



**The European House**  
Ambrosetti

# **HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE GLOBAL ITALIAN DIASPORA**

*How to strategically manage a valuable  
asset for the country-system*

*Position Paper*

**September 2023**



*This report has been realized by The European House – Ambrosetti in collaboration with the National Italian American Foundation.*

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*The tens of millions of Italian men and women in our diaspora have always provided an invaluable contribution to the success of the countries they move to. To them we owe a significant part of the esteem and consideration that we enjoy, of the greatness of Italy in the world. In the U.S., the value of Italian Americans is widely recognized at all levels. The 20 million Americans proud of both their citizenship and their origins are a cornerstone of our extraordinary bilateral relationship. Italian-American entrepreneurs and managers, scientists and researchers, high officials in the Administration, congresswomen and men; students: they all nurture our bonds and they are naturally inclined to promote both contemporary Made in Italy and our heritage, culture and language, which is studied by over 200,000 Americans every year. Italian-Americans associations greatly enhance the value of the Italian diaspora in the United States. They not only fuel a sense of belonging, preserving the traditions, symbols, and testimonies of their past; these associations promote the study of the Italian language, students exchanges, and always provide support to Italy in times of need, such as during natural disasters. Thousands of Italians who moved to the U.S. in recent years also contribute to strengthening our bilateral relationship. These include entrepreneurs and managers who invest in the USA while keeping the center of their interests in Italy, over 14,000 Italian researchers and scientists in prestigious American institutions, officials in international organizations, managers, and professionals. Both Italian-Americans and Italians newly established in the U.S. contribute to the deep economic partnership between Italy and the U.S., which is the world's second-largest destination for our exports.*

*The Italian diaspora is a network that must be recognized, valued, and continuously nurtured. Italian Prime Minister Meloni's video message at the 2022 NIAF Gala, just days after taking office, was extraordinarily appreciated by the Italian-American community, as much as her words of appreciation, during her recent visit to Washington, for the Italian Americans, "who miss Italy and therefore love it more than many Italians who live in our country". To achieve critical mass, it is necessary to create connections with Italian-Americans, with Italians who more recently moved to the U.S. and among their respective associations and groups, also leveraging on sector-specific networks. Emblematic is the case of ISSNAF (Italian Scientists and Scholars of North America Foundation), which brings together nearly 4000 Italian scientists and researchers in its state and national chapters. Together with all players of our "Sistema Italia" (Italy's institutional network) we will increasingly involve the Italian diaspora in all fields. At the initiative of the Farnesina (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Italian Embassy, along with the network of Consulates and Cultural Institutes, plays a pivotal role in promoting and supporting the expansion of these networks. Major projects such as the "Turismo delle radici" (Genealogy Tourism), initiated by the Italian government, have the potential to be real game changers in the relationship between Italy and its diaspora. Facilitating the rediscovery of one's family's places of origin satisfies a natural need, is a source of redevelopment and economic growth for many areas of our country, and, above all, helps to renew the connection of second or third-generation Italian-Americans with Italy, of which they will be even more enthusiastic ambassadors upon their return.*

**Mariangela Zappia (Italian Ambassador to the United States of America)**

*“The Italian diaspora is an indispensable element of Italy’s standing in the world today. The diaspora functions as a network of ambassadors and influencers which has helped to popularize essential facets of Italianità around the globe. Moreover, the diaspora serves Italy as a catalyst for trade development and as a reservoir of political and moral influence. In short, the diaspora constitutes a uniquely valuable asset in the portfolio of Italy’s soft power. For this reason, the Italian diaspora merits significant tangible support from the Italian government in new and innovative ways.”*

**Robert E. Carlucci (Chairman of the National Italian American Foundation—NIAF)**

*“What is the heart of Italicity? The World. Italy’s economic, political and social progress requires a new and different vision of our national dimension. Today, the reference perimeter, once defined by borders, is challenged by globalization. In order to fully appraise the value of the Italian diaspora we need to adopt a much broader vision and begin to confront with the concept of ‘glo-cal’, understood as a synthesis of local and global. In this perspective, ‘Made in Italy’ should not be defined as something ‘built in Italy’, but as ‘the Italian way of making something’. Similarly, the meaning of Italicity is inherently different from the definition associated with the space whereby ‘a thing is Italic if it comes from Italy’. On the contrary, Italicity corresponds to the way Italian culture is present in the world. The awakening of Italicity is an essential cultural phenomenon that we can only rejoice in.”*

**Piero Bassetti (President, Globus et Locus)**

*“In the vast expanse of global migration, the diaspora emerges as a transformative force that transcends borders and cultures. It represents not merely a dispersion of individuals, but a grand opportunity for nations to forge meaningful connections with their communities. To seize the full potential of this diasporic phenomenon, it is imperative to recognize that success cannot solely rely upon informal networks, but necessitates the active involvement of institutional frameworks. Within the framework of diaspora engagement, informal networks undoubtedly play a crucial role in facilitating connections, sharing experiences and fostering a sense of belonging. However, these informal ties alone may not suffice to unlock the diaspora’s true potential. A strong institutional presence is indispensable, one that embraces and nurtures the diaspora’s diverse talents, experiences and aspirations. Leveraging the power of nostalgia, these institutions can kindle a profound emotional connection with their compatriots abroad, awakening a shared sense of history, culture and heritage. It is through such emotional resonance that the diaspora can be mobilized as an active and passionate force, committed to contributing to the growth and prosperity of their homeland.”*

**Ferruccio de Bortoli (Vice Chairman, Società Dante Alighieri; columnist Corriere della Sera)**

*“The Italian diaspora experience and the deep emotional bond with compatriots must be seen as a national value. Its full appreciation, primarily economic, requires balancing two mutually complementary needs. On the one hand, a more dynamic engagement becomes imperative for Italy to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship that can align diaspora communities with the country's development goals. Harnessing the talents, knowledge and networks of the diaspora can be key to collaboratively pursuing sustainable growth and prosperity. On the other hand, Italy must aim to create more opportunities for its human capital to return. This requires targeted policies for the younger generation, innovation, start-ups and modern cities, aimed not only at retaining, but also at reintegrating Italian energy and talent back into our society.”*

**Carlo Ferro (Adjunct Professor, LUISS Guido Carli and LUISS Business School; former President, Italian Trade Agency)**

*“For several decades, Italy has grappled with its diaspora across the globe, seemingly displaying limited interest in engaging with it effectively. An adequate strategy of involvement, one that transcends the political, social and economic circumstances of the country, has proven elusive. Nonetheless, these Italian communities abroad, deeply intertwined with their homeland and yet profoundly integrated into the countries they inhabit, stand as an invaluable asset awaiting discovery. Unlocking the potential of these overseas communities demands a new approach, harnessing the power of diplomacy and culture. In this regard, culture emerges as the foremost conduit capable of forging meaningful connections between nations and asserting Italy's cultural leadership.”*

**Vittorio Emanuele Parsi (Professor of International Relations, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Director of ASERI – Graduate School of Economics and International Relations)**

*“Italy has had a numerically important diaspora and this phenomenon has proven to be very successful. However, unlike other diasporas—even smaller ones, but which act in a coordinated manner and with a shared direction—Italy struggles to create a system with its fellow-Italian oriundi communities around the world. Italy must overcome this limitation and create permanent strategies for dialogue, also overcoming the great misunderstanding of the brain drain that represents a great resource for Italy in the world. Italian descendants are enthusiastic ‘ambassadors’ of Italy. We need to wake up these resources and connect them with our country.”*

**Federico Rampini (writer; columnist *Corriere della Sera*)**

*“A distinguishing feature of Italian diasporic communities is their ability to integrate seamlessly into their host economic and social environment. This is a very positive attitude and the basis of the success of the Italian diaspora. At the same time, however, it makes these networks less ‘compact’ than other diasporic communities and, therefore, more difficult to mobilize for the implementation of actions of national interest. This is a great challenge for the Italian system. In fact, the Italian diaspora represents a great heritage and is a channel of communication and influence towards public opinion, government units and the business world that Italy can count on globally. A privileged tool for dialogue and involvement of these communities is cultural leverage, understood as the projection of Italy's common values, combining tradition and contemporaneity.”*

**Pasquale Terracciano (former Director General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Position Paper analyzes the strategic importance for Italy of the network represented by the populations of Italian origin in the world, with particular emphasis on economic and geopolitical factors, while also taking into consideration the cultural and social aspects through an examination of the origins and recent history of the global Italian diaspora, with special focus on the areas of greatest presence, such as the United States of America (US) and South America. In addition, also offered are proposals for some areas of action for the country to enhance this widespread “asset” in light of the challenges posed by the evolution of the international scenario.

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- Vittorio Emanuele Parsi (Professor of International Relations, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Director of ASERI – Graduate School of Economics and International Relations)
- Federico Rampini (writer; columnist *Corriere della Sera*)
- Pasquale Terracciano (former Director General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)
- Mariangela Zappia (Italian Ambassador to the United States of America)

The Position Paper was produced by a team of The European House – Ambrosetti comprised of Lorenzo Tavazzi, Partner of The European House – Ambrosetti and Head of the International Development, Luca Celotto (Research Coordinator), Francesco Galletti (Consultant), Diego Medagli (Analyst), Federica Riccio (Analyst) and Paola Gandolfo (Project Assistant).



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## KEY MESSAGES

1. **Italy has been a country with one of the largest diasporas worldwide.** Today, diaspora communities are estimated to number **more than 80 million people of Italian descent worldwide**, one-third more than the current Italian population (about 60 million as of 2023). Along with the quantitative aspect, the other two characteristics of the Italian diaspora are its **geographical presence** (from the Americas, to Europe, Africa and Australia) and the **success of its integration in the countries of destination**. Italians in the diaspora have made major contributions to the development of the societies and economies that have welcomed them, helping to shape the DNA of these communities and leaving a strong imprint of “Italianness”.
2. **Today, Italy is still a country of highly-mobile people.** While the diaspora between the late-1800s and the second half of the 1900s was fueled by hunger and poverty and the search for better living conditions, today the opportunities of the globalized world remain a strong attraction for many Italians. Yet not only have the reasons changed, but also the profile of the protagonists of the Italian diaspora. Once generally males and of humble origins, today they are often **young, with medium- and high-levels of education** (in the decade 2012-2021, more than 1 million residents emigrated from Italy, about a quarter of them holding a bachelor’s degree) **and include an increasing number of women** (nearly 1-in-2 emigrant).
3. **While diaspora was seen in the past as a phenomenon not to be publicized because it stemmed from poverty, since the turn of the millennium, its value has re-emerged as a major national policy issue.** Given the profound changes in the international system, the growing competition for resources—capital, talents and political endowments—required to fuel a country’s development is a strategic priority. Diaspora populations are a source of **economic capital** (remittances, investment, trade and tourism), **human capital** (education, skills and relational networks) and **soft power** (cultural, political and reputational influence). As a result, governments are increasingly aware of the importance of understanding the “diaspora”, because the diaspora (as a group of people residing outside their homeland) is, in fact, an important extension of the homeland.
4. **Italian diaspora communities represent a widespread asset for the country’s development.** In economic terms, it can be estimated that their **economic value exceeds 2.5 trillion Euros**, of which 93.4 percent of the total refers to Italian descendants in the Americas, the geographical area that hosts the largest number. But Italian descendants can represent **an all-round development opportunity for Italy**: promoting the reputation of the country of origin in that of destination is a very important contribution that Italian descendants make to the positioning of “Made in Italy” products; the potential of **“genealogy tourism”** can be worth more than 90 billion for Italy (almost 200 billion Euros

considering direct and induced effects); **training programs** in Italy dedicated to diasporic communities can help the country improve its attractiveness and build long-term strategic ties; and the influential role of Italian descendants' communities in countries of settlement can play a key role in stimulating **positive advocacy for Italy**.

5. **In recent times, Italy has been studying the role and value of its diaspora in the world, and the issue has received increased recognition on the country's formal agenda.** This is an important step in **catching up with countries** that have long interpreted their diasporas as levers for growth and development through specific engagement and mobilization strategies. **China**, for example, represents a landmark case of a country committed to establishing policies and initiatives toward its diaspora to enhance its prestige at the geopolitical level and harness its power as a means of providing energy for development. **France** is also recognized as a successful case in organizing coordinated national governance for strengthening diaspora relations and in its effectiveness in mobilizing French descendants' communities according to a shared strategic vision. Additional cases of best practices in diaspora management are also seen in India, Israel, Ireland and several Asian countries.
6. **An initial point of action to increase the engagement of the Italian diaspora is the promotion of Italy's image abroad.** Today, the country is strongly recognized for certain elements associated with the **concept of "Being Italian"**. Among these are style, creativity and the centrality of human relationships. At the same time, others, while strongly present in Italian products and services, are less-recognized as characteristic qualities, which **undermines their contribution to what is offered overall and enhances the advantage of those of other competing countries**. Innovation, entrepreneurship and technological humanism (human-centered approach to technological development) are attributes to be enhanced in Italy's identity image and external projection. More comprehensive and effective communication to diasporic communities **can be both an effective engagement tool**, stimulating curiosity and the desire to learn more about the current reality of the country of origin of their ancestors, **and a mobilization tool**, through the provision of information that the diaspora communities themselves can enhance based on the context of the countries where they are rooted.
7. **A second area of intervention is the promotion of the Italian language abroad, which is one of the main instruments of cultural influence available to Italy and is of priority interest to Italy's international presence.** The linguistic aspect is an instrument for exercising soft power. At the same time, the dissemination of the Italian language around the world can be a very effective way to engage Italian communities abroad, because it is a means for exporting Italian culture. The network of **Italian Cultural Institutes (ICCs)** represents an operational tool of primary importance, and it needs to be further

strengthened **both from the point of view of the diffusion and widespread presence of the network and its effectiveness** (as it has begun). For instance, French (Institut Français) and English (British Council) institutes have a diffusion level of 2.5x that of their Italian counterparts; those in Germany (Goethe-Institut) 1.8x, and China (Confucius Institute) has over 540 offices against 85 for Italy.

8. **An additional important area of improvement involves the issue of dual citizenship which is an essential element of an effective strategy to connect or reconnect with diaspora populations.** Dual citizenship evokes a feeling of identity and connectedness among diaspora members in engaging with their country of origin. The recognition of dual citizenship also helps to build trust between a diaspora and its country of origin. **By treating Italian descendants as part of an “extended nation” the likelihood that a beneficial and long-lasting bond can be forged is substantially higher.** To date, the timeline required to obtain Italian citizenship is a **lengthy process** that can take up to four or five years (and even longer) while in other countries, the bureaucratic procedures are much easier and require less energy and time (for instance, in the UK, the process is generally concluded within six months). There is a **priority need to re-power the network of consulates** by ensuring adequate human resources and funds, as has recently begun to be done, reversing the trend over the past decade that has seen, on the contrary, staff cuts (-15%) despite increasing task loads.
9. **A fourth sphere of action is the empowerment of the relations between Italy—conceived as the entirety of its governmental and institutional framework at national and regional level—and the associations of Italian diasporic communities in the world.** The diaspora associations are assuming an increasingly important role in co-development and cooperation processes between the countries of settlement and communities of origin. As a result, these networks constitute **recognized parties in the dialogue with national and regional authorities.** Making sure that these organizations are financed through private sources (e.g., membership fees, donations and crowdfunding), **but also with the allocation of public funds** (as France is doing, for instance), can be an important objective in ensuring organizational vitality and financial resilience and, through this, safeguarding their contributions toward the country of origin.
10. **A fifth area of empowerment is the support and development of programs and initiatives in the field of research and education, with the involvement of Italian universities, research facilities and associations of Italian researchers abroad.** Culture in the broadest sense can, in fact, represent the transversal “glue” of the many “souls” of the Italian diaspora, and training and research activities represent a privileged and effective channel of involvement of this network for the mutual benefit of the country. In this area there are some experiences and initiatives that offer models to be further adapted and disseminated. An example is the initiative of Luiss University in partnership with NIAF in offering scholarships for foreign students of Italian origin.

## INTRODUCTION

- i. **The quality and depth of a country's international projection is an essential element for its growth and development.**

In a context of growing competition, economic and social transition and the redrawing of the balance of power in the international system, the ability of each nation to be “present” in the various geographical areas as a **system capable of interconnecting with the rest of the world and the areas of greatest geo-strategic interest**, is a critical factor in guaranteeing access to the economic, industrial, technological and cultural resources required by any modern society.

This international projection can be realized at various levels: economic, through trade, investment and industrial presence abroad; geo-strategic, including through military presence; and political-cultural influence (soft power).

- ii. All these elements are also based on the ability to **create and nurture formal and informal networks** that can fuel international projection and its effectiveness.

Among these networks, one element of established value is represented by the number and quality of the communities of people linked, for various reasons, to the country. **The link of origin is among the strongest.**

- iii. Italy is a country whose history has been characterized by a **high rate of emigration**, which—for economic, social and political reasons—has fueled a significant diaspora in numerical terms and in terms of the influence it has had in the countries of destination, particularly the Americas and Europe, as well as Australia.

The influence of Italian communities, as well as their contribution to the growth and prosperity of the countries that have welcomed them, has been significant, **shaping and leaving a widespread imprint of “Italianness”** in the arts, science, economics, finance and politics, as well as in entertainment and sport.

- iv. **Today, Italy is still a country of emigration**, although the characteristics and motivations of these phenomena are profoundly different than in the past. In an increasingly interconnected world, the search for opportunities abroad stimulates young people and graduates to seek their futures beyond national borders.

This phenomenon does not only involve Italy. The international mobility rate of people has in fact progressively and steadily increased and, alongside those fleeing situations of war or crisis, interaction with cultures and contexts of countries other than their country of origin is a **distinctive and structural feature of our times**. Migration today, as it has been in the past, plays a key role in the sustainable development of countries of origin and destination. For Italy, however, the issue is particularly relevant because the country can count on a network of **more than 80 million people of Italian origin** deeply rooted in a number of key areas of the world, starting from the Americas, but also in Europe or Australia, plus an additional

5.8 million fellow citizens living abroad, who can make their contribution to the communities of Italian descendants already present, or create new ones.

- v. Historically, however, **Italy has not paid enough attention to these links**. Over time, there has been a lack of strategic management of the “Diaspora network”. In recent years, some institutional initiatives have been promoted to engage communities of Italian origin. This must become a structural constant in the country's policy and strategic action in recognition of the economic, commercial, political and strategic value that can be activated. In addition, a long-term strategic perspective is essential. As stated by the International Organization for Migration: *“The long-term project of building partnerships between governments and diasporas is much more likely to succeed if it has a strong foundation of good communication and mutual trust.”*<sup>1</sup>
- vi. **This Position Paper is born out of the belief that, given the period of major, profound change the world is experiencing, Italy's prosperous and sustainable development can be concretely supported by the enhancement and engagement of the community of Italian origin in the world and in the deployment of the necessary tools to create *ex novo* or re-establish strong and structural economic and strategic ties based on criteria of shared interest and mutual benefit.**
- vii. The analysis focuses on people of Italian origin and their descendants, as well as the communities founded by them. Within the analytical framework, citizens of the Italian Republic who settled temporarily or permanently abroad are considered as potential contributors to the evolving communities of Italian origin.

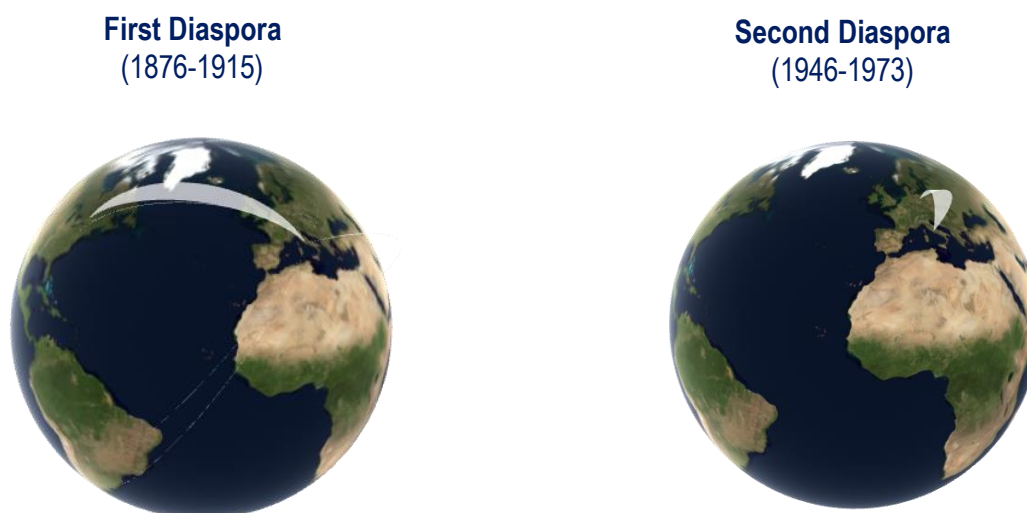
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<sup>1</sup> IOM and MPI, “Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development. A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries”, 2015.



