

LITHUANIA

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET 2022

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



OVERARCHING CHANGES

A country-wide extreme situation was declared in July 2021 due to the influx of foreigners and this remained in place throughout 2022. As a result, many border crossing points with Russia and Belarus were closed and all people attempting to cross the border with Belarus, including irregular migrants, were redirected to the nearest functioning international border crossing point. The construction of a 550 km physical barrier at the border with Belarus began in 2021 and was completed in August 2022.

In response to Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and the build-up of Russian and Belarusian forces on the territories of Russia and Belarus, Lithuania declared a state of emergency on 24 February 2022, which remained in effect throughout the year. The emergency measures included further strengthening of border protection (e.g., checks on vehicles, deployment of the armed forces to implement emergency measures) and a tightened visa regime for Russian and Belarusian nationals. As of September 2022, border passage was closed to all Russian nationals, except those who met the criteria set by the government.

On 16 March 2022, the government introduced temporary protection for Ukrainian nationals displaced on or after 24 February 2022 as a result of the military invasion by Russian armed forces.

KEY POINTS



In response to the war in Ukraine and the build-up of troops in neighbouring Russia and Belarus, Lithuania declared a state of emergency on 24 February 2022, strengthening border protection, restricting the visa regime for Russian and Belarusian nationals, and, as of 19 September 2022, limiting the entry of Russian nationals.



The government granted temporary protection to people fleeing the war in Ukraine from 4 March 2022 until 4 March 2024.



A number of changes to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners further eased access to the labour market and facilitated the issuance of temporary residence permits for students and highly qualified employees.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

2022 saw significant work to adjust the legal framework and practical preparations to allow for applications for temporary residence permits from abroad through an external service provider (VFS Global). As of 1 January 2022, Lithuania issues temporary residence permits to third-country nationals who are unable to return

to their country due to persecution or who are in danger of repressions by a non-democratic regime.

In January 2022, the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners was amended to introduce the requirement for third-country nationals to be in possession of a travel authorisation, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The time limit for examining temporary residence permit applications was reduced by one month in order to speed up the procedure.

Work-related migration

The Labour Code was amended to oblige employers to prepare a contract of employment and related information (rules establishing the procedure at the workplace, occupational health and safety requirements, etc.) in both Lithuanian and any other language the employee understands.

In order to ensure transparent and fair remuneration, wages, travel allowances and reimbursements must be paid by bank transfer (and not in kind or in cash). In conjunction with a significant increase in minimum monthly salary, these changes substantially improved the working conditions of workers on long-term business trips, especially road transport drivers, most of whom are third-country nationals.

There were a number of changes to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners to improve labour market access for third-country nationals taking up highly qualified employment:

- for information technology (IT) and information and communications technology (ICT) professionals, three years of relevant work experience is now accepted as proof of high professional qualifications instead of a diploma;
- highly qualified employees are not required to apply to the Employment Service to pass the labour market test;
- the procedure for changing job function with the same employer, or changing employer, was simplified for highly qualified employees;
- highly qualified employees can now hold employment contracts with multiple employers;
- third-country nationals hired as managers or deputy managers do not need to prove the equivalence of their professional experience to higher education qualifications;
- the term for finding a new job in case of unemployment was extended from three to six months for highly qualified employees.

The time limit for examining a work permit application was reduced from two months to 28 days to shorten the duration of immigration procedures.

Work permits may now be issued for the purpose of employment by natural persons, not only legal persons.

Students and researchers

Third-country nationals enrolled in a Bachelor's programme are no longer restricted to working less than 20 hours per week. Third-country nationals can get a

temporary residence permit for a traineeship in Lithuania, even if the traineeship is in a different area to their studies. The validity period of a temporary residence permit issued to doctoral students was extended from two to three years.

Family reunification

The [Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners](#) was amended to make it easier for the family members of people of Lithuanian descent and those with the right to reinstate their citizenship of Lithuania to apply for a temporary residence permit. The requirements for issuing temporary residence permits to family members of foreigners enrolled in Masters' programmes were eased (waiting time waived). To simplify migration procedures, the family members of third-country nationals who have a permanent residence permit and the family members of Lithuanian citizens are issued a temporary residence permit that is valid for two years and can be extended for four years.

Other measures

As of 1 August 2022, temporary residence permits for the purpose of employment can be issued to third-country nationals who have completed their formal vocational training in Lithuania (previously limited to studies).

The [Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners was amended](#) to encourage more third-country nationals who have completed their studies or vocational training in Lithuania to stay and work in the country:

- if they apply for a temporary residence permit within 10 years of completing their studies or vocational training, they are exempt from requirements regarding qualifications and work experience;
- they will not be charged the fee for processing their residence permit application documents.



TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Main national developments in relation to temporary protection

The government granted temporary protection to people fleeing the war in Ukraine from 4 March 2022 to 4 March 2023 and, later, extended it to 4 March 2024. Temporary residence permits began to be issued after 17 March 2022. The format of this residence permit was approved in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002 and could also be issued as a digital document. The residence permit electronically records a foreigner's biometric identifiers (facial image and two fingerprints). Temporary residence permits issued to beneficiaries are valid for up to two years.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection were provided with access to free accommodation in accommodation facilities of state and municipal institutions. The government also decided to reimburse natural and legal persons who had provided accommodation to beneficiaries of temporary protection free of charge. Beneficiaries who rented housing on their own received reimbursement for part of

the rent paid. Legal amendments granted beneficiaries the right to receive state-guaranteed healthcare services and prescription medicines free of charge. Beneficiaries were granted the same access to social welfare and means of subsistence as Lithuanian citizens.

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

From 1 March 2022, foreigners entitled to temporary protection could be exempted from the obligation to be in possession of a valid travel document, medical insurance and other documents entitling them to enter and stay in Lithuania, as well as the requirements for issuing national visas or residence permits in Lithuania.

On 11 April 2022, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport approved the procedure for funding Lithuanian language teaching to beneficiaries of temporary protection. On 24 April 2022, in order to create employment opportunities and support schools teaching Ukrainian children, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport created a special procedure to recognise the professional qualifications of teachers and support professionals from Ukraine.

