

Expatriate Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

Italian expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

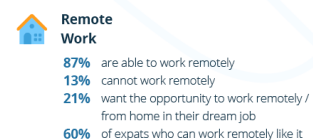
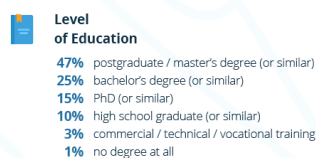
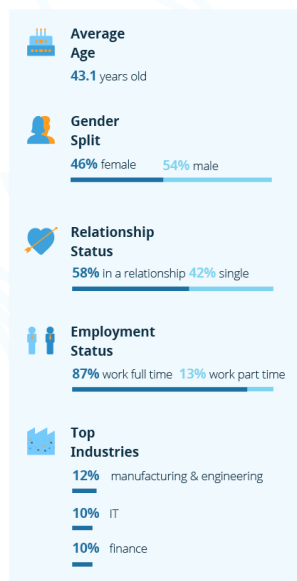
- *Italians working abroad are either highly educated, or their highest level of education is just a high school degree.*
- *The most common destinations for Italians working abroad are Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the USA, and the Netherlands.*
- *Italians move to countries with better career opportunities and a more modern approach to work.*

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do Italians move abroad? According to the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 60% of Italians working abroad name their career as the most important reason for moving. This is 13 percentage points more than the global average among working expats (47%). Most of the Italian expats were recruited internationally (22%), found a job on their own (21%), or were sent by their employer (15%). Just 2% moved abroad to start their own business.

The key focus of this year's *Expatriate Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

Italian Expats

The Future of Working Abroad



* 22% were recruited internationally, 21% found a job on their own, 15% were sent by their employer, 2% to start their own business

** Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

The Typical Italian Expat Working Abroad

Italian expats working abroad are on average 43.1 years old, and the gender ratio is split quite evenly between male (54%) and female (46%) expats. A slightly higher-than average share work full time (87% vs. 82% globally), while about one in eight (13%) work part time (vs. 18% globally). On average, they also work slightly longer hours (40.6 hours per week vs. 39.9 hours per week globally).

Most Italians working abroad make a living in the field of manufacturing & engineering (12%), followed by IT and finance (10% each). Other fields of work they frequently mention are education (8%) and healthcare (7%).

Varying Levels of Education

When it comes to the level of education, the *Expat Insider* survey shows an interesting split: The majority of Italian expats working abroad is highly educated. In fact, 47% have a postgraduate degree / master's degree, which is on par with the global average (47%), but 15% even hold a PhD or similar. The latter is about twice the global average (8%). However, the share of those whose highest level of education is just a high school degree is also twice as high as the global average (10% vs. 5% globally).

This difference is also reflected in their current employment situation. Many Italian expats work in a senior / specialist position (36% vs. 30% globally) or as top managers / executives (14% vs. 13% globally). But there's also an above-average share working in lower / middle management (19% vs. 17% globally) or in entry-level jobs (10% vs. 7% globally). Generally, Italians abroad do not tend to have their own business (4% vs. 7% globally) or work in self-employment / as a freelancer (6% vs. 11% globally).

Italians Working Abroad Appreciate their Career Opportunities...

Italians working abroad are very satisfied with their career opportunities (57% vs. 49% globally) and the state of the local economy in their respective host country (72% vs. 65% globally). This stands in stark contrast to their home country: 43% of expats living *in* Italy are unhappy with the local economy (vs. 17% globally) and 51% rate the local career opportunities negatively (vs. 29% globally).

In fact, the most common destinations for Italians working abroad are Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the USA, and the Netherlands. All countries rank among the top 10 worldwide for either the local career opportunities (UK, USA), or the state of the local economy (Switzerland, Netherlands), or even both (Germany). *"I like the opportunities for employment and education,"* says an expat woman who moved from Italy to Hamburg (Germany) because she found a job there.

... Remote Work, a Good Compensation, and a Good Work-Life Balance

When asked what they like most about their current job, most working Italian expats cite the opportunity to work remotely / from home (36%). In fact, 87% are able to work remotely. COVID-19 seems to have played a role here, with close to half (48%) saying that their employer's policy regarding remote work changed permanently due to COVID-19 (i.e., the changes will apply even after the pandemic). Nearly three in ten (28%) are now able to work remotely more often than before COVID-19, and 20% state that remote work was newly introduced and is here to stay. Interestingly, while a large share points out that working remotely is what they like best about their current job, only a below-average share of 60% state that they like remote work in general (vs. 65% globally).

Other than that, Italian expats enjoy the good compensation and/or good benefits (35%) and their good work-life balance (33%). Regarding the latter, close to seven in ten (68%) are happy with their work-life balance abroad, which is the same as the global average (68%). The gross yearly income of Italian expats working abroad is similar to the global average, too: 39% make more than 75,000 USD per year (vs. 38% globally), while 61% earn less than that (vs. 62% globally).

What Italian Expats Working Abroad Wish For

With regard to the future, a good compensation and/or good benefits (55%), as well as a good work-life balance (48%), are factors that remain relevant for Italian expats working abroad. However, many also name creative/interesting tasks (31%), flexible working hours (25%), career development (24%), and room for personal development/growth (21%) when imagining their dream job.

"These are all factors that have become more and more relevant in the public discussion about the future of work," says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. "It seems like Italians are not only moving to countries with better career opportunities but also to destinations with a more modern approach to work."

In fact, 59% of Italian expats say that factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment are more important in the business culture of the country they now live in than in Italy. These values are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age. On a global scale, just 49% of expats say the same about their host country.

The Concept of New Work Is Not Important in Italy — What about Italians?

Italy only comes 49th out of 55 countries in the ranking that compares how much of a role the concept of New Works plays in the local business culture. The USA and the Netherlands, two of the most common destinations for Italians working abroad, however, rank first and fifth worldwide. While the UK (15th), Switzerland (23rd), and Germany (35th) do not make it into the top 10, they still rank considerably higher than Italy.

Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

1	USA	20	Greece	39	Brazil
2	UAE	21	Czechia	40	Philippines
3	Finland	22	Poland	41	Indonesia
4	Estonia	23	Switzerland	42	Chile
5	Netherlands	24	Luxembourg	43	Romania
6	Bahrain	25	Malta	44	Thailand
7	Australia	26	Kenya	45	Cyprus
8	Canada	27	Taiwan	46	China
9	New Zealand	28	Portugal	47	France
10	Sweden	29	Hungary	48	Spain
11	Ireland	30	Colombia	49	Italy
12	Norway	31	Russia	50	Kuwait
13	Denmark	32	South Africa	51	India
14	Singapore	33	Mexico	52	Turkey
15	United Kingdom	34	Austria	53	South Korea
16	Malaysia	35	Germany	54	Egypt
17	Oman	36	Vietnam	55	Japan
18	Qatar	37	Hong Kong		
19	Saudi Arabia	38	Belgium		

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expatriate Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report “The Future of Working Abroad” uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expatriate Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](https://www.internations.org) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), [in our company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

Press Contact
Stephanie Anko-Hubik
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH
Schwanthalerstrasse 39
80336 Munich, Germany

Email: press@internations.org
Homepage: <https://www.internations.org/press>