## CHAPTER 1 – ONE ITALIAN DIASPORA, MANY ITALIAN DIASPORAS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE ITALIAN PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

1. Analyzing the movement of people abroad means understanding their economic, social and cultural relations with the world's communities. Italy is a country with a **long history of emigration**, with mass emigration beginning with the unification of Italy (1861) when, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian peninsula was finally united under one flag, but its people were by no means united. Those in southern Italy, for instance, had little hope of improving their social conditions, and the fledgling government was unable to provide relief.
2. There were **several reasons for Italian emigration**. The Italian population was severely damaged by the wars,<sup>2</sup> by natural disasters (such as the earthquake of 1908), and the worsening of taxation after the unification of Italy. While, on the other hand, the economic expansion that characterized other countries between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and World War I was considered as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As transatlantic transportation became more affordable and the word “America” became synonymous with “prosperity”, Italians found it increasingly difficult to resist the call of “America”. **By the late 1800s, the United States was the largest destination of Italian emigrants** who were workers, artisans and, above all, farmers. **After World War II, Italians emigrated mostly to Europe, especially Germany.**



**Figure 1.** Illustrative representation of main emigration flows from Italy during the First and Second Diasporas, 1876-1973. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data and other sources, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The Italian Wars of Independence were three conflicts, occurring between 1848 and 1866 (First Italian War of Independence: 1848–1849, Second Italian War of Independence: 1859–1860, Third Italian War of Independence: 1866), which resulted in the territorial extension of the Kingdom of Sardinia and the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, followed by World War I (1915–1918).

- The aim of this chapter is thus to better understand the key dynamics related to the “**Global Italian Diaspora**”, starting from the first two diasporas that occurred between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, up to the present emigration flows that continue to feed this phenomenon.

### 1.1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ITALIAN DIASPORA

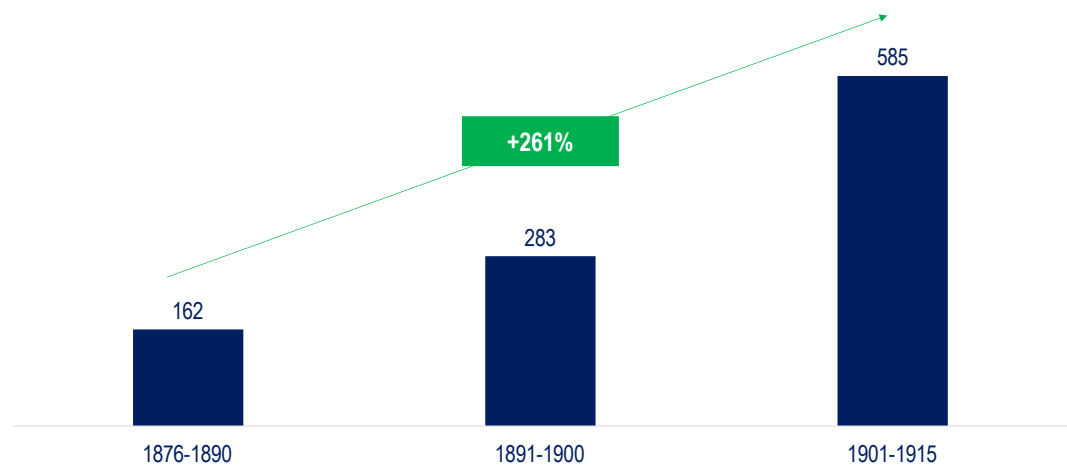
- The framework of Italian communities not only includes the national ones (which consist of all individuals who are Italian and are located within the borders of Italy itself), but also **global Italian communities**, groups of people of Italian descent (also known as “**oriundo**”).<sup>3</sup> Within this context, Italian global communities were created by Italian immigrants and, today, consist of their **descendants** who, despite the fact they live in a different country, still **preserve their Italian identity**. Their pride in their Italian heritage represents a key factor that needs to be taken into account and can be leveraged when implementing actions and initiatives aimed at engaging Italian global communities.
- From a historical perspective, the **Italian diaspora** is a phenomenon of large-scale emigration that occurred in the **19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**. During this period, almost **30 million Italians** left the country looking for better opportunities abroad, and of these, more than **18 million never returned to their homeland**. The Italian emigration process is generally divided into **two historical phases**, which differ in the number and characteristics of the emigrants, as well as in the territory of origin of the migration flow and the country of destination. The first diaspora occurred approximately from 1861 to 1915, and the second one from 1946 to 1973.

	Origin			Destination			
	North Italy (thousand)	Center Italy (thousand)	South Italy (thousand)	Europe (thousand)	Americas (thousand)	Oceania (thousand)	Other (thousand)
1 <sup>st</sup> Diaspora (1876-1915)	7,027	1,523	4,027	4,282	7,327	18	950
2 <sup>nd</sup> Diaspora (1946-1973)	2,254	677	3,363	4,293	1,513	350	137

**Figure 2.** Area of origin and destination of Italian emigrants during the first and second diaspora (thousand). Note: 1876 is the first available year of the statistics. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, an “Italian oriundo” (plural oriundi) can be defined as an individual who lives in a place other than Italy and who has a direct descent with Italian emigrants. Source: Migrantes, “Rapporto italiani nel mondo”, 2010.

6. The **first diaspora began in 1861**, after the Unification of Italy, when a conspicuous number of Italians left the country seeking their fortune elsewhere. Overall, **between 1876 and 1915, about 14 million people emigrated**.<sup>4</sup> Until 1920, Italians were more attracted by destinations outside Europe, specifically in **South America** and the **United States**, while in the second part of the first diaspora, European countries were more popular.
7. The first phase of the Italian diasporic phenomenon was characterized by a **growth trend**, registering in the first period (from 1876 to 1890) more than 160,000 emigrants per year. This value then rose, reaching 283,000 emigrants on average per year between 1891 and 1900, and up to 585,000 between 1901 and 1915.

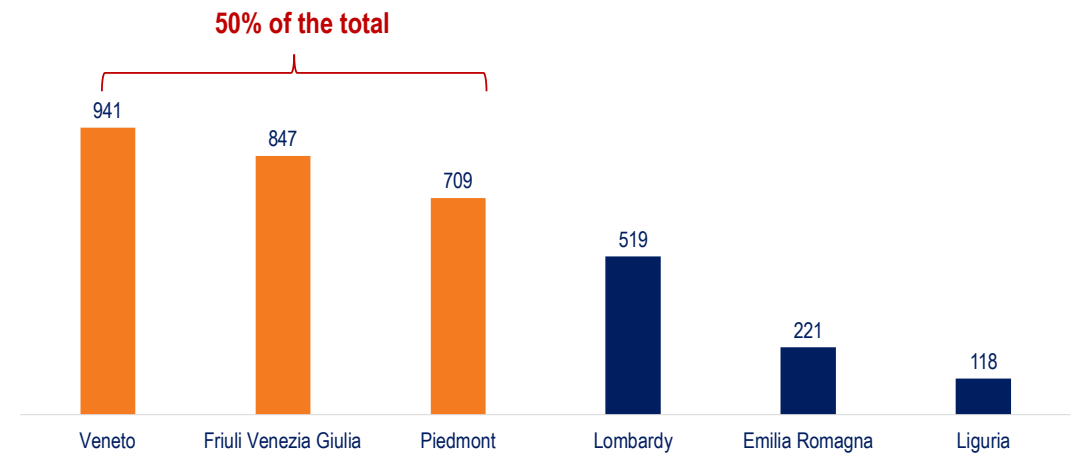


**Figure 3.** Average annual emigrants from Italy on average (thousand), 1876-1915. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

8. The main reasons behind the decision of Italians to leave the country were linked to **political and socio-economic factors**, specifically the poor living conditions in the peninsula, including widespread poverty and overpopulation. In fact, Italian emigrants generally were men of humble origins, mostly peasants and laborers with basic skills, looking for new job opportunities and better living conditions abroad.
9. **From 1876 to 1900** the migratory phenomenon involved about **5 million Italians, more than 15% of the population of the time** (~30 million), mainly originating in **Northern and Central Italy**: Veneto, almost 940,000 (17.9% of the average annual population), Friuli Venezia Giulia, almost 847,000 (16.1%) and Piedmont, over 709,000 (13.5%). Their destinations were France (980,000) and Germany (more than 400,000), but in particular South America (especially Argentina, with more than 840,000, and Brazil, with about 830,000) and the United States (almost 800,000).

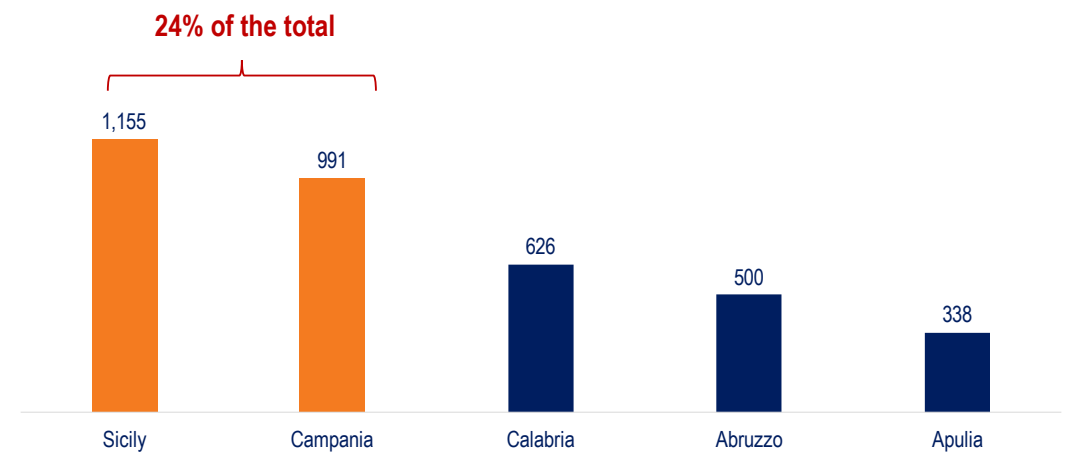
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<sup>4</sup> 1876 is the first year of official data collection on Italian emigration.



**Figure 4.** Italian emigrants by region of origin, top-6 regions (thousand), 1876-1900. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

10. At that time, while Italy was in the midst of political and economic upheaval, European countries like France and the Americas were flourishing. In particular, the **US** proposed itself as a **welcoming country**, offering entry to foreigners and work opportunities. Many Italians saw the United States as the **land of opportunity**, where rebuilding their lives and obtaining a better quality of life was possible. They actively contributed to the nation’s growth, from the construction sector to finance, where, for instance, Amedeo Pietro Giannini, a second generation Italian American, was the founder of Bank of America.
11. **Between 1900-1915**, during the *Grande Emigrazione* (“Great Emigration”), **the number of Italian emigrants globally almost doubled, reaching about 9 million** (a quarter of the population of the time). Also due to the improvement of living conditions in Northern Italy, during this second wave of emigration, most Italian emigrants came from **Southern Italy**, mainly from Sicily, which counted over 1 million emigrants, and from Campania, with over 990,000 emigrants.



**Figure 5.** Italian emigrants by region of origin, top-5 regions (thousand), 1900-1915. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

12. The outbreak of World War I in 1914 caused a **decline in migratory flows from Italy**, but with the war ended and the rise of fascism, in 1918, Italians started emigrating once again, headed mainly to the United States.

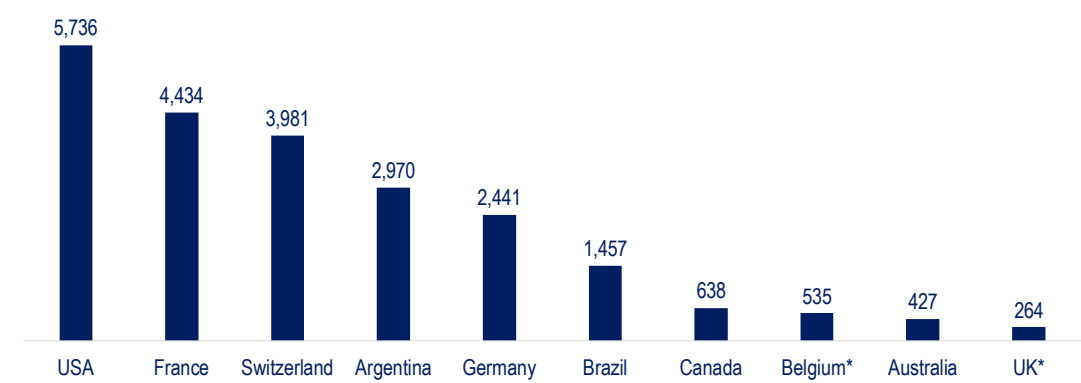
**During the interwar period—from 1918 to 1939—about 3 million Italians left Italy**, but unlike previous waves of migration, whole families moved, not just men looking for work.

13. The **second diaspora began in 1946**, in the post-World War II period, **and lasted until 1973, when, for the first time, the number of Italians who returned to their country of origin exceeded the number who emigrated**. In this period, European destinations were preferred, especially between 1961 and 1970, when 80% of the Italian migratory flow was directed to the European continent.

However, between 1951 and 1960, flows also increased to new transoceanic destinations such as Australia, Venezuela and Canada. Since the 1970s, there has been a progressive reduction in the flow of migrants, from the peak of nearly 900,000 in 1913 to 55,000 in 1987.

14. In general, during the two centuries analyzed in this study, the **main transoceanic destinations preferred by Italian emigrants were the United States** (about 6 million Italian emigrants), **Argentina** (almost 3 million), **Brazil** (1.4 million), **Canada** (about 650,000) and, on a smaller scale, Italy’s African colonies.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding European countries, most Italians who left the country headed mainly to **France** (which welcomed a total of about 4 million emigrants), **Switzerland** (at least 4 million) and **Germany** (2.4 million).



**Figure 6.** Italian emigrants by country of destination, top-10 countries (thousand), 1876-1976. (\*) Data retrieved from Rosoli, G., *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana (1876-1976)*, 1978. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Italian colonies were present in Eritrea, Somalia, Libya and Ethiopia between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

15. Thanks to the flow in past centuries, Italian presence is now widespread across the globe. Italian descendants represent a population of significant size: it is estimated that **more than 80 million descendant Italians are located in countries around the world**,<sup>6</sup> 30% more than Italy's current population (approx. 60 million).<sup>7</sup>

16. Data on the geographical dispersion of Italian descendants around the world confirms the importance of the Italian diaspora. According to the estimates of Fondazione Migrantes,<sup>8</sup> taking into consideration only Brazil, Argentina and the United States, **Italian descendants total about 70 million**.

Proceeding with an analysis by country, **Latin America is the global area that hosts the largest number of Italian descendants**, where it is estimated that approximately **55 million** residents have Italian ancestry. They are distributed among Brazil, which hosts over 30 million Italian descendants (about 15% of the local population), Argentina with at least 20-25 million Italian descendants (more than 50% of the population) and Uruguay with about 1.5 million people (more than 40%). For **North America**, the **US** hosts more than 17 million Italian descendants, which represents 6% of the current population, while around 1.5 million live in Canada (4.3%).

17. Even if the past migratory flows from Italy mainly involved the United States and France, with, respectively, 5.7 million and 4.4 million Italian emigrants recorded, the largest presence of Italian emigrants is in Brazil and Argentina. The main reason for this numeric discrepancy is due to the **number of Italian repatriations recorded for the period between 1901 and 1990**.

18. In fact, during that period, the US registered over 2.6 million and France 1.4 million Italians who returned, compared to Argentina, which recorded 1 million repatriations to Italy, and Brazil, with only 360,000 Italians repatriated. Another possible explanation to be taken into account for this gap is the different size of South American family households compared to those in the United States and European countries.

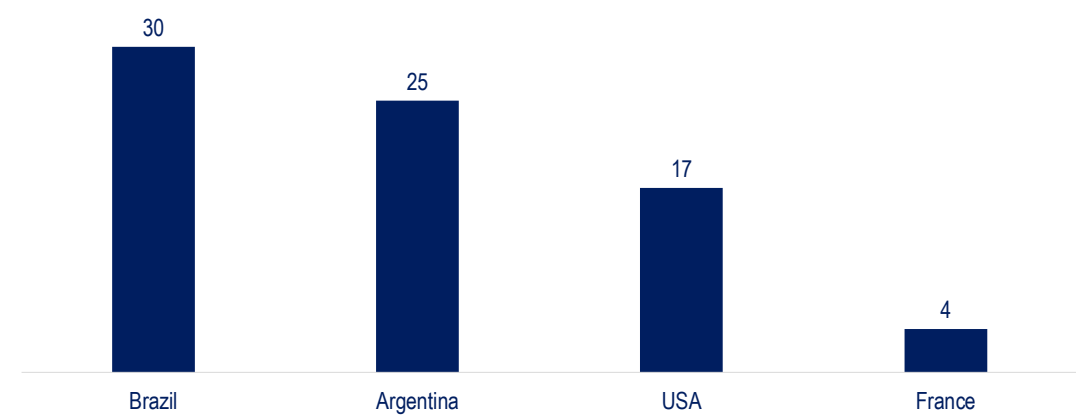
19. For the **European continent**, which hosts more than **5.5 million Italian descendants**, France has the highest number of Italian descendants, estimated to be about 4 million, followed by Germany (700,000), the United Kingdom (500,000), Spain (about 260,000) and Belgium (200,000).

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<sup>6</sup> Bombi, R., Orioles, V., "Scenari dell'italianità nel mondo. Da oriundi a italice, con il valore aggiunto della doppia appartenenza", 2011.

<sup>7</sup> This figure considers the total resident population in Italy, including the number of Italians abroad registered at the AIRE—about 5.8 million—and excluding the number of non-Italian residents in Italy—about 6 million foreign population (data as of 2022).

<sup>8</sup> An Italian pastoral organization that provides estimates on the Italian presence in the world through the "Rapporto italiani nel Mondo" report (the 17<sup>th</sup> edition was published in 2022).



**Figure 7.** Estimates of the current global distribution of Italian descendants by country, top-4 countries (million), latest available year. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Fondazione Migrantes data, 2023.

## 1.2. THE ITALIAN DIASPORA TODAY

### 20. Even now, Italy remains a country of emigration albeit with different characteristics and motivations from the first diaspora waves.

Italian communities are found in every corner of the world today. Every region of Italy has seen its people leave their homeland in the past and continues to do so, thus fostering the Global Italian Diaspora.

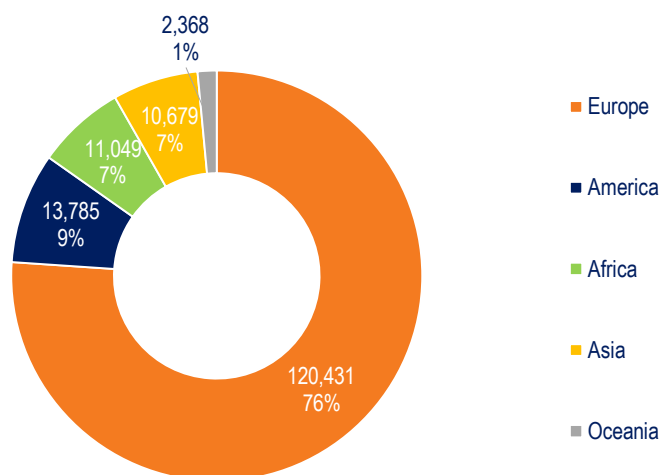
Although lower than the past waves, the migratory flow of Italians abroad **continues** and, after the hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is now rising once again.

