

LATVIA

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET 2022

Main developments in migration
and international protection,
including latest statistics
August 2023



OVERARCHING CHANGES

On 14 December 2022, the Saeima declared its trust in the new Cabinet of Ministers, which is the second consecutive government chaired by Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš. The declaration on the planned actions of the Cabinet of Ministers states that there will be an increase in funding for public order and safety, including migration. In addition, an external State border will be built, vehicles and equipment for personnel will be provided and a strategy for the prevention of irregular migration and cross-border crime risks on the external border as well as measures to prevent the irregular entry and stay of people will be implemented.






LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Amendments to the Immigration Law strengthened the security of the state in view of the war initiated by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. They facilitated the termination of international crimes and violation of human rights by limiting the issuance of first temporary residence permits for citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus.

Work-related migration

On 7 April 2022 and 22 September 2022, amendments to the Immigration Law significantly limited the entry and stay of citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus in the Republic of Latvia.

KEY POINTS

-  On 3 March 2022, following the war of aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians was urgently adopted, providing reception and support for Ukrainian civilians.
-  Amendments to the Immigration Law strengthened the security of the State by limiting the issuance of temporary residence permits for citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus.
-  Amendments to the Immigration Law provided the right for third-country nationals to request a permanent one-year visa to stay in Latvia when they are employed by an employer abroad or are a self-employed person registered abroad and can work remotely.

Amendments from 7 April 2022 discontinued the issuance of first temporary residence permits for nationals of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus entering as employees, except for those entering in accordance with regulations determined by the legal acts of the European Union (EU). Amendments to the Immigration Law of 22 September 2022 cancelled this restriction for nationals of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation who had been employed in the Republic of Latvia for the last three months.

Information on routes to and conditions of legal migration

To facilitate entrepreneurs' understanding of employment procedures for migrant workers as set out in the Immigration Law, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs created a [video guide](#) on the steps to invite migrant workers to work in Latvia.

Other measures

On 2 June 2022, amendments to the Immigration Law gave third-country nationals the right to request a one-year permanent visa to stay in Latvia while employed by an employer registered abroad or working as a self-employed person registered abroad (e.g. providing individual services, such as legal consultations, translation services, services in the information technology (IT) field and such) who can work remotely.



TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Main national developments in relation to temporary protection

On 3 March 2022, the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians was adopted, determining the procedure for the reception and support for Ukrainian civilians.

Main measures taken outside of the legal framework of the Temporary Protection Directive

On 28 February 2022, the Cabinet adopted the [Plan of Measures](#) in case of mass arrivals of persons from Ukraine to Latvia. That plan became void on 29 April 2022, when [another plan](#) was adopted, setting out guidelines for the reception and accommodation of additional people arriving. People entering Latvia were registered in reception centres.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Legislative and policy developments related to international protection

In light of the situation on the border between Latvia and Belarus, on 29 March 2022, an operating plan was signed between the Ministry of the Interior and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) to provide support to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs for the asylum procedure. It was in place from 1 April to 31 December 2022. The plan was a continuation of the previous plan signed in September 2021.

Relocation and resettlement ¹

On 31 May 2022, the internal regulations of the State Border Guard No. 23.1-8.2/12 procedure, according to which measures in the asylum field are to

be performed within the framework of the State Border Guard, entered into force. They determine the procedure used by the State Border Guard in respect of relocation and resettlement to the Republic of Latvia from EU Member States, countries of the European Economic Area (EEA), Swiss Confederation and third countries.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Minors

On 10 March 2022, amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance were adopted, stipulating the right to social rehabilitation for children suffering from violence. The amendments apply to children who are recognised as asylum seekers with special admission needs or as less protected persons in the removal procedure as well as to other children, based on the opinion of the responsible authorities.



INTEGRATION

National integration strategy

On 18 January 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the [Plan for the development of a united and civically active society 2022-2023](#). The plan has three sections: National identity and belonging; Culture of democracy and inclusive citizenship; and Integration. Integration includes measures focusing on the inclusion of third-country nationals and beneficiaries of international protection (refugees, persons with alternative status, asylum seekers) in Latvian society.

Basic services

On 10 March 2022, amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance were adopted, determining the right to receive social rehabilitation at the expense of the state budget for: victims of violence staying in the Republic of Latvia on a temporary residence permit; third-country nationals or stateless persons with no legal ground to stay in the Republic of Latvia and who are detained (until the day of removal or exit); those to whom an alternative measure of detention has been applied; and foreigners whose return decision has been suspended or for whom the time period has been determined for voluntary departure.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Border management

On 10 August 2021, Cabinet Order No. 518 regarding the declaration of an emergency situation entered into force. Several amendments followed, extending the emergency situation in the administrative territories bordering the Republic of Belarus. The extension was

¹ Includes Humanitarian Admission Programmes

necessary due to the rapid increase of irregular border-crossings between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Belarus, as well as the huge number of irregular border-crossings between the neighbouring Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Belarus.

Visa policy

Pursuant to Cabinet Order No. 599 regarding the entry of the citizens of the Russian Federation into the Republic of Latvia adopted on 9 September 2022, restrictions were put in place for the entry of nationals of the Russian Federation into Latvia with temporary visas for non-significant purposes (e.g. tourism and leisure, culture, sports). On the basis of an individual assessment, entry was permitted for the politically persecuted, human rights defenders, independent journalists, family members, holders of a residence permit, for the provision of freight and transportation services, for representatives of diplomatic missions and in other cases based on humanitarian considerations.

Schengen governance

In November 2022, an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the Schengen assessment mission in India. The mission assessed the work of the embassies of Malta, Luxembourg and Iceland as well as compliance with the Schengen acquis.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Preventing and tackling irregular migration in legal migration channels

On 5 July 2022, Cabinet Regulation No. 399, amendments to the Cabinet Regulation No. 846,

regarding the requirements, criteria and procedures for admission to study programmes, was adopted. It seeks to promote more responsible recruitment by supplementing universities and colleges' rules of admission with rules on conducting and retaining interviews with foreigners.

Access to services and legal solutions for irregularly staying migrants

On 10 March 2022, amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance were adopted, determining the right to receive social rehabilitation at the expense of the State budget for: victims of violence who are third-country nationals or stateless persons with no legal ground to stay in the Republic of Latvia, and who are detained (until the day of removal or exit); those to whom an alternative measure of detention has been applied; and foreigners whose return decision has been suspended, or for whom the time period has been determined for voluntary departure.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Identification and information to victims of trafficking in human beings

Referral of victims of trafficking in human beings between the countries of the Baltic Sea region was assessed within the framework of the project 'Competence building, assistance provision and prosecution of labour exploitation cases in the Baltic Sea region' (CAPE). Recommendations were made for improvements in the 'Guidelines on referral of victims of trafficking in human beings between the countries of the Baltic Sea region'. The recommendations are intended for professionals working with third-country nationals.



STATISTICAL ANNEX

The statistical annex available on the next pages complements the Country Factsheet and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Latvia on aspects of migration and international protection. It was prepared by Eurostat and it is organised in ten thematic sections, including legal residence, temporary protection, asylum, unaccompanied minors, integration, irregular migration, return and visas. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators.

The data presented in the annex were extracted on 8 May 2023, with the exception of data on first-time applicants extracted on 7 June 2023. They cover the period 2019-2022. Since 2022 data were not available at the time of publication for certain datasets, in these cases the period 2019-2021 is covered.

For some indicators, data are rounded at the source. Due to this, in some cases, the sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value.

A 'How to read the statistical annex' guide, describing each individual chart and providing links to the data sources, is available [here](#).

