Overview

Between 1 January and 31 December 2018, 23,370 persons arrived in Italy by sea. This is an 80 per cent decrease compared to sea arrivals in the same period last year (119,369). In the first half of the year, monthly arrival numbers ranged from 1,049 in April 2018 to 4,189 in January 2018. In the second half of the year, the numbers of monthly arrivals decreased further. Notably, in December 2018, 359 refugees and migrants were recorded at landing points in southern Italy.

Nationality of arrivals

In 2018, 22 per cent of all arrivals originated from Tunisia, followed by Eritrea (14 per cent), Iraq (7 per cent), Sudan (7 per cent), Pakistan (7 per cent), Nigeria (5 per cent), Algeria (5 per cent), Côte d’Ivoire (5 per cent), Mali (4 per cent), and Guinea (4 per cent). In 2017, the most common nationalities of sea arrivals were Nigeria, Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Bangladesh, Mali, Eritrea, Sudan, Tunisia, Senegal, and The Gambia. The numbers of arrivals from Nigeria and western African countries have significantly decreased this year. While over 18,000 Nigerians were registered at landing points in 2017, their number dropped to 1,250 in the same period this year. The numbers of Eritreans reaching Italian shores have also halved, from over 7,000 in 2017 to 3,320 in 2018. Notably, there were no arrivals by sea of Nigerian or Eritrean nationals in December 2018. Furthermore, the numbers of Tunisian nationals arriving by sea dropped from 6,150 in 2017 to 5,200 in 2018. However, in 2018, Tunisians are proportionally higher than in 2017, representing 22 per cent of sea arrivals, compared to 5 per cent last year.
Country of embarkation and demographics of arrivals

While Libya remains the main country of departure for persons arriving in Italy by sea, departures from Libya have dropped significantly compared to last year. In 2018, 56 per cent of sea arrivals (12,977 persons) crossed from Libya, compared to 91 per cent (108,409 persons) last year. The most common departure sites in Libya for individuals reaching Italian shores in 2018 were Zuwarah, Garabulli, and Al Khums. In December 2018, none of the sea arrivals in Italy had departed from Libya.

The proportion of departures from Tunisia increased from 4 per cent in 2017 period to 25 per cent in 2018 period. Most refugees and migrants departing from Tunisia embarked in Zarzis, followed by Sfax and Kerkennah, normally reaching the island of Lampedusa. Another 20 per cent of 2018 sea arrivals embarked from other countries, including most commonly Turkey (12 per cent of 2018 sea arrivals), but also Greece (5 per cent) and Algeria (3 per cent). Refugees and migrants departing from Turkey most commonly embarked in Antalya and Izmir, while most departures from Greece to Italy were registered in Patras and Corfu. Annaba was the most common departure point in Algeria for individuals reaching Italian shores in 2018.

In 2018, most sea arrivals were men (72 per cent), followed by unaccompanied and separated children (15 per cent), adult women (10 per cent), and accompanied children (3 per cent). In 2018, 3,536 UASC reached Italian shores. Further information on UASC arrivals in Italy can be found in the December 2018 Italy – Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard.