



## **AP Poll: Half of Italians Believe Immigrants A Bad Influence**

**New York, NY (AP)** — Half of Italians believe immigrants are having a bad influence on their country, according to an Associated Press poll.

*The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between May 7-17, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of about 1,000 residents of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain and the United States. The margin of error is +/- 3 for all adults. Please reference the topline results for the complete list of number of interviews and margin of error for each country.*

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### **Associated Press**

**New York, NY (AP)** — Half of Italians believe immigrants are having a bad influence on their country, according to an Associated Press poll.

Thirty-three percent say they have a somewhat bad influence and 17 percent say it's very bad; 38 percent thought immigrants had a good influence and 12 percent weren't sure.

Also, 20 percent of the 1,001 Italians polled said they thought that immigrants were stealing jobs; but the majority — 74 percent — said they think immigrants are just filling jobs that Italians don't want. Six percent weren't sure.

The Italians' sentiment about immigration is probably more of a reflection about their overall views of the mood in Italy, said Nando Pagnoncelli, president of Ipsos-Explorer in Italy. He noted Italians' support for diversity of religion.

Italy's geographical position makes it a popular arrival point for immigrants from Africa and Eastern Europe. Many then head to northern European countries with larger and older immigrant communities in search of work.

Immigrants from developing countries and Eastern Europe made up 85 percent of the 1,448,000 foreigners officially resident in Italy, according the latest official figures, which are for 2002. Many more are present in Italy illegally.

The highest number come from Morocco, followed by Albania, with large communities from Romania and the Philippines.

The poll respondents were divided on whether cultural variety is best for Italy. Fifty-two percent said it's better if almost everyone has the same customs and traditions; 45 percent disagreed and 2 percent weren't sure.

Most of those polled favored a diversity of religious views: 62 percent said it's better if people have a variety of religions; 32 disagreed and 6 percent were unsure.

Italy has a Muslim community of more than 1 million, according to Muslim groups in Italy, making Islam the second religion in the country after Catholicism.

Some Italian cities, most recently Rome, have elected immigrant representatives to local councils, but a proposal last year to allow immigrants to vote in local elections provoked more resistance.

In an attempt to crack down on illegal immigration, legislators pushed through a law in 2002 ruling that only immigrants with work contracts could be given residency permits, and that they could be fingerprinted on entry.

Opposition parties have drawn attention to the plight of immigrants, some fleeing conflict zones, who travel from northern Africa to Sicily and surrounding islands on dangerous voyages in ill-equipped fishing boats.

The AP/Ipsos poll was conducted May 7-15 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Other European nations polled by Ipsos were France, Germany, Spain and Britain.

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