Resettlement and humanitarian admission - Italy

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Italy is bound by the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation (URF).

National legislation

There is no specific national legislation regulating resettlement in Italy. The existing Italian legislation on refugees and international protection applies.

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authorities responsible for establishing resettlement and humanitarian admission policy	Ministry of the Interior | Ministero dell'Interno, Department of civil liberties and migration | Dipartimento delle libertà civili e dell'immigrazione

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Identification and referral of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) For humanitarian corridors, civil society organisations with which the government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (e.g. Sant'Egidio, the Waldensian Evangelical Church, Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI) and Italian Bishops Conference (ARCI)).
Selection of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	Ministry of the Interior | Ministero dell'Interno Civil society organisation with which the government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (e.g. Sant'Egidio, the Waldensian Evangelical Church, Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI) and Italian Bishops Conference (ARCI)).
Pre-departure assistance a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) - Resettlement Support Facility (RSF) in Türkiye International Organization for Migration (IOM) for humanitarian corridors and evacuations from Afghanistan. Civil society organisations for humanitarian corridors from Lebanon, Jordan, Niger and Ethiopia.

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Travel arrangements a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	Ministry of the Interior | Ministero dell'Interno International Organization for Migration (IOM) Civil society organisations for humanitarian corridors from Lebanon, Jordan, Niger and Ethiopia.
Arrival and reception a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	Ministry of the Interior | Ministero dell'Interno, Department of civil liberties and migration | Dipartimento delle libertà civili e dell'immigrazione

Programmes currently in place

Resettlement programmes: Resettlement programme is based on annual quotas within the framework of the European Resettlement Programme.

Humanitarian admission programmes:

- Humanitarian Corridors from Lebanon
- Humanitarian Corridors from Niger, Ethiopia and Jordan.
- Humanitarian Corridors/Evacuations for Afghans.

National quotas on resettlement and humanitarian admission

National commitments for resettlement, humanitarian admission and emergency quota

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2-year Union Plan	National commitment for resettlement	National commitment for humanitarian admissions	Emergency quota
Period 2024-2025	1,000 refugees	1,700 refugees	Information is currently not available
Period 2026-2027			
Period 2028-2029			

Procedural and practical arrangements

The admission procedure

The referral procedure for resettlement involves key stakeholders, primarily UNHCR, which submits resettlement proposals based on their assessments of refugees in need. The IOM also plays a critical role in logistical support and medical screening. When submissions are received, a designated case officer assesses the cases, which are then discussed by a panel of 3 or 4 case officers who propose decisions. The Coordinator of the Resettlement Unit provides the final approval.

In terms of humanitarian admissions, the process similarly involves UNHCR for initial referrals, but it may also include other entities such as local NGOs or government bodies that identify individuals in urgent need. The referral procedure may differ from the resettlement process in that it often prioritizes immediate protection needs rather than longer-term resettlement criteria. Humanitarian admission may also bypass some standard procedures for expedited processing in cases of critical vulnerability.

Selection interviews can be conducted either face-to-face or by videoconferencing, depending on the circumstances. Interviews include questions related to integration and reception purposes, such as language knowledge,

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connections to Italy, educational background and essential medical needs. Typically, 3-5 people are interviewed per selection mission, with minors present, depending on family structures. Interviews are usually conducted individually to ensure confidentiality and comfort, although group interviews may occur in some contexts. While there is a standard questionnaire for assessments, it may be adapted based on nationality or country of first asylum, distinguishing it from the standard asylum procedure.

Cases examined on a dossier basis are those where applicants may not be present for a selection mission. The procedure for these cases involves thorough review of the Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) or Identification-based Methodology for Resettlement (IbM) submitted by UNHCR, along with any supporting documentation. Italy does not have a specific quota for emergency or urgent cases; however, emergency admissions are prioritized. The processing times for decisions regarding emergency cases are accelerated to no later than one month from registration, compared to the standard timeframe of two to three months for regular submissions. Special arrangements may be made for individuals with specific vulnerabilities to accommodate their needs during transit.

The timeframe to issue decisions on admissions for resettlement and humanitarian admission cases is generally no later than 7 months from the date of registration, with a possible extension of 3 months if necessary. The decision-making process is thorough, ensuring that every case is evaluated carefully, and there is no recourse against negative decisions.

Type of protection granted and residence permit issued after the admission procedure

Resettled refugees receive refugee status immediately upon arrival. They must submit an asylum application to the Territorial Commission for the Recognition of International Protection in Rome. According to Article 12(2) of Legislative Decree No 25/2008, refugee status is granted without an interview. The criteria to recognise refugee status are the same for both asylum seekers and resettled refugees. The resettled refugees received a Refugee Residence Permit issued by the Questura.

Pre-departure assistance

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No information provision activities are organised at this stage of the procedure. Pre-departure orientation courses are provided to selected candidates in their country of first reception by IOM trainers, 1-3 weeks before departure. Italy has conducted these courses in Lebanon, Türkiye, Jordan and Sudan. Travel arrangements and medical screening are managed by the IOM based on a bilateral agreement with the Italian authorities (not in force since January 2020).