In fact, according to the Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero (AIRE, the Registry of Italians Resident Abroad), as of January 1, 2022, the **number of Italians living abroad is more than 5.8 million** (9.8% of the current population in Italy).<sup>9</sup>

In 2022, compared to January 1, 2021, the Italian emigration flow increased by 2.7%, recording almost 160,000 new registrations abroad: **Europe** welcomed 76% of the total of Italian emigrants, mainly in the United Kingdom (27,914), France (14,354), Germany (17,513) and Romania (13,684). Although in smaller percentages, Italians also headed to the **Americas** (9% of the total), mostly the US (4,543) and Brazil (4,042).<sup>10</sup>

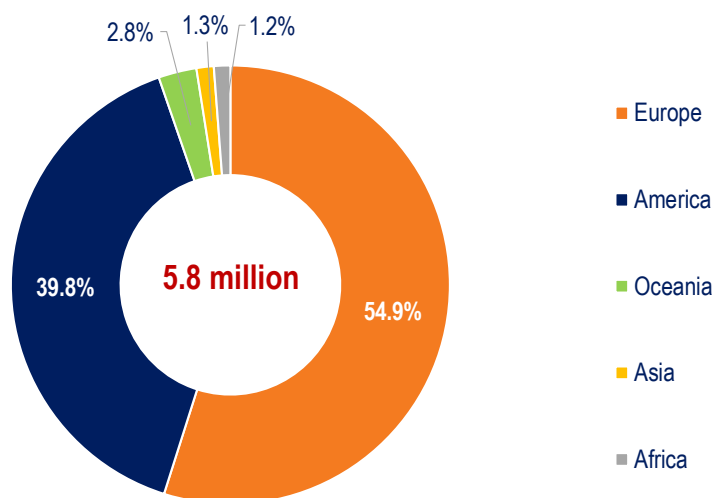
<sup>9</sup> The number of Italians living abroad is statistically included in the total Italian population.

<sup>10</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat and AIRE data, 2023.



**Figure 8.** New registrations of Italians living abroad, by destination (absolute number) in the year 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on AIRE data, 2023.

21. Considering the current “stock” of Italians living abroad, the **main destination** remains **Europe**, with over 3 million Italians emigrated (almost 55% of the total), followed by the **Americas**, with over 2 million Italians (almost 40% of the total). Other global areas only account for 5.3% of other Italians living abroad.



**Figure 9.** Global distribution of Italians living abroad (percentage), 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on AIRE data, 2023.

22. On the **European side**, the countries where most Italians live are Germany, with 814,000 Italians (14.0% of the population of Italians living abroad), Switzerland with 648,000 (11.2%), France with 457,000 (7.9%) and the United Kingdom with 439,000 (7.6%), followed by Belgium (277,000) and Spain (219,000). As for the **Americas**, most Italians live in Argentina, which registers over 903,000 people enrolled in the AIRE (15.5% of Italians registered in the AIRE), Brazil with 529,000 (9.1% of the population) and the USA, with almost 300,000 Italians (5.1%).



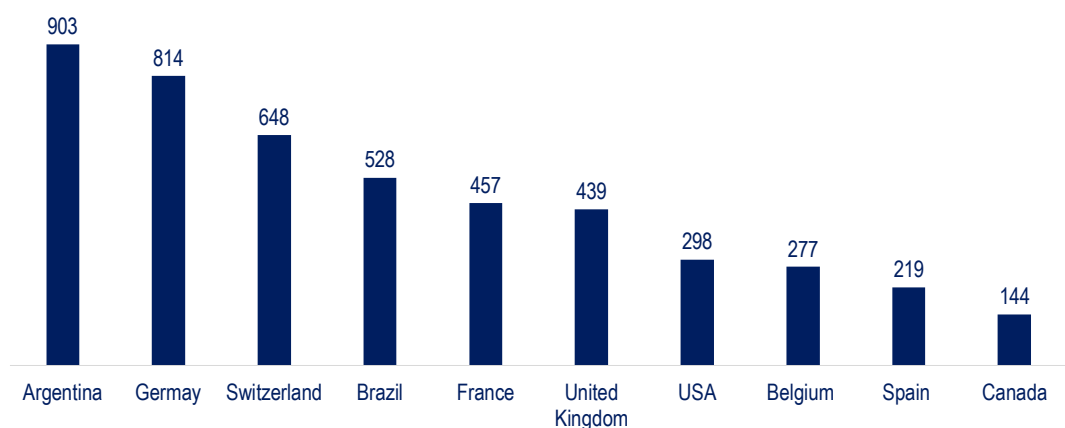


Figure 10. Distribution of Italians living abroad, top-10 countries (thousand), year 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on AIRE data, 2023.

23. **The 21<sup>st</sup> century migratory flow is driven by factors that are profoundly different from those of Italians who emigrated abroad in the past.** First, **globalization** has made a major contribution to creating interconnected markets and offering new and increasingly open perspectives. Second, **mobility**, and thus access to distant territories and systems beyond national borders, is certainly easier than in the past. At the same time, as in the past, factors related to **unemployment and enhanced opportunity** continue to play a key role in the decision to leave the country.
24. Compared to the diaspora of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the profile of the **Italian emigrant has radically changed.** While previously those who left Italy were mostly men of working age, today the range of age brackets is more complex. In fact, there is now a significant share of **young people, often with a high level of schooling** (e.g., college graduates), leaving the country to look for better job opportunities and more stimulating experiences.
25. According to the latest "Report on migrations" released by Istat in 2023, over the past decade, the number of **young Italians who have taken up residence abroad has steadily increased, while far fewer have returned home.** More specifically, in the decade 2012-2021, more than 1 million residents emigrated from Italy, with about a quarter of them holding a **bachelor's degree.** In the 25-34 age bracket, there are about 337,000 young emigrants, of whom more than 120,000 at the time of departure had a bachelor's degree (35.6%). On the other hand, repatriates of young people in the same age group are about 94,000 for the entire 2012-2021 period, of whom more than 41,000 held a bachelor's degree (43.6%). The difference between young graduates who return and those who leave is consistently negative, resulting in an **overall reduction** for the entire period of **over 79,000 young graduates.**

26. The United Kingdom is the preferred destination for young Italian graduates. The intensification of flows to and from the UK, especially since 2016, is also due in part to a “**Brexit effect**” that accelerated AIRE enrolment procedures of young expatriates already on British territory, before the conclusion of the negotiations that finalized the country’s exit from the European Union (January 31, 2020). The net balance of young graduates heading to the UK over the entire decade is about 19,000. The other European countries considered attractive for Italian emigrant graduates are Germany, with a much smaller net balance of skilled emigrants (-12,000), Switzerland (-9,000) and France (-8,000).

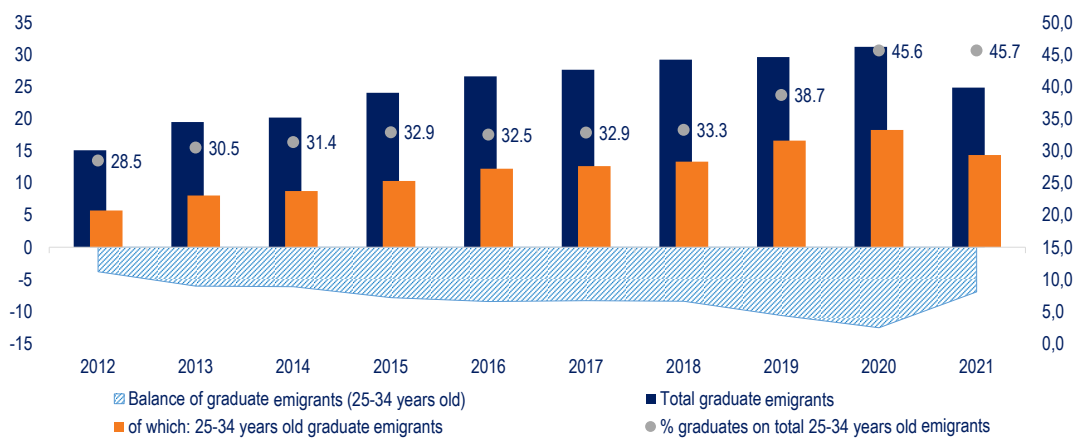


Figure 11. Young Italian emigrants with a bachelor’s degree (thousand), 2012-2021. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat data, 2023.

27. Another difference in the category of individuals moving from Italy to new destinations is the **number of women** in the total number of Italian emigrants. In fact, compared to the past, the percentage of women has grown, reaching 48.1% of the total in 2022.

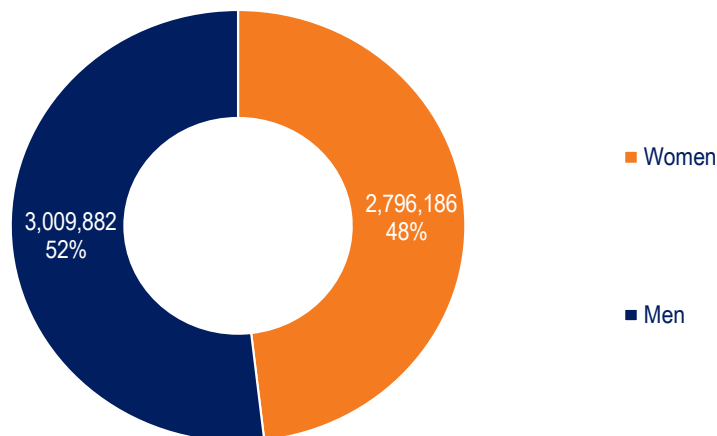
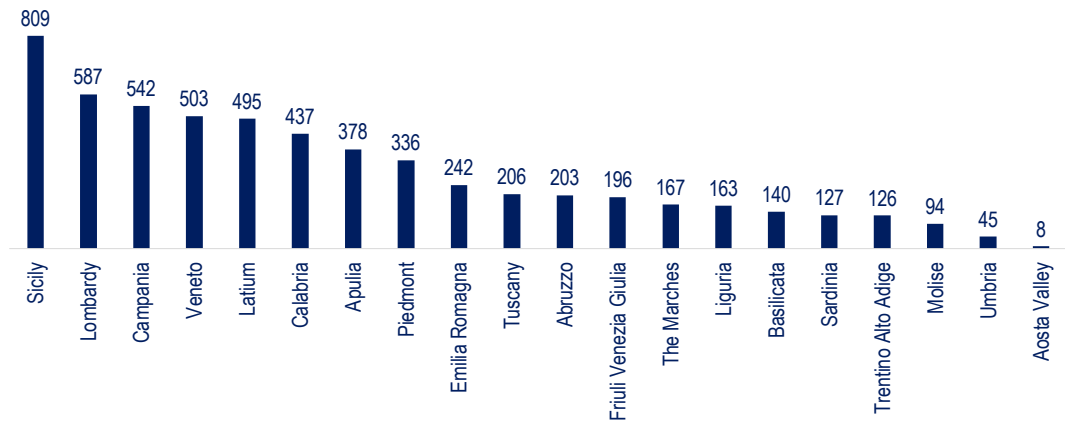


Figure 12. Italian emigrants by sex (percentage), year 2021. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on AIRE data, 2023.

28. As for the region of origin of Italians living abroad, the **majority come from Southern Italy**, with over 2.7 million AIRE registrants (47% of the total emigrated population) and, in particular, more than 800,000 from Sicily and 500,000 from Campania. The nearly 2 million Northern Italians living abroad (33% of the national total) come mainly from Lombardy (over 580,000) and Veneto (503,000).



**Figure 13.** Number of Italians living abroad by Italian region of origin (thousand), 2021. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on AIRE data, 2023.

29. The growing presence of Italians abroad is also reflected in the **increased spread of the Italian language at a global level**. An estimated 85 million people worldwide speak Italian. In the EU, Italian is the fifth most widely spoken mother tongue, after English, German, French and Turkish, and 13.4 million residents speak it as a second language (3 percent of the EU population). More generally, **Italian is the fourth most studied language in the world, after English, Spanish and Chinese**.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Ethnologue data, 2023.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE VALUE OF THE ITALIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES FOR ITALY

30. The global distribution of Italian diaspora helped to **spread the Italian “footprint” abroad**. Italian emigrants and their descendants contribute to promoting Italian identity in different countries to act as **a bridge between Italy and rest of the world**. Also, thanks to the diaspora, customs, traditions, habits, language and the inestimable value of **Italian heritage in general is preserved**.
31. The Italian global diaspora not only plays a cultural and historical role, but also an **economic** one.

First, Italian descendants play a key role in their respective economies. Considering the number of descendants and the per capita GDP for each country where they live, the total value produced by Italian descendants is estimated to **exceed 2.5 trillion Euros**, of which 93.4% refers to Italian descendants in the Americas, the geographical area where they are most numerous. Specifically, Italian descendants contribute more than 1.3 trillion Euros to GDP in the US, more than 320 billion Euros in Argentina, nearly 300 billion Euros in Brazil (12.9%) and around 75 billion Euros in Canada.

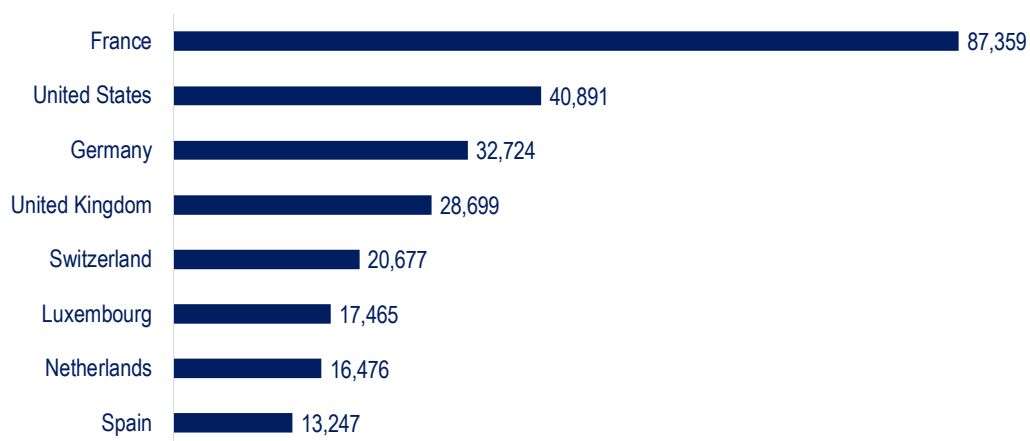
In addition to this direct economic contribution, **Italian descendants potentially represent an all-round development opportunity for Italy**. As will be discussed below, through stronger relationships with communities of Italian origin abroad, significant opportunities for value creation in investment, trade, tourism, educational and entrepreneurial ties, and soft power can be created. As enthusiastic “ambassadors” of Italy, Italian descendants **make a vital contribution in promoting the reputation and image of the country of origin in the country of destination**.

	Benefits stemming from the engagement of oriundi
Investment and trade	Overcoming the informational barriers, stimulating the exports (towards the country of origin), promoting the reputation of the destination country as an investment opportunity
Tourism	Promoting genealogy tourism, enhancing social and cultural bonds, activating indirect and induced economic returns
Educational links	Enhancing human capital development, promoting the reputation of the country of destination, activating collaborations in the field of education and research
Soft power	Promoting and strengthening social, economic, cultural and political relations

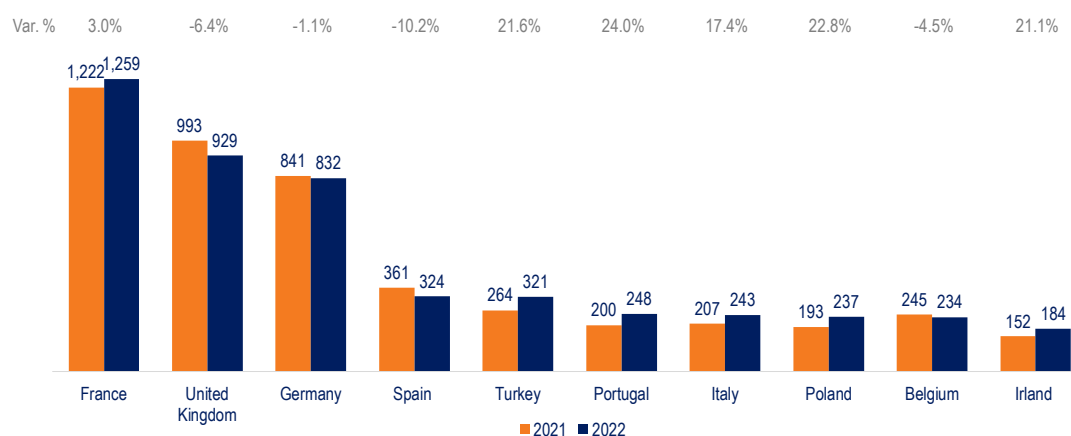
**Figure 14.** Development opportunities stemming from stronger relations with Italian communities abroad (illustrative). Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on various sources, 2023.

## 2.1. INVESTMENT AND TRADE

32. In terms of attractiveness and investment, in 2021 Italy recorded **an inward stock of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of 393 billion Euros<sup>12</sup>**, registering a growth of 11.1% in the last 5 years. The first country of origin of FDI directed to Italy is France, which, with a share of 22.2% of the total FDI, in 2021, recorded a stock of 87,359 million Euros. Among the main countries of origin are also the United States (10.4% for a total of 40,891 million Euros in FDI stocks), followed by Germany (8.3% and 32,724 million Euros in FDI stocks). Furthermore, in 2022, Italy was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> globally for number of FDI projects. The **243 foreign investment projects in 2022** registered a growth of +17% vs. 2021 and more than double in value compared to 2020 (+115%). As for the origin of FDI projects, 21% of the total came from the United States, followed by France and the United Kingdom with a share of 14% each, and Germany (11%).



**Figure 15.** Inward FDI stocks in Italy by counterpart country, top-8 countries (million Euros), year 2021. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Banca d'Italia data, 2023.



**Figure 16.** FDI projects (no.), 2021-2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Value based on UIC perimeter, which is the entity at the top of the ownership chain not controlled by another entity.

33. According to the 2022 edition of the **Global Attractiveness Index (GAI)**,<sup>13</sup> a research initiative of The European House – Ambrosetti launched in 2016 for measuring a country’s overall economic and industrial appeal that compares 148 economies (accounting for 95% of the world’s population and 99% of the Gross Domestic Product), **Italy ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in terms of overall performance** thus showing a high ranking and a country context that **offers multiple opportunities for investment and productive settlement**.

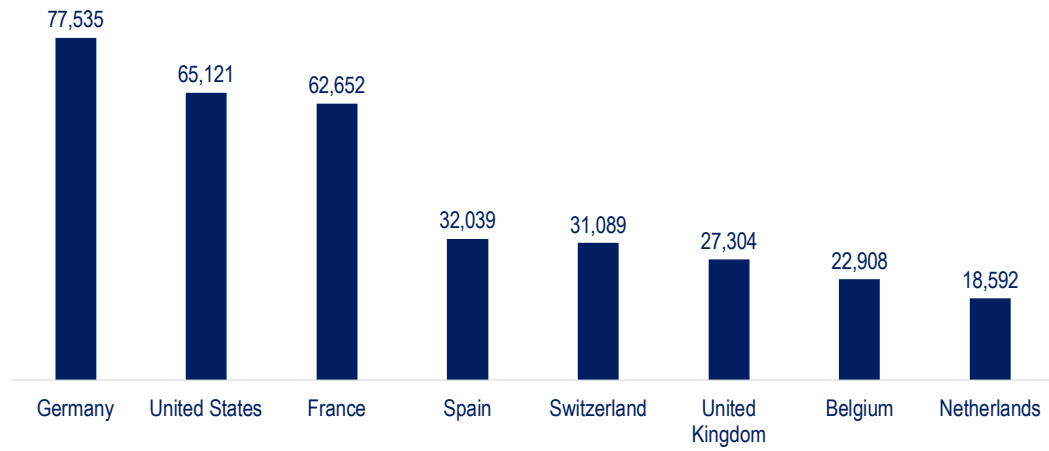
	GAI rank 2022	Dynamism 2022	Sustainability 2022	Growth expectations 2022	Conflict exposure 2022
Germany	1	Green	Green	Green	Green
USA	2	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Hong Kong	3	Red	Green	Green	Green
UK	4	Green	Green	Green	Green
Japan	5	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
Singapore	6	Red	Green	Green	Green
China	7	Green	Green	Green	Green
Korea	8	Green	Green	Green	Green
Australia	9	Green	Green	Green	Green
Canada	10	Green	Green	Green	Green
France	11	Red	Green	Green	Green
Arab Emirates	12	Green	Green	Green	Green
Switzerland	13	Red	Green	Green	Green
Ireland	14	Green	Green	Green	Green
Netherlands	15	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Belgium	16	Green	Green	Green	Green
Sweden	17	Green	Green	Green	Green
Denmark	18	Green	Green	Green	Green
<b>Italy</b>	<b>19</b>	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
Austria	20	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

Figure 17. Top-20 countries in the Global Attractiveness Index 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration, 2023.

