

Emilia after a meeting with her parents, who had attempted to force her to marry a cousin in Pakistan. Prior to her disappearance, she contacted local social service centers and moved to a protected community. Her parents returned to Pakistan after her disappearance.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Authorities enforced laws prohibiting child sexual exploitation, the sale of children, child sex trafficking (offering or procuring a child for commercial sex), and practices related to child pornography.

Independent observers and the government estimated at least 4,000 foreign minors were victims of sexual exploitation, including child sex trafficking. According to the Department of Equal Opportunity, the number of child victims of trafficking who received assistance decreased from 105 in 2020 to 59 in 2021. The NGO Telefono Azzurro noted that the quantity of sexual abuse material published online almost doubled in 2021 compared to the previous year, and cases of pedophilia and sexual abuse reported to the organization almost tripled in 2021.

On January 15, police arrested a man responsible for child sex trafficking. He was sentenced to six years in jail for the sexual exploitation of foreign children in commercial sex. There were reports of child pornography. On January 29, authorities arrested two persons accused of sexual exploitation and of posting images of minors who were naked or having sexual intercourse with adults in two unrelated cases in Bari and Catania. In 2021, Postal Police reported 1,282 persons under investigation for online pedophilia, representing an 8 percent increase compared to 2020. Save the Children Italy reported that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated sexual exploitation and other abuses of children, who were often forcibly trapped unprotected in overcrowded apartments without access to health care. The minimum age for consensual sex is 14, or 13 if the age gap with the partner is less than three years.

Displaced Children: The Ministry of the Interior reported 5,460 unaccompanied children arrived in the country between January and August 28. As of June 30, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies reported the presence in the country of 15,595 unaccompanied minors, of whom 80 percent were boys. Approximately

one-third were displaced Ukrainian children. Authorities located 3,087 of the 4,410 foreign minors who were reported missing between January and June leaving 1,323 at risk of labor and sexual exploitation, including trafficking (see section 2.e).

Antisemitism

There were approximately 27,000 Jews in the country. The law criminalizes the public display of the Fascist stiff-armed Roman salute and the sale or display of Fascist or Nazi memorabilia. Convictions may result in imprisonment from six months to two years, with an additional eight months if Fascist or Nazi memorabilia were sold online. The coordinator to combat antisemitism acknowledged the judicial system often did not follow up on such charges. The Presidency of the Council of Ministers in its final report from the technical working group for the recognition of the definition of antisemitism approved by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance noted the rules of the criminal code “do not adequately cover the reasons or purposes of antisemitic discrimination or hatred or antisemitic prejudice.”

Antisemitic societal prejudices persisted. Some extremist fringe groups were responsible for antisemitic remarks and actions, including physical violence against Jews, vandalism of Jewish-owned business and synagogues, and publication of antisemitic material on the internet. The Observatory on Antisemitism, part of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation, reported 150 antisemitic incidents between January and August 31, including acts of violence.

On May 20 in Milan, two men assaulted and spat on a Jewish man wearing a kippah and yelled profanities at him. The victim required hospitalization. On January 25, two teenage girls physically assaulted and verbally insulted a Jewish child in the province of Livorno, telling him to “shut up and die in the ovens.” On August 25, several Jewish organizations reported receiving an email containing death threats.

Internet hate speech and bullying were the most common forms of antisemitic attacks, according to the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation. The center reported four cases of insults on the internet and 27 cases of graffiti against Jewish residents during the first half of 2022. Most incidents occurred during Jewish holidays or celebrations. Antisemitic slogans and graffiti appeared in some cities, including Milan, Rome, and Genoa. More than 2,000 police officers regularly guarded synagogues and other Jewish community sites in the country.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics

Criminalization: The law does not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

Violence against LGBTQI+ Persons: NGOs advocating for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons reported instances of societal violence, discrimination, and hate speech. UNAR received 162 reports on cases of discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals between January and June. On May 17, the website Gay.it reported that during the previous 12 months it had received approximately 20,000 calls and online messages, 64 percent of which concerned discrimination against members of the gay community and 12 percent of which concerned discrimination against transgender individuals. Approximately 35 percent of requests for help involved cases of discrimination in the workplace, 15 percent concerned cases of mobbing, blackmail, and revenge porn, 19 percent assaults, and 15 percent bullying.

The press reported cases of violence against LGBTQI+ individuals. Discrimination and violence against lesbian and bisexual women occurred. On May 8, NGO Tessere le Identita reported that one of its members was the victim of

assault; she was beaten and thrown down the stairs due to her sexual orientation. When LGBTQI+ persons reported crimes, authorities consistently investigated.

