

Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Commission for Intercountry Adoptions Central

Authority for the Hague Convention of 29.05.1993

Data and perspectives in Intercountry Adoptions

Summary Report
dossiers from 2016 to 2017

in collaboration with Istituto degli Innocenti



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Introduction

The analytical information that allowed the realization of this report comes from the files of foreign children authorized to enter and reside permanently in our country for adoption purposes that over the years the Commission for International Adoptions has systematized in a dedicated database. The analyses here proposed concern the data available for the two-year period 2016-2017, and concern the quantitative dimension and the main characteristics of the couples and children affected by the adoptive phenomenon.

During the two-year period considered, the contingent of adoptive couples and children who entered Italy for adoption confirm the downward trend observed in recent years. These data must necessarily put in relation to the international regressive scenario that has characterized adoption for almost a decade now. Within this context, however, the data relating to our country highlights some elements worthy of note: our country is placed at a global level, in terms of number of annual entries, behind the United States of America and in the European context in a position of marked pre-eminence with a value of annual adoptions more than double compared to France, the second country for entries into the union. If we promote a correct comparison between countries, by comparing the number of adoptions decreed to the resident population, Italy is the country with the highest rate of international adoption among those with significant entry flows - it is enough to say that Italy, with a population six times lower than that of the United States of America, decrees half of the international adoptions carried out in that country, while with a substantial parity of resident population with France and the United Kingdom, carries out in one year respectively three and fourth times the international adoptions decreed in those countries. Italy, finally, is the country that has experienced the lowest reduction in the last decade among those with a high flow of entry for adoption, although the decline is still very significant.

It is important to stress here that an interpretation of the adoptive phenomenon based solely on numerical data, ascribing an absolute negative connotation to the reduction in cases, risks adulterating the analysis of the phenomenon by shifting the emphasis from the quality of the adoption process to the quantity of adoptions carried out.

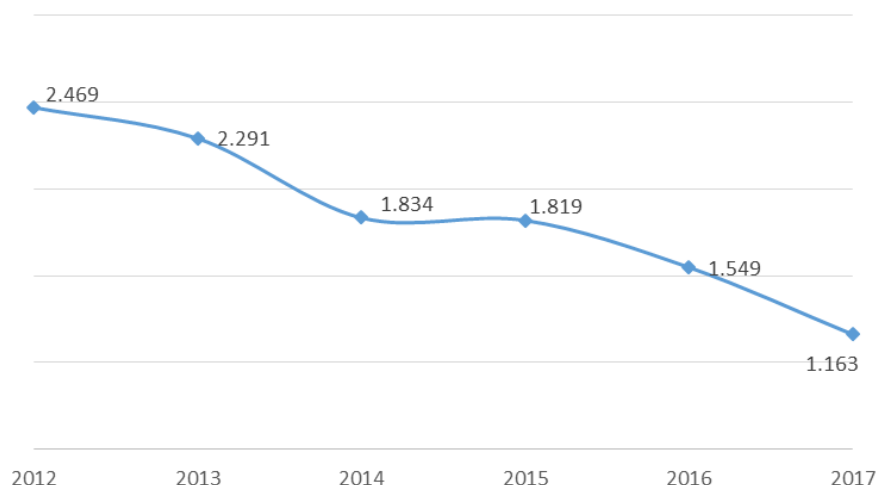
In this regard, over the last decade, the constant decline in the number of international adoptions has been due primarily to the internal transformations in the countries of origin, which have been influenced by political, economic and social factors, which are often in rapid and unpredictable evolution. However, it should not be taken for granted that these transformations are unavoidably negative. In fact, in many countries they are determined, for example, by the accession and ratification of the 1998 Hague Convention, by legislative changes aimed at making adoption procedures safer and more transparent, by the improvement of internal policies in favor of childhood and of national measures for the protection of children - it is not by chance that in many countries of origin there is an increase in national adoption and other forms of reception, such as family foster care, on their own territory, guaranteeing by this means a reception that does not involve the uprooting of the child, and leaving to the international adoption a more subsidiary, if not residual, task.

At international level, the reduction of the cases also depends on the internal dynamics of the receiving countries, for which there is a widespread lower tendency to international adoption due to many factors, including those within the family relating to the increasing instability of relationships, as well as the economic depression that has crossed most of the traditional receiving countries.