34. In terms of Italy’s commercial presence, in 2022 the country recorded **strong export growth: +20%** compared to 2021 for a total of 624.7 billion Euros. The main destination of Italian goods is Europe, with a share of 67%, followed by the Americas (14.5%), and Asia (12.8%). Specifically, the main countries where Italian

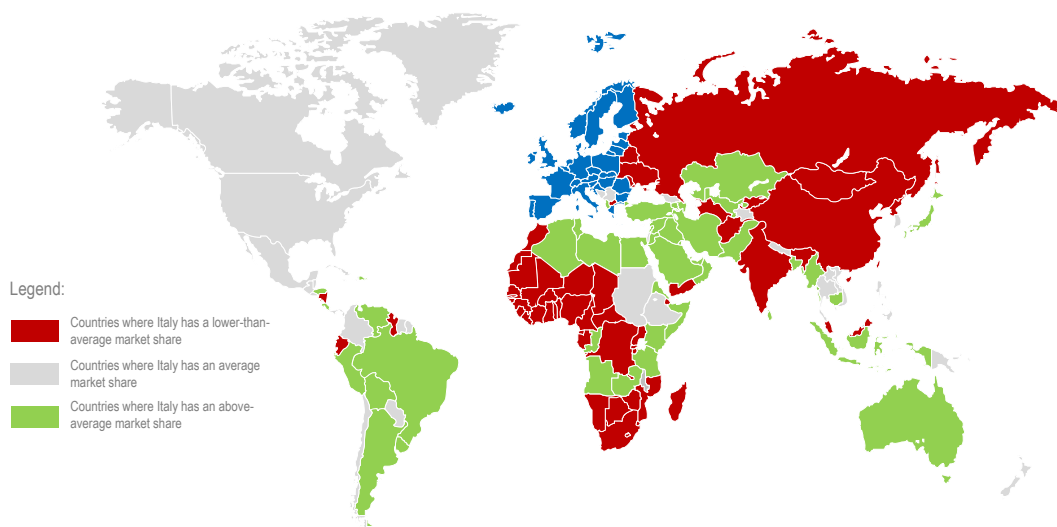
<sup>13</sup> Using a range of primarily quantitative indicators, the GAI measures the appeal of a country from a dual perspective: internal (the ability to retain resources already present in the area) and external (the ability to attract new resources from the outside). The GAI Index compares the global performance of economies in four macro-areas of attractiveness: Openness, Innovation, Endowment and Efficiency. Four additional sub-indices—Dynamism (this sub-Index describes future medium-term trends in attractiveness of countries and represents the speed of change in the indicators that made up the overall ranking), Sustainability (it provides quantitative information about the sustainability of the ranking of the given country), Growth Expectations (a forecasting Indicator that outlines a country’s growth trajectories and medium/long-term scenario) and Conflict Exposure (added in 2022, this sub-Index measures the level of economic dependance of countries on the area directly involved in the conflict in Eastern Europe)—provide a comprehensive view of all the features of a country. Every year the GAI Index undergoes an independent statistical audit by the European Commission Joint Research Centre. In addition, the GAI is accredited by the OECD and is used by a number of Government as an official indicator. For more information: <https://www.ambrosetti.eu/en/global-attractiveness-index/>

exports are directed include Germany (77.5 billion Euros), the United States (65.1 billion Euros) and France (62.7 billion Euros).



**Figure 18.** Italian exports by country of destination, top-8 countries (million Euros), 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Istat-Coeweb data, 2023.

35. The data shown above indicates that Italy’s international ranking is steadily improving, but **major opportunities remain to be seized**. For instance, regarding investment, according to the latest OECD data, Italy is 17<sup>th</sup> in the world for stock of inward Foreign Direct Investment (393 billion Euros) and 37<sup>th</sup> in terms of the share of FDI to GDP (22.3%). Regarding trade, the distribution of Italian exports tends to follow, to some extent, that of the Italian diaspora. In other words, **where more Italians or Italian descendants live, export penetration also tends to be higher than average**. This represents a further opportunity for enhanced trade flows with these countries, starting with the US (the largest market where trade potential is still very high).

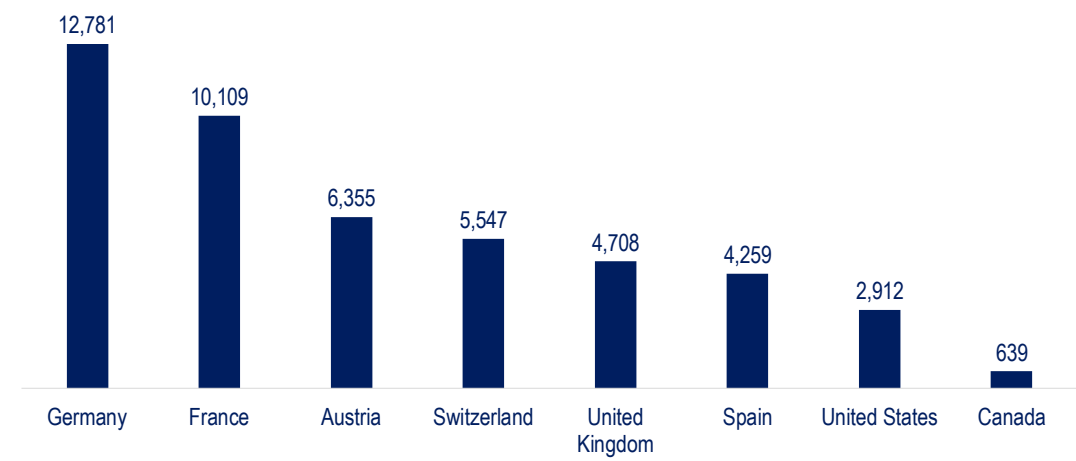


**Figure 19.** Map of Italian export positioning in non-EU markets. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Eurostat data, 2023.

36. Within this perspective, involving diasporas and immigrant entrepreneurs can also provide a key contribution in terms of **investment and trade**. Basically, immigrants act as a “bridge” between the Italian region and their country of origin and facilitate the process of foreign marketing by providing information about their country and overcoming the information barrier. In addition, **promoting the reputation of the country of origin in the country of destination** is a very important contribution that Italian descendants make to Italy and to the positioning of “Made in Italy” products. In fact, according to recent studies<sup>14</sup>, there is a direct **link between the level of immigration** to a country—considered as diaspora—**and the level of exports**. Analysis shows that immigration can stimulate export activity from the country of origin. Specifically, it is estimated that for every 1 percent increase in the immigrant population in a destination country, thanks to new trade relations and investment and the creation of increased demand and better promotion of products stimulated by the diasporic community settled in the destination country, an increase in manufacturing exports from the country of origin of up to +1.7 percent can be achieved.

## 2.2. TOURISM

37. Tourism is a pillar of Italy’s economy as well as a distinct feature of the country’s DNA. According to the latest data, in 2022 Italy recorded an international tourist flow of **74.7 million foreign visitors** (including overnight travelers and hikers), +82.9% compared to 2021 and close to the 2019 figures: **90.7%** of total international tourists came from Europe, mainly from Germany (12.8 million), France (10.1 million), Austria (6.3 million), Switzerland (5.5 million), Spain (4.3 million), and the UK (4.7 million). The tourist flow from North America accounted for **6.0%**, mainly from the US (2.9 million) and Canada (639,000), but also from South America (986,000).



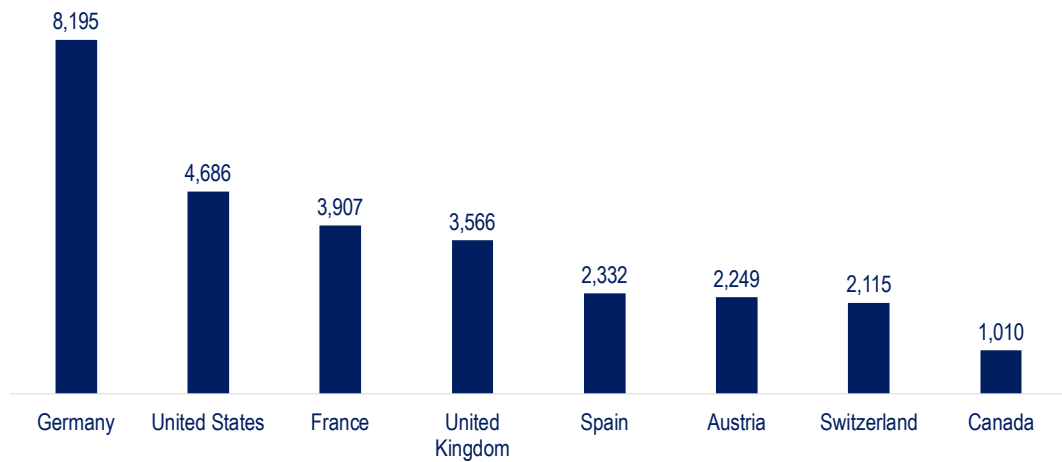
**Figure 20.** Foreign visitors to Italy by country of origin, top-8 countries (thousand), 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Banca d’Italia data, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Bratti, M., De Benedictis, L., Santoni, G., “Immigrant entrepreneurs, diasporas, and exports”, 2018.

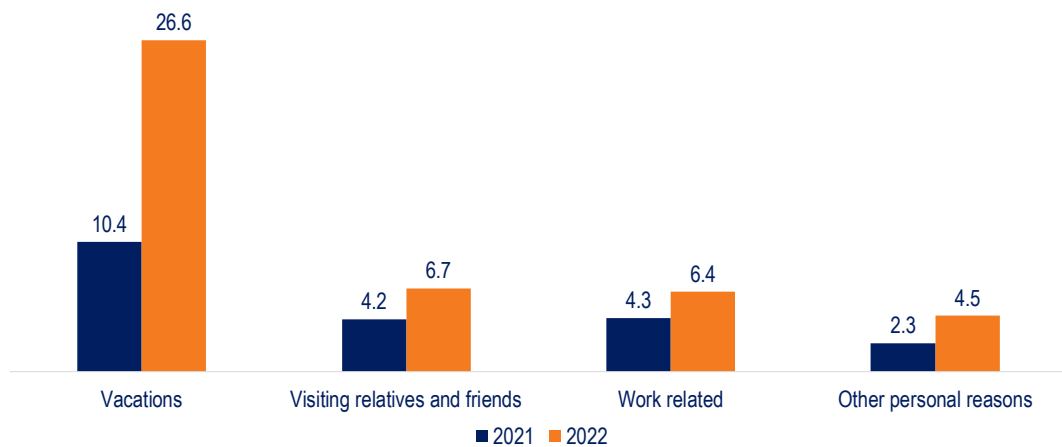


38. In 2022, Italy ranked **5<sup>th</sup> in the world for international tourist revenue**, after the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain and France, with a total revenue of €44.3 billion Euros<sup>15</sup> (+108.1% compared to 2021), returning to pre-pandemic values. As for the tourist balance, in 2022, Italy registered a **18.2 billion surplus**, exceeding the 2019 value by 5.8%.<sup>16</sup>

Of the revenue generated by tourism expenditure, 60% comes from visitors from the European Union, with 18.5% of total revenues from Germany (8.2 billion Euros), 8.8% from France (3.9 billion Euros) and 5.3% from Spain (2.3 billion Euros). Taking into consideration non-EU European countries, in particular revenues from the United Kingdom (3.6 billion) and Switzerland (2.1 billion Euros), the share of revenues reaches 76% of the total. Visitors from the **Americas** generate revenues equal to 15% of the total, especially the US, with 4.7 billion Euros spent.



**Figure 21.** Total tourist expenditure by country of origin, top-8 countries (million Euros), 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Banca d’Italia data, 2023.



**Figure 22.** Tourism expenditures by reason of travel (million Euros), 2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Banca d’Italia data, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on UNWTO data, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Banca d’Italia data, 2023.

39. Even given this positive tourism context, Italian communities abroad can represent a **significant opportunity for further growth**. Regarding **genealogy tourism**, the Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo (ENIT, Italian National Tourism Agency) estimated that, over the period 2010-2019, **more than 10 million Italian descendants visited Italy** to rediscover their roots, registering significant growth (+72.4%) compared to 1997 levels, and with revenues exceeding **5 billion Euros**<sup>17</sup>.

Many of the Italian descendants visiting Italy come from the Americas. According to an ENIT study involving 140 tour operators, around **670,000 Americans of Italian descent** come to Italy every year.

If all Italian descendants spread across the globe were to be involved and attracted to Italy as tourists, taking into consideration the average expenditure per departure in each country, the potential value that could be generated would be over **94 billion Euros**<sup>18</sup> (approximately 5% of Italian GDP). If the tourism economic multiplier (estimated to be around **2.17**<sup>19</sup>) is then applied, **the overall economic impact of genealogy tourism could exceed 200 billion Euros**.

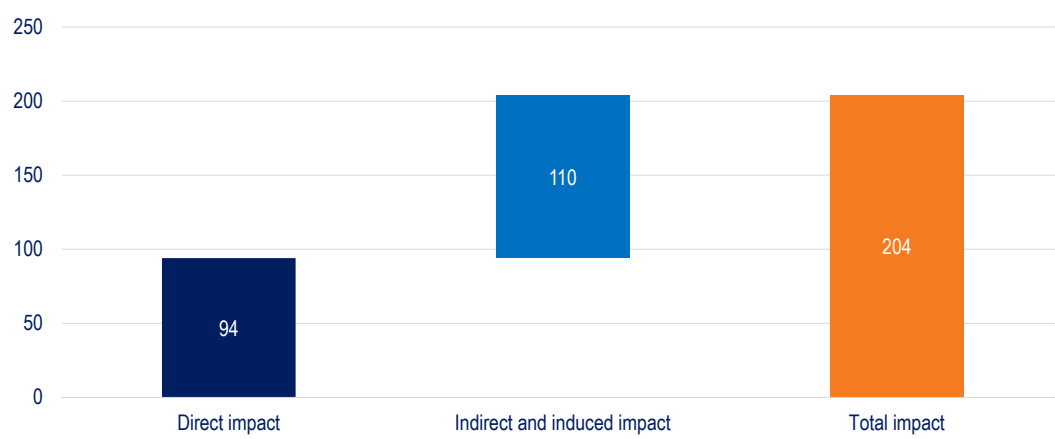


Figure 23. Economic impact of genealogy tourism for Italy (billion Euros). Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on various sources, 2023.

### 2.3. EDUCATIONAL LINKS

40. Promoting the educational potential **can contribute positively to Italy's image and international positioning and generate new value at several levels**.

First, increasing the flow of foreign students can be an important source of income for Italian universities.

<sup>17</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, February 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Value estimated considering the number of emigrants and the average international tourism expenditure of each country, in 2018.

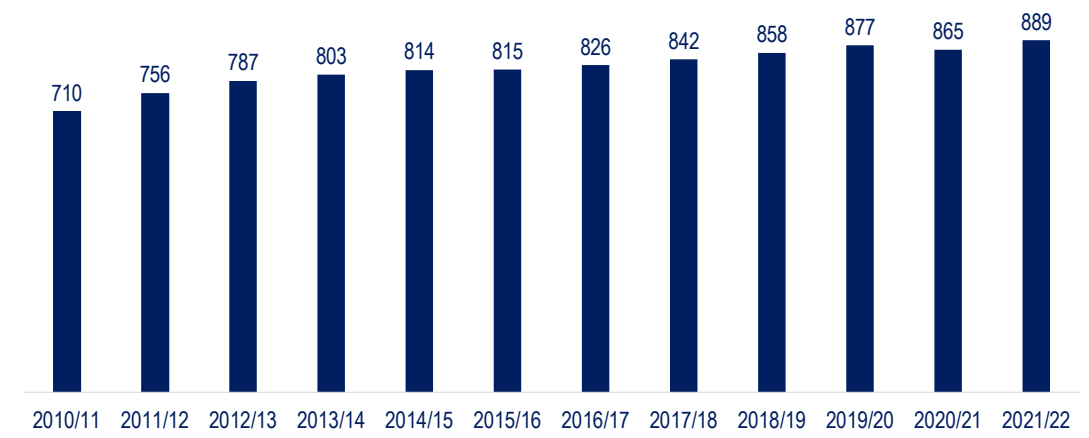
<sup>19</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti, “Rilanciare l’Italia. Le 8 proposte del Club The European House – Ambrosetti”, 2020.

In addition, providing high-level education to foreign students creates solid and long-lasting relationships, enabling Italy to spread its cultural, economic and social assets, and, ultimately, increase the country's perceived attractiveness. Finally, international students represent a highly-skilled potential workforce to attract and develop.

41. In fact, advanced countries are increasingly interested in attracting international students, and widespread awareness of the importance of this development lever is having ever-greater influence on national government strategies.

Over the past twenty years, international student mobility has grown steadily. In 2019, **over 6 million tertiary students worldwide** moved beyond their national borders to have an academic experience in a foreign country, more than twice the number in 2007. According to OECD data, in the period between 1998 and 2019 (pre-COVID19) the number of foreign tertiary students grew on average by **5.5% per year**.

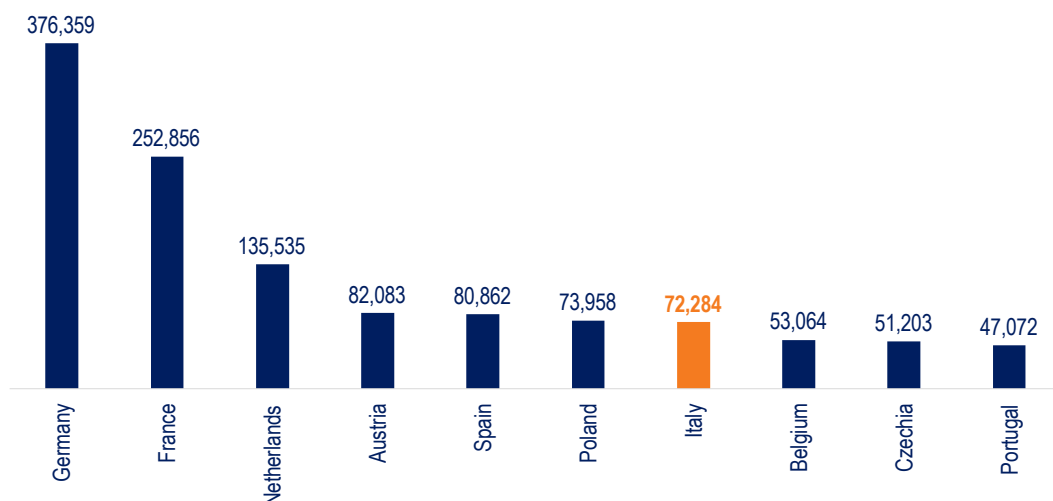
42. To date, the number of foreign students without Italian citizenship enrolled in Italian schools reached **nearly 890,000** in the 2021/2022 academic year<sup>20</sup>, **up 25% from 10 years ago**. This growth trend is expected to continue in the future, with 1 million foreign students expected by 2033.



**Figure 25.** Number of foreign students moving to Italy (thousand), 2010-2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Italian Ministry of University and Research data, 2023.

