (110,703).*

*Top five municipalities of origin: Rome (266,652), Milan (58,107), Naples (36,975), Turin (36,346) and Genoa (29,950).*

*Flows regarding Italy*

*Registrations from abroad 2000-2010: 404,952*

*Cancellation of registration for emigrants abroad 2000-2010: 450,161*

*Registrations from abroad 2010: 28,192*

*Cancellation of registration for emigrants abroad 2010: 39,545*

*Flows regarding the South*

*Number of people going to the Centre-North (2009): 109,000*

*Destination Regions: Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Lazio*

*Regions of origin: Campania, Sicily, Apulia, Calabria*

*Main characteristics: average age 32.5 and 32.5% of them are graduates*

*Number of people going abroad (2009): 12,000*

*Main destination countries: Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom*

*Long-range commuters (2010): 134,000 (2010)*

*To the Centre-North: 121,000*

*To foreign countries: 13,200*