To improve beneficiaries' access to the labour market, the government resolved that beneficiaries will be exempt from the requirements for proficiency in the Lithuanian language for a period of two years from the granting of temporary protection. On 4 June 2022, the government extended the application of temporary protection to children born to eligible people after 24 February 2022 outside Ukraine or during the period of their residence in Lithuania.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Legislative and policy developments related to international protection

Following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, as of 1 January 2022, during a state of emergency or an extreme situation due to a mass influx of foreigners, foreigners may lodge their applications for asylum from abroad with consular posts designated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. New guidelines were approved for state border guards, specifying the individual circumstances that should be taken into account when assessing whether an application for asylum can be accepted from foreigners attempting to cross the border illegally during a state of emergency or an extreme situation due to a mass influx of foreigners.

Relocation and resettlement¹

The government decided to resettle eligible people from Ukraine (Lithuanian descent, or with the right to reinstate their Lithuanian citizenship) and their family members in accordance with the Law on Resettlement of Persons to the Republic of Lithuania. Under a bilateral

agreement with Moldova, it approved the resettlement of up to 2 000 Ukrainians fleeing the war.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Minors

Changes in legal regulations will speed up the appointment of a representative for separated minor third-country nationals where the representative is a natural person and it is in the child's best interest. The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners was amended to introduce a time limit of three months for ensuring access to education for children under 18 years of age, including access to pre-school and pre-primary education.



INTEGRATION

National integration strategy

On 20 September 2022, the Minister of Social Security and Labour approved the description of progress measure No 09-003-02-02-07 under the Development Programme for 2021-2030, a strategic document providing for analytical, regulatory, investment and communication activities to address emerging challenges in integrating foreigners.

Education and training of adults/ labour market and skills

As of 1 August 2022, third-country nationals can apply to the Employment Service to learn the state language if their residence permit in Lithuania is valid for at least one year. As of 21 March 2022, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Lithuania have access to formal vocational training and qualifications.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Border management

As the extreme situation declared due to the influx of foreigners was extended throughout 2022, many state border crossing points remained closed. Those crossing the border in non-designated places were denied entry.

Following the declaration of the state of emergency on 24 February 2022 due to the war in Ukraine and the build-up of military forces in neighbouring Russia and Belarus, state border protection was strengthened. Special measures included the use of the Lithuanian armed forces for patrolling and surveillance. As of 19 September 2022, all Russian nationals were refused entry to the Republic of Lithuania, except those who met specific criteria set by the government.

¹ Includes Humanitarian Admission Programmes

In August 2022, the final segments of the 550 km long physical barrier were installed at the Lithuanian border with Belarus.

Visa policy

Following the declaration of the state of emergency on 24 February 2022, the visa regime was tightened. The acceptance of visa applications by Russian and Belarusian nationals and the adoption of decisions on these applications by the visa services of Lithuania abroad was suspended, except where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted as an intermediary.

All third-country nationals applying for visas and temporary or permanent residence permits are now legally required to fill in a questionnaire and provide detailed information about themselves in order to assess their threat to national security. The criteria for assessing the threat to national security represented by a national of an EU Member State were amended in 2022.

Schengen governance

The State Border Guard Service was tasked with developing the Lithuanian Entry/Exit System (EES). In 2022, significant work was done to develop and install the EES subsystem of the State Border Guard Service Information System (VSATIS). In preparation for the Schengen evaluations in 2023, the State Border Guard Service developed the national Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism for border control and return and undertook evaluations of its structural units.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Preventing facilitation of irregular migration ('smuggling') and preventing irregular stay

Following the declaration of the state of emergency on 24 February 2022, the state border protection was strengthened and those attempting to cross the border in non-designated places, including asylum seekers, were denied entry and redirected to the nearest functioning international border crossing points. Due to the ongoing extreme situation due to the influx of foreigners and the declared state of emergency, asylum applications could only be lodged with the State Border Guard Service at border crossing points or in transit zones.

Access to services and legal solutions for irregularly staying migrants

Amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners came into effect on 1 January 2022 to provide non-asylum-seeking foreigners irregularly staying in Lithuania with a package of rights, including legal aid during court hearings, basic medical aid, access to material reception conditions, food allowance, etc.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport obliged the Lithuanian Centre of Non-Formal Youth Education to organise non-formal education activities (sports, arts, etc.) in three accommodation centres hosting children under 18 years of age.



RETURN AND READMISSION

Main national developments

The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners was amended to establish that if a decision on the expulsion of a third-country national who entered Lithuania during a period of martial law or a state of emergency or during a period of an extreme situation declared due to a mass influx of foreigners is not enforced within five years of its adoption, they will be issued a temporary residence permit. Shorter time limits were set for filing appeals against court decisions and for adopting court decisions in the event of the introduction of martial law, a state of emergency or declaration of an extreme situation due to a mass influx of foreigners. New grounds for issuing a decision to return a foreigner to a foreign state were introduced: foreigners may be returned if their travel authorisation is annulled, revoked or expired.

Cooperation with third countries

Identification missions were organised in respect of foreigners irregularly staying in Lithuania, involving representatives of Iraq, Cameroon, Togo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Protocol between the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Armenia implementing the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation entered into force on 1 December 2022.



STATISTICAL ANNEX

The statistical annex available on the next pages complements the Country Factsheet and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Lithuania 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](#).

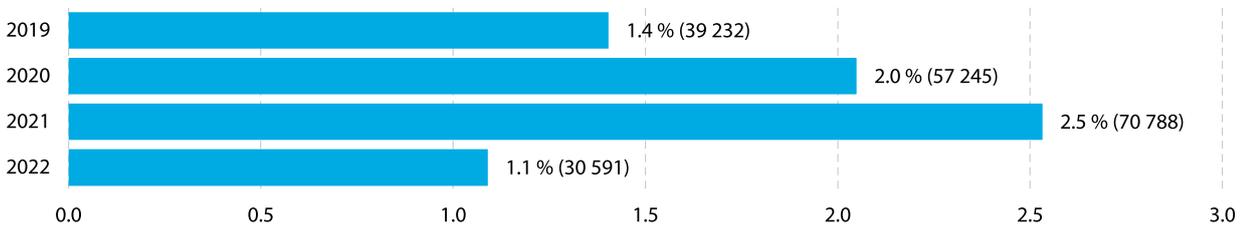
An online data code available under each table/figure can be used to directly access to the most recent data on [Eurostat's website](#).