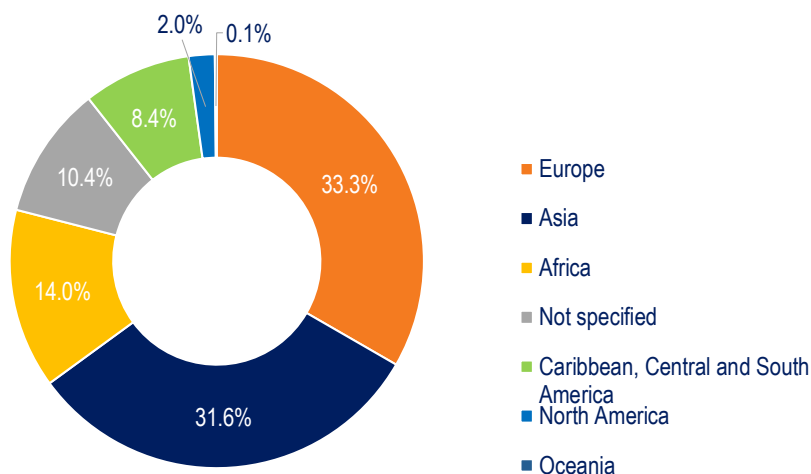
43. In terms of **foreign university students**, Italy is in the top-10 of EU-27 countries with about **72,000** international university students hosted during academic year 2021/2022, up **23.5%** on the previous year, but still lagging behind the pre-COVID19 figures: -32.2% compared to academic year 2018/2019.

<sup>20</sup> This figure includes only foreign students enrolled in Italian primary and secondary schools.



**Figure 29.** Number of foreign university students enrolled in EU-27 countries, top-10 countries, academic year 2021/2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Eurostat data, 2023.

44. During academic year 2021/2022, the majority of foreign tertiary students who chose Italy as a destination for academic reasons came from Europe (more than 24,000 university students, equal to 33.3% of the total), 31.6% came from Asia (nearly 23,000 university students), 14% from Africa (about 10,000) and 10.4% from the American continent (8.4% from the Caribbean, Central and South America, and 2.0% from North America), with approximately 7,600 university students.



**Figure 28.** Number of foreign university students enrolled in Italian universities by country of origin, academic year 2021/2022. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Eurostat data, 2023.

45. Overall, the number of university students hosted in Italy **is much below the number in other countries**, such as Germany (about 376,000 foreign students in 2021), France (almost 253,000 foreign students in 2021) and The Netherlands (more than 135,000 foreign students in 2021). For academic year 2021/2022, the

share of foreign students out of total tertiary education enrolment in Italian universities was **3.4%**, **4.8 percentage points below the EU-27 average**. Italy's attractiveness gap is even higher when compared with non-European countries. For instance, in 2021, the US received more than **16 times** the number of international tertiary education students hosted by Italy, Australia recorded an influx of international students almost **8 times** that of Italy and Canada **5.5 times**.

46. To help bridge this gap and reap the benefits of an increased number of international students, **implementing strategies targeting countries with major Italian diasporic communities** could be an important lever. An example of this is LUISS University, which has announced a special scholarship program for foreign students of Italian origin. Specifically, thanks to a partnership with NIAF, during the 2023-2024 academic year two full-tuition scholarships for Italian American students to study at the Rome campus have been awarded (one to a student pursuing a bachelor's degree and one seeking a master's degree).
47. Working on ties of origin and using them to build a part of a student's educational pathway in Italy can be a **very effective relational strategy** with positive short-term tactical effects, but also—and above all—structural strategic spin-offs in the medium- to long-term.

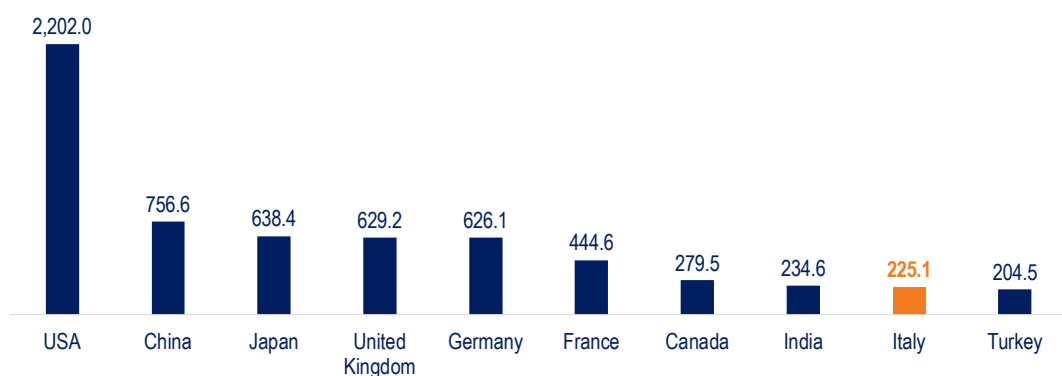
## 2.4. SOFT POWER

48. Economic and military aspects are not the only areas which determine a country's international worth and influence. **The strength of its identity and recognition of the image it projects abroad** are also of primary importance. In other words, its soft power. Italy excels in its spontaneous and natural ability to exercise soft power by building on those characteristics that make it unique.
49. The concept of "**Being Italian**"—the set of tangible and intangible aspects related to culture, entrepreneurship, lifestyle and "know-how"—is fundamental to Italy's heritage and fertilizes the nation's productive value chains. It is what differentiates and characterizes its products and services from those of its competitors.<sup>21</sup> "Being Italian" is the very foundation of the positioning of everything Italy produces and offers: shaping it, molding it, providing a positive influence to strengthen its competitiveness and growth.
50. This contribution is possible because Italy is recognized as the global **benchmark for artistic-cultural heritage and "lifestyle"**. In other words, thanks to a set of values, traditions, skills and manufacturing excellence, Italy is known as an economic and manufacturing power, a regional geopolitical power and a global "cultural" super-power.

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<sup>21</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti, "L'essere italiano come leva strategica per la crescita economica e la promozione internazionale del Paese", 2018.

51. From a geopolitical point of view, Italy has a role as a regional power, that is, a **key position in the European Union**, due to its status as a founding country as well as the largest economy in southern Europe. It also acts as a “**bridge-nation**” toward the countries of the Mediterranean and the Balkan area, a role which, over the years, has been strengthened by its continued commitment to international cooperation and peacekeeping activities.
52. While manufacturing resilience and its geopolitical role are two aspects that actively contribute to Italy’s positioning on an international scale, it is **in the cultural field that it has a role as a global super-power**. This can be demonstrated empirically:
- Italy is the leading country in terms of sites recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites numbering, to date, 58 (a full 5 percent of all sites on a global scale).
  - Italy's contribution to the arts and culture spans all time, from the present and reaches back into the past, where it is rooted in the history of the Roman Empire, architecture and urban planning, Renaissance art, and much, much more.
  - As illustrated in the previous section, it is among the top countries in the world for tourism.
53. The perception of Italian values is strong and positive and the recognition of Italy as a global power continues to grow. Despite its excellent international position, Italy’s importance and prestige could continue to blossom, enhancing its soft power. According to the Elcano Royal Institute, Italy ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the global scenario for Soft Power Exercise Ability.<sup>22</sup> While this ranking is significant, there is room for further improvement given the **gap with other international powers**.



**Figure 30.** Top 10 countries in the world for Soft Power Exercise Ability (score), 2021. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on Elcano Royal Institute data, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> The "Soft Presence" Index considers the positioning of country systems in 9 macro-areas: Migration, Tourism, Sport, Culture, Information and Communication, Technology, Science, Education and Cooperation.

54. The Italian diaspora is a powerful resource for **enhancing and promoting Italianness worldwide**. Indeed, Italy can build on the patriotism and sense of belonging of Italian communities abroad and utilize them as mouthpieces for Italy's vast cultural heritage.

**Italian descendants serve as cultural ambassadors of Italian identity.** In fact, their pride in their Italian heritage is a powerful tool through which to spread globally the core values of "Being Italian".

## CHAPTER 3 – LEARNING FROM FOREIGN EXPERIENCES: HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE THE DIASPORIC NETWORKS

### 3.1. DIASPORAS AROUND THE WORLD: AN OVERVIEW

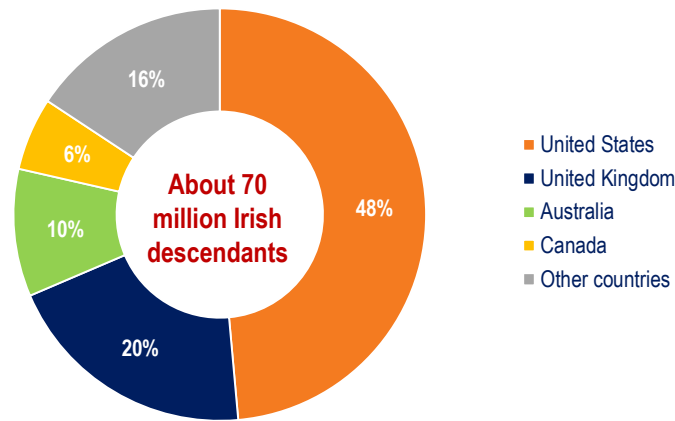
55. Historians associate the term "diaspora" with the great migratory flow of the past which affected the Jewish people and is **one of the oldest stories of all time**. It originated with the Assyrian conquest of Babylon in 722 B.C. and continued to 70 A.D., when the Romans expelled the entire population from the Jewish state, giving rise to one of the largest migrations of the day.
56. In the modern era, the Jewish diaspora suffered major shocks from the events of World War I and the Shoah, which destroyed Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Before the war, the global Jewish diaspora was estimated to be 16.5 million, but this decreased sharply, with a loss of between 5.5 and 6 million people. With the end of the Holocaust, the surviving Jewish population left Europe and the former Soviet Union to head toward Israel and North America.
57. Counting the number of Jewish descendants in the world today is not easy. According to the leading expert on this subject, Sergio Della Pergola, as of 2020, the **core Jewish population<sup>23</sup> is close to 14.8 million spread around the globe**. This number rises to **18 million** if the “connected” Jewish population (which includes people who claim to be partly Jewish or who have Jewish origins from at least one Jewish parent) is considered and further grows to **21 million**, also considering the “enlarged” Jewish population, which includes all non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.). The over 21 million enlarged Jewish population is **mainly concentrated in the US** (47.6% of the total), with over 10 million people, followed by the **State of Israel**—comprising Israel and Palestine—with over 7 million people (34.4% of the total).
58. The Jewish case is not unique. In the past, the **diasporic phenomenon has affected many other populations and countries**. Today, globalization is leading an increased number of people to leave their home countries and move to foreign lands in search of new job opportunities rather than new experiences. Therefore, over the last two centuries, the phenomenon of the interconnection of distant markets has created a series of diasporas. To date, among the **largest diasporas in the world**, the **Chinese** and the **Irish** are of note.
59. Despite Ireland’s small population compared to other European countries (only 1.2% on the total EU population in 2023), **the number of Irish descendants is estimated to be significant**, reaching over **70 million people**.

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<sup>23</sup> Core Jewish population includes all persons who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews, or, if the respondent is a different person in the same household, are identified by him/her as Jews. It also includes individuals with a Jewish parent who claim no current religious or ethnic identity.



Again here, the United States represents the country with the highest number of Irish descendants, with more than 34 million people. The geographical dispersion of the Irish people also involves the United Kingdom (about 14 million people with Irish ancestry), Australia (7 million) and Canada (more than 4 million).



**Figure 31.** Estimates of the global distribution of Irish descendants by country (% of total estimated descendants), latest available year. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on various sources, 2023.

60. The Chinese diaspora is also significant. According to some recent estimates, **Chinese descendants** around the world may exceed 100 million.<sup>24</sup> Again, the US is the country with the largest Chinese diaspora, counting, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, more than 5 million people claiming Chinese origins.
61. This chapter examines some of the dynamics and ways of dealing with some major international diasporas. It should be emphasized that there is **no standard approach** to diaspora engagement, nor is the diaspora a solution for all a country's development needs.
62. Nonetheless, **international experiences and best practices demonstrate tremendous potential if the power of the diaspora is harnessed** as part of an appropriate long-term strategic vision with clear policy objectives, a coherent multistakeholder framework of actions and a set of **shared interests**.

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<sup>24</sup> In the case of China, estimates vary significantly from source to source. The references used in this paper are studies and additional specialized analysis.

Objective	Involvement	Key Characteristics	Notable Examples
<b>Knowledge and Skills Transfer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional networks</li> <li>Skills-matching databases</li> <li>Coaching</li> <li>Virtual return for education or training purposes (distance learning)</li> <li>Pro bono capacity-building of individual initiatives</li> <li>Partnerships with private sector for return or training schemes</li> <li>Providing support to universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes competitive, desirable opportunities for professional engagement</li> <li>Identifies existing skills in the diaspora</li> <li>Fills knowledge/skills gaps in country of origin</li> <li>Invests in long-term development of human capital</li> <li>Networks and programs can be broad, based on sector, local area or institution</li> <li>Government can act as steward and “matchmaker”</li> <li>Largely diaspora-driven</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taiwan</li> <li>Republic of Korea</li> <li>Scotland</li> <li>New Zealand</li> <li>Colombia</li> <li>China</li> <li>South Africa</li> <li>India</li> </ul>
<b>Investments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct commercial enterprise investment</li> <li>Remittances</li> <li>Diaspora bonds</li> <li>FDI</li> <li>Opening new areas</li> <li>Creating business expansion opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term infusions of capital and long-term investment</li> <li>Mitigates risk through knowledge of local language, culture, and institutions</li> <li>Uses knowledge and position of diaspora to expand opportunities and enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senegal</li> <li>Taiwan</li> <li>Republic of Korea</li> <li>Mexico</li> <li>Israel</li> </ul>
<b>Philanthropy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hometown associations</li> <li>Foundations</li> <li>Online platforms (e.g., Kiva)</li> <li>Faith-based groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be an effective “entry-point” to more substantial interactions (Kingsley Aikins)</li> <li>Targeted to specific sectors or geographic locations</li> <li>Often used during or post-crisis situations to mobilize funds quickly</li> <li>Can be more effective and agile than non-diaspora philanthropy</li> <li>Government facilitates by helping to identify projects, reducing barriers to implementation</li> <li>Vulnerable to differing priorities in COO and within diaspora</li> <li>Require concrete, targeted objectives for success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mexico</li> <li>Senegal</li> <li>Jamaica</li> <li>Honduras</li> <li>Ireland</li> <li>Philippines</li> <li>India</li> </ul>
<b>Community Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural centers</li> <li>University groups and associations</li> <li>Informal networks via Facebook or WhatsApp groups</li> <li>Festivals, holiday celebrations and conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide networks for people to engage</li> <li>Can be facilitated by embassies/consulates or diaspora-driven</li> <li>Offer support to other diasporas and contribute to welfare of community</li> <li>Maintain cultural linkages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bangladesh</li> <li>Ireland</li> <li>France</li> <li>United Kingdom</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and Heritage, Nostalgia Industries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genealogy tourism</li> <li>Friends and family tourism</li> <li>Trade in nostalgia goods</li> <li>Specialty food items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotion-driven</li> <li>Incentivizes diaspora to visit to reconnect with roots, in turn stimulating the industry and commerce</li> <li>Homecoming trips may include volunteering aspects or homestays to better understand life in country</li> <li>Trips from diaspora to visit family or friends</li> <li>Offers low-cost entry point for friends of diaspora to experience the country</li> <li>Spending is often concentrated in communities and local economies, rather than tour operator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India</li> <li>Ireland</li> <li>Poland</li> <li>Israel</li> <li>Haiti</li> </ul>

**Figure 32.** Diaspora initiative typologies, examples and characteristics. Source: The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on IOM data, 2023.

### 3.2. FOREIGN EXPERIENCES OF DIASPORA VALORIZATION: SUGGESTIONS FOR COUNTRY STRATEGIES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

63. Diaspora policy is an important field of study in international relations, as diaspora communities are influenced by political and economic initiatives implemented by their home states. Many countries use diaspora communities as a tool of geopolitical competition, however, diaspora management can change depending on a country's goals and global position. In fact, diaspora populations can be both a source of capital, capabilities (know-how, technologies, etc.) and a tool for spreading culture, to increase a country's reputation and consequently its economic development.

#### THE CHINESE CASE

64. **China represents a reference case of a country committed to defining policies and activating initiatives towards its diaspora as a strategy to strengthen its prestige at a geopolitical level** (in fact, the Chinese diaspora is used by the country as a tool of non-military warfare), **and, at the same time, exploits its power as a means of supplying energy for the country's development.**

65. In recent years, China has been very committed in this area and has focused much effort on its diaspora on two levels: on the one hand, China is **encouraging Chinese descendants to return to their country of origin**, through the spread of a series of political campaigns, economic incentives, and educational assistance; on the other hand, starting from the commitment of Chinese President Xi Jinping who in recent times held several speeches for overseas Chinese, especially students, the country is **exhorting its descendants to act as “ambassadors” for the country and to “tell China’s story well”**.

66. In 2015, China launched the “Made in China 2025” national plan, with the aim of achieving global technological leadership and establishing itself as the no. 1 global economic power. To achieve the success of this ambitious strategic action plan, as well as other diplomatic goals (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative), the participation of Chinese diaspora communities is crucial. In fact, in 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party invited all the diaspora to help **promote Chinese culture around the world and participate in the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.**

67. In its commitment to the diaspora, the Chinese government is focusing on the economic and cultural aspects of the Chinese diaspora. Its strategic objective is to **attract talent, capital and technology from the Chinese diaspora** for national development and the strengthening of the transnational image of the Chinese nation through cultural exchange initiatives.

68. To facilitate the collaboration between the country and Chinese diasporic communities, over time the Chinese government has built a **comprehensive network of institutions** that is both centrally- and regionally-based. For example, the United Front Work Department of the CCP Central Committee is the head department for the development and implementation of China's diaspora policies. Among the major Chinese diaspora-related institutions is the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO), which works with the Office of Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs and is responsible for protecting the rights and interests of overseas Chinese and repatriated Chinese and family members, for implementing policies to attract Chinese capital, technology and talent abroad, as well as developing cultural exchange programs and plans for Chinese language education.
69. **Each year, China hosts a series of conferences and meetings aimed at strengthening communication between the country and diaspora communities.** Among the most important is the Conference for Friendship of Overseas Chinese Associations, which is *“an important platform for communication and exchange among major overseas Chinese associations and their leading members around the world”*.<sup>25</sup> At its 10<sup>th</sup> conference, 500 members of overseas Chinese associations from more than 130 countries participated, demonstrating their interest in maintaining solid relations with the country.
70. One of the main targets of Chinese policies concerns **overseas students**. In fact, a series of initiatives has been activated to re-attract back home the talents of Chinese origin. In 1913, the Chinese government established the **Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA)**, a national association of Chinese students returned from overseas that provides services to high-level Chinese talents who are abroad and maintains contact with over 100 associations of Chinese scholars abroad in the main destination countries. In addition, many of the major Chinese cities, such as Shanghai, Beijing and Zhejiang, have adopted a number of policies to offer qualified repatriated students special facilities and policies, high salaries, advantageous tax rates, special commercial loans and subsidies of various kinds.
71. In addition to the various policies implemented to encourage the return of talent, great efforts are also made to **attract high-caliber Chinese workers** with advanced scientific and professional skills. For example, in 2008, the **Thousand Talents Plan (TTP)** was established with the aim of recruiting international scientists and research professionals, technological innovators and entrepreneurs. Finally, in order to establish an economic network with Chinese entrepreneurs abroad, since 1991, every 2 years the Chinese government organizes the **World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention (WCEC)**. In 2023, Beijing hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> convention and, as every year, many foreign nationals of Chinese descent took part.

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<sup>25</sup> “Xi meets representatives to 10<sup>th</sup> Conference for Friendship of Overseas Chinese Associations”, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, May 9, 2023.

