

MINORITIES IN ITALY

GENERAL INFORMATIONS: ITALY

Format: 153 x 192 mm



Total population	57,888,245 (2004)
Official languages	Italian, German (provincial), French (regional), Slovene (provincial)
Minorities	Sardinian(2.2%), Friulian(0.9%), German (0.5%), Occitan (0.3%), Albanian (0.2%), Roma (0.2%), Franco-Provencal and French (0.2%), Ladin (0.1%), Slovene (0.1%), Greek (0.03%), Catalan (0.01%), Croat (0.01%)
Migrants	Moroccan, Albanian, Filipino, Romanian, Tunisian, Yugoslavian, Chinese, Senegalese and other (3.4%)

The German minority in Italy lives in the Northern provinces, primarily in the province of Südtirol/Alto Adige (South Tyrol) but there are also some linguistic enclaves in other areas. In South Tyrol as well as in Trentino and Belluno, Ladin minority populations can be found.

The Slovene minority lives in Trieste-Gorizia, near the Slovenian border, as well as in Udine, both part of the region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. The Friulans, Italy's second largest minority, are also found in this province. French is spoken and used among a small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta, in the northwest. The population that speaks Occitan lives mainly in Piemonte, as well as in a few villages in Liguria and Calabria. A Croatian community is settling in Molise. The majority of the Albanian and Greek minority dwell in the southern regions of Abruzzo, Campania, Calabria, Basilicata, Puglia, Sicily and Molise. The Sardinian minority dwells on the island of Sardinia. Particularly the city of Alghero is inhabited by a small Catalan community.

GENERAL INFORMATIONS: SOUTH TYROL

SOUTH TYROL'S LOCATION AND INHABITANTS:

Other expressions for the English name South Tyrol are "Südtirol" (German), "Sudtirol" (Ladinish), "Alto Adige" or "Sudtirolo" (Italian). It is located in the north of Italy at the border to Austria and Switzerland and has about 476.000 inhabitants. Its population includes 69% German-speaker, 26% Italians, who are especially situated in Bozen/Bolzano and Meran/Merano, and 4% Ladins, the oldest, smallest and most endangered linguistic minority group of South Tyrol.

HISTORY:

North, East, South Tyrol and Trentino had a common history for a long time. Since the 14th century South Tyrol was associated with Austria. During the Napoleonic Wars people from South Tyrol put up strong resistance against the occupation, led by its leader Andreas Hofer. Since then an Italian movement (“Risorgimento”) towards a unification of Italy arised.

After the First World War, in the Treaty of Saint Germain 1919, South Tyrol was annexed by Italy. People staying in South Tyrol were forced to assimilation, the use of German language was prohibited, and Italian immigration and industrialization in South Tyrol started.

In an agreement between Mussolini/Italy and Hitler/German Reich, resettlement to the German Reich was granted to all German speakers in Italy. A large majority opted for the German Reich, the rest became subject to Mussolini’s policies and had to assimilate totally. During the Nazi occupation between 1943 and 1945 Nazis were partly welcomed by the South Tyrolean population as liberators, but also partly feared by those who had opted for staying.

After the war, the majority of emigrated inhabitants of South Tyrol returned and deep cleavages within South Tyrolean society were increasing. The “Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement” (named after the Austrian and Italian foreign ministers) in 1946, as a result of bilateral negotiations between Italy and Austria, assured a complete equality of rights to German-speaking inhabitants in comparison to the Italian population. Special safeguard-provisions for the improvement of the ethnical German character and its cultural and economic development; autonomy for the German speaking population (autonomous legislative and executive power on regional level); appropriate ethnical proportions in public service; bilingual topographical naming; the right to re-establish German family names and mother tongue education are some important claims of this agreement.

South Tyrol’s First Autonomy Statute of 1948 established the Region “Trentino-South Tyrol”, composing the Provinces of Trento and Bozen/Bolzano, and gave the majority of powers to this region. But this autonomy caused increasing dissatisfaction for German-speakers. Because of their minority-status (71, 5% of this regional population were Italians), they were outvoted in regional decisions easily. As a consequence, protests, demonstrations, rallies and even bombings followed and the conflict got international recognition. The Austrian foreign minister Bruno Kreisky then raised the South Tyrol-question before the UN. After debates in the General Assembly two resolutions were issued and bilateral negotiations encouraged.