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2019–2022

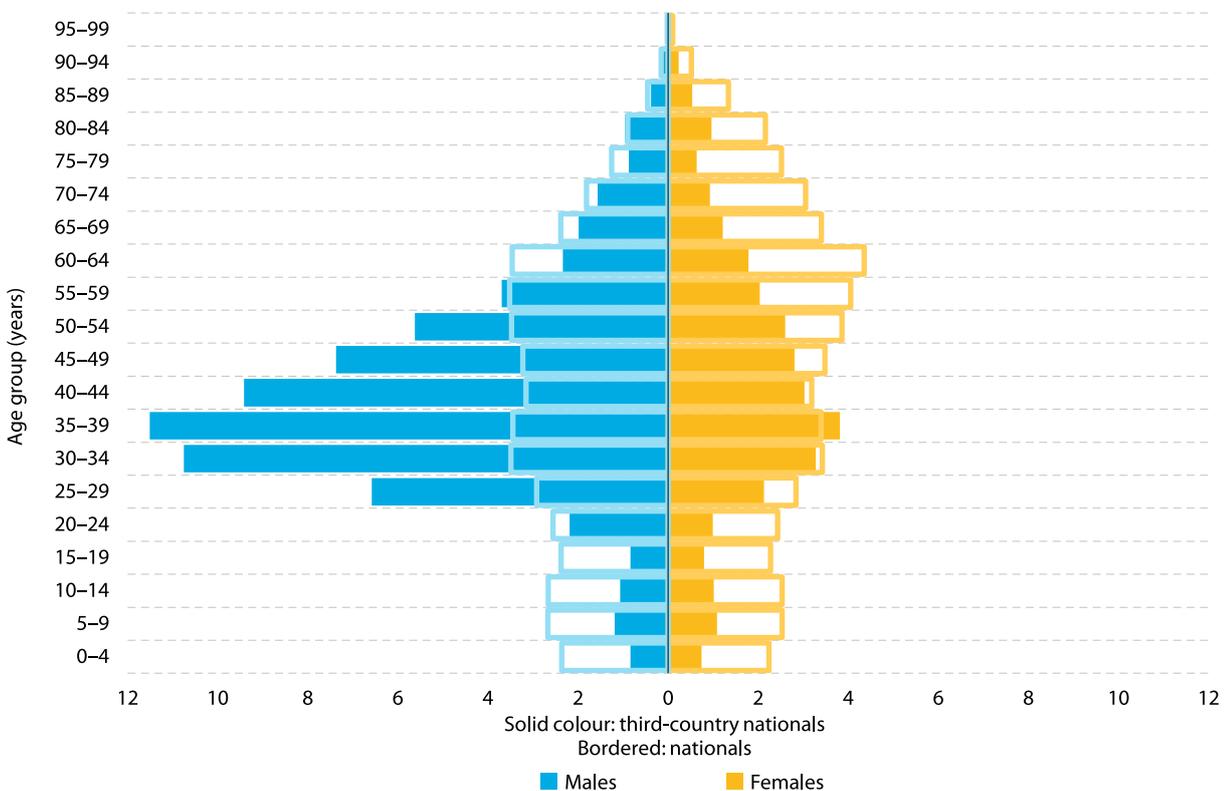
Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

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

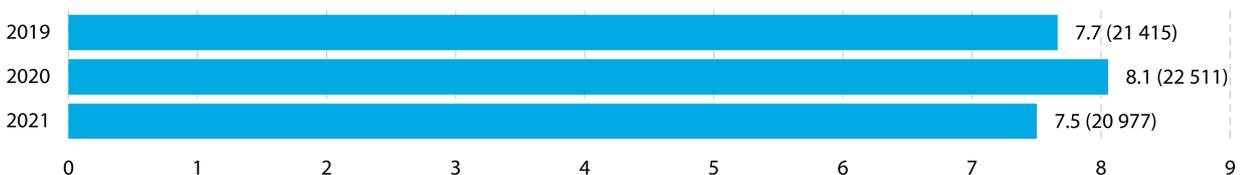
%



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

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

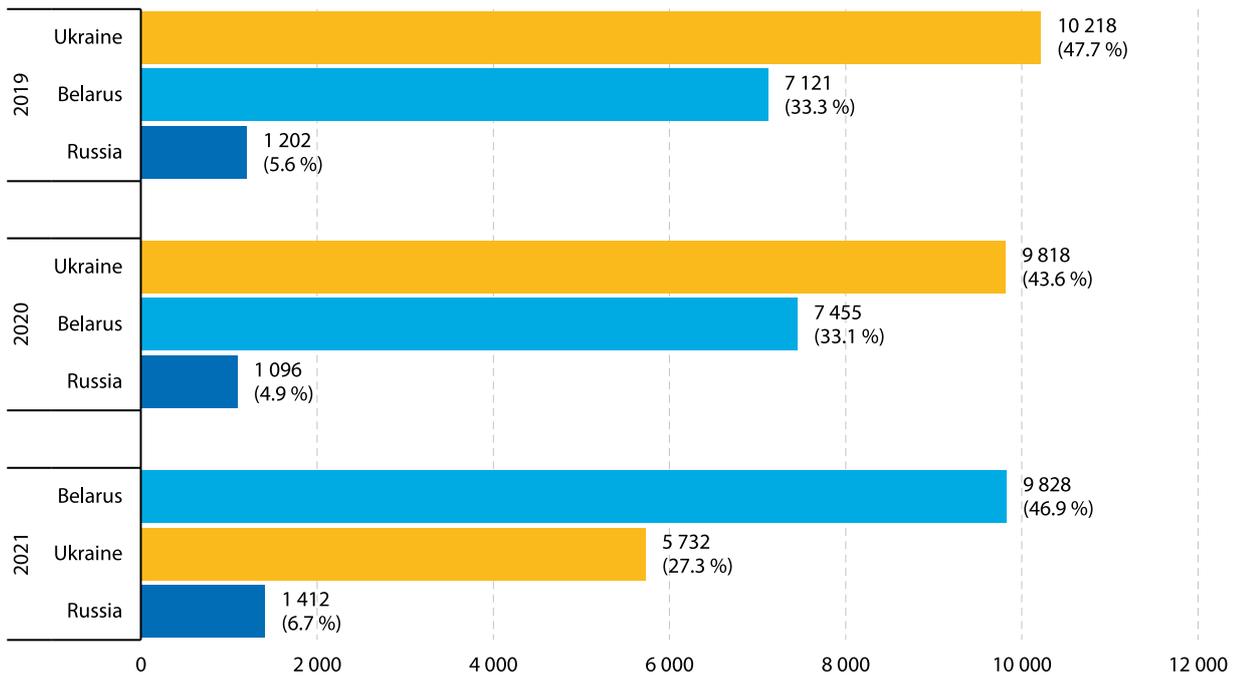
Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst and migr_pop1ctz)