## THE IRISH CASE

72. Another country highly active in engaging its diaspora is Ireland. In 2015, the country hosted the first **Global Irish Civic Forum**, during which Irish community leaders from all over the world—migrant and diaspora communities—discussed the challenges facing Irish people abroad. In the same year, **the Irish government published its first set of policies to manage the Irish diaspora worldwide: the “Global Irish – Ireland’s Diaspora Policy”**.
73. Among the initiatives of Ireland’s Diaspora Policy, a new Inter-Departmental Committee on the Irish Abroad has been created, with the aim of ensuring that work progresses to guarantee that the diaspora strategy’s objectives are achieved. The Irish diaspora policy package is very detailed and contains a series of targets and actions. Specifically, to support the diaspora, the government created the **Emigrant Support Programme (ESP)** and, since its inception in 2004, has allocated over 220 million Euros in grants. The ESP program aims to strengthen the international Irish community and its bond with Ireland by supporting projects in several categories, including Welfare, Culture, Sport, Heritage, Capital and Business.
74. To support Irish descendants and the Irish diaspora, the cornerstone of the Irish government’s commitment is primarily focused on **communication**. In fact, to improve connectivity between Ireland and its diaspora, different levels of communication have been activated and many digital initiatives have been implemented. One of the main communication resources of the Irish government is the **Global Irish Media Fund**, established in 2016 by The Department of Foreign Affairs with the aim of increasing the involvement of Irish abroad and their awareness of Irish foreign policy issues.
75. Communication was also the key theme of the **Global Irish Civic Forum**, which took place in May 2017, and for which the Irish Abroad Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Commerce developed a **Global Irish Communications Handbook** to help Irish organizations abroad communicate with their communities. The goal of the Irish government’s communication strategy is the **spreading of Irish culture throughout the world**, and for this, its various initiatives include support to Irish cultural organizations, associations and festivals around the world celebrating Irish culture, language and heritage.
76. In recent years, the Irish government has been committed to creating a series of facilities to **ease the return of Irish descendants to their homeland** by monitoring obstacles to their return and acting to remove them where possible, as well as negotiating reciprocal agreements with countries hosting important Irish diaspora communities.
77. Ireland’s diaspora policy also includes a series of **specific initiatives for the engagement of entrepreneurs and alumni**. For entrepreneurs, in 2017, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Commerce launched **“Back for Business”**, a

pilot mentoring program aimed at returning migrant entrepreneurs. To date, “Back for Business” has enrolled 45 emigrant entrepreneurs, 26 women and 19 men from all over the country.

78. In addition, its commitment to the education sector is the Irish government’s initiative to involve Irish diaspora through the “**Global Irish Summer School**”, a program launched in 2015 with the aim of involving American student communities of the Irish diaspora. A 2½-week summer camp was organized, involving twenty young people from the diaspora in the United States who traveled to Ireland to attend lectures and workshops on Irish history, language and culture.
79. In general, the efforts of the Irish government have concentrated mainly on the countries that receive the largest number of Irish immigrants and Irish descendants, which are Britain, the US, Australia, and Canada. However, aware of the growing community of the diaspora in “non-traditional” places, the government is actively working to involve and support these new communities of the diaspora. In fact, countries like Estonia, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Portugal and Chile are reached through the “**Emigrant Support Program**” founded in 2015. In Southeast Asian countries, links with the Irish diaspora are supported by the partnership between the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the establishment of the Global Games Development Fund.

## THE FRENCH CASE

80. Past migration flows from France are less significant than those from other European countries. In fact, from 1861 to 1931, only 2.4 million French emigrants were registered. Even today, France has one of the lowest OECD country emigration rates, although in the last 17 years the number of French emigrants has risen by 3.7%, from about 80,000 in 2006 to an average of about 110,000 in the period 2016-2018.
81. Although migratory flows in the past have been limited, today, there are **about 2 million French living abroad** and **over 30 million French descendants** populating different countries in the world. Specifically, Canada hosts between 9 and 10 million French descendants, in second place for the number of French descendants is the United States with about 9.4 million people, followed by Argentina (about 6 million), the United Kingdom (about 3 million) and Brazil (about 1 million).
82. With the aim of engaging its citizens abroad and French descendants, in recent years, **France has developed a broad network of institutions** designed to connect with the French diaspora. Specifically, the institutional network includes ministries, consultative and representative bodies and parliamentary representation, as well as an extensive French diplomatic network, which, with 160 embassies and 172 consulates spread across the globe, represents the third-largest

in the world, after the United States and China.

83. **France is recognized as a successful case in organizing coordinated national governance for strengthening relations with the diaspora and effectively mobilizing French descendants' communities based on a shared strategic vision.**
84. Numerous institutions look after the interests of the French living abroad. For example, since 2004, the *Assemblée des Français de l'étranger (AFE)* has been operational, providing non-binding opinions on issues relevant to French people domiciled abroad, and the *Conseil Consulaire* was created to guarantee the defense of French interests abroad and their social rights. France also protects the right to vote of French natives living outside French borders, through the presence of various seats—of both the *Assemblée Nationale* and the *Sénat*—throughout the world.
85. The French government's commitment to the French diaspora also includes the **cultural aspect** with a series of initiatives and institutions to promote the spread of French culture in the world. Among the most important, in 1883 the *Alliance Française* was established, a private body designed to promote the French language and culture abroad, while, in 2018, a 2 million Euros fund—the *Dispositif de soutien au tissu associatif des Français à l'étranger (STAFE)*—was created. STAFE is a grant scheme of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs that supports all associations that carry out projects with an educational, charitable, cultural or social integration purpose, while also contributing to the support of the French abroad.
86. A further characteristic feature of the French model is the **strategic use of education**. In fact, the network of French educational institutions abroad, with 556 facilities in 138 countries around the world and more than 390,000 students, is **unique globally in terms of its geographic reach**, number of staff employed and breadth of pedagogical objectives.<sup>26</sup>

Together with the Mission Laïque Française (French Lay Mission), the body in charge of coordinating and managing the French school network abroad is the *Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger* (Agency for French Teaching Abroad). The AEFÉ is a national public administrative entity that is part of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All French teaching institutions abroad are recognized by the French Ministry of National Education and follow all programs established by it. All children schooled in the French system automatically have the right to be accepted in any French teaching institution in the world and the French baccalaureate diploma (high school diploma in the US) gives access to all French and European universities. Where in some schools enrollment is not sufficient to open

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<sup>26</sup> Source: AEFÉ, data as of September 2022.

certain sections, teaching is provided by the CNED—*Centre Nationale d'Enseignement à Distance* (National Center for Distance Education).

## THE INDIAN CASE

87. India is a pioneer in recognizing the **importance and valuable contributions** of its Indian community abroad. The Indian government created a High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora to analyze the location, situation and potential development role of nonresident Indians (NRSIs). The information resulting from this two-year exercise led to a new direction in diaspora policy, including the creation of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) in 2004.
88. **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is the main event for Indian diaspora.** It is hosted every two years on January 9<sup>th</sup> to mark the contributions of the **Indian community abroad** in the development of India.<sup>27</sup> The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also organizes Regional Pravasi Bhariya Divas (RPBD) events to reach out to Indian diasporas which cannot attend the main biennial event in India. The RPBDs were initiated in response to a significant demand to host these events regionally and, since their launch, have received enthusiastic support from the Indian diaspora and local government, and have been highly successful.
89. At the same time, several initiatives (research programs, scholarships and fellowships) have been introduced to allow overseas Indian scientists and academics to work in Indian institutions and universities. For example: the **Ramnujan Fellowship** which provides opportunities to Indian researchers abroad who are below 40 years of age, to work in different areas, i.e., science, engineering, and medicine; the **Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship**, a program to encourage Indian scientists abroad to pursue research in life sciences, biology, biotechnology and other related areas; the **Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children** for young diaspora members, it was created to make higher education in Indian universities and institutions more accessible through scholarships.
90. A number of initiatives have been introduced specifically in the science field, including: the **Biomedical Research Career Programme**, open to all eligible Indian researchers who hope to establish their research and academic careers in biomedicine or clinical and public health in India; the **Senior Research Associateship** that provides highly-qualified Indian scientists abroad with temporary placements, enabling them to do research/teaching in India while they are looking for regular employment opportunities; the **Global Initiative of Academic Networks**, a higher education program to enhance the talent of Indian scientists and entrepreneurs abroad; the **Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik Summit**, a collaborative initiative whose purpose is to create an ecosystem of

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<sup>27</sup> January 9<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion because it was on this day, in 1915, that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi (diaspora member), returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.



innovation and knowledge in India through a global network; the **Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark**, a digital and interactive platform to engage the global Indian scientific community in addressing India's challenges; and the **Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty Scheme**, designed to bring overseas Indian scientists and academics to India to work in publicly-funded institutions and universities.

91. India has also been very proactive in social and cultural awareness, for instance through:
- **Know India Programme** which promotes awareness among young diasporas about different aspects of life in India and national progress made in a range of areas including cultural, economic development, the education system, science and technology, communication and information technology.
  - **Bharat Ko Janiye**, an educational program to enhance engagement with young Indians abroad.
  - **Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora**, a program to support the diaspora in the organization of cultural events featuring Indian culture, new initiatives and the development of modern India.

## THE FILIPINO CASE

92. The Philippines went through **three distinct waves** of out-migration.<sup>28</sup> Given that approximately **10%** of the Philippine population lives abroad, it is no surprise that the government actively attempts to engage with its diaspora and has a long history of actively connecting and interacting with its overseas populations.
93. Work is a central part of the strategies put in place by Filipino institutions to engage with their communities abroad. For instance, the **Commission of Filipinos Overseas** (CFO), established in 1980, is an agency of the Philippine government tasked to promote and support the interests, rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos and strengthen their ties with the motherland. It provides **pre-departure orientation** seminars to natives, promotes transfer of technology, material and financial contributions from overseas for development projects in communities across the Philippines, and provides Filipino youth overseas with opportunities to learn about Filipino history and culture.
94. During the same period, the government also established the **Overseas Workers**

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<sup>28</sup> Specifically, the first wave of out-migration occurred from 1900 to the early 1940s where Filipino emigrants filled a variety of job markets throughout the United States, including agriculture, food processing and the service sector. The second wave occurred after the Philippines gained independence in 1946 and continued into the early 1970s, when a more class-diversified stream of Filipinos departed for the United States, including military personnel and their families, medical professionals and skilled technical workers. A third wave of migration saw Filipinos become more visible in global labor markets.

**Welfare Administration** (OWWA) to protect and promote the welfare of overseas Filipino migrant workers and their dependents, and the **Philippines Overseas Employment Administration** to facilitate the creation and preservation of **jobs for Filipino migrant workers**, promote their protection and their return and reintegration into society.

95. Finally, the **Inter-Agency Committee** (IAC) is chaired by the president of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch, an umbrella organization of twelve migrant civil society organizations working for the recognition, protection and fulfilment of the rights of Filipino migrants in the Philippines and abroad.

## THE SOUTH KOREAN CASE

96. Since the start of the 1990s, the number of Koreans living abroad has increased significantly while, at the same time, South Korea's population has been aging and its fertility rate has fallen. The most recent data from South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that nearly **7.5 million** ethnic Koreans live outside the Korean Peninsula, with the most significant diasporic groups in the US, China, Japan and Central Asia. These trends threaten to reduce South Korea's international and economic competitiveness.
97. In the early 1990s, however, the government began to view the Korean diaspora as an opportunity in a rapidly globalizing world. Beside trying to strengthen **political and cultural ties** with the worldwide network of Korean communities, engagement with Korea's diaspora has been primarily developed through the **economic relationship**.
98. Toward this, various transnational initiatives, like the **World Korean Business Convention** and the **Overseas Korean Traders Association**, have been launched to promote business ties as well as networking opportunities between Korea and its diaspora. As a result, according to the latest available data, each year more than 600 small- and medium-sized companies in Korea sign deals with Korean entrepreneurs living overseas to further improve Korea's economic profile.<sup>29</sup>
99. In addition, the founding of the **Overseas Koreans Foundation** (OKF) in 1997 expanded educational and cultural opportunities for overseas Koreans to learn more about their **Korean heritage**. From a high-level perspective, OKF works to foster the relationship between Korea, their native country, and their countries of residence. Notably, the Foundation's work is not as focused on cultivating commercial networks as it is on strengthening **cultural ties between these communities and South Korea**.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Yonhap News, "Over 600 S. Korean SNEs clinch overseas deals: World-OKTA", 2017.

<sup>30</sup> "Engaging the diaspora in an era of transnationalism", Changzoo Song University of Auckland, and IZA, Germany.

100. After the establishment of the OKF in 1997, the Asian financial crisis occurred. Seeking help from diaspora Koreans, the South Korean government looked especially to the communities in wealthier Western countries. To attract investment from diaspora Koreans, it conferred **virtual extraterritorial citizenship** on them under the Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans (1999), which gave diaspora Koreans the right to enter South Korea freely and engage in business activities.
101. In addition to the legal changes, one of the most important projects of the OKF has been helping diaspora Koreans to network among themselves and with Koreans in their homeland. The OKF has built **online networks** such as Korean Net and supported Korean diaspora media such as *Dongpo News* and the *Overseas Koreans Times*. A key point of the OKF has been **engaging and networking with the younger generations** of the Korean diaspora and organizing homeland visits for them. Through these programs, younger overseas Koreans are invited to visit South Korea to learn the traditions, history and language of their ancestral homeland, thus strengthening their sense of Korean identity.

## CHAPTER 4 – HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE ITALIAN DIASPORA: AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

102. The Italian diaspora represents the large-scale emigration of Italians from Italy. As noted above, there were **two major Italian diasporas**. Undoubtedly, over time, several factors triggered this emigration including poverty, scarcity of job opportunities and low agricultural productivity. Italian emigrants went wherever work was available and they found, *in primis*, European and American labor markets to be the most dynamic and welcoming. For Italian immigrants, the US became a “promised land”, the promise of a better future but, at the same time, the uncertainty of that dream. However, it was a place where they could easily find work in the mines, railroads and construction industry, as well as other sectors. In fact, in their destination countries, Italian immigrants not only provided a **workforce** but also their **culture**, the Italian **way of life**, which has profoundly influenced the social fabric of destination countries.
103. But the network of the diaspora is still nurtured today with a **constant flow of Italians** who settle abroad (see Chapter 1). Italy, therefore, has significant economic, strategic and relationship potential spread around the world that can be leveraged in mutually beneficial development initiatives. Early diaspora engagement strategies focused on enticing emigrants’ home, believing physical return to be the only way to regain human capital. Today, modern diaspora engagement policies should aim to achieve and consolidate **strong partnerships based on shared development values between the country of origin and diasporic communities** and on multilevel and multistakeholder action frameworks that include goals of enhanced international relational capacity.
104. In the final analysis, it can be said that **the Italian diaspora is a successful case**. Over the years multiple Italian emigrants and descendants have held top positions in politics, business, the sciences and culture, and, more generally, have become well-entrenched in society and the economies where they have settled. The diaspora is, therefore, a heritage for Italy that must be recognized as such.
105. This chapter addresses the question of the **strategic management** of the Italian global diaspora and how, starting from the basis of ongoing initiatives and according to the country's objectives, Italy can equip itself to make the most of this strategic and competitive asset, on a par with other global powers. The first part is therefore dedicated to some indications of the importance that the communities of Italian origin have had in their destination countries, demonstrating how they have positively influenced development and have traced a strong imprint of “Italianness” still present and active today on which to build. The second part of the chapter outlines potential initiatives and actions that Italy could promote, based on the comparative analysis with the experiences and strategies of other countries with strong diasporic engagement.

#### 4.1. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITALIANS ABROAD

106. As seen in Chapter 1, the Italian diaspora consists of a widespread flow of people who settled in many countries of the world, although more in some areas than others. This section will offer a concise summary of some of the outstanding contributions of the Italian diaspora to illustrate its success and the value it represents.

107. **Australia**, since 1788, has been heavily influenced by many Italian immigrants and Australians of Italian descent.<sup>31</sup> In Australia there are also several associations manned by Italian Australians, such as the *Dante Alighieri Society*, formed in 1896, which is Australia's oldest Italian association, as well as a number of magazines dedicated entirely to Italians in Australia, notably *Italy Down Under*.

108. Italian immigrants contributed in different ways to the economic, scientific and social development of Australia. **Raffaello Carboni**, a follower of Mazzini and Garibaldi, who was forced to leave Italy after the fall of the Roman Republic, became one of the leaders of the *Eureka Stockade Rebellion* of 1854, a series of events involving gold miners who revolted against the British administration of the colony of Victoria, Australia, during the Victorian gold rush. Italians also contributed to the birth of the Australian socialist movement, for example **Francesco Sceusa**, who came to Sydney from Trapani, Italy, in 1877 because of his political activities and was active in Australian socialism for the next thirty years,<sup>32</sup> along with **Pietro Murani**, a textile worker from Vicenza who emigrated to Australia in the 1890s and participated in the debates that gave birth to the Labor Party. **Domenico Piccoli**, deputy of the Kingdom of Italy and entrepreneur, also participated in the Australian political debate and emigrated to found a company that imported Italian textiles and porcelain to Melbourne.

109. In civil infrastructure, **Carlo Catani**<sup>33</sup> was an Italian civil engineer who emigrated to Australia in early 1876 and worked for the Victorian government, specifically for the Public Works Department of the Victorian State Government. For the state, he supervised and designed many projects, including “Lake Catani” (an artificial lake in Mount Buffalo National Park in Victoria State), built to provide recreational facilities in the newly-opened winter resort, and the township of Catani, a rural locality in the state of Victoria, where Catani worked on the draining of the Koo-Wee-Rup swamp. A colleague of Catani's who deserves to be remembered is **Ettore Cecchi**, another civil engineer at the Department of Public Works and a proponent of the 1925 River Murray Agreement.

110. The scientific and socio-political contribution of some Italians and Australians of

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<sup>31</sup> Rosato V., “150 years of our history: the pastoral care of migrants in Europe and Australia”.

<sup>32</sup> E. Pozzetto and Ramirez B., “The Italian Diaspora: Migration Across the Globe, Studies in Ethnic and Immigration History”.

<sup>33</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Italian origin has also been important: **Anthony Albanese**, Prime Minister of Australia since 2022, is of Italian origin; **Joseph Bosisto** was a pharmacist who became the first mayor of Richmond and later a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly; **Tommaso Fiaschi** arrived in Sidney in 1875 and established a medical practice in Windsor; **Pietro Baracchi**,<sup>34</sup> an Italian who played a central role in Australian astronomy in the late 1800s and early 1900s and **Francesco (Frank) Sartor**, a former Australian politician and former mayor of Sydney, were born to Italian parents who emigrated to Australia.

111. There have been important economic and cultural ties between **Italy and South America** since the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the region was one of the most common destinations for Italian immigrants. Italian immigration has successfully contributed to the cultural, social and economic fabric of South America and has formed an important part of the cultural identity of many countries. Italian immigrants and their descendants, endowed with experience and professional expertise have had a profound impact in various fields—including business, architecture, engineering, science, the arts and entertainment—sharing their practical and specialized skills.
112. In the field of architecture and urban planning, several prominent Italians changed the urban landscape of many cities in South America. **Mario Palanti** was an Italian architect who designed important buildings in the capitals of Argentina and Uruguay. Among his major works were the construction of the Barolo Palace in Buenos Aires and the twin Palazzo Salvo in Montevideo. Another is **Vittorio Meano**, an Italian architect who was involved in various public works, including the renovation of the Casa Rosada in Buenos Aires, the office of the President of Argentina. He also won the international competition to design the Palacio Legislativo in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. **Virginio Colombo** arrived in Buenos Aires in 1906 and became one of the most representative architects of Art Nouveau in Latin America. His most important public work was the design of two pavilions (Public Celebrations and Postal Service) for the Exposición Internacional del Centenario (1910), for which he was awarded a gold medal.
113. Latin America is a continent that has also developed thanks to the key role played by infrastructure. In several cases, Italian engineers have been able to put new and daring ideas into practice and overcome highly complex challenges due to the peculiar characteristics of the region. They include: **Giovanni Pelleschi**, an Italian engineer who contributed to the construction of the railway network in the province of Córdoba, a railway that enabled the economic development of this area and the creation of numerous colonies, especially Italian immigrants attracted by the advantages offered by the government. **Felipe Caronti**, an Argentine engineer of Italian origin who made a great contribution to the development of the Argentine city of Bahía Blanca, and one of his sons, **Luis Caronti**, was the second mayor of

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<sup>34</sup> Museums Victoria Collections.

this city and the first born in that area.