Discrimination: The law prohibits discrimination in the labor market by state and nonstate actors based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics and recognizes LGBTQI+ individuals, couples, and their families. The government enforced the law. The law does not punish discrimination in other sectors such as education and housing and incitement to commit violence on the same ground.

Availability of Legal Gender Recognition: Legal gender recognition is available, but individuals must petition a court with jurisdiction over the matter. Self-determination is not allowed. An individual may petition for sex reassignment surgery or, where surgery is not desired, for a legal name change and gender marker update. Courts decide considering gender dysphoria and irreversible identification with the perceived gender. The petition must include psycho-diagnostic and medical documentation attesting to the path of gender affirmation, irreversible willingness to rectify legal sex, and definitive and irreversible identification with the experienced gender. For the first time on March 7, the Court of Rome recognized a person's gender as nonbinary and held that individuals could have their legal gender recognized without the need to undergo gender-affirming surgery or hormone therapy.

Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices Specifically Targeting LGBTQI+ Individuals: There were no reports of involuntary or coercive medical, or psychological practices specifically targeting LGBTQI+ individuals.

Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly
The law does not restrict freedom of expression, association, or peaceful assembly for LGBTQI+ individuals.

Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and the law require authorities to provide access to education, health services, public buildings, and transportation to persons with disabilities on an equal basis. The government enforced these provisions effectively, but there were incidents of societal and employment discrimination. Although the law mandates access to government buildings and public transportation for persons with disabilities, physical barriers continued to pose challenges, and government information was not always provided in an accessible format. On April 19, the NGO Assoutenti sued a group of tourists seated in an area of a train reserved for those with disabilities who allegedly refused to give up their seats to seven persons with disabilities. The press and social media reported several cases of escalators and elevators out of order in public buildings and persons with disabilities being denied access to public transportation and other services. On August 4, police arrested four employees of a nursing home in Manfredonia accused of having repeatedly insulted and beaten persons with disabilities. One of the employees was also accused of sexual violence.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law provides for the right of workers to establish and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. Antiunion discrimination is illegal, and employees fired for union activity have the right to request reinstatement. A law passed on April 28 provides for the right for members of the armed forces to establish independent unions.

By law, strikes impacting essential public services (such as transportation, sanitation, and health services) require longer advance notification than in other sectors; the law also prohibits multiple strikes within days of each other in those services. The law only allows unions that represent at least one-half of the transit workforce to call a transit strike.

The government effectively enforced laws protecting freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike for workers. The penalties were commensurate with those provided under other laws involving denials of civil rights, although administrative and judicial procedures were sometimes subject to lengthy delays. Penalties were regularly applied against violators and judges effectively sanctioned the few cases of violations that occurred.

The government generally respected freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, although there were instances in which employers unilaterally annulled bargaining agreements. Employers continued to use short-term contracts (according to official government labor statistics, 3.16 million of 23.2 million employees in July were employed on short-term contracts, the highest value since 1977) and often turned to subcontracting to avoid hiring workers with bargaining rights.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits and criminalizes all forms of forced or compulsory labor, and the government effectively enforced the law. Actual sentences given by courts for forced and compulsory labor were significantly lower than those provided by law.

The law provides stiff penalties for illicit intermediaries and businesses that exploit agricultural workers, particularly in the case of forced labor but also in cases of general exploitation. It identifies the conditions under which laborers may be considered exploited and includes special programs in support of seasonal agricultural workers. The law punishes so-called *caporalato*, the recruitment of agricultural workers who are illegally employed at subminimum wages and required to work long hours without premium pay or access to labor or social protections. Penalties range from fines to the suspension of commercial and business licenses and in some cases imprisonment.

According to NGO reporting, workers were subjected to debt bondage in construction, domestic service, hotels, restaurants, and agriculture, especially in the southern part of the country. The practice has reportedly spread to other sectors

and regions. There were media reports that a limited number of People's Republic of China nationals were forced to work in the textile sector and that criminal groups coerced persons with disabilities from Romania and Albania into begging. In 2021 in the southeastern region of Sicily, 30,000 workers on approximately 5,500 farms worked through the pandemic for as little as 15 euros (\$15) per day. During the year, immigrant workers were subjected to exploitation. There were anecdotal reports of labor contracts of 200 euros (\$200) per month for 10-12 hours of work per day at beach facilities in Calabria. On some occasions, employers reportedly refused to pay workers. There were also reports of children subjected to forced labor (see section 7.c.).