The commission of “19”, composed of twelve Italians, six German-speakers and one Ladin was established by the Italian government in 1961 to investigate the South Tyrol Question and resulted in the elaboration of the “package” of 1969, which proposed 137 legislative and administrative measures and 97 modifications to the first Statute and led to the New Autonomy Statute of 1972. Mutual recognition, agreement on distribution of powers and spheres of influence, significant transfer of powers from the region to provinces (provinces should be seen as principal “actors” and regions as a territorial “roof-structure”) are main

demands of this statute. Consequently, South Tyrol's inhabitants have succeeded in gaining powers and competences within the Italian State.

In 1992 the conflict was officially resolved before the United Nations. The original purpose of the autonomy attributed to South Tyrol was in fact to protect the cultural and linguistic development of German-speaking and Ladin populations, but this complex autonomy is as well a territorial one: All inhabitants of the province, regardless of origin, benefit from its self-governance.

SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE LADIN POPULATION:

Ladins belong to the Rhaeto-Romanic subgroup within the Romance family.

In 1927, the Ladin-speaking valleys of Northern Italy were allocated to three provinces; one of them was Bozen/Bolzano. In 1939 the Italian government offered the Ladins as well as the German speaking population the opportunity to emigrate, although Ladin was officially classified by the Italian government as an Italian Dialect. This Option was cancelled by the German occupation in 1943.

With the Autonomy Statute for the Trentino/South Tyrol Region in 1948, the Ladins of the provinces of Bozen/Bolzano and Trentino were given special rights like the promise of teaching of Ladin in primary schools; Ladin place names; radio and television programmes in Ladin and the enhancement of Ladin culture in general. In comparison to this region Ladins in the Italian province Belluno (region Veneto) had less protection.

In 1972, the New Autonomy Statute strengthened the legal position of the Ladins in Bozen/Bolzano. Nowadays there are a large number of organizations devoted to the preservation of the Ladin language and culture, who work in setting up various organizations. Today the Ladin minority has one representative on the Regional Council and one in the South Tyrol Parliament, but Ladins are still excluded from some important political committees.

In Bozen/Bolzano, Ladin is supported in schools and the public media by financial contributions and by the payment of a trilingual allowance to public servants.

THE CURRENT SOCIAL SITUATION IN SOUTH TYROL:

The German language group is in the majority almost everywhere in South Tyrol – except in some few cities, for example Bozen/Bolzano. One instrument for the distribution of resources between the three language groups is the quota system. Separate school systems for each group and the requirement of bilingualism in the public sector are examples for attempts to accommodate South Tyrol's language groups. But because of the autonomy, which aims at safeguarding the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the German and Ladin minorities, a separation of ethnic groups can be stated. While preserving their integrities the three language groups live partially side by side, but not together.

There are a multitude of possible explanations for the tensions between the language groups that still exist. But it has to be stated that the multicultural and multilingual environment has enormous influence on an independent South Tyrolean identity (of people from all language groups), which supports the image of South Tyrol as an “island between Austria and Italy”. There are as well attempts to show its significant role in Europe and to focus South Tyrol as an environment with special benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Generally, South Tyrol’s autonomy is often taken as a model by other countries with language minorities.

EDUCATION:

Following the Autonomy Statute every citizen of South Tyrol has the right for education in kindergarten and schools in his native language. In general, there is a separate school system for Germans and Italians and a paritative system for Ladins. Parents have free choice for their children’s schools, but a special level of language skills is required for entering non-mother-language-schools.

In German schools Italian language education is compulsory from the second class. In German as well as in Italian schools teaching a second language starts in the first class. When Ladin pupils start school, parents may elect whether their children attend the German-Ladin or Italian-Ladin class. From the second year onwards, "ordinary" teaching is then carried out in the other two languages, and these classes include two hours of Ladin a week. In lower secondary schools Ladin is taught for two hours per week, in the upper secondary education it is only an optional subject.