114. Italian immigrants and their descendants have also played an important role in entrepreneurship in South America. One of the most important Italian automobile companies, Pagani Automobili S.p.A., was founded in 1992 by the Argentinean-Italian businessman and engineer **Horacio Pagani**, whose family had Italian origins and moved to Argentina in the late 1800s. **Antonio Devoto**, pioneer of Italian emigration to Argentina, born in Italy and emigrated to Argentina in 1854, thanks to a series of risky and important entrepreneurial initiatives, became one of the most important and influential oligarchs of Argentina in the late nineteenth century. In the Argentine capital, Devoto was among the financiers of the construction of the city's water system. **Giovanni Battista Berisso** emigrated to South America in 1848 and founded the Compañía Marítima Argentina, specialized in the transport of goods, and in 1882 he founded in Boca (a district of Buenos Aires) a shipyard with its own mechanical workshops for the construction of steamships. The contribution of Italians in South America was also important in the field of science. **Clemente Onelli** was an Italian naturalist, paleontologist and geologist who directed the Buenos Aires Zoo for twenty years (1906-1926).
115. Until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italian immigration to the **United States** was limited to a few hundred or thousands of people a year. Mass Italian emigration began around 1880 and peaked in the early twentieth century when hundreds of thousands of Italians, mainly from the regions of the annexed Bourbon kingdom, set sail for the US to seek a new life, new opportunities and escape misery. It should also be remembered that these Italians had very marked linguistic and social class differences. However, **their presence was essential for the booming US economy**, and on the job, male and female workers brought to America the rich tradition of trade union associations and mutual aid that made a fundamental contribution to the growth of the labor movement in the United States.<sup>35</sup>
116. From the experience of the mutual societies began the entrepreneurial activity of **Amadeo Giannini**, who in 1904 opened in California the Bank of Italy, destined to become one of the most important banks in the United States. Meanwhile, Italians also began to excel in the arts: **Attilio Piccirilli**, with the help of his five brothers, sculpted the Lincoln Memorial between 1911 and 1922.
117. One area in which Italians were able to achieve absolute cultural dominance, however, was classical music, and in particular Italian opera, which became very popular in the United States during those years. **Giulio Gatti Casazza** was the director of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York from 1908 to 1935, making it an internationally renowned theater. Another Italian conductor who made the United States his main residence was the famous **Arturo Toscanini**. **Giacomo**

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<sup>35</sup> "The Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia", ed. Salvatore LaGumina, New York, 2000. For more, see: The European House – Ambrosetti, National Italian American Foundation, "The Strategic importance of Italy-US, Past, present and future of a mutually beneficial alliances", 2022 (available at this [link](#)).

**Puccini** visited the United States and composed *La fanciulla del West* for the New York premiere on December 10, 1910, a historic evening for the entire Italian American community.

118. Italians also distinguished themselves during World War I. For example, **Michael Valente** was the first Italian American to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest military award in the United States, for his military actions. In the years following World War I, between 1921 and 1924, the United States government enacted emergency legislation to stem massive immigration (called the Emergency Quota Act). These laws drastically reduced the number of immigrants, especially from southern and eastern Europe, in favor of northern Europeans. As a result, Italian immigrants were reduced to a few thousand per year.
119. During this period, some Italian Americans began to become popular with the general public, in the field of cinema (for example, actor **Rodolfo Valentino** and director **Francesco Borzage**), sports (boxer **Primo Carnera**), opera (**Rosa Ponselle** and **Dusolina Giannini**, both daughters of Italian immigrants) and architecture (**Rosario Candela**, who designed numerous buildings on New York's Upper East Side, mainly on Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue). A leading role in the dissemination of Italian culture during these years was played by **Giuseppe Prezzolini**, professor of Italian at Columbia University from 1929 to 1950, where the House of Italian Culture was inaugurated on October 27, 1927. In the same period, the mayor of New York for three consecutive terms, from 1934 to 1945, was the Italian American **Fiorello La Guardia** (son of an Italian immigrant originally from Apulia).
120. After the enactment of racial laws in Italy in 1938, the U.S. became a place of refuge for many Italian Jews, such as the economist **Franco Modigliani** and **Emilio Gino Segrè**, an Italian American physicist who won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1959. With the entry of the United States into World War II in December 1941, restrictive measures were taken against Italians, now citizens of an enemy country, especially until 1943. But some of them fought on the side of the US, for example **Enrico Fermi** played a decisive role in the development of the American atomic program.



## 4.2. INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES OF THE ITALIAN DIASPORA ABROAD

121. In recent times, Italy has been studying the role and the value of the **Italian diaspora** worldwide, an increasingly important theme in the institutional agenda of the country. Recognizing that the contribution of Italians abroad to the nation's development has been decisive, the Italian government has once again made this a priority issue.

122. Important action taken recently on an institutional level is the revitalization and enhancement of Italy's cultural policy abroad. As is well known, **culture is an essential part of Italy's global identity**, and consequently, **promoting culture** plays a key role in Italian strategic policy as a pivotal tool for heightening Italy's image abroad. In general, culture is playing an increasingly-greater role in international relations and foreign policy, and therefore, **cultural diplomacy** is used by countries to promote their unique attributes. This enhances cultural diversity and opens the way to cooperation and dialogue. In addition, in our ever more interconnected world, cultural diplomacy can represent a tool to foster peace and stability, through "**soft power**" which, today, is equally important as "hard power" in international politics.

123. Given this context, in early January 2022, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) launched a new department: the **Directorate for Cultural and Public Diplomacy**.<sup>36</sup> The aim of this new body is to make "*Italian soft power*" a tool that can be used to build influence and consensus on priority themes for Italy.

The new Directorate, with its key pillars (communication, cultural diplomacy, strategic programming and presence in international organizations) has been designed to forge a constructive dialogue with media, think tanks, universities and international organizations to promote and develop a different and modern narrative about Italy in the world. It also represents **strategic leverage** to actively engage Italian communities abroad through structured promotion and dissemination of Italian values and culture.

124. As part of its strategy to utilize cultural leverage to optimize its foreign presence, **Italy is strengthening the network of Italian Cultural Institutes (IICs)** that are part of the framework of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Currently, there are **85** Italian Cultural Institutes: **41** in Europe; **17** in

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<sup>36</sup> The Directorate is divided into six Offices (Office I – Media Relations; Office II – Public Relations; Office III – Cultural Promotion and Italian Cultural Institutes; Office IV – Promotion of the Italian language and publications, internationalization of universities, fellowships/scholarships; Office V – Italian education system in the world; Office VI – Multilateral cultural cooperation, archaeological missions) and three Units: i) Unit for the coordination of communication; ii) Unit for Analysis, programming, statistics and historical documentation; iii) Unit for the promotion of Italy within international organizations.

Asia; **9** in Africa; **7** in North America and **11** in Latin America.<sup>37</sup> IICs promote **Italian culture** in the world and are involved in the teaching of the **Italian language**.<sup>38</sup> They are, therefore, structures of major importance, whose activity profoundly influences how **Italian identity and image** are perceived, which, as already mentioned, is a powerful and direct tool for engaging Italian diasporic communities around the world.

125. Another important initiative is the promotion of “**Genealogy Tourism**”.<sup>39</sup> In February 2023, the MAECI launched a call for ideas for its “Turismo delle radici” (Roots Tourism) project. Its aim is to raise awareness of local communities around the issues of Italian emigration and genealogy tourism. The initiative calls for local collaboration around the project proposal and the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sustainable tourist package for roots travelers.<sup>40</sup> Italy has also declared **2024 the year of genealogy tourism**.<sup>41</sup> This project is also financed by Italy’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) through a specific 20 million Euros investment.

The strategic vision is to leverage the desire of Italian descendants to rediscover their origins, and thus Italy's heritage, to attract new tourism and boost Italy's image and promote the country, thus fostering the development of new investment, and export

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<sup>37</sup> Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

<sup>38</sup> According to Italian law (Law 101/90 and Regulation 392/95), the Italian Cultural Institutes have the following functions: i) establishing connections with institutions, agencies and organizations of the cultural and scientific environment of the host country; ii) promoting and organizing initiatives, cultural events and exhibitions; iii) supporting initiatives to encourage integration into the host country, as well as the cultural relationship with the home country; iv) supporting Italian students in their study plans and research activities abroad; and v) promoting initiatives for the diffusion of the Italian language abroad. In general terms, IICs are involved in organizing events involving art, music, cinema, literature, theater, dance, fashion, design, photography and architecture, and the management of Italian language and culture courses that comply with the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages". Furthermore, they promote the scientific culture of Italy, manage an efficient network of libraries, create contacts between Italian and foreign cultural workers and facilitate dialogue between cultures based on the principles of democracy.

<sup>39</sup> The term genealogy tourism (or roots tourism) is linked with a specific type of tourism which involves people, mainly descendants of emigrants, who undertake international trips toward their places of birth or origin, to reconnect with their families and relatives, or to reach the country of their ancestors. This phenomenon is motivated by the desire to discover their identity and reconnect with their origins and roots. This emotional journey can involve various aspects, such as visiting the place of origin, getting a deeper understanding of the culture of the place or their family history, and tracing relatives.

<sup>40</sup> The main objective pursued is to support the creation of new professional roles specialized in planning and promoting services related to genealogy tourism, as well as to promote youth employment in areas with high unemployment (e.g., small villages and rural areas) and counteract depopulation. Therefore, in order to support this ambitious project, in addition to national bodies, an increasingly number of organizations are being mobilized at the local level. In fact, many of the initiatives to attract more tourist flows of Italians abroad have been undertaken by regional authorities. An example is the “2023 Anno del Turismo di ritorno. Alla scoperta delle origini” project promoted by Rete Destinazione Sud, with the aim of “giving life to an International Expo of Italianity”.

<sup>41</sup> The decision to promote this initiative was taken during the special meeting of the round table on genealogy tourism (now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition) held in May 2021. The round table represents a moment of discussion and sharing of ideas on key topics for the promotion of tourism in Italy. Organized for the first time in 2018 by the MAECI, it annually brings together key representatives of the public and private sector.

and business opportunities, while also stimulating new collaborative relationships to revitalize areas of the country (e.g., small towns) and create new jobs.

126. **Communication is one the main levers** for the realization of this project. Among the most important initiatives, MAECI has published the “Guide to Italian Roots: a journey in the footsteps of your ancestors”, available in different languages. It traces the history of Italian emigration and the story of the culture and characteristics of the country’s local areas and includes useful information for carrying out family/historical research. At the same time, one of Italy’s key points of focus is **involving younger generations**. In fact, many initiatives have been promoted and are being planned to attract the target population of young graduates and university students.<sup>42</sup>

127. In addition to the initiatives implemented at national level, the Italian government and institutions are also actively committed in countries where the Italian presence—both in terms of new emigrants and descendants—is high. Specifically, the Italian government has included Italian diaspora communities in its “**Promoting the Italian Economic System**” strategy, with the aim of preserving and developing relations between Italy and Italians abroad.

128. Italy supports the Italian economic diplomacy of diasporic communities and encourages the political participation of Italians abroad not only through the network of consulates and embassies, but also through representative organizations, such as the **Committees of Italians abroad (COMITES)**.

Established in 1985, the COMITES are representative bodies of the Italian community, directly elected by the Italian nationals living abroad in each consular district where at least three thousand Italian nationals live. The Committees are composed of 12 or 18 members<sup>43</sup> and, in addition to the elected members of Italian citizenship, **foreign citizens of Italian origin** may be members of the Committees. COMITES contribute to **identifying the social, cultural and civil development needs** of the community of reference, also through studies and research. Jointly with the consular authorities, the regions and local authorities, as well as with entities, associations and committees operating within the consular district, they also promote **appropriate initiatives** in matters pertaining to social and cultural life, with specific reference to youth participation, equal opportunity, social and educational assistance, vocational training, the recreational sector, sport and leisure. Currently, there are **118 Committees**, of which 55 in Europe, 44 in the Americas, 10 in Asia and Oceania, 4 in the Middle East and 5 in Africa.

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<sup>42</sup> For example, the “2023 Anno del Turismo di ritorno. Alla scoperta delle origini” project includes the actuation of an International Forum of young Italian descendants that involves the realization of two exchange programs between young Italians abroad who wish to come to Italy to work in the places of origin of their ancestors.

<sup>43</sup> Depending on whether they are elected in consular districts with fewer or more than 100,000 resident Italian citizens.

129. Italian economic diplomacy of diasporic communities is also supported through the **General Council of Italians Abroad** (CGIE), an advisory body to the Italian government and parliament on major issues of interest to Italians abroad. It derives its representative legitimacy from its direct election by the members of the COMITES around the world and represents an important step in the process of **developing proactive participation** in the country's political life by Italian communities globally. At the same time, it is the essential body for their permanent connection with Italy and its institutions.

The CGIE is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and, following the changes introduced by the latest regulatory modifications, it is comprised of **63 Councillors**, **43** of whom are directly elected abroad and **20** of whom are appointed by the government, on the following bases: **7** on the recommendation of national emigration associations, **4** on the recommendation of the parties that have parliamentary representation, **6** on the recommendation of the most nationally-representative labor confederations and associations, and who are represented in the CNEL (Italian National Council of Labor), **1** on the recommendation of the National Press Federation, **1** on the recommendation of the United Federation of the Italian Press Abroad and **1** on the recommendation of the most representative organization of border workers.

The CGIE examines the problems of Italian communities abroad: the living and working conditions, education and social services, financial support for associations, consular activities and information for Italians abroad. It plays a **crucial role in promoting and facilitating the development of the living conditions of Italian communities around the world and strengthening their ties with Italy**.<sup>44</sup>

130. More recently, in 2003, Italy also allowed **Italian citizens living abroad and regularly registered with AIRE** to exercise their right to vote abroad in their place of residence for national elections, and for abrogative and constitutional referendums.

131. In addition to these more institutional activities, Italy has also provided “soft power” initiatives, for instance through the media, to engage Italian communities abroad. In fact, starting in 1940, Italy began providing intermittent **international broadcasting** in regions including Europe, the Americas and North Africa, with

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<sup>44</sup> Specifically: i) formulates opinions, proposals and recommendations, regarding administrative, electoral of legislative initiatives of the State, international agreements and community regulations concerning Italian communities abroad; ii) promotes studies and research on issues concerning Italian communities and communities of Italian origin in the world, and collaborating in their organization and elaboration; iii) fosters the integration of Italian communities into the social and economic-productive structures of the host country and the enhancement of the national identity of Italian communities abroad; drafts an annual report to be presented through the government, to parliament. Furthermore, regarding its consultative functions, the CGIE formulates opinions on the allocation on the various chapters of the Italian budget in favor of Italian communities abroad.

news programs and entrainment provided in Italian and other languages.<sup>45</sup> In 1995, Italy launched RAI International (now **RAI Italia**), to broadcast a selection of Italian radio and television programs throughout the world. In addition, RAI Italia broadcasts original programs specifically produced for Italians abroad, and more generally with reference to anyone who has an interest in a cultural and linguistic link with the country. RAI Italia's activities focus on the best-possible fulfilment of its institutional mission: the **broadest possible dissemination and promotion of knowledge of the Italian language and culture**, as well as to uphold the highest possible brand image of the RAI and defend its standing in the difficult international broadcasting market.

132. Regarding culture-related activities, Italy has activated other major initiatives, such as the “**Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo**” (Italian Language in the World Week). Organized by some of the key institutional players in the cultural and institutional field,<sup>46</sup> over time, the Week has become the most important **review dedicated to the Italian language on a global scale**. Since its inception in 2001, this event has received annual High Patronage from the Office of the President of the Italian Republic. Each Week is dedicated to a different theme, which serves as a common thread for a rich program of lectures, exhibitions and meetings.

133. In this context, Italy has also launched the “**Stati Generali della Lingua Italiana**” (States General of the Italian Language in the World). It is a two-day forum of working sessions, discussion and study, with the contribution of experts, academics and representatives of the other bodies active together with MAECI in language promotion abroad, to take stock of the diffusion and challenges of Italian at the international level. Since 2014, four different editions have been organized (2014, 2016, 2018, 2021), each one on a different theme.<sup>47</sup>

### **4.3. POLICY PROPOSALS TO MOBILIZE THE ITALIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES**

134. Despite several initiatives, over time Italy has not traditionally devoted specific and sufficient strategic attention to managing and enhancing the network of communities of Italian origin around the world, as a number of governments around the world have done or are doing.

**This may represent a strategic “own goal”.**

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<sup>45</sup> Di Martino L., “Italian diaspora diplomacy: Italianness, political participation and international broadcasting”, 2017.

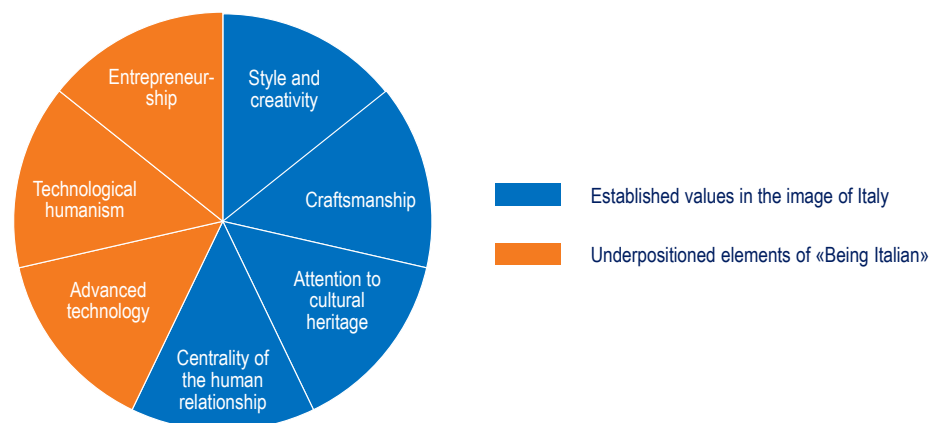
<sup>46</sup> The diplomatic-consular network and the Italian Cultural Institutes in collaboration with the main partners in language promotion (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Merit, Ministry of University and Research, CePeLL – Centre for the book and reading, Government of the Helvetic Confederation, Accademia della Crusca, CGIE, Italian-speaking Radio and Television Community, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, RAI Italia and Società Dante Alighieri).

<sup>47</sup> Themes to date: Italian in the Changing World; Italian, an Alive Language; Italian and the network, the networks for Italian.

135. In today's context of great geopolitical and economic change, each country must **make the best and fullest use** of all its tangible and intangible resources. For Italy, the "power of the diaspora" is a major strategic asset, on both an economic and relational level. Diasporas can contribute significant financial, intellectual and social capital to the development process. Italian policymakers **should increasingly recognize** the value that diaspora populations bring to development efforts at home and **consider this a national interest priority**.
136. To date, several governments around the world have taken an extra step in institutionalizing their engagement with the diaspora by creating special offices or directorates within government agencies (see also Chapter 3). Institutions were **created specifically to engage diasporas on a formal basis**, on different levels of government and with clear priorities and degrees of engagement. Countries like India or China have established ministries to address the needs of diaspora populations.
137. Cognizant of the experiences already implemented by several leading countries and governments across the globe, Italy must develop an action strategy for the management and empowerment of diaspora and the value they represent. The goals of diaspora engagement cannot be set in a vacuum and should be seen as an integral part of strategic planning **guided by a clear, long-term perspective**.
138. Such a strategy, dedicated to the relationships and needs of origin communities, must provide for an **effective coordination mechanism** between the various ministries involved: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy; Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry; Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education and Merit; and Ministry of University and Research.
- Effective diaspora management requires an organization that encompasses **multiple competencies with policies and actions that are coordinated and integrated** across all legislative and operational levels involved. This requires a special framework with **proper funding and resources** and a mechanism for continuous monitoring, evaluation and adaptation.
139. The strategy—with a flexible policy framework and country-specific plans—should be **dual level**, effectively implementing actions and initiatives at national and local government levels. In fact, descendants are often inclined to engage at the **local level** (region or city), usually in their place of origin, where they know the context best and, in many cases, still have family or cultural ties.
140. In addition, **understanding the needs, desires and potential of diaspora is an essential pre-requisite**. Concerted effort should be devoted to mapping and serious data collection focused on identifying the size and locations of the diaspora and also its members' skills, capacity and willingness to engage. Another

fundamental requirement is the ability to design effective policies and implement them on a **meaningful scale**.