In 2021, inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and the Carabinieri identified 2,192 victims of labor exploitation or *caporolato*, up 18 percent from 2020. The government attributed the increase in identification to the end of COVID-19 restrictions that made labor inspection activities more difficult. Of the identified victims, 380 were undocumented migrant workers. The inspections office of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies identified 1,680 unregistered workers.

According to the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), a national trade union, 81 cases of exploitation resulted in criminal proceedings in 2021, a decrease from 114 cases in 2020. The CGIL claimed that in 2021 there were 14 complaints filed directly by workers, whereas there were 12 complaints in 2020.

The government, through the inspector's office of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, continued to focus on forced labor, especially in the agricultural sector. The government provided a system to legalize undocumented foreign workers in the country. In 2021 more than 220,000 migrant workers applied for legal status through the program. The government estimated there were 600,000 undocumented migrants in the country.

Government labor inspectors and labor organizations expressed concerns that lockdown measures related to COVID-19 made migrant workers more vulnerable

to exploitation. Some migrant workers were designated “essential” by an emergency measure, thereby allowing accelerated processing times to obtain legal working status. This provision put them at risk of further exploitation, including employer blackmail. According to press reports, some employers manipulated and blackmailed migrant agricultural workers and care givers to obtain employer signatures on applications.

In 2020 a three-year plan (2020-22) revitalized the government’s efforts to fight labor exploitation and other illegal practices in the agricultural sector. Based on the plan, the European Commission and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies funded projects to coordinate labor inspections with law enforcement agencies and the private sector. As a result of the inspections in central and southern Italy, 418 individuals were summoned for prosecution in 2021 from January 1 to December 31.

Also see the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits all of the worst forms of child labor and includes a minimum age for employment, including limitations on working hours, and occupational safety and health restrictions for children. The minimum age for employment is 16 and applies to children in all sectors.

Children between the ages of 16 and 18 are limited to working eight hours a day or 40 hours a week. There are specific restrictions on employment in hazardous or unhealthy occupations for minors, such as activities involving potential exposure to hazardous substances, mining, excavation, and working with power equipment.

The government effectively enforced laws related to child labor in the formal economy. Penalties were commensurate with those for analogous serious crimes. Penalties were regularly applied against violators. Enforcement was not effective in the relatively extensive informal economy, particularly in the southern regions

of the country and in family-run agricultural businesses.

There were reports of child labor during the year, primarily in migrant and Roma communities. In 2021, labor inspectors and Carabinieri officers identified 114 underage laborers, of whom 58 were working in the services sector (hotels and restaurants). The remainder primarily worked in the art, sports, and entertainment sectors. Inspectors also identified 141 child workers with disabilities, mostly in the manufacturing sector.

The law provides for the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors and creates a system of protection that manages minors from the time they arrive in the country until they reach the age of 21 and can support themselves. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies recognized that unaccompanied minors were vulnerable to child labor exploitation and worked to prevent abuse by placing them in protected communities that provided education and other services. The law also created a roster of vetted and trained volunteer guardians at the juvenile court level to help protect unaccompanied minors.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The law prohibits discrimination with respect to employment and occupation, based on race, religion, national origin, color, sex (including pregnancy), ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV or AIDS status, or refugee or stateless status. The government effectively enforced applicable law. Penalties were commensurate with other laws related to civil rights, but the number of inspections was insufficient to provide adequate implementation. Penalties were regularly applied against violators.

There were media reports of employment discrimination based on race or ethnicity. Unions criticized the government for providing insufficient resources to the National Office against Racial Discrimination to intervene in discrimination cases and for the lack of adequate legal measures to address new types of discrimination.

Employment discrimination based on gender, religion, disability, sexual

orientation, and gender identity occurred. The government implemented some information campaigns, promoting diversity and tolerance, including in the workplace. In many cases, according to labor unions, victims of discrimination were unwilling to request the forms of protection provided by employment laws or collective contracts, due to fear of reprisal. According to Eurostat data for 2020, the most recent year available, the country's unadjusted gender pay gap was 4.2 percent.

In 2021, Ministry of Labor and Social Policies inspectors carried out 51,752 inspections related to labor and social security regulations and identified 245 working mothers and pregnant women during those inspections. The employment sectors with the most violations related to occupational discrimination included hospitality, wholesale and retail trade, but violations also occurred in the tourism and health- and home-care assistance sectors. According to CGIL, unions focused their efforts on protecting the rights guaranteed to workers under national labor contracts, including protecting the rights of transgender workers. The CGIL reported tax exemptions for companies hiring women led to an increase in women's employment. The union noted that such jobs were almost exclusively fixed-term or part-time contracts, rather than long-term, salaried employment.