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

Absolute number (and the share in total number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

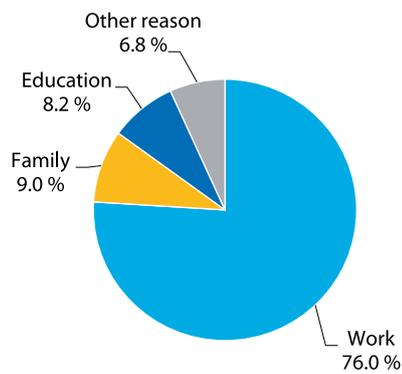
First residence permits issued, distribution by reason or type, 2021

%

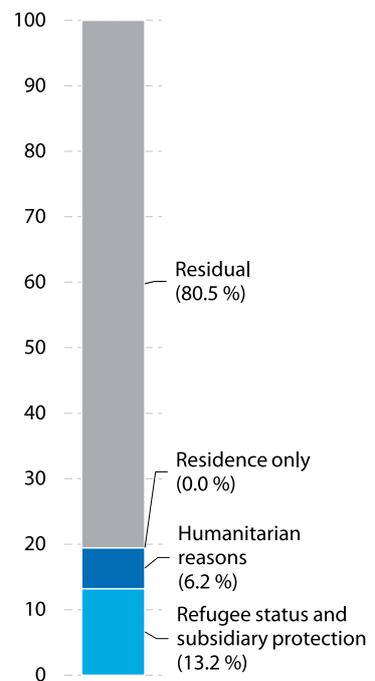
Work reason, by type



All permits, by reason



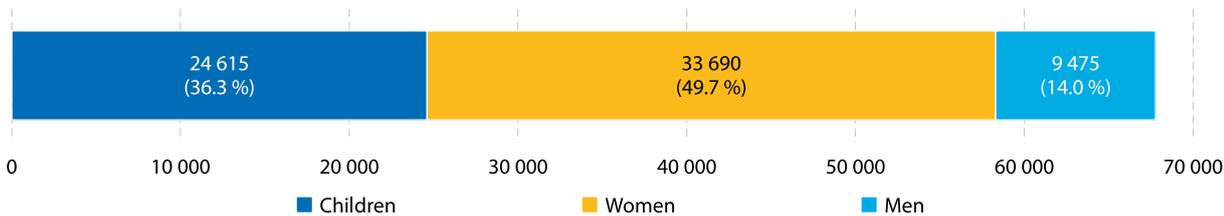
Other reason, by detailed reason



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_resocc and migr_resoth)

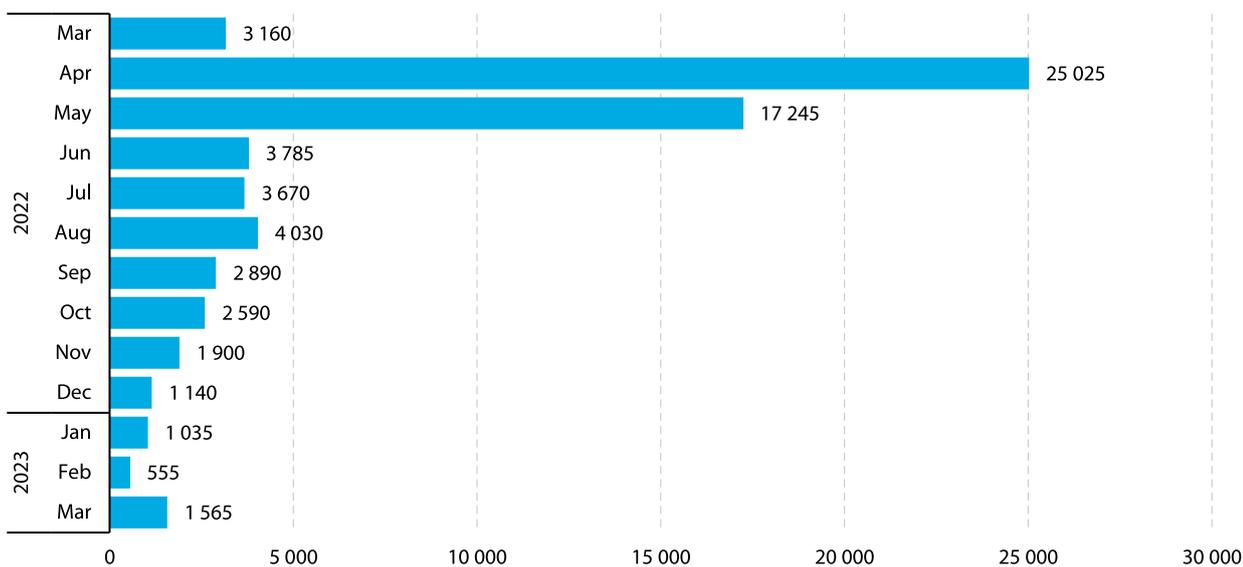
TEMPORARY PROTECTION

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)



