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*Prefettura - UTG  
di Alessandria*



MINISTERO  
DELL'INTERNO

**Fondo europeo per l'integrazione di cittadini di paesi terzi  
Progetto "Da straniero a cittadino"**

# ITALY: User guide



**Istituto per la storia della resistenza e  
della società contemporanea  
in provincia di Alessandria  
"Carlo Gilardenghi"**

## Welcome to Italy!

Art. 1

Italy is a Democratic Republic founded on work. Sovereignty belongs to the people, who exercise it in the forms within the limits of the Constitution.

Art. 3

All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions.

It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of the economic or social nature which, limiting the freedom and equality of the citizens, impede the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country.

Art. 11

Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other people and as a means for settling international controversies; it agrees, on conditions of equality with other states, to the limitations of sovereignty necessary for an order that ensures peace and justice among Nations and it promotes and encourages international organizations with these purposes.

These articles summarize some of the main principles in the **Constitution of the Italian Republic**.

The Republic was elected by the Italian population through a referendum on the 2nd of June 1946 and for this reason this day is a public holiday. In addition, woman voted for the first time on that day.

Another public holiday in Italy is the 25th of April, to celebrate the liberation from Fascism and Nazism.

In Rome, capital of Italy, the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 and established the European Economic Community which today is known as the European Union. At the end of 2013 the member states of the European Union were 28.



From the second half of the 19th century, up until the first World War and in the decades after the Second World War, Italy was a country characterized by immigration, both abroad and within its own borders, from north to south and east to west. Since the 90s it has become a destination for many immigrants from various parts of the world.



Any foreign national who enters Italy for the first time signs an Integration Agreement. It is an agreement between the foreign national who is above 16 years of age and the Italian Republic. It is based on the European Union principle which Italy conforms to, which states that: Integration is a principal of mutual alignment which involves both the foreign national and the European citizen. This means that the foreign nationals must participate in public life and have rights and responsibilities towards the Italian State and at the same time the society which embraces them must guarantee them access to learning of the Italian language, the laws and the functioning of the services.

Adherence to this agreement is evaluated every two years whereby the foreign national must prove:

- sufficient knowledge of spoken Italian
- sufficient knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution and organization of the State
- sufficient knowledge of civil life with particular reference to healthcare, education, social services, work and taxes
- comply with the laws on compulsory education for minors

In addition, the person concerned undertakes to comply with the principles and regulations set out in the Charter of the Values of Citizenship and Integration.

The State enables the person concerned to reach these obligations by guaranteeing free-of-charge participation in courses at the Permanent Regional Centres, videos and brochures in all foreign languages.

For further information about the Integration Agreement please visit [www.interno.gov.it](http://www.interno.gov.it) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs where you can find information in 19 different languages.



Italy is composed of 20 regions which are subdivided into provinces. The regional capital of Piedmont (a region in North-West Italy) is Turin. Alessandria is a province in Piedmont and aside from Alessandria which is the capital of the province other important cities are: Casale, Acqui Terme, Novi Ligure, Ovada and Tortona. Seravalle Scrivia is the town with the highest percentage of foreign nationals in the province.

The Integration Agreement is signed together with a Residence Permit with duration of no less than one year. Once signed the document is delivered in two copies one of which is for the Prefecture and the other for the foreign national who can choose his/her preferred language amongst the languages available according to the Ministry.

The Integration Agreement is signed at the One-Stop Shop for Immigration of the Prefecture in Via Piacenza 31 – Alessandria (in the case of work permits or family re-union), or at the Central Police Station in Via Lamarmora 71 – Alessandria (for freelance work permits, family cohesion or other reasons).

The Prefecture and the Central Police Station are the reference points in the area for foreign nationals and it is where Residence Permit renewal, Family re-union requests or Italian Citizenship requests are dealt with.

Once the Residence Permit is awarded, it is important to go to the Municipality where the foreign national will be signed up to the Residence Registry and thereafter can obtain identity documents, family state declaration, registry office certificates etc. In some municipalities there are intercultural mediation services where specialized staff speak the most common foreign national languages.



In Alessandria the Foreigner Information Desk can be found in Piazza della Libertà 1

In Casale Monferrato the municipality is in via Mameli 10 and the Foreigner Information Desk is in Via Martiri di Nassirya 8.

In Novi Ligure the municipality is in Via Giacometti 22, in Tortona it's in Via Alessandria 62, in Valenza its in Via Pellizzari 2, in Ovada it's in Via Torino 69 and in Seravalle Scrivia it's in Via Berhoud 49. The Employment Centre is another important registry to subscribe to in order to receive assistance in finding a job. In Alessandria it is in Via Cavour 17, in Tortona in Via Marsala 22, in Novi Ligure it's in Via Oneto 29, in Acqui Terme it's in Via Crispi 15, in Casale Monferrato it's in Via Magnocavallo 11/13, in Ovada it's in Via Pietro Nenni 12/16 and in Valenza it's in Via 9 Febbraio 16.

In every municipality there are social services which assist people and families in need of help for various reasons such as poverty, disability or abuse.

The Italian and European laws protect every citizen's health. Legal Foreign nationals with Residence Permits can subscribe to the National Healthcare Service and therefore choose a general practitioner and a pediatrician for their children. The health care provided by the ASL requires the payment of a ticket based on income, however, if income is too low, exemption from payment may be requested.