Under law, harassment in the workplace is not considered a crime.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Wage and Hour Laws: The law does not provide for a minimum wage. Instead, collective bargaining contracts negotiated between unions and employers set minimum wage levels for different sectors of the economy. These minimum wages were above the poverty income level.

Unless limited by a collective bargaining agreement, the law sets maximum overtime hours in industrial firms at no more than 80 hours per quarter and 250 hours annually. The law prohibits compulsory overtime and provides for paid annual holidays. It requires rest periods of one day per week and 11 hours per day.

Occupational Safety and Health: The law sets occupational safety and health (OSH) standards and guidelines for compensation for on-the-job injuries. Occupational safety and health experts from government institutions were responsible for identifying unsafe situations and did so through inspections conducted by the same inspectors as wage and hour violations, under the same authorities. The government enforced regulations related to personal protective equipment requirements, in line with union negotiations and guidance from the Ministry of Health. In general, if documentation was provided workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety.

Occupational safety and health standards were appropriate for most sectors of the economy; however, government officials identified violations of safety standards in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

Migrant workers in the agricultural sector sometimes faced unsafe work conditions, including working outdoors for prolonged periods of time while being exposed to temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit and receiving wages below legal minimum wage requirements. In addition to farmworkers, unions and workers in the logistics sector expressed concerns regarding the grueling pace of work, work-related pain and injuries, and mental health issues as well as the lack of employment stability and security for temporary workers.

In 2021 there were 1,361 workplace deaths due to accidents as well as 349,643 reported incidents that resulted in injuries. Workplace deaths decreased by 19.2 percent from 2020 to 2021. The report of “traditional” fatal accidents, not related to the COVID-19 pandemic, increased by almost 10 percent.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement: The government effectively enforced minimum wage, overtime, and occupational safety and health laws. Penalties for violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence and were regularly applied against violators.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies is responsible for enforcement and, with regular union input, effectively enforced standards in the formal sector of the

economy. Labor inspections were jointly conducted by representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, the National Institute for Social Security (INPS), and the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL). In 2021, the national labor inspections unit consisted of 3,848 representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (2,294), INPS (942), INAIL (223), and the Carabinieri (389). The number of labor inspectors was sufficient to enforce compliance and inspectors have the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions.

In 2021, authorities completed 65,685 inspections, including 51,762 inspections related to labor and social security regulations and 13,924 inspections related to health and safety in the workplace. An additional 25,819 technical and administrative accounting checks were completed. Labor inspectors and Carabinieri officers inspected 117,608 companies (compared to 103,857 in 2020) (including agricultural firms) and identified 480,119 workers whose terms of employment were fully or partly in violation of labor law.

The government increased training for labor inspectors and Carabinieri and increased efforts to inform foreign agricultural workers of their rights. In July the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy launched an effort to hire 1,249 new positions including 1,174 technical inspectors, 50 statistical experts, and 25 data information experts. The Carabinieri received authorization to hire 90 additional units related to labor monitoring and enforcement.

Informal Sector: An August survey by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies identified 15,150 workers employed in the informal sector, of which 739 were undocumented immigrants. Workers employed in the informal economy were primarily identified in the agricultural, manufacturing, services, and construction sectors. Among informal employment cases identified, the share of female workers decreased from 40 percent in 2019 to 30 percent in 2021. Workers identified in the informal sector represented 26 percent of the 59,362 workers identified as not regularly employed workers in 39,052 inspections in the informal sector. Informal workers were often exploited and underpaid, worked in

unhygienic conditions, or were exposed to safety hazards.

Informal sector workers or those working part time are covered by wage, hour, OSH, and other labor laws and inspections. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies provided social protections for informal economy workers. However, enforcement of laws and provision of protection was limited due to the nature of informal work. Labor standards were partially enforced in the informal sector, especially in agriculture, construction, and services (hotel, bar, restaurant, transportation, and warehouse services), which employed an estimated 2.4 percent of the country's salaried workers and 0.7 percent of the country's self-employed workers (3.59 million).

Unions reported significant numbers of informal foreign workers living and working in substandard or unsafe conditions in some areas of Calabria, Puglia, Campania, and Sicily. According to statistics published by the National Institute of Statistics in 2021, the informal sector of the economy was responsible for more than 11 percent of the country's GDP. Of the sites inspected in 2021, labor inspectors found 70 percent of the jobs in the northeast were irregular, approximately 61 percent of jobs in the northwest were irregular, and nearly 60 percent of the jobs in the central and southern parts of the country were irregular.