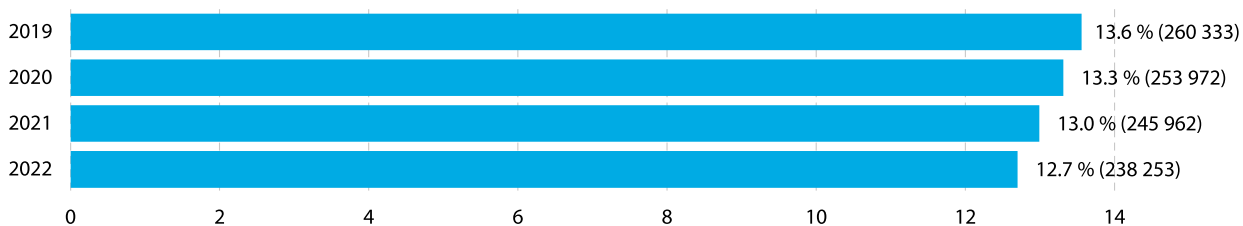
An online data code available under each table/figure can be used to directly access to the most recent data on [Eurostat's website](#).



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2019–2022 ²

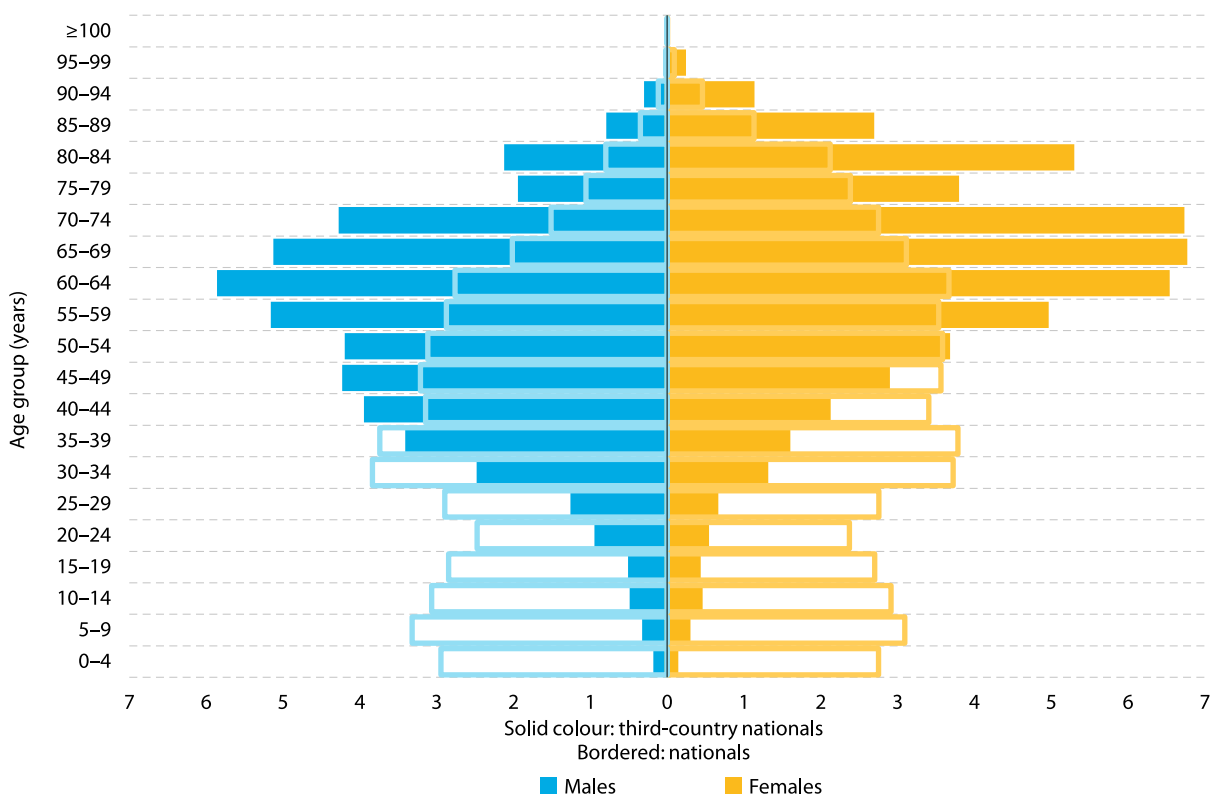
Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Age structure of nationals and third-country nationals, 1 January 2022

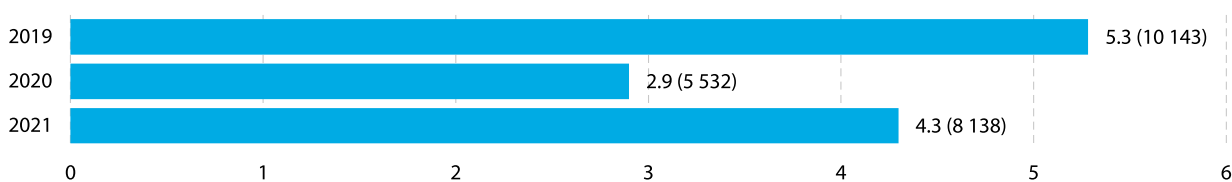
%



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

First residence permits issued to third-country nationals, 2019–2021

Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)

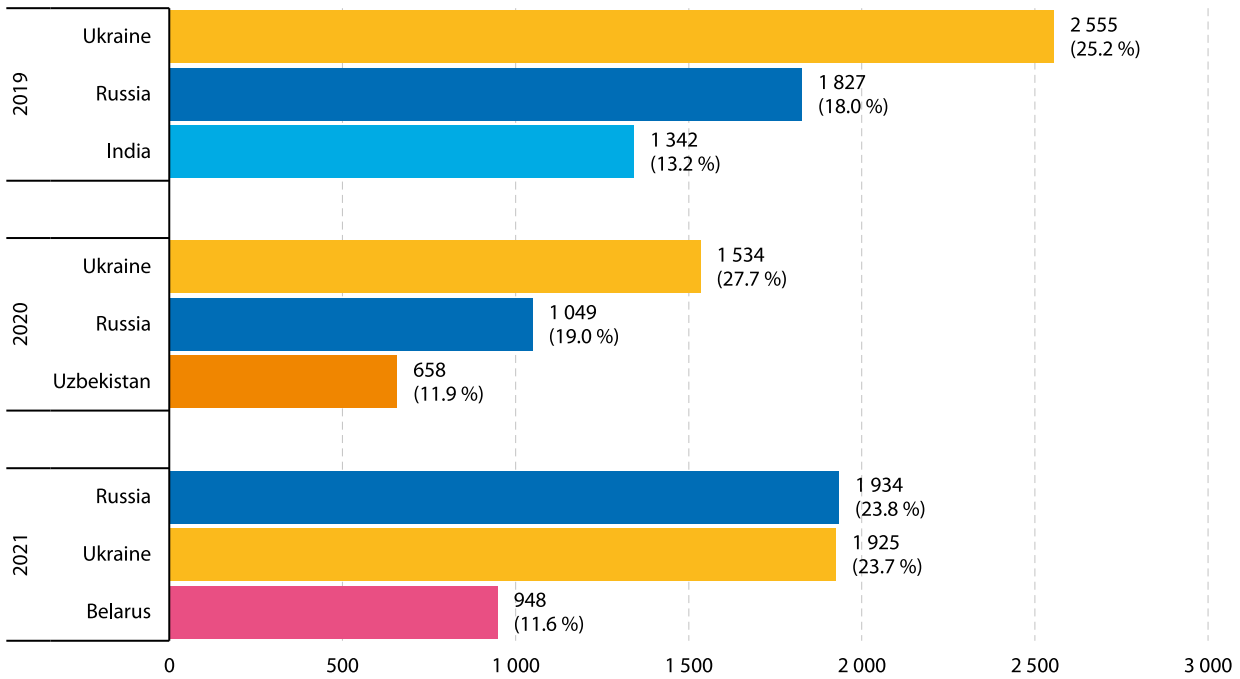


Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst and migr_pop1ctz)