South Tyrol has also a trilingual (German, Italian, English) university in Bozen/Bolzano and a number of diploma and degree-awarding schools, colleges and academies.

CULTURE:

Because of the special interethnic situation, the cultural programme in South Tyrol is very various and there are different cultural initiatives, which are offered throughout the year. Although they have many characteristics in common, the forms of cultural expression of the three linguistic groups in South Tyrol are very different. Each linguistic group has its own administrative and organizational cultural domain. Traditionally the German and Ladin ethnic groups have a large number of cultural associations and organizations, choirs, amateur theatres, costume-, folk-dancing and music societies, which are supported by the province. The Italian ethnic group cooperates closely with other Italian provinces.

Special South Tyrolean cultural events are the “Festival of Religious Music”, the “Festival of Contemporary Music” and the international ballet summer course. The Haydn Orchestra has international reputation and every year in late summer the "Busoni Piano competition" is held in Bozen/Bolzano. Literary competitions (for example the lyric award of Meran/Merano), which are organized by different

associations, help to discover new talents in the South Tyrolean literature world. Many South Tyrolean artists, writers and musicians from all three linguistic groups are well-known beyond the frontiers of the province.

MEDIA:

South Tyrol has a very diverse media landscape, which contains four daily newspapers (two in German and two in Italian), nine weekly papers, one Sunday newspaper, 286 local papers and a large number of other publications. There are German language programmes on radio and television, broadcasted from the state network RAI and some private radio and television stations in both languages. German and Ladin language radio and television programmes from Germany, Austria and Switzerland can be provided as well.

ECONOMY:

The current economic situation is one of the most important indicators of the success of the province. The unemployment rate (below 3% since 1995) and inflation remain low, social benefits are high and the general standard of living elevated. Some decades ago South Tyrol was still one of the poorest regions of Italy. Nowadays South Tyrol has more positions available than it has workers to fill them.

One of its advantages is South Tyrol's placement in the center of Europe, close to the big German market and on the border to Austria and Switzerland. The province is also the home of essential alpine passes in Europe, for example the Brenner Pass, one of the most heavily traveled trade routes in Europe.

Although the industry sector occupies approximately a quarter of the economic activities in the province, it represents South Tyrol's weakest economical aspect. Historically the South Tyrolean economy was always centered on farming, the service sector and handicrafts. Regarding geography, the alpine situation puts as well certain limitations on industry.

AGRICULTURE:

64, 4% of South Tyrol has an altitude of 1500 meters or more above sea level. Despite this fact, 37% of the land in South Tyrol is used for agriculture. Land below the 800-meter mark is primarily cultivated with fruits, especially apple trees, and vines. A large proportion of these products is exported throughout Europe.

TOURISM:

The tourism sector employs approximately 60% of the South Tyrolean employment and economic sector. The province can offer year round vacation possibilities, for example skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer. Especially Germans and Italians make up a great majority of visitors. For them South Tyrol has an appeal of a foreign country, while still allowing to communicate in their native language.

Links about South Tyrol on the internet:

General Information:

<http://www.provincia.bz.it/>
<http://www.provincia.bz.it/english/default.htm>
<http://www.regione.taa.it/>
<http://www.consiglio-bz.org>
<http://www.euroregione.info>

<http://www.unibz.it/>
<http://www.eurac.edu/>
<http://www.gfbv.it/>
<http://www.museion.it/eng/155.html>
http://www.archaeologiemuseum.it/index_ice.html
<http://www.trauttmansdorff.it/>

Media

<http://www.ras.bz.it/>
<http://www.athesia.it/dolomiten/>
<http://www.altoadige.quotidianiespresso.it/giornalilocali/index.jsp?s=altoadige>
<http://www.ff-online.com/>

History

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/t/tr/trentino-alto_adige1.htm
http://www1.faknaw.nl/mercator/regionale_dossiers/regional_dossier_german_in_italy.htm#foreword
<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2125/stories/20041217000207600.htm>
<http://www.provincia.bz.it/english/default.htm>