141. Accomplishing this means initiatives must synergistically integrate formal and informal levers. Among potential initiatives are at least five levels on which further action can already be taken in the short term.
142. First, **additional effort should be directed toward the promotion of the image of Italy** in a more effective way and according to modern criteria, to represent the country as it is today and overcome current negative stereotypes and the “nostalgia effect”, while remaining strongly rooted to its origins.
143. The concept of “Being Italian”—i.e., the set of tangible and intangible characteristics related to culture, entrepreneurship, lifestyle and “know-how”—is a fundamental asset that enriches the country’s production chains, differentiating and distinguishing Italy’s products and services from those of its competitors. **“Being Italian” shapes the entire positioning of what Italy offers**, positively influencing it and strengthening its competitiveness and growth.
144. At the same time, the fundamental values of “Being Italian” that is, the elements which, as a whole, constitute the essence of “Italianness”, are **perceived in very different ways**. Some of them are uniquely Italian, such as style, creativity and the centrality of human relationships that are most reminiscent of the “savoir faire” and “savoir vivre” of Italians. Others, while strongly present in Italian products and services, are less identified as characteristic qualities and this undermines their contribution to what Italy offers overall to the benefit of other competitor countries. Specifically, innovation, entrepreneurship and technological humanism (a human-centered approach to technology development) are attributes to be enhanced in the image of Italy’s identity and foreign presence.



**Figure 33.** The founding values of “Being Italian” in the perception of Italy’s image. Source: elaboration The European House – Ambrosetti.

145. According to a study conducted by The European House – Ambrosetti<sup>48</sup> through a comprehensive survey and interviews of the top management of the international network of MAECI (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation including embassies, Italian Cultural Institutes and ICE offices) and Italian business leaders, the vast majority of those involved (7 out of 10) expressed the **priority need for a more integrated approach to promoting Italy**. Critical aspects emerging from the survey included the need to strengthen collaboration mechanisms between the business community and the diplomatic network, the need to reduce differences in perception around specific objectives and means of operation, and the urgent need to promote innovative and high-impact communication about Italy.
146. **The “power of the diaspora” fits perfectly within this context.** Primarily through their associations, diasporan communities typically have an up-to-date image of Italy. Moreover, descendants have a very positive view of the country, certainly based on ties to their roots and curiosity about rediscovering them, but also, simultaneously, on information drawn from multiple channels, both formal and informal.

The diaspora therefore plays a dual role. First, as the recipient of a coordinated full and updated information strategy by Italy focused on the cultural elements and aspects of fully “Being Italian”. Second, as an active participant and contributor to promoting Italy’s image in the world. In the first case, the goal is to create “involvement” of Italian descendants’ communities by having them perceive the essence of the country of origin of their ancestors, and stimulating a sense of closeness and affection. In the second case, providing full information coherent with the country’s development strategies can enable their role as informal “ambassadors” and positive enhancers of Italy’s influence and international presence that diaspora communities can play.

147. A second area of intervention is the **promotion of Italian language abroad**, which is one of the main instruments of cultural influence available to the country and is of priority interest to Italy’s international presence. As seen earlier, language is the foundation of a nation’s culture and values and therefore, the linguistic (and cultural) aspect is a means for exercising **soft power**. The dissemination of the **Italian language** around the world can be a very effective way to engage Italian communities abroad, because, through it, **Italian culture** is exported. In fact, knowledge of the Italian language represents the necessary key to get in touch with culture in a broader sense and to better understand the dynamics of “Italian Living”. An analysis of data on the spread of Italian throughout the world shows that **more than two million** foreigners choose to study Italian as a way to learn more about its extremely rich artistic and creative heritage.

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<sup>48</sup> The European House – Ambrosetti, *L’“essere italiano” come leva strategica per la crescita economica e la promozione internazionale del Paese*, 2018.



148. In this context, the network of Italian Cultural Institutes (ICCs) represents an operational tool of primary importance. Continuing to strengthen it (see section 4.2.) is a strategy **to be continued both in terms of broadening and developing the network as well as its effectiveness**. In comparison with the number of cultural institutes of other countries, the IIC presence abroad is clearly too low. In fact, currently across the globe there are **150** Institutes Français, **159** Institutes Goethe, **more than 200** British Councils and **541** Institutes Confucius. In addition, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocates **11-12 million Euros per year** to Italian Cultural Institutes abroad; the British Council receives around **150 million Pounds** annually in public funding, and the Institut Français and Instituto Cervantes offices also receive more than the IICs. There is also a significant difference in staffing: for instance, **5** people work at the IIC in Munich, **19** at the Institut Français in the same city, and **20** at the Instituto Cervantes.

149. **Integration and dialogue among all networks involved in the presence and dissemination of the Italian language in the world**,<sup>49</sup> must also be optimized, starting with the Dante Alighieri Society, which is composed of over 500 committees, more than 400 of which are active abroad on all five continents.<sup>50</sup>

	Countries	Foreign Offices
Confucius Institute	142	541
Institut Français	161	219
British Council	>100	>200
Goethe-Institut	98	150
Istituti Italiani di Cultura	63	85

Figure 34. Distribution of cultural institutes of selected countries. Source: *The European House – Ambrosetti elaboration on various sources, 2023.*

150. An additional important area of improvement involves **dual citizenship**.

In 1930, the League of Nations proclaimed, “*it is in the interest of the international community to secure that all members should recognize that every person should have a nationality and should have one nationality only*”.<sup>51</sup> Over the latter part of

<sup>49</sup> Some shared initiatives have already been initiated. For instance, every year in the second week of October, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Accademia della Crusca, the Dante Alighieri Society and the Network of Representations and IICs abroad celebrate the Week of the Italian Language in the World. The XXIII edition (Oct. 16-22, 2023) will have the theme “Italian and Sustainability”, with the aim of promoting globally, through the Italian language, the culture of sustainability carried out by a country at the forefront of environmental issues.

<sup>50</sup> The Dante Alighieri Society was founded in 1889 on the initiative of a group of intellectuals led by Giosuè Carducci. Its institutional mission is the enhancement, promotion and dissemination of the Italian language and culture.

<sup>51</sup> League of Nations 1930 quoted in Koslowski 2003.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this view of dual citizenship was challenged and **today dual citizenship has grown substantially** (granted by less than 40 countries in the 1980s to more than 90 today) as countries increasingly recognize the value of international migration and seek to maintain ties with their diasporic communities to reap economic and political benefits.

The extension of dual citizenship is therefore an essential element of an effective strategy to connect or reconnect with diaspora populations. Dual citizenship evokes a **feeling of identity and connectedness** among diaspora members engaging with their country of origin. The recognition of dual citizenship also helps to build trust between a diaspora and its country of origin. By **treating descendants as part of an “extended-nation”, the likelihood that a beneficial and long-lasting bond can be forged is substantially higher.**

151. From the perspective of a descendant, dual citizenship offers concrete benefits. For instance, it eliminates the need to obtain a visa to return to the country of origin or allows the opportunity to purchase property and make investments more easily, and also provides the opportunity to contribute concretely to the political and social life of the nation. On the other hand, dual citizenship is beneficial for countries of origin as it evokes a feeling of inclusion in the homeland, a feeling that will lead descendants to seek connections and, thus, generate positive economic and social spillovers (see Chapter 2).

152. For instance, there is evidence that dual citizenship generates **greater economic benefit** at the macro and micro levels and is associated with a higher likelihood of return migration.<sup>52</sup> In addition, dual citizenship provides the **fundamental advantage of being immersed in the culture of two countries**. Members of diasporic communities often enjoy dual citizenship and see it as a way to promote the image of their ancestors' country of origin as a prime destination for tourists or, even, investment and activities. Dual citizenship also provides an opportunity to learn about the history of both countries, to learn two (or more) languages and to experience a different lifestyle. Finally, the extension of political rights by the country of origin of the descendants through dual citizenship helps maintain strong ties and can provide **better links between the governments of the country of settlement and the country of origin.**

153. **Italian Law 91/1992 allows an individual to be a citizen of more than one nation.** Italy thus recognizes, by law, the right and possibility of being a citizen of more than one state, that is, the right to have dual and even multiple citizenship.

Italian citizens who have become citizens of foreign countries lose their Italian citizenship only by express renunciation, which may be voluntary or imposed by the law of the foreign country whose citizenship they intend to acquire. Foreigners can

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<sup>52</sup> Leblang, 2013.

become Italian citizens without renouncing the citizenship they already hold, as long as the law of their country of origin allows it.

Italian law thus allows both its own citizens abroad and those who later become citizens to have dual citizenship, and thus to exercise the corresponding rights (and duties) when they decide to root their lives in a country other than that of their original nationality, provided that it is not prohibited by the other state. In addition, it should be noted that because Italy is a member state of the European Union, those who acquire Italian citizenship automatically become citizens of the European Union.

154. Given the above, dedicating more resources to the process for obtaining dual citizenship and streamlining its requirements may be highly beneficial for Italy. The country would benefit from having thousands and thousands of new citizens who in many cases feel a greater sense of pride in and attachment to Italy (with all the benefits to Italy that come with that pride).

155. By contrast, the timeline required to obtain Italian citizenship is a **lengthy (and sometimes cumbersome) process** that can take up to four or five years or even a further 12 to 24 months due to bureaucratic factors. In other countries, bureaucratic procedures are much easier and require less effort and time. In the UK, for instance, the process is generally completed within six months.

Therefore, **drawing inspiration from the best international benchmarks**, implementing any measures that would aid in meeting deadlines and streamlining bureaucratic procedures as a way to reduce the time required for obtaining Italian citizenship is important. Members of the diaspora may not fully understand local systems in their country of origin, and if these systems are overly bureaucratic, they can be a major barrier to diaspora engagement.

156. In addition, for years, resources to Italian consular posts have continued to be cut, a trend that has impacted their ability to efficiently deliver services. The Italian consular network has suffered over time from the cuts that have affected the entire Italian PA. Against an increase in activity (for example, AIRE members increased by around 50% between 2009 and 2020) there has been a reduction in personnel in consular offices of around 15% in the last 10 years.

It is necessary to **strengthen the network and reverse this negative trend**. Toward this, are the reactivation of some existing consular offices (for example, the Manchester Consulate which closed in 2014 and soon the Consulate in Madrid) and the opening of new ones (such as the Consular Chancellery of the Italian Embassy in Montevideo or the Consulate General in Curitiba). Equally positive is the new allocation of funds in the 2023 Budget Law which also authorizes a quota of 3150 units for the hiring of employees with permanent contracts to be included in diplomatic missions, consular offices, Italian Cultural Institutes and special diplomatic delegations.

157. A fourth area of action is the **empowerment of the relations between Italy** (seen as the entirety of national and local level government and institutions) **and the associations of Italian diasporic communities** in the world.

158. Diaspora engagement cuts across government policies and institutions in both countries of origin and destination, going far beyond the migration-development nexus. In this regard, diaspora associations are assuming an increasingly important role in co-development and cooperation processes between the countries of settlement and communities of origin. Therefore, these networks constitute **recognized parties in the dialogue with national and regional authorities**.

159. Equally important to the bureaucratic and organizational improvements indicated in the previous paragraphs is the **strengthening of relations, links and dialogue with associations representing Italian descendants' communities** through long-term formal, structural and ongoing mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of Italy's relational network and influence around the world, and benefit from informal diplomacy, as a priority of action.

160. **The role that these agents can play is potentially key on several levels.** For instance, they can improve communication and the working relationships among the members of the Italian diaspora and Italy. Similarly, they can offer the Italian diasporic network points of aggregation to promote better organization and "compactness" (easing their mobilization). They can keep their network informed about existing opportunities in Italy as well as in their countries of settlement. They can also facilitate the creation of networks that offer expertise relevant for Italy (e.g., scientific networks, investment networks, political networks, etc.) and offer positive advocacy for Italy, also encouraging members of the diasporic community to invest in the nation's development. Finally, they can share information and understanding, and provide support to Italian institutions to create shared initiatives and successfully engage in a mutually beneficial way.

161. In this context, it must be noted that, while diaspora organizations are becoming increasingly important players in their respective countries of residence and are making important contributions to both the country of origin and of settlement, their funding streams often overlap with those designed for other non-state players. Diaspora organizations thus face the challenge of ensuring their long-term financial resources and often rely on donor funding to realize their activities. This can limit their scope of action and operational flexibility and make long-term planning difficult.

Making sure that the organization is financed through private sources (e.g., membership fees, donations, crowdfunding), but also with dedicated public funds, can be an important objective in ensuring organizational vitality and financial resilience and, as such, safeguarding their contributions towards the country of origin.

162. For this, and as part of Italy's strategic vision towards its diaspora, a **measure of financial support** should be envisaged, with structured funding mechanisms from the Italian government to leading Italian diaspora organizations.

**Healthy and strong diaspora organizations do, in fact, constitute an extra lever available to the country to activate economic, industrial, political and cultural energy and as a force for positive change.** Therefore, these financial mechanisms should be equipped with **funds adequate to the strategic objectives of national interest to be pursued** and offer long-term stability to obviate the problems and uncertainty of annual refinancing.

International experience shows that these types of financial mechanisms are envisaged and developed within the overall management and engagement strategies of diaspora networks, thus representing an **integral part of them** (as for example in the French model—see paragraph 3.2, point 85). Furthermore, **resources should be allocated according to priority criteria** that take into account, at least, the geo-economic and strategic importance of the country where the diaspora community is based, the potential for collaboration with Italy and the quality of representation and track record that the funding recipient organization represents.

163. Finally, a fifth area of empowerment is the support and development of programs and initiatives in the field of **research and education**, with the involvement of Italian universities, research facilities and associations of Italian researchers abroad, to leverage the resources of the diaspora. Culture in the broadest sense can in fact represent the transversal “glue” of the many “souls” of the Italian diaspora, and training and research activities represent a privileged and effective channel of involvement of this network for the mutual benefit of the country.

164. Several initiatives have been implemented in this area. One is the initiative already mentioned of **LUISS University** which has announced the offer of special scholarships for foreign students of Italian origin (see point 46).

Another notable example involves the **University of Pisa** which has signed a strategic, three-year agreement with the **Italian Scientists and Scholars in North America Foundation (ISSNAF)** with the aim of strengthening and stimulating the emergence of projects and experiences in both the educational and scientific spheres between the Italian university and some of the most prestigious American scientific entities.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> ISSNAF is an influential nonprofit organization founded in 2007 by 36 scientists (including four Nobel laureates) whose mission is to connect and empower the Italian intellectual diaspora in North America and to maintain a shared identity and common culture within this community. The ISSNAF Foundation spans the entire United States and Canada and can count on a network of thousands of scholars and researchers in many academic fields and several major research institutions in North America. In addition, since the year of its founding, ISSNAF has facilitated connections between young researchers from Italy and its network of North American scholars, organizing events to promote networking and facilitating academic, scientific and technological cooperation between Italy and North America in order to increase the visibility and prestige of Italian research in North America.

This positive model of **scientific-educational cooperation** should be promoted and replicated by other Italian universities and research centers, as well as additional public and private entities, with the many associations of Italian researchers distributed across Europe and around the world. The scope for action in this field is particularly significant, as are the potential benefits.<sup>54</sup>

165. In addition, and as a complement to the above, there is a need to **provide continuity and further strengthen** ongoing initiatives that Italian governments have promoted in recent years, such as the program dedicated to genealogy tourism, and, at the same time, activate new initiatives at national level that are well-publicized abroad, including using digital contact tools.

166. An overarching theme being pursued by many countries regarding diaspora engagement is the increasing formalization, professionalization and capacity development of diaspora engagement structures, frameworks and personnel. In fact, the “institutionalization” of diaspora engagement occurs through the creation of structures specifically meant to address this issue.

The national institutional framework and enabling environment must be developed with the explicit recognition of the key role of the diaspora in the nation’s development. Within this framework, **mobilizing and creating multi-stakeholder partnerships** among potential public and private stakeholders in different sectors is crucial because of the ability to **create coalitions of partners who share common interests**. Literature review shows that several of the most significant stories of diaspora involvement in development also occur outside of institutions. However, policies can encourage and facilitate diaspora projects. By identifying and reaching out to emerging networks, governments can provide guidance and resources to assist them in scaling up.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> For example, among the institutions: ARIA-SA—Association of Italian Researchers in Australasia-South Australia: The aim of the association is to promote scientific cooperation between Italy and Australia by providing a point of contact for Italian and Australian researchers and between institutions, research organizations and companies in the two countries; ARIB—Association of Italian Researchers in Brazil: The Association of Italian Researchers in Brazil (ARIB) was born in June 2016 from an idea of Dr. Roberto Bruno, Scientific Attaché of the Italian Embassy in Brasilia, and a group of Italian researchers living in Brazil. ARIB is a non-profit association, open to all Italian researchers with interests in Brazil and Brazilian researchers with significant experience in Italy; ARPICO—Society of Italian Researchers & Professionals in Western Canada: Arpico is a non-profit association in Western Canada that aims to spread awareness of research activities that involve Italians or could be of interest to the Italian community. The association provides an informal forum for discussion, debate and exchange of ideas on modern societal issues to facilitate networking and dialogue among researchers, practitioners and institutions; CSIC—Italian Scientific Community in Canada-Québec: the first Canadian association of Italian researchers created with the aim of being a reference point for those currently residing in Quebec and a link to the Italian reality. Since its first meetings in 2005, the association has a membership of nearly two hundred researchers. CSIC promotes the development of exchange programs and collaboration between students, academics and professionals working in Quebec and Italy; RÉCIF—Réseau des Chercheurs Italiens en France: RÉCIF is a network of people, ideas and projects, created in 2014 with the aim of bringing together Italian researchers and professionals working in France in the fields of research, business and culture.

<sup>55</sup> IOM, *Global Best Practices in Diaspora Engagement*, 2021.

## CONCLUSIONS

167. **As in the past, migration today plays a key role in the sustainable development of countries of origin and destination.** Yet more so than in the past, the magnitude and depth of the challenges posed by the structural economic, political and social transitions affecting our era require maximizing the quantity and quality of resources available to a system-country and optimizing the relevant levers to mobilize them.

168. Despite its negative connotations and stereotypes, migration has always been at the heart of progress and movement forward. It helps to build connections, transform communities and empower people.<sup>56</sup>

169. Italy has been and remains a country of **high mobility of people**. In the past this has sometimes been seen as something to be ashamed of, the product of backwardness or necessity and therefore to be kept under wraps.

In reality, as this position paper shows, the Italian diaspora has brought development and prosperity to the world through an **active and significant contribution in the countries of the world where it has settled**. Today the legacy of those migrations represents a community of people perfectly rooted abroad, often with roles of power or influence, but who feel a cultural and emotional closeness to the country of origin of their ancestors.

170. **Diasporas should no longer be seen as “lost talent”, but as established assets.** “Brain drain” should be reconceptualized as “brain circulation” in recognition of a mutually-beneficial relationship. The “power of the global Italian diaspora” must be seen and interpreted as a strategic asset for Italy’s development and growth: **an extra lever available to the country to activate economic, industrial, political and cultural energy and a force for positive change.**

171. Increasing the interaction and integration between Italian diasporic communities and country strategies is central to strengthening and accelerating Italy’s development dynamics. Given this, Italy should aim to create an overall diaspora-friendly environment by establishing strategic, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks that encourage greater diaspora participation in the country’s development, with simplified channels, strengthened dedicated mechanisms and substantial funds, and an effective multi-channel (institutions, private sector, academic network and civil society) mobilization strategy.

172. **Strategies of continuous dialogue between Italy and the communities of its diaspora are needed.** Italy’s approach and strategic posture must necessarily be country-specific given the different realities of the diaspora, and must, at the same time, be shaped in consideration of the country’s geopolitical interests and

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<sup>56</sup> UNDP, “Engaging diasporas in local development”, 2020.

development priorities.

173. Because of this, **specific attention must be paid to the American continent**, where today the communities of Italian origin are particularly significant and, as part of this, to the **United States** for its strategic importance. Geography, areas of economic specialization and its diplomatic and peace contributions throughout history have made Italy a highly-strategic partner for the US. This is particularly true in the current context of the great-power competition. However, politics and economics are not everything. In fact, although public opinion is not very aware of this, the two countries are tied by a special relationship, forged by decades of cultural cross-fertilization and mutual benefits and where the diaspora has played an important role in creating and nurturing this over the years.
174. **Mutual trust is the basis of every prosperous, stable and reliable partnership**, both in human relations and in international relations, and it cannot be built overnight. It takes decades, if not more, to trust a power and Italy, together with its people who have emigrated over the years and who have played a fundamental role in forging many of the countries that have welcomed them, have at their disposal a value—that of the diaspora—still not fully exploited and which can contribute to the prosperous development of the nation and to its contribution and commitment to the West and the world.



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