² Including recognized non-citizens

Top 3 countries whose citizens received first residence permits, 2019–2021

Absolute number (and the share in total number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

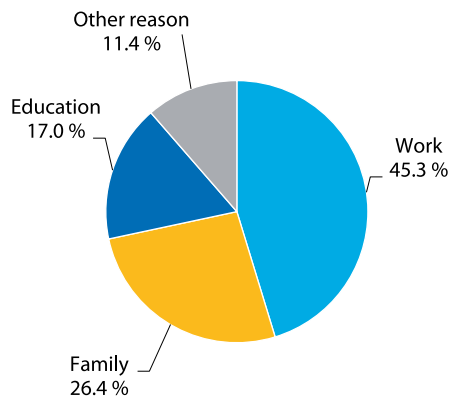
First residence permits issued, distribution by reason or type, 2021

%

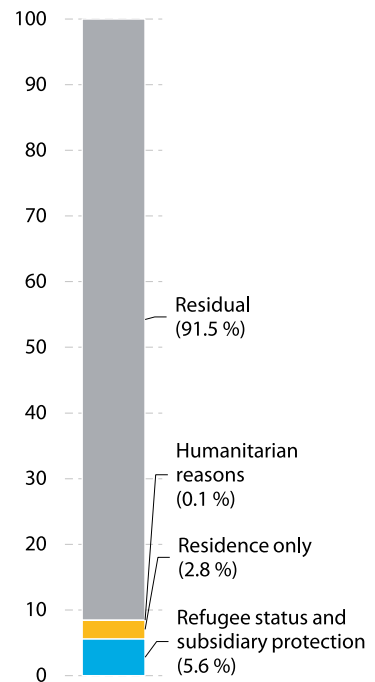
Work reason, by type



All permits, by reason



Other reason, by detailed reason

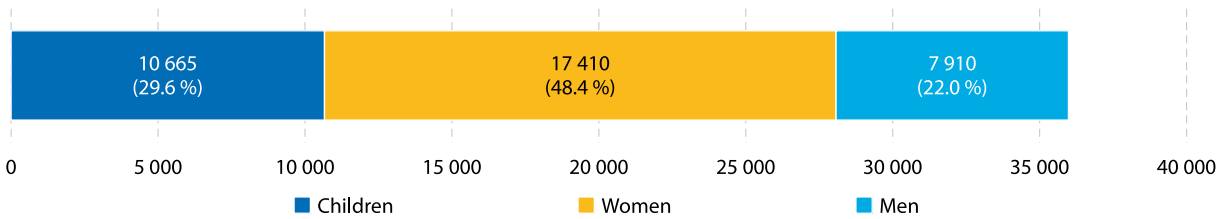


Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_resocc and migr_resoth)



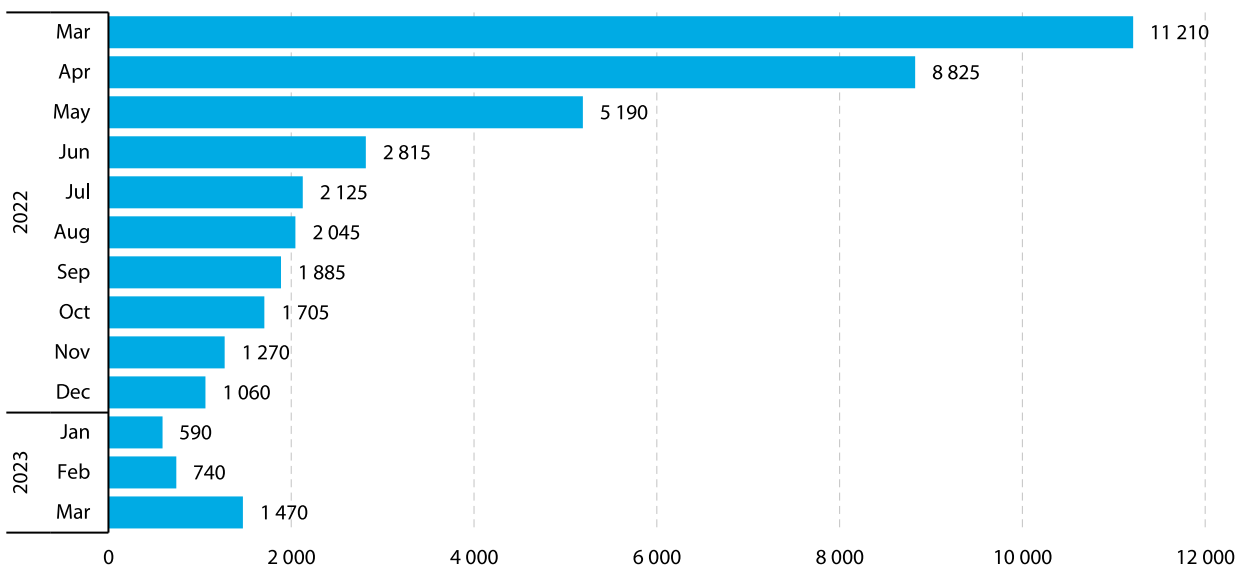
TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Third-country nationals who fled Ukraine and were benefitting from temporary protection at the end of March 2023
 Absolute number (and the share within the total)



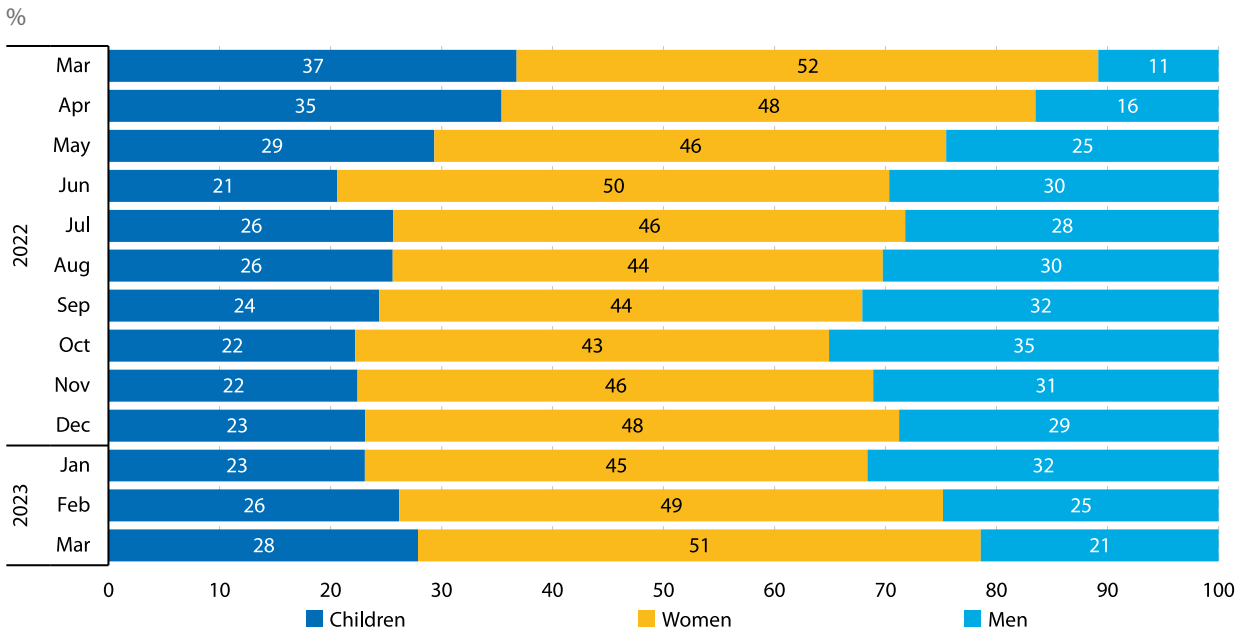
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpsm)