Adoptive couples: territorial distribution and main characteristics

The number of couples who applied to the Commission for International Adoptions for authorization of foreign minors to enter Italy in 2017, i.e. the number of couples who, in possession of the decree of eligibility, successfully completed the adoption process through the intermediation of an authorized body in the year has been 1,163 – they were 1,549 in 2016. The figure is inscribed in the progressive decline observed in recent years and, remaining within the perimeter of the last five years, marks a new minimum in the number of Italian adoptive couples with a reduction of 53% compared to couples in 2012 (2,469).

Figure 1 - Couples who have applied for permission to entry into Italy of foreign minors for adoption - Years 2012-2017



As highlighted in previous reports of the Commission, observing the trend of international adoption in the last six years, in the different regional contexts emerges as a cross-cutting element the generalized decline in the number of cases with extreme peaks in all territorial distributions: Lombardia (-61%) in the north-west, Trentino-Alto Adige (-50%) in the north-east, Lazio (-62%) in the center and Sicily (-64%) in the south and islands.

At territorial level, the data reflect the trends showed over the years. In 2017, adoptive couples from the northern regions¹ are the 47% of the total compared to 48% in 2016, with Lombardia as the region with the highest number of couples who applied for permission to

¹ Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Liguria and Emilia-Romagna.

enter in Italy for foreign minors (179). The regions of central Italy², including Tuscany in the first place with 124 adoptive couples, represent 25% of the total compared to 23% in 2016. Southern couples³ represent 27% of the total compared to 29% in 2016. The first representative region is Campania with 99 couples.

For what regards the annual national rate, in 2017 there was a value of 13.6 applicant couples for every 100,000 married couples aged 30-59, in progressive decline compared to previous years (in 2016 it was 18.1) and that confirms significant territorial differences between areas of central, northern and southern Italy. Above the regional average, Tuscany has the highest rate (25), followed by Friuli-Venezia Giulia (20.7) and Liguria (20.4). The lowest values are in Sicily (5.9), Sardinia (7.8) and Campania (10.8).

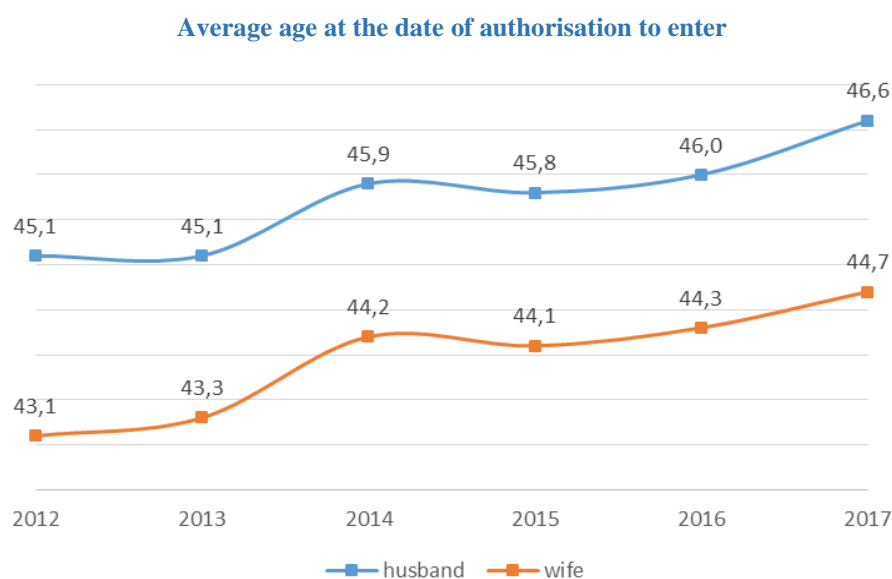
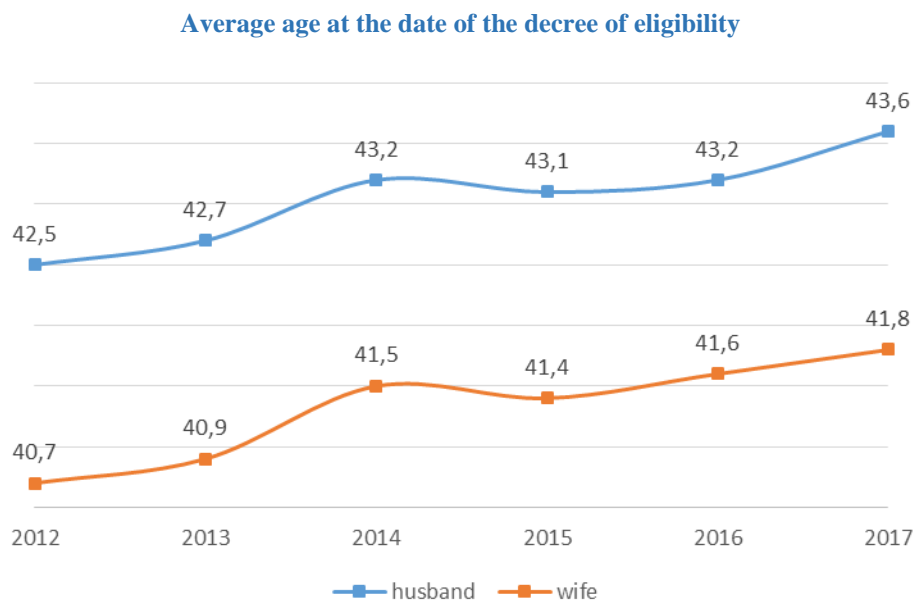
The data for the two-year period 2016-2017 confirm what has already been highlighted in the dynamics of some characteristics of the adoptive couples, such as the age at the date of the decree of eligibility and authorization to enter, the educational and the professional background. On the other hand, the impact on the type of decree, the presence of natural children and the number of children adopted do not change much. Specifically, we note that:

- increase in the age of the adoptive couples. The age group, at the date of the decree of eligibility, with bigger frequency for husbands and wives is the one of 40-44 years, respectively 40.1% and 40.5%. The average age of husbands is 43.6 years, the one of wives 41.8 years, with a slight increase in respect to 2016, with an average 43.2 for husbands and 41.6 for wives. The average age of the adoptive couples move forward about three years if we take into account the date of authorization to enter, in 2016 equal to 46 years for men and 44.3 for women while in 2017 they are respectively 46.6 and 44.7 years.

² Tuscany, Umbria, Marche and Lazio.

³ Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia.

Figure 2 - Average age of couples who have applied for authorisation to enter Italy for adoption of foreign minors at the date of the decree of eligibility and at the date of authorisation to enter - Years 2012-2017



- a high level of education, compared to the national average, is confirmed. In 2016, a prevalence of the upper secondary school diploma (47%) and the degree diploma (42%) emerged among husbands, while among wives there was even a priority prevalence of the

degree diploma (49%) and only later of the upper secondary school diploma (42%). In 2017, for husbands, the same percentages visibly weigh 45% of the total, for wives, the degree continues to weigh more reaching a percentage of 55%, while the secondary school degree weighs 38%.

- increase since 2016 the percentage of professions of the parents related to intellectual, scientific and highly specialised professions - measured based on the Istat classification of employment position. Also in this case, wives put themselves in a position of relative head start: among husbands there are 34.1% (29.7% in 2016) of intellectual, scientific and highly specialized professions, followed by 17.6% (16.3% in 2016) of employees and 16.6% (20.4% in 2016) of technical professions, while among wives there are 42.5% (36.1% in 2016) of intellectual, scientific and highly specialized professions, followed by 20.3% (21% in 2016) of employees and 13.4% (16.1% in 2016) of technical professions.

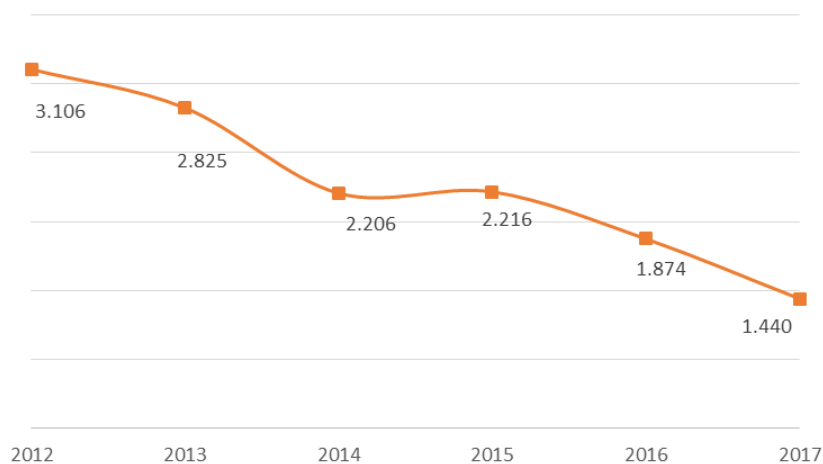
- in 2017 there was a slight increase in the number of adoptive couples in possession of a generic decree, which rose from 70.8% to 73.6% compared to the previous year. Also with respect to 2016, the percentage of couples in possession of a targeted decree remains unchanged (24%), i.e. a measure that specifies a certain country of origin rather than ethnicity, gender, a particular age or specific information on the child. As a result, the number of couples in possession of a named decree for the adoption of a specific child decreases in the two-year period considered from 4.9% to 2.3%.

