

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Milan, Italy



Population: 1,404,431 (2019)

GDP per capita: \$55,541 (2019)

Major industries: services (finance, ICT), fashion, design and life sciences

Percentage of migrants: 20% (2019)

Mayor's name: Giuseppe Sala | **Next election date:** 2021

Socioeconomic profile

Milan is a northern Italian city and capital of Lombardy. The city proper has a population of 1,404,431, the second largest in Italy after Rome (City of Milan Statistics Unit, 2020). The population of the Milan Metropolitan City (i.e. Milan province) is 3,279,944 (as of 1st January 2020) (Office for Statistics Services, Metropolitan City of Milan, 2020). As of 31st December 2019, only 16% of Milan's population is under 19 years of age, compared with 28% who are 60 years and older (City of Milan Statistics Unit, 2020). Milan is built in a concentric pattern, following the *navigli* canals that run through the city, with suburbs expanding mainly to the north (Britannica, n.d.). Over half of Milan's inhabitants commute by using public transport (Laker, 2020).

Milan is a major engine of growth due to its well-educated labour force and high level of entrepreneurship (OECD, 2006). It is Italy's wealthiest city, with a GDP per capita in 2018 of \$55,541 (City of Milan and Assolombarda, Osservatorio Milano, 2019).¹ The city is Italy's financial and economic capital, home to the stock market and the headquarters of more than 2,000 corporations, especially in the ITC sector (EU Commission, 2015). It is also Italy's largest industrial area. The city is characterised by a mixture of elite, highly skilled professional occupations alongside low-skilled, low-paid service sector jobs (ibid.). Across Lombardy the service sector accounts for 67.4% of employment, with industrial jobs contributing 25.7% (EU Commission, 2020). Milan city is one of the world's four fashion capitals. Businesses based in the city generate 10% of Italy's fashion sector revenue.²

Milan's absolute poverty rate is 7% (Reuters, 2019). The city's unemployment rate (7%) is far below the national average (OECD Stats, 2017). With the real

estate market an important historical driver of the city's economic growth, investment in social housing had been neglected for a certain period (Costa et al., 2016). As a result, housing affordability has become a crucial factor affecting social inequality and social exclusion in the city. For this reason, in the last few years the Municipality has been implementing a plan for the construction of new social housing, as well as the requalification of existing social housing, especially aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged families and students.

Migration profile

Milan is home to a large number of immigrants – approximately 20% of the population (City of Milan Statistics Unit, 2020) and around twice the size of other Italian cities. This is projected to increase to 21.2% by 2036 (Milan Government, 2019a). Milan's foreign-born populations are mainly from Asia (40%), Africa (22%) and Latin America (18%) (Milan Government, 2019a). Specifically, 16% of foreign-born residents of Milan were from the Philippines, 13% from Egypt and 11% from China (EU Commission, 2015). The Municipality of Milan, in cooperation with private sector organisations, manages the Central Station Help Centre (CASC). This targets individuals and families who have just arrived in Milan and need counselling and support to meet their basic needs (including meals and night shelter). Assessments are conducted and newcomers are directed to the most appropriate public services.

Milan has around 129,000 asylum-seekers and refugees living in the city (Milan Government, 2019a). Newly arrived undocumented migrants struggle to find jobs, although three-quarters of those resident for three years or longer are eventually employed (ibid.). Milan has implemented integration measures for asylum-seekers, including language courses and professional training.

¹ GDP data refers to the Milan Metropolitan Area and was provided directly by Milan City Council. It was converted from Euros to US\$ using OECD exchange rates for 2019 (see <https://data.oecd.org/conversion/exchange-rates.htm>).

² Data processed by the Chamber of Commerce of Milano Monza Brianza Lodi and provided directly by Milan City Council.

This reform is affiliated with the 2017 ‘Together without walls’ initiative for the promotion of positive narratives about migration. In addition, the municipality provides accommodation, stipends and social/legal assistance to asylum-seekers and minors.

Governance structures

The Mayor and 48-member City Council are elected every five years. The executive body of the city, the City Committee, is made up of 12 members directly appointed by the Mayor (Milan Government, 2019b). The major parties in the City Council are the Democratic Party (36%) and Lega Salvini Premier

(27%) (Milan Government, 2019c). The Mayor also presides over the Metropolitan Council, comprising 24 mayors covering the Milan Metropolitan Area (Milan Government, 2019b). The City Council oversees approximately 25 thematic focus areas, including urban planning, employment and social services. In response to the Covid-19 lockdown, the City Council has announced the ‘*Strade Aperte*’ plan to turn 35 km of streets into cycle- and walk-ways by the end of 2020 (Laker, 2020). This will operate in conjunction with the Milan 2030 City Masterplan, which seeks to enhance Milan’s position as a globally connected city, develop transportation, urban spaces and social housing and revitalise the *navigli* canal system (MIPIM, n.d.).

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