Number of decisions granting temporary protection to third-country nationals displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, March 2022–March 2023



Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpfm)

Distribution by age and sex of decisions granting temporary protection to third-country nationals displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, March 2022–March 2023



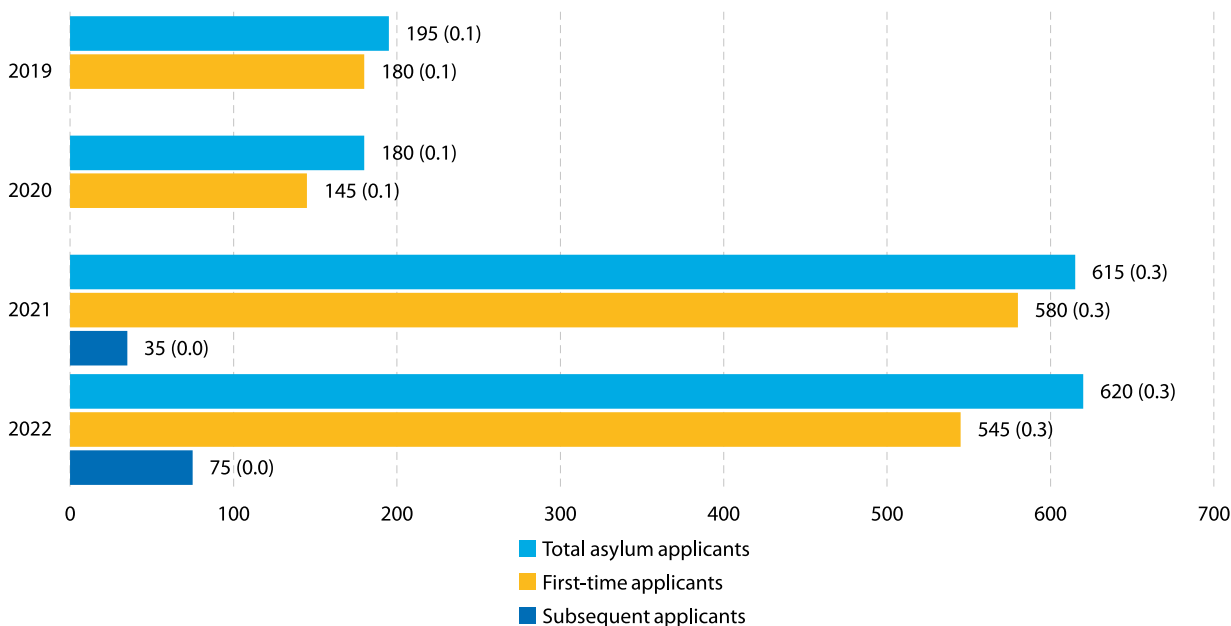
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpfm)



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Asylum applicants (third-country nationals), by type of application, 2019–2022

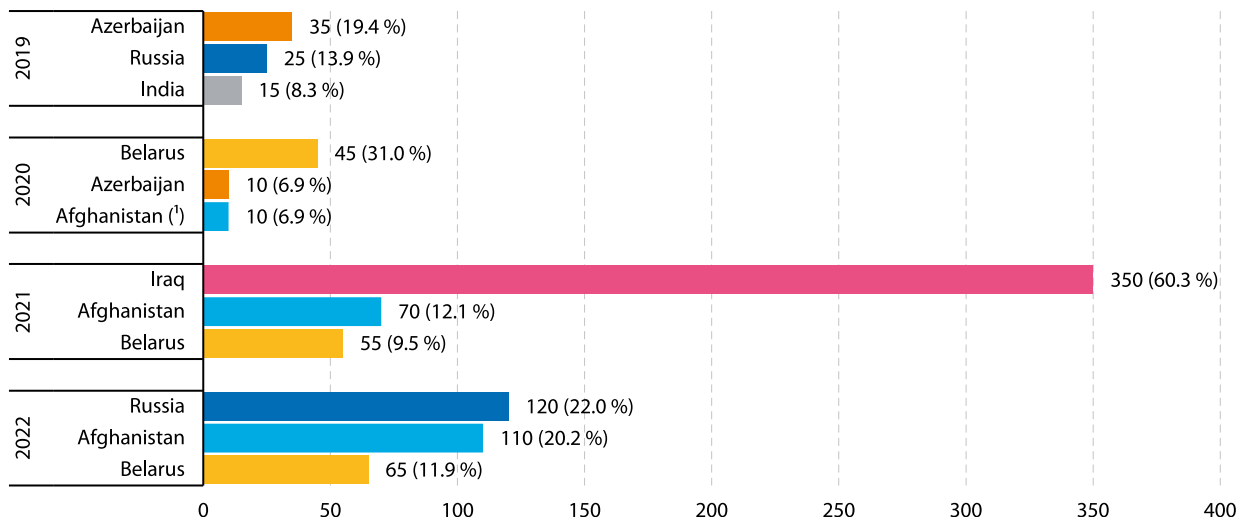
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](#) and [migr_pop1ctz](#))

Top 3 countries of citizenship – first-time asylum applicants, 2019–2022

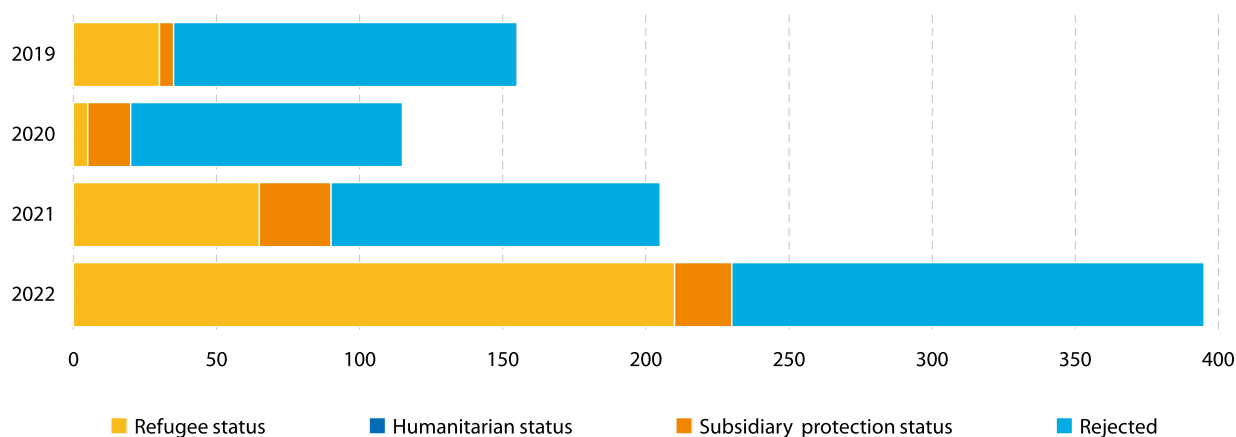
Absolute number (and the share in total number of first-time applicants)



(*) Russia and Syria: same number.