Minors authorized to enter Italy for adoption purposes

In parallel with the decrease in the number of adoptive couples, the number of adopted children continues to decrease. In 2017, 1,440 children were granted permission to enter Italy for adoption and, in relation to the 1,163 couples mentioned above, there was an average of 1.23 children per couple. Compared to 2016 (1,187), the number of adopted children actually decreased by 23%, and if we consider 2012 as a reference, the number of adoptions in 2017 is more than halved (-54%).

The decrease in the number of adopted children is also confirmed by the contraction in the annual rate, which fell from 18.9 children adopted per 100,000 resident children in 2016 to 14.5 in 2017. Historically, the average annual rate for the five-year period 2006-2010 remains by far the highest, following the adoption boom with a peak in 2010, with a value of 36.7 children for every 100,000 residents, a good 22 points of difference compared to 2017. The strongest variations are recorded in Lombardy, which in this period of time goes from 47.6 to 12.5, in Liguria from 64.8 to 18.5, and in Molise from 49.0 to 2.3.

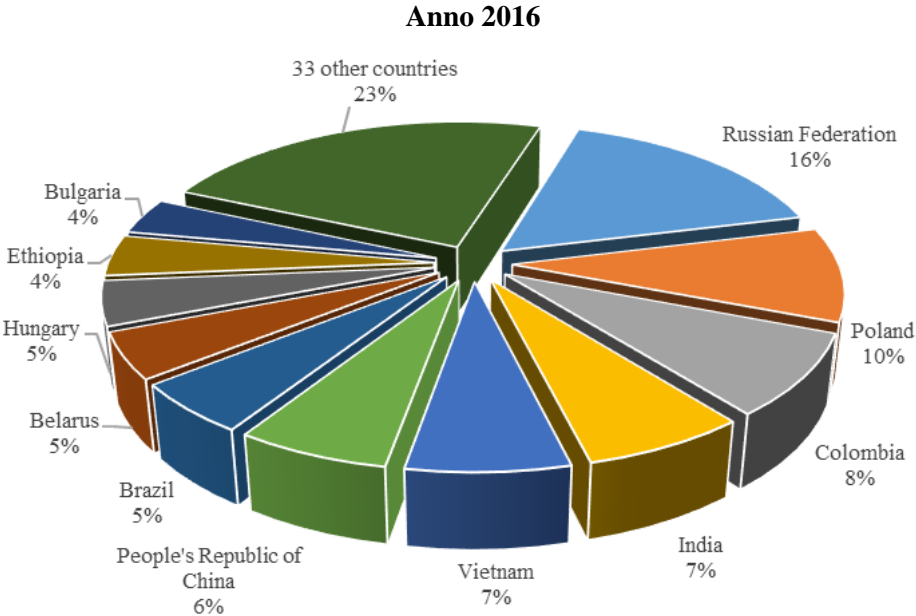
Figure 3 - Minors for whom an entry permit has been issued in Italy - Years 2012-2017



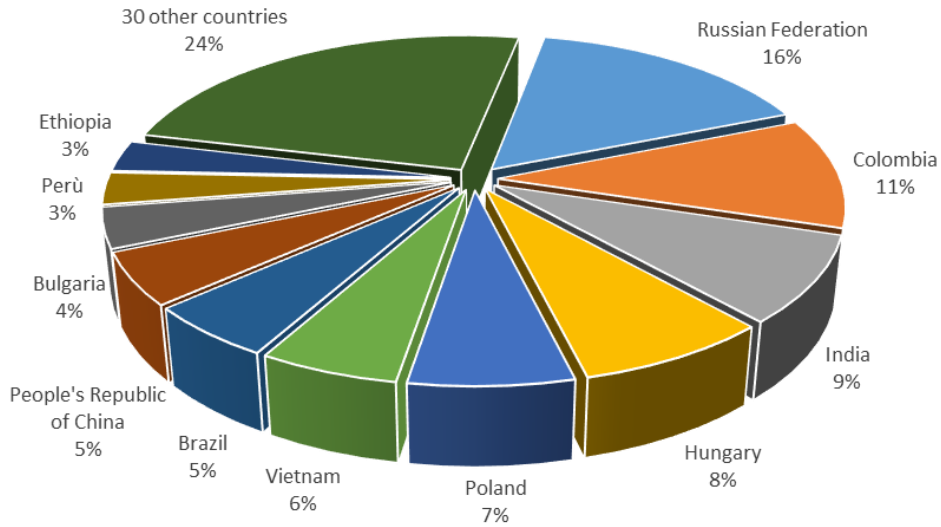
In 2017 there were forty-one countries of origin. The Russian Federation is confirmed as the main country of origin with 228 minors, equal to 16% of the total number of adoptions. Above 100 adoptions are Colombia (157, 11%), India (123, 9%) and Hungary (112, 8%). This is followed by a further 5 countries with between 50 and 100 adoptions: Poland (7%), Vietnam (6%), Brazil (5%), the People's Republic of China (5%) and Bulgaria (4%).