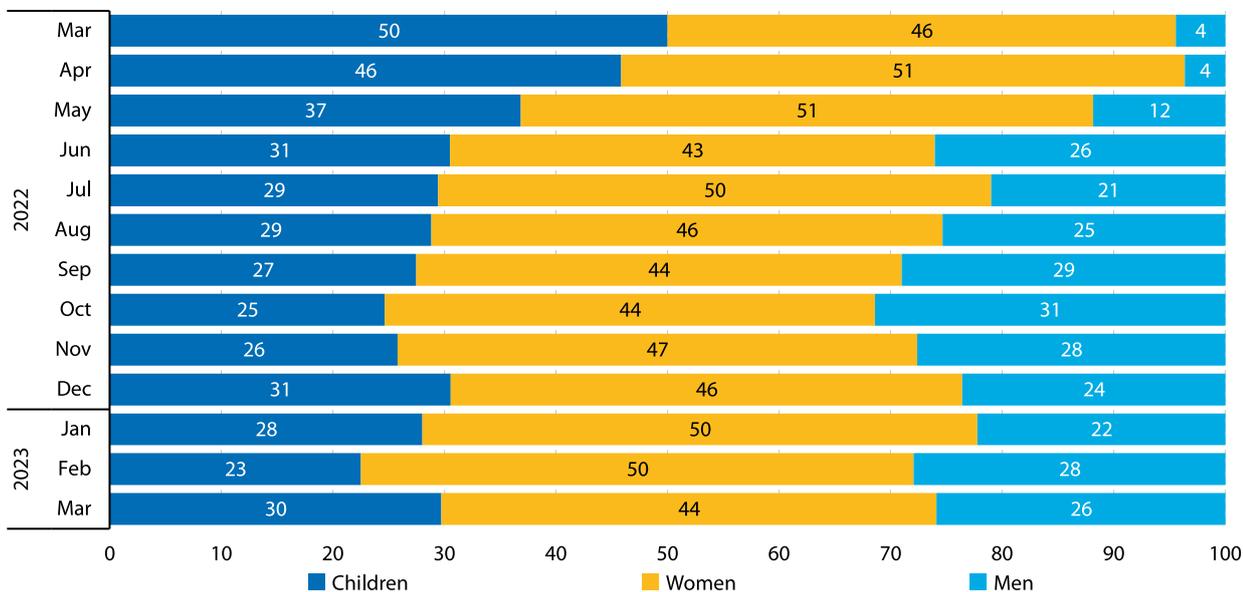
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytspm)

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_asytppm)

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
%

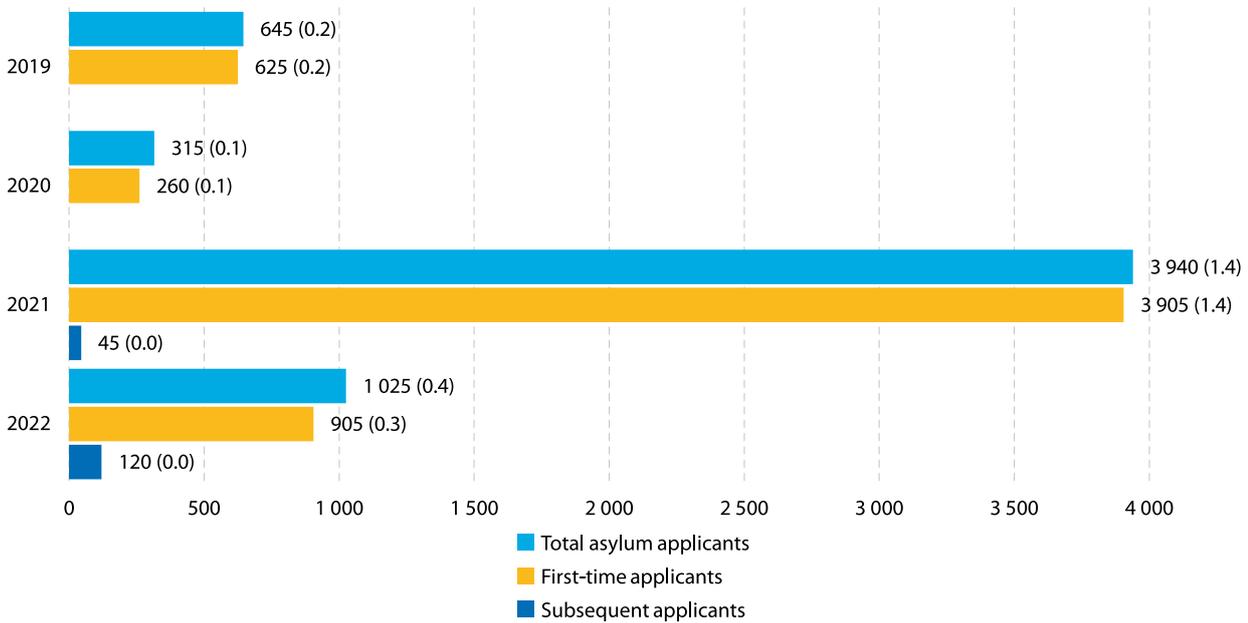


Source: Eurostat (migr_asytppm)



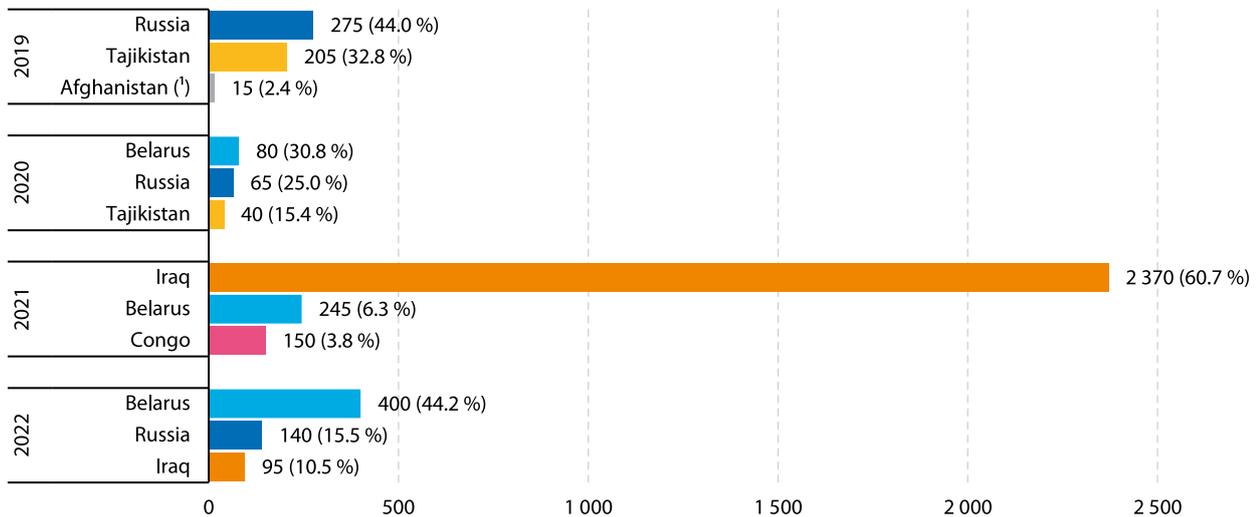
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