Travel arrangements

In the pre-departure phase for resettled refugees, several key stakeholders are involved in various capacities. The IOM is primarily responsible for booking flight tickets and ensuring the delivery of travel documents, including exit visas. IOM staff also conduct medical screenings prior to departure to assess the health of resettling refugees, ensuring they are fit to fly. This medical examination is crucial for identifying any health issues that could affect travel or necessitate special arrangements.

UNHCR collaborates with the IOM during this phase by helping to organise the travel and providing necessary information to the refugees. Together with the IOM, they facilitate the reception process upon arrival in Italy, ensuring that refugees have adequate support throughout their journey.

Travel documents are issued by Italian consular services, which include visas and, for those without a valid passport, a laissez-passer. This documentation is essential for refugees to enter Italy legally.

Upon arrival at the airport, refugees are welcomed by IOM and UNHCR staff, along with interpreters and representatives from the Resettlement Unit and SAI (System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees). They assist refugees through airport procedures, including security checks and formal identification by the Italian Police, who photograph and fingerprint all family members over the age of 14.

Special travel arrangements may be necessary for individuals with vulnerabilities, such as medical conditions or family members requiring additional support. Challenges in this process can include ensuring that all necessary medical checks are completed in time, securing appropriate travel accommodations for vulnerable individuals, and managing potential delays in documentation or flight arrangements.

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Source: https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapter-italy

Arrival and reception

Post-arrival and integration procedures are the same as for beneficiaries of international protection. Resettled refugees are channeled into the national reception system (SAI/SAI) directly upon arrival. Once in Italy, refugees have access to the same services as Italian citizens in terms of healthcare and social assistance.

Integration support to resettled and admitted refugees

Italy provides comprehensive integration measures for resettled refugees.

Accommodation: SAI (Reception and Integration Systems) offer housing for resettled refugees for a period of 12 months, which can be extended based on need. This accommodation, which may include shared or individual housing, covers essential needs and varies based on resources and availability in each region.

Health services: Resettled refugees have immediate access to the national health system (SSN) under the same conditions as nationals.

Language training: Italian language courses are offered by SAI, with at least 10 hours of instruction per week to support linguistic integration.

Education: School access is granted for all ages and educational levels, including primary, secondary and university education. School attendance is compulsory up to age 16. SIPROMI social workers assist families in registering children for school.

Employment and vocational training: SAI provides guidance on vocational training and employment requalification, tailored to the interests of each refugee, to aid in achieving financial independence.

Financial assistance: Refugees receive 12 months of financial support, covering basic needs like food, healthcare and daily expenses. Assistance is also available for specific purchases, such as school supplies and medication.

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Special needs support: Dedicated services are provided by SAI for refugees with special needs.

Resettlement programmes

The resettlement programme is based on an annual quota within the framework of the European Resettlement Programme.

Humanitarian admission programmes

Information is currently not available.

Complementary pathways

Community sponsorship schemes related to state-led resettlement programmes

Information is currently not available.

Community sponsorship schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian admission programmes

Schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian admission programmes:

- Humanitarian Corridors from Lebanon
- Humanitarian Corridors from Niger, Ethiopia and Jordan.
- Humanitarian Corridors/Evacuations for Afghans.

The Evacuation/Humanitarian Corridors from Libya Project is a collaborative initiative facilitating the legal and safe transfer of people in urgent need of international protection from Libya to Italy. Established through an agreement in December 2023, the project is a joint effort between UNHCR, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches, the Waldensian Table, ARCI, and Italian authorities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior.

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Over a 3-year period, the project will transfer 1,500 highly vulnerable individuals identified by UNHCR in Libya. Of these, 900 individuals will be supported through a community sponsorship model led by the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches, the Waldensian Table, and ARCI, while 600 individuals will receive accommodation through the Italian SAI (Reception and Integration System) programme.

Upon arrival in Italy, the individuals will apply for asylum to receive refugee status. While their applications are processed, they will be housed in accommodations managed by the sponsoring organisations, which will also oversee their sustenance and provide support for their integration into Italian society.

Source: Resettlement and other forms of legal and safe transfer to - UNHCR Italy

Community sponsorship schemes linked to other complementary pathways

University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE): Launched in 2019, this programme is a collaboration between Italian universities, UNHCR and various Italian organisations, aiming to facilitate higher education for refugees from African countries (e.g. Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia) by enabling them to continue their studies at Italian institutions. The programme does not apply to refugees already residing in Italy.

Progetto Mediterraneo: Sponsored by Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome, with the support of UNHCR and Italian ministries, this initiative provides scholarships to 23 refugee students from Jordan, Morocco and Malta who have completed high school and wish to pursue university studies in Italy. This programme is similarly restricted to students currently living outside of Italy.

Pagella In Tasca: Organised by INTERSOS and supported by UNHCR, this project aims to create safe and legal pathways for 35 unaccompanied refugee minors from Niger, offering them the chance to study in Italy. Like the other programmes, it is specifically designed for refugees outside Italy.

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