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](#))

Number of first instance asylum decisions for third-country nationals, by outcome, 2019–2022



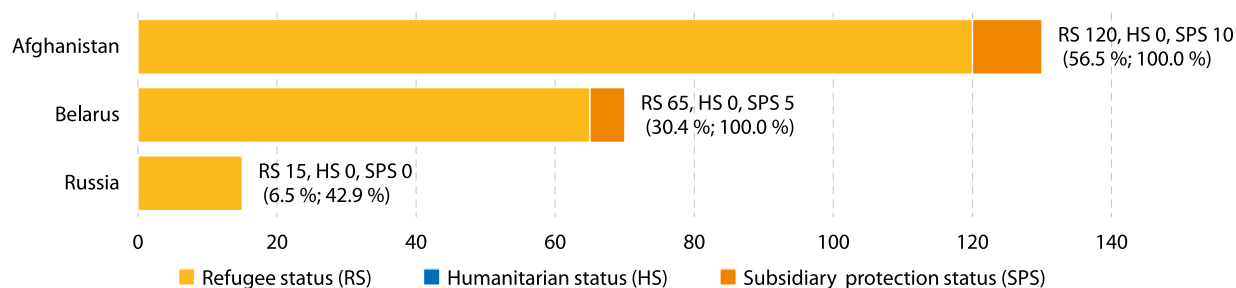
Refugee status		Humanitarian status		Subsidiary protection status		Rejected					
Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)				
2019	30	19.4	2019	–	–	2019	5	3.2	2019	120	77.4
2020	5	4.3	2020	–	–	2020	15	13.0	2020	95	82.6
2021	65	31.7	2021	–	–	2021	25	12.2	2021	115	56.1
2022	210	53.2	2022	–	–	2022	20	5.1	2022	165	41.8

Note: the shares are calculated using the sum of the four outcomes as the denominator.

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asydcfsta](#))

Top 3 countries of citizenship granted positive asylum decisions at first instance, by outcome, 2022

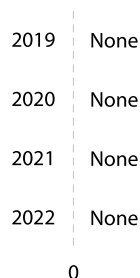
Absolute number (and share in total positive decisions; and the recognition rate)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asydcfsta](#))

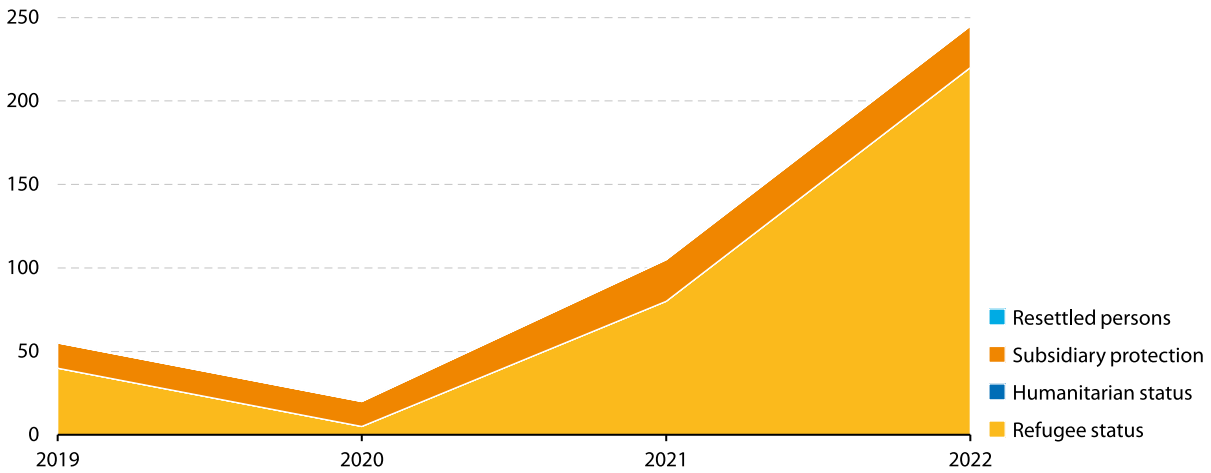
Resettled third-country nationals, 2019–2022

Absolute number (and the share of the total resettled within the EU)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyresra](#))

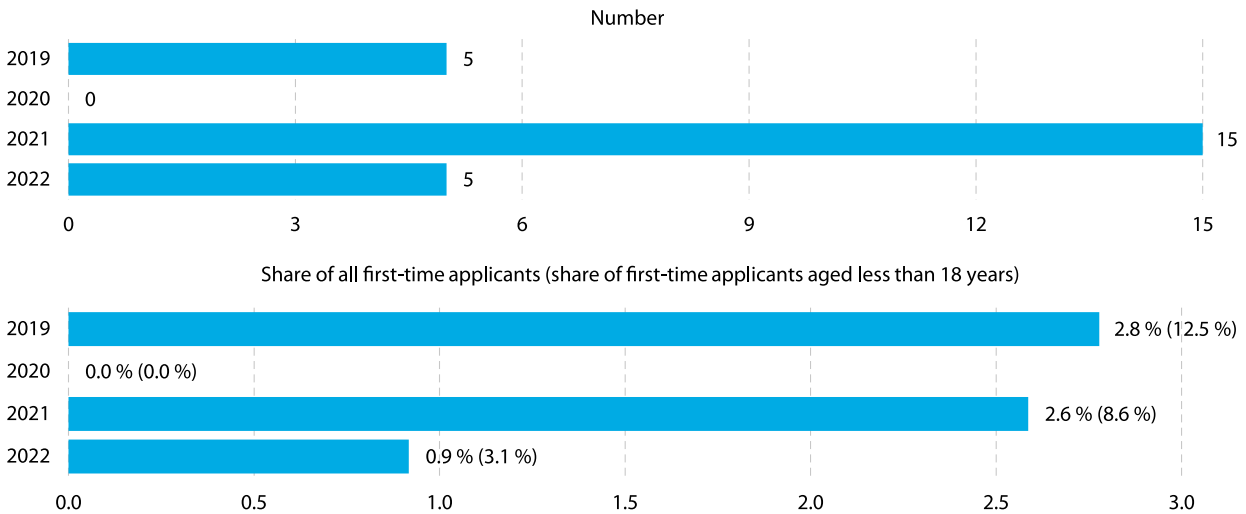
Number of positive decisions for third-country nationals, by outcome, 2019–2022



Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyresa)

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

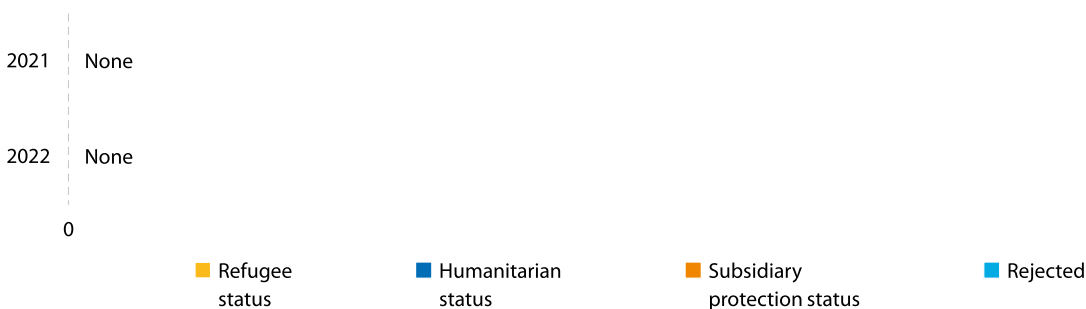
Unaccompanied minors (third-country nationals) applying for asylum, 2019–2022



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa and migr_asyappctza)

First instance asylum decisions on applications lodged by unaccompanied minors (third-country nationals), by outcome, 2021 and 2022

Absolute number (and the share in the total)