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)

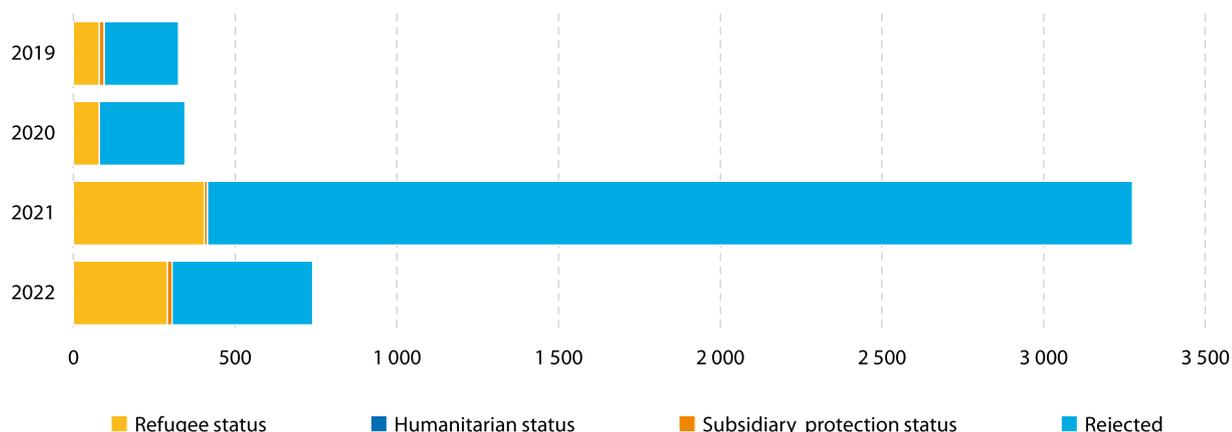
Top 3 countries of citizenship – first-time asylum applicants, 2019–2022
Absolute number (and the share in total number of first-time applicants)



(*) Azerbaijan, Belarus, Iraq, Syria, Türkiye and Ukraine: same number.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)

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



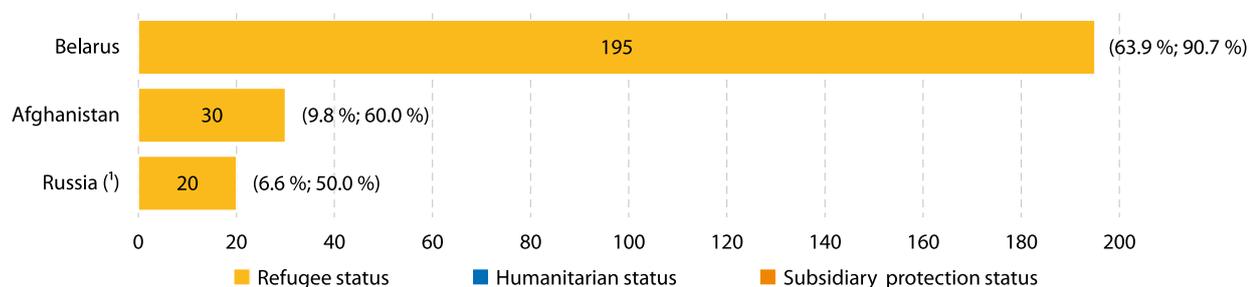
Refugee status		Humanitarian status		Subsidiary protection status		Rejected					
Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)	Number	Share in total (%)				
2019	80	24.6	2019	0	0.0	2019	15	4.6	2019	230	70.8
2020	80	23.2	2020	0	0.0	2020	0	0.0	2020	265	76.8
2021	405	12.4	2021	0	0.0	2021	10	0.3	2021	2 860	87.3
2022	290	39.2	2022	0	0.0	2022	15	2.0	2022	435	58.8

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)

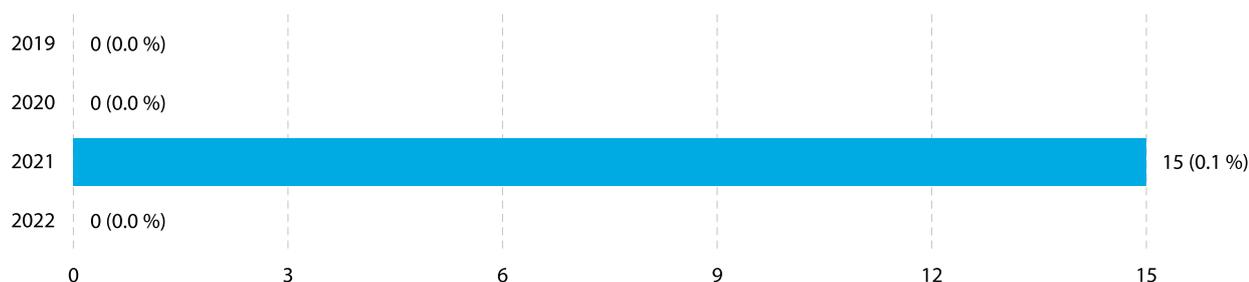


(†) Syria: same number of positive decisions.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