The remaining 32 countries have less than 50 adoptions per year. In 2016, among the top 10 countries of origin there were Ethiopia and Belarus, which came out in 2017 in favour of Bulgaria and Peru. Ethiopia and Poland are the two countries with the strongest contractions in the two-year period: Poland (-48%, from 181 to 94) and Ethiopia (-44%, from 79 to 44). On the contrary, Hungary, the Philippines and Haiti, in a context of a general decrease in the adoption phenomenon, have actually increased the number of adoptions to Italy from 2016 to 2017: Hungary from 85 to 112 adoptions, the Philippines from 16 to 37 and Haiti from 24 to 31.

Figure 4 - Minors for whom entry authorisation has been issued in Italy according to their country of origin (percentage values) - Two-year period 2016-2017

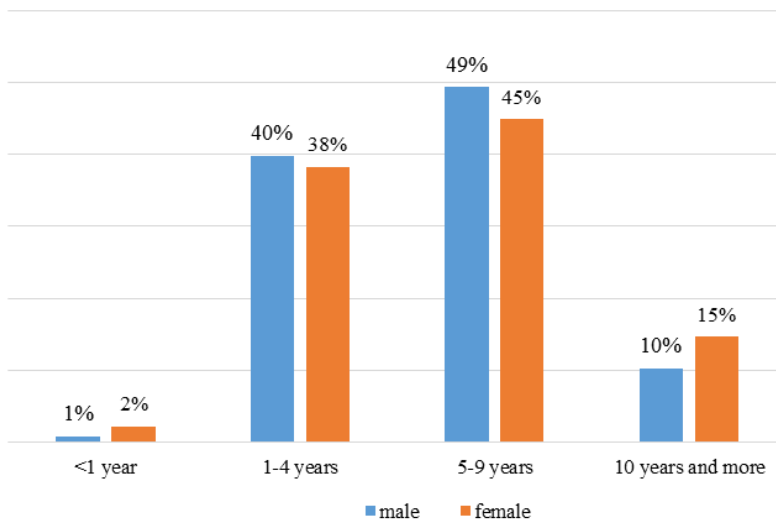


Anno 2017



A look at the characteristics of the adopted minors shows a relative disproportion between males and females and a prevalence of minors aged between 5 and 9 years. Between 2012 and 2017, in fact, males account for an average of 60% of the total number of adopted children (56% in 2017), while the modal age group (5-9 years) represents on average 45% of the total number of entries (47% in 2017).

Figure 5 - Minors for whom entry into Italy has been granted according to age group and gender (percentage values) - Year 2017



In 2017, compared to an average age of 6.1 years, there are very heterogeneous values in relation to the different countries of origin: the average age ranges from 13.4 years recorded in Belarus to 1.6 years recorded in South Korea. The average ages significantly exceed the average value of 6.1 years in a large block of countries in Eastern Europe and Central and South America. In addition to the already mentioned Belarus, there are 9.1 average years in Ukraine and 8.4 average years in Poland, 8.7 in Brazil, 8.1 in Chile and Costa Rica. On the other hand, alongside the aforementioned South Korea, Ethiopia (3.2 years), Vietnam (3.1 years) and Armenia (1.8 years) are particularly low at adoption age.

In 2017, 53 authorized bodies supported Italian couples in completing the adoption process - 56 in 2016 -, of which 48 worked for the completion of more than 5 adoptions. In the group of authorized bodies CIFA Onlus - international center for children and families (139 minors and 123 couples) and Ai.Bi. - association of children's friends (87 minors and 64 couples) confirmed this year for maximum frequency of adoptions. In 2017, both organizations experienced a significant decrease in the number of cases followed compared to the previous year, when they completed 172 and 108 adoptions respectively. The N.A.A.A Network for assistance in reception onlus (77) and the Multifunctional Service for international adoption (70) are more limited but nevertheless significant in terms of completed adoptions.