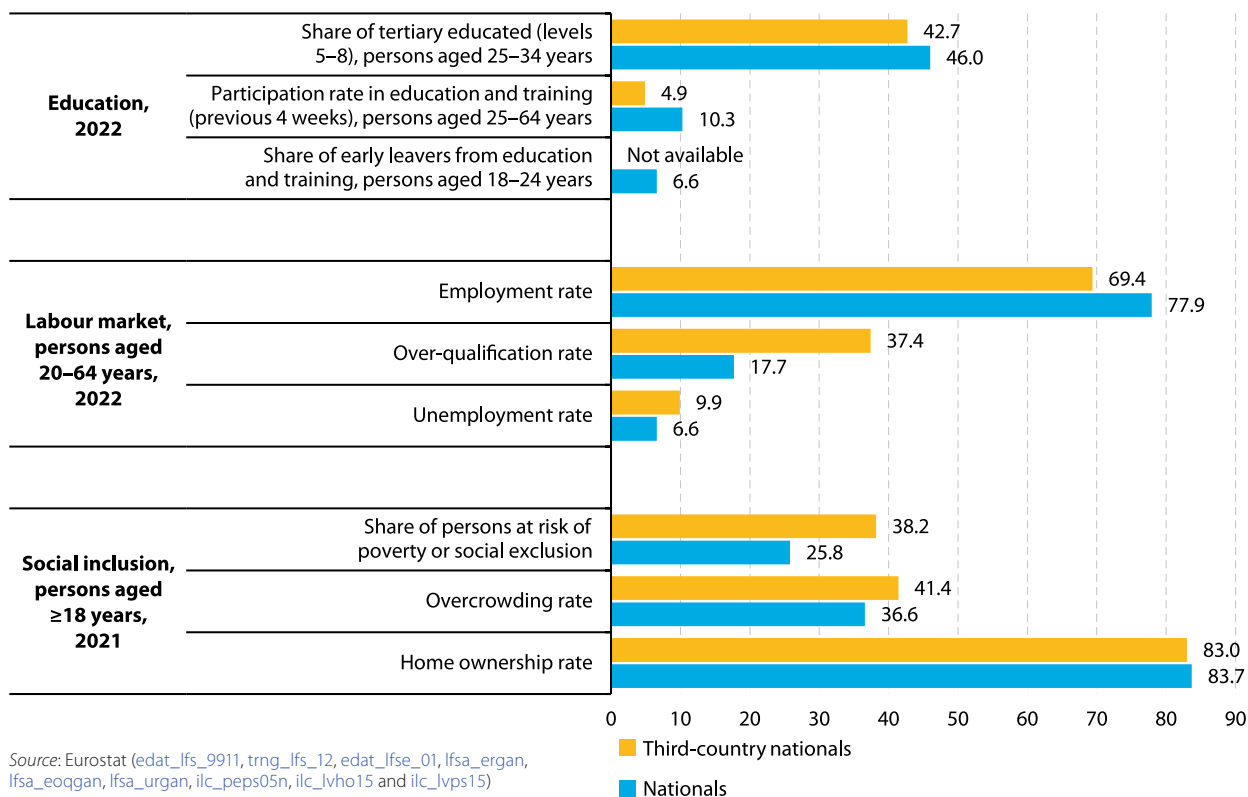
Source: Eurostat (migr_asyumdcfq)



INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2021 or 2022 ³

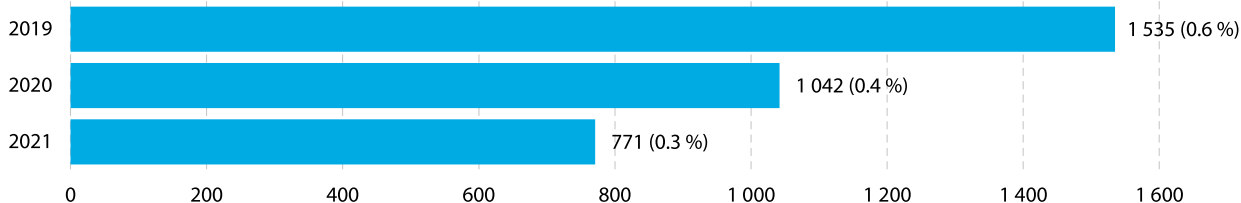
%



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

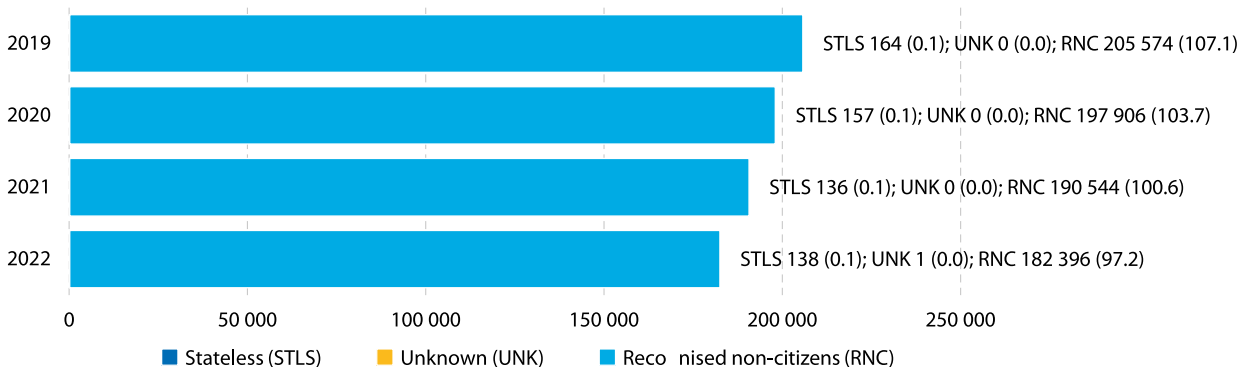
Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2019–2021

Absolute number (and share of total third-country nationals in the country)



Stateless persons, persons with unknown citizenship and recognised non-citizens, 2019–2022

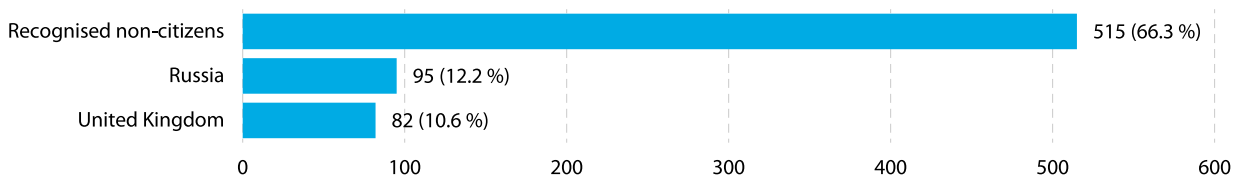
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



³ Including recognized non-citizens

Top 3 countries of previous non-EU citizenships of persons acquiring citizenship, 2021

Absolute number (and the share of all acquisitions by third-country nationals plus stateless)



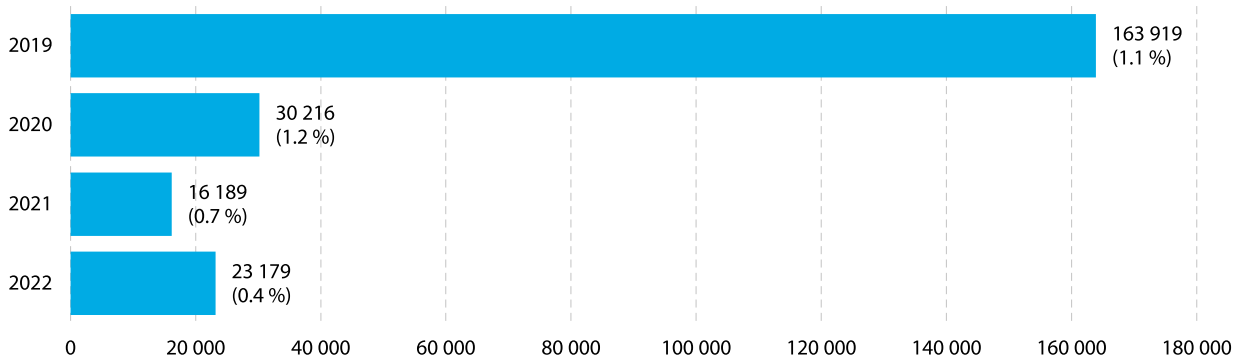
Source: Eurostat (migr_acq)



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Schengen uniform short-stay visas issued, 2019–2022

Absolute number (and the share of all uniform short-stay visas issued within the Schengen Area)

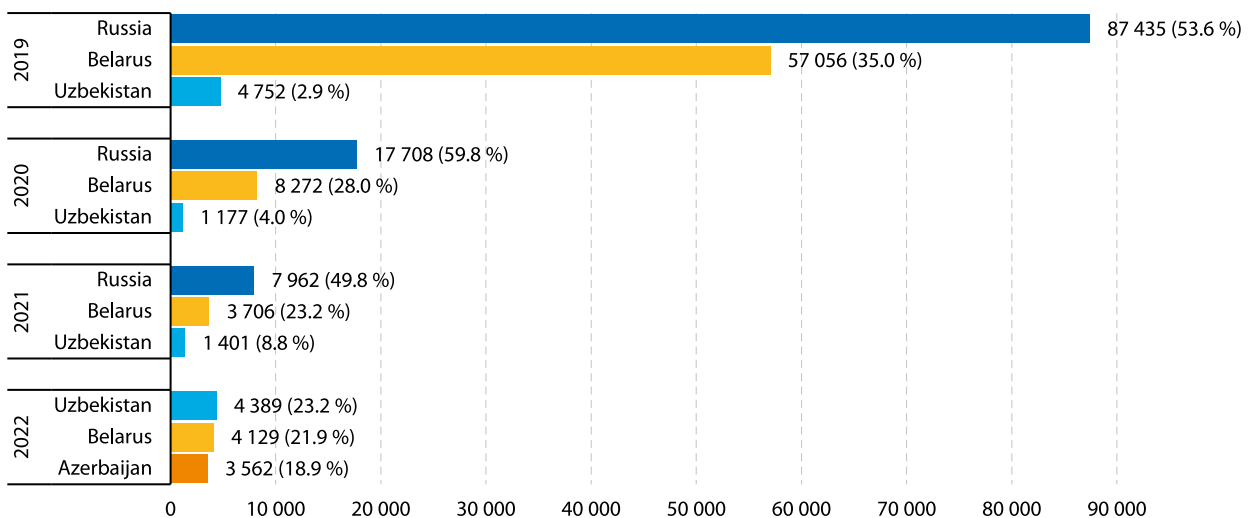


Note: Bulgaria, Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania were not part of the Schengen Area. Uniform short-stay visas (C visas) entitle the holder to stay in the territories of all Schengen States for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Such visas may be issued for the purpose of a single entry or multiple entries.

Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

Three consulate countries in which the most Schengen uniform short-stay visas were issued, 2019–2022

Number of uniform short-stay visas issued (and the share of all uniform short-stay visas issued in consulate countries)



Note: the consulate country might not be the same as the country of citizenship of the visa applicant.

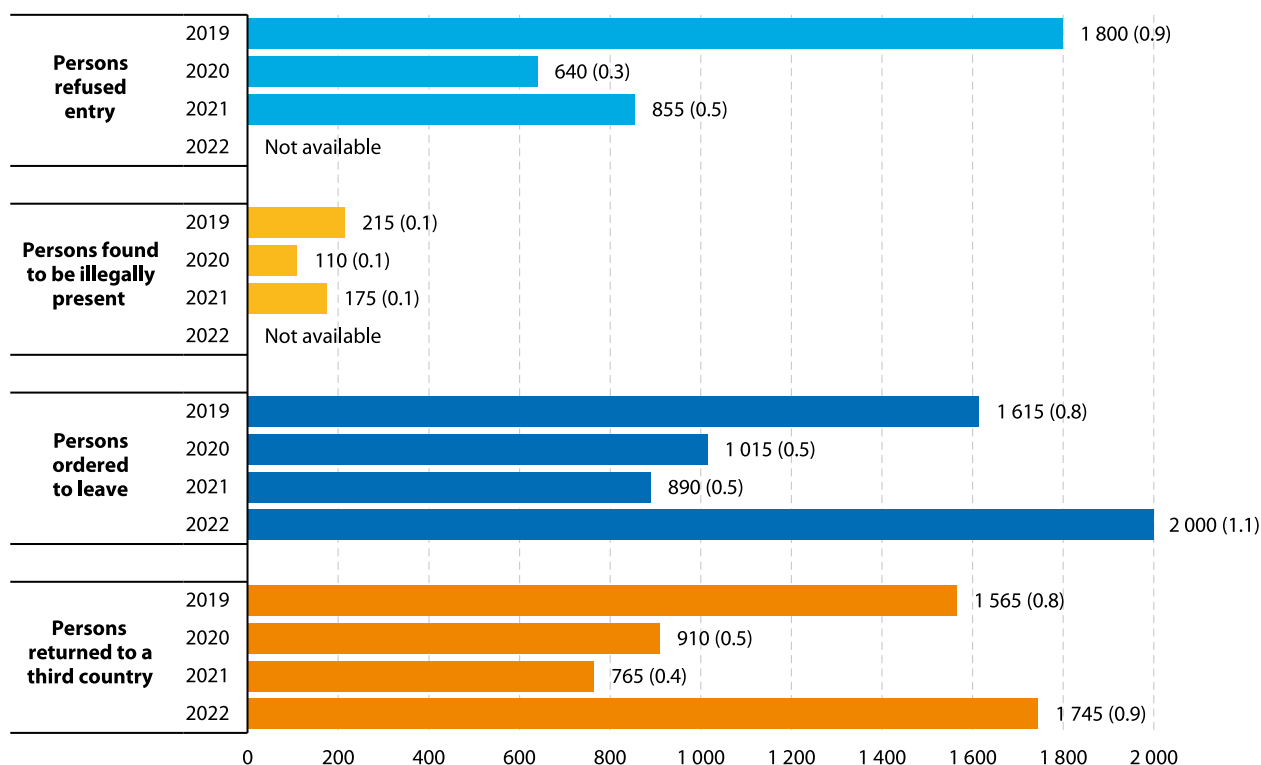
Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2019–2022

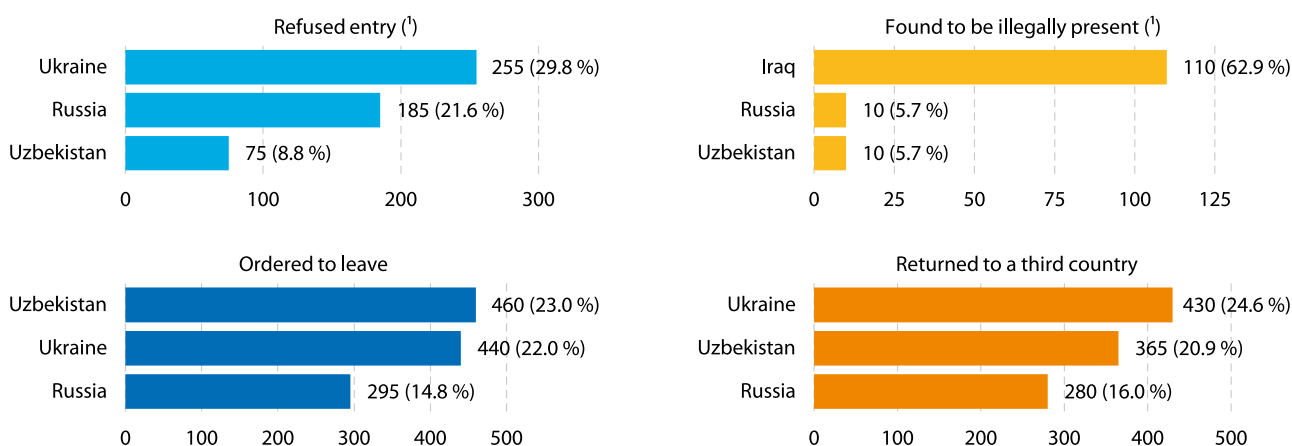
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn and migr_pop1ctz)

Top 3 countries of citizenship of third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2022

Absolute numbers (and the shares in the respective totals)



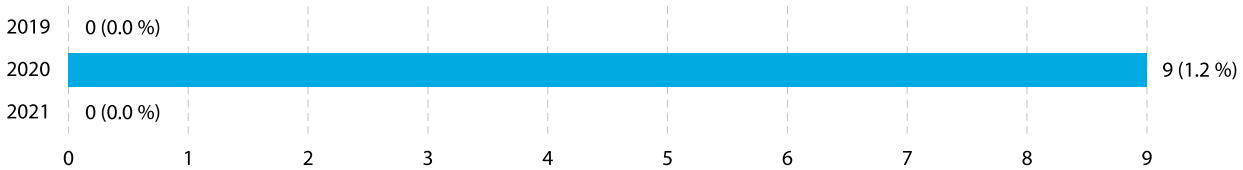
(¹) 2021.

Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord and migr_eirtn)



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

First residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings, 2019–2021
Absolute number (and the share within the EU)

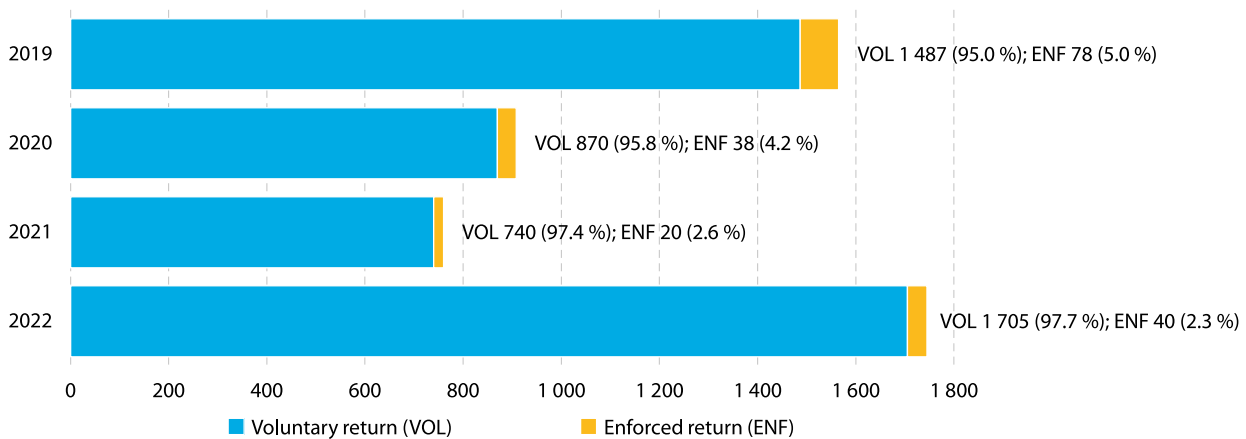


Source: Eurostat ([migr_resoth](#))



RETURN AND READMISSION

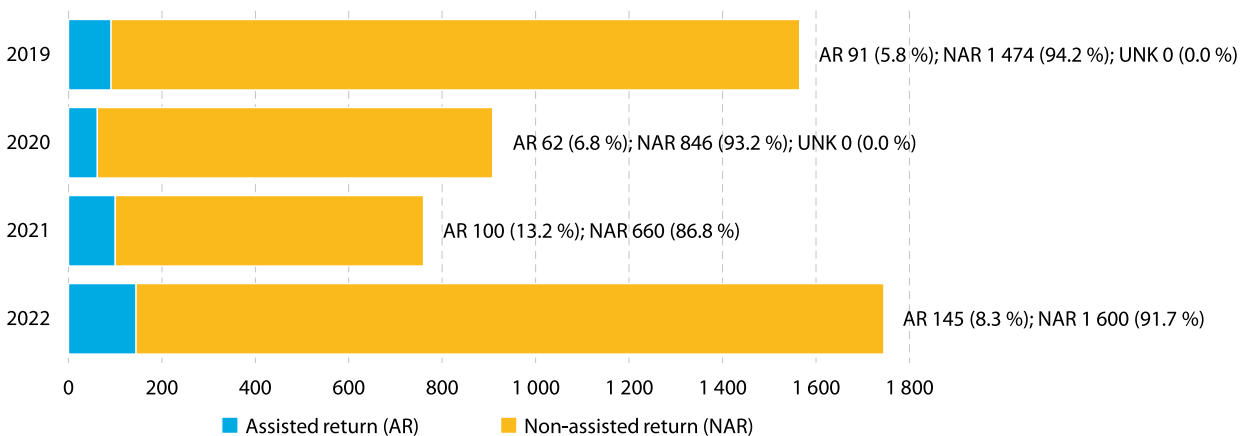
Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of return, 2019–2022
Absolute number (and the share within the total)



Note: data for 2019 and 2020 are from [migr_eirt_vol](#). Data for 2021 and 2022 are from [migr_eirtn1](#).

Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirt_vol](#) and [migr_eirtn1](#))

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of assistance received, 2019–2022
Absolute number (and the share within the total)



Note: data for 2019 and 2020 are from [migr_eirt_ass](#). Data for 2021 and 2022 are from [migr_eirtn1](#).

Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirt_ass](#) and [migr_eirtn1](#))

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EMN YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@EMNMigration>

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Belgium www.emnbelgium.be

Bulgaria www.emn-bg.com

Croatia <https://emn.gov.hr/>

Cyprus www.moi.gov.cy/moi/crmd/emnncpc.nsf/home/home?opendocument

Czechia www.emncz.eu

Denmark www.justitsministeriet.dk

Estonia www.emn.ee/

Finland <https://emn.fi/en/>

France www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM2

Germany <https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/EMN/emn-node.html>

Greece <http://emn.immigration.gov.gr/en/>

Hungary www.emnhungary.hu/en

Ireland www.emn.ie/

Italy www.emnitalyncp.it/

Latvia www.emn.lv/en/home/

Lithuania www.emn.lt/en/

Luxembourg <https://emnluxembourg.uni.lu/>

Malta <https://emn.gov.mt/>

The Netherlands <https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/>

Poland <https://www.gov.pl/web/europejska-siec-migracyjna>

Portugal <https://rem.sef.pt/>

Romania <https://www.mai.gov.ro/>

Spain <https://www.emnspain.gob.es>

Slovak Republic <https://emn.sk/en/>

Slovenia <https://emm.si/en/>

Sweden <http://www.emnsweden.se/>

Norway <https://www.udi.no/en/statistics-and-analysis/european-migration-network---norway>

Georgia https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=1&clang=1

Republic of Moldova <http://bma.gov.md/en>

Ukraine <https://dmsu.gov.ua/en-home.html>

Montenegro <https://www.gov.me/en/mup>

Armenia <https://migration.am/?lang=en>

Serbia <https://kirs.gov.rs/cir>