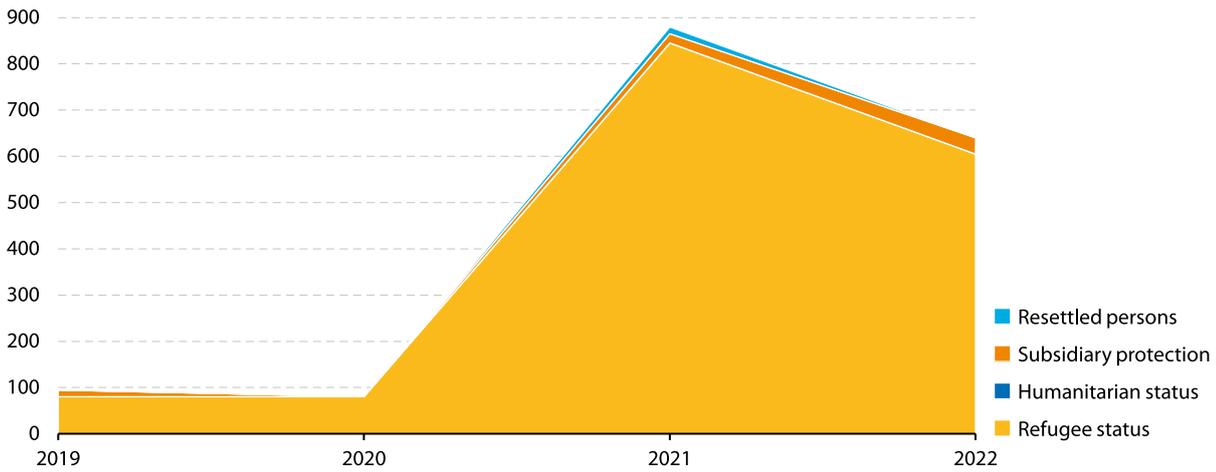
Resettled third-country nationals, 2019–2022

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

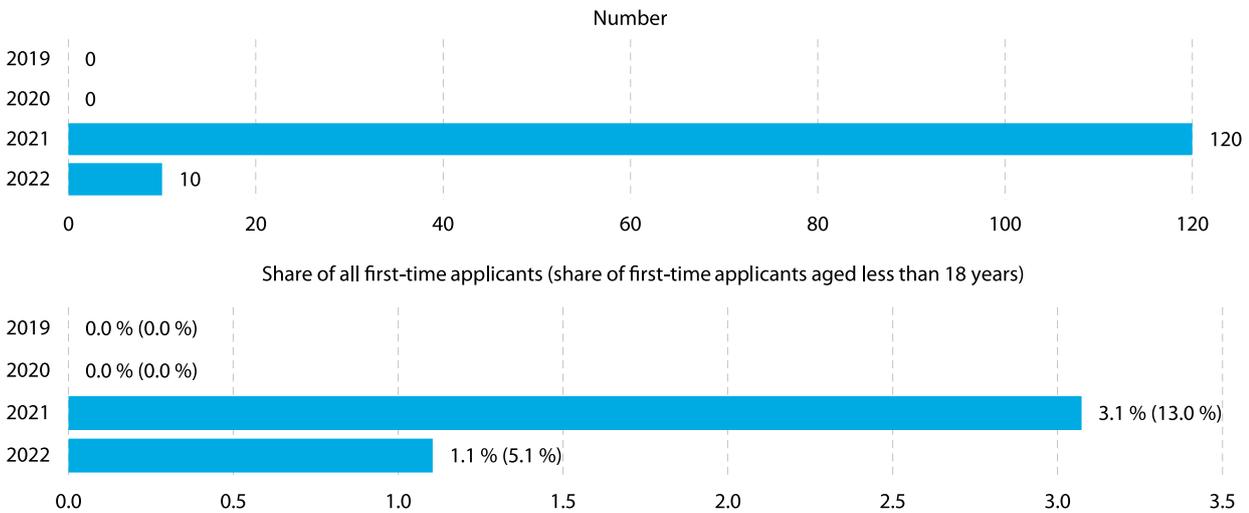
Number of positive decisions for third-country nationals, by outcome, 2019–2022



Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyresa)

 UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

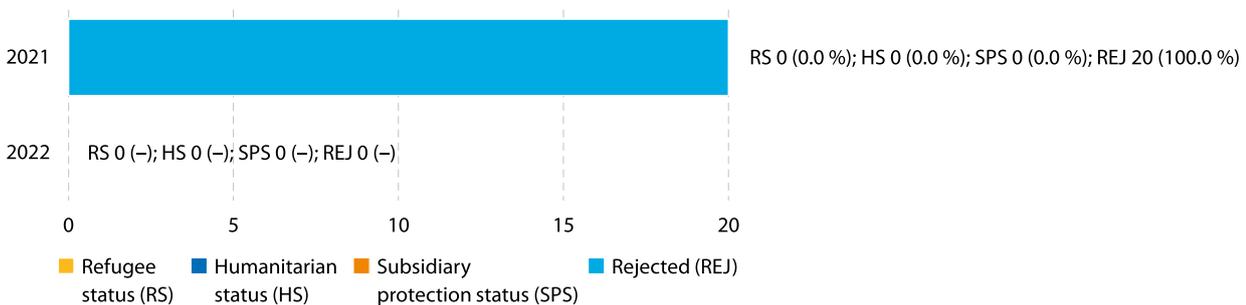
Unaccompanied minors (third-country nationals) applying for asylum, 2019–2022



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)