For the subscription to the National Healthcare System and the choice of the general practitioner it is necessary to go to the following ASL-AL branches: Alessandria - Via Pacinotti 38; Acqui Terme - via Alessandria 1; Casale Monferrato - via Palestro 41; Novi Ligure - via Papa Giovanni XXIII (23); Ovada - Via XXV(25) aprile 22; Tortona - via Milazzo 1; Valenza - viale Santuario 67/69.

The emergency room is open 24 hours a day for emergencies. The telephone number to call for an ambulance is 118. When a person arrives at the emergency room he/she will be attended to by a specialized nurse who will collect information on the health problem and assign a color code based on the urgency of the problem: red for urgent, yellow for rather critical, green for slightly critical and white for not urgent.



It is very important that these services be used exclusively for emergencies or severe situations. This is to avoid overcrowding, needless waiting and mostly to allow the most severe cases and emergency situations to be attended to first. For any other health problem consult the general practitioner, the pediatrician or other health services. It is also very important to prevent health problems by having a healthy lifestyle which means healthy eating, not smoking or drinking too much alcohol and doing exercise. Another way of preventing health problems is having regular check ups done, for example the papsmeat test and mammography for woman. This can avoid many illnesses or help to cure them in the early phases of development where the possibility of a cure are greater.

In Alessandria the hospital can be found in Via Venezia and there is also a Children's Hospital in Spalto Marengo where intercultural mediators are always available if necessary.

Pregnant women are covered too and can go to the Family Counselling centre where they will be assisted by specialized staff and intercultural mediators. All the basic tests for pregnant women are free of charge. Family Counselling centre there are also activities for the health of the woman, the couple and the family. There is a vaccination service where parents are invited to take their children to have vaccinations done to prevent many infectious diseases.



In Italy all children must go to school and school is compulsory and free from 6 to 16 years of age. Many children start pre-school at 2 or 3 years old and school for this age group is also free of charge. If both parents work the children can go to nursery school from the age of 3 months. After completing compulsory primary school or after 16 years of age, children can attend public highschools free of charge and can choose amongst various types of highschools based on their aptitude where they will be able to obtain a diploma which is very important in the working world. Universities require payment based on income but worthy students with low income can receive bursaries.



Adults can also attend school to continue learning at all ages and this can be done at the Permanent Regional Centres for Adult Education where foreign nationals can learn Italian and civic culture, attend courses to obtain a primary school certificate, a high school certificate, learn other languages or IT technology etc.

The following are the headquarters of the Permanent Regional Centres in this province: Alessandria- spalto Rovereto 63; Casale Monferrato – via Gonzaga 21; Acqui Terme – via Marengo 2 which has other branches in Tortona, Ovada and Novi Ligure.

For all necessary information regarding school enrollment for children, teenagers and adults go to the office of the public school nearest your home. Very often the school offices have translated brochures and documents in various languages and during the school year intercultural mediators are available.

By signing the Integration Agreement the foreign national commits to respecting the Charter of the Values of Citizenship and Integration. But what exactly is this document about? The Charter of Values was created to summarize and clarify all the fundamental principles on which civil life in Italy is based. These principles derive from the Constitution of the Italian Republic and European and International Charters on Human Rights with particular regard to those problems that can arise from the cohabitation of different cultures.



The fundamental values of civil cohabitation in Italy are freedom, equality and respect for the dignity of every human being. For this reason Italy provides for the support of the weak in particular woman and children and people who are victims of discrimination and oppression, for example, refugees from war stricken countries or countries under dictatorship. Italy, as a country tries to support people who live in conditions of poverty because every person has the right to a respectable and dignified life.

Equality means having the same rights and responsibilities...men, woman, Italians and foreigners.

Men and woman are the same before the law and have the same rights within the family, in society and in the workplace.

Every person who lives in Italy has the right to express and practice their culture and religion, with respect to other people. The State is non-religious and all religions are the same before the law. Every religious symbol is respected as well as every form of clothing, although, it is forbidden to cover the face in public places as this prevents recognition of a person.

Every form of violence is prohibited both inside and outside the family.

Education is a fundamental right for the growth of every person and his/her inclusion into society and for this reason every child must respect the obligation of schooling as described above. It is a duty of the parent to enable the children to go to school. School is the place where children and teenagers, foreign and Italian, learn to build the future society.

Work is also a fundamental right of all citizens and must be done abiding to the law. Non-contractual jobs or any form of discrimination or exploitation are forbidden.

Racism and Xenophobia in all their forms will be opposed.

Every person has the right to receive essential healthcare in public facilities. All forms of bodily mutilation, which are not for medical reasons, are forbidden.

Italy is against war and takes part, at an international level, in a peaceful resolution to all conflict.

In Italy torture or capital punishment are not practiced as in every other European country. Europe and Italy are striving for these to be abolished in the rest of the world too so that Human Rights can be respected and Democratic States, which allow everyone to participate in political activities, can be formed.

In Italy, participation in civil life is created through associations. Many people, Italian and foreign, are involved in voluntary associations that are active in many fields such as health, social, cultural and sports. With an increase in immigration many associations were created and their objective is to advertise and teach the traditions and language of the country of origin. Others were created to enhance the exchange between Italians and foreigners but also between foreigners of different countries and cultures. Living in Italy is also going to a party, a concert or an intercultural conference....and why not - with a delicious intercultural snack!

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