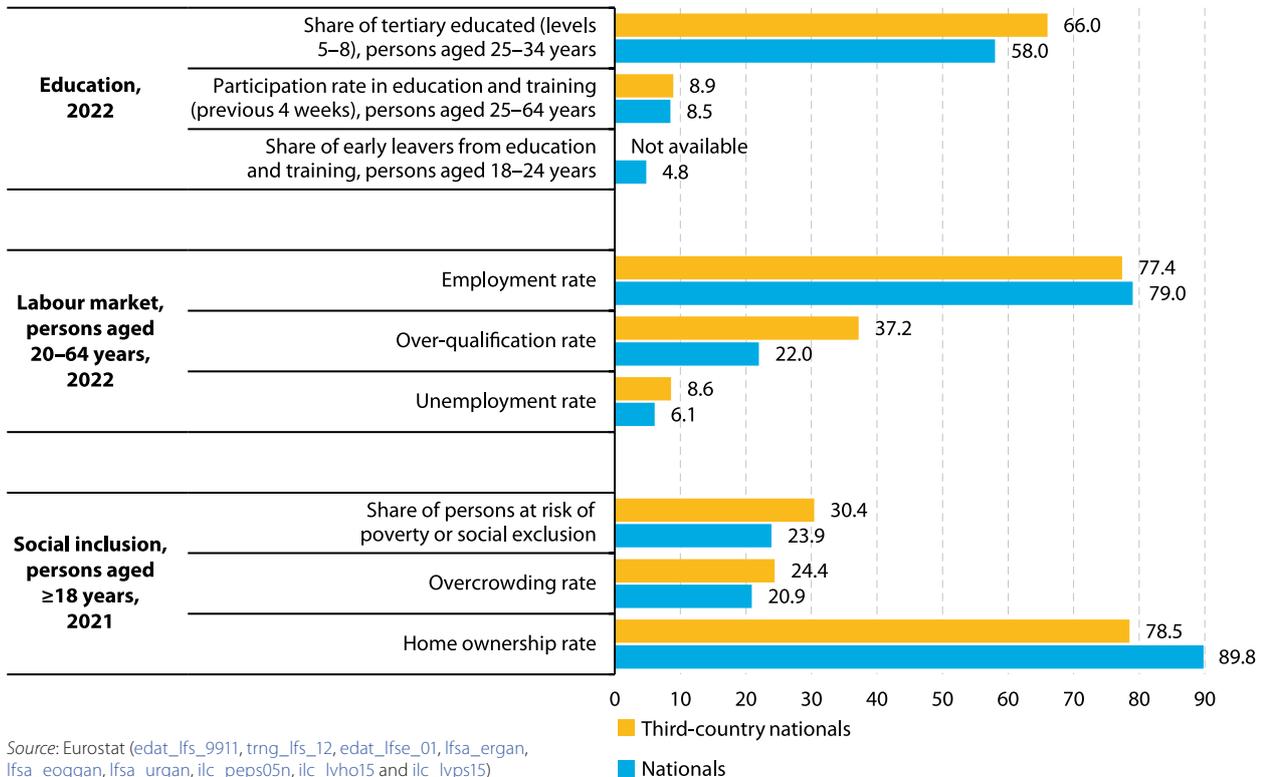
Source: Eurostat (migr_asyumdcfq)



INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2021 or 2022

%



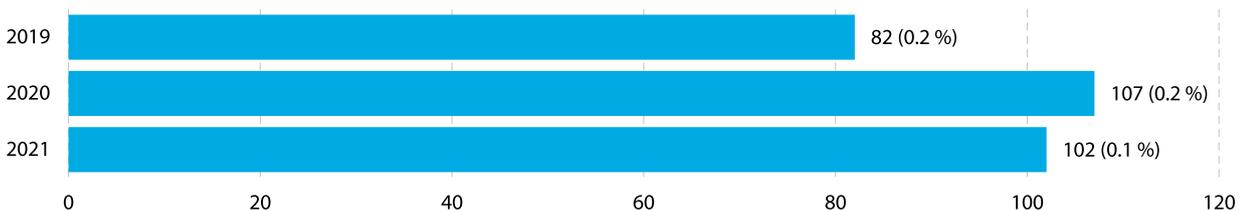
Source: Eurostat (edat_lfs_9911, trng_lfs_12, edat_lfse_01, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_eoqgan, lfsa_urgan, ilc_peps05n, ilc_lvho15 and ilc_lvps15)



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2019–2021

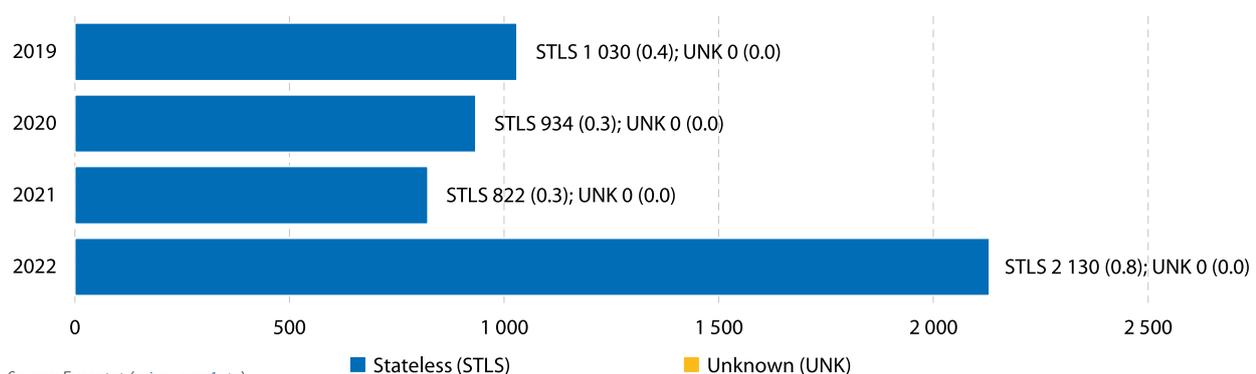
Absolute number (and share of total third-country nationals in the country)



Source: Eurostat (migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz)

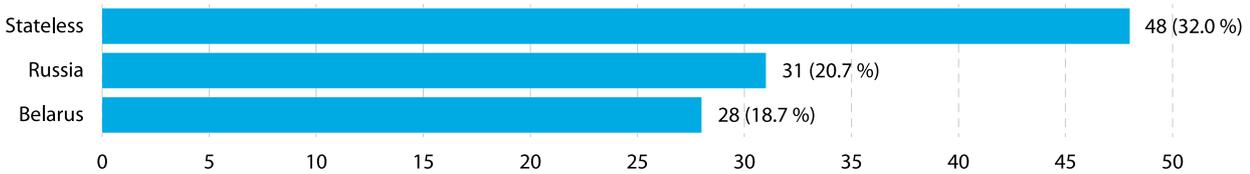
Stateless persons, persons with unknown citizenship and recognised non-citizens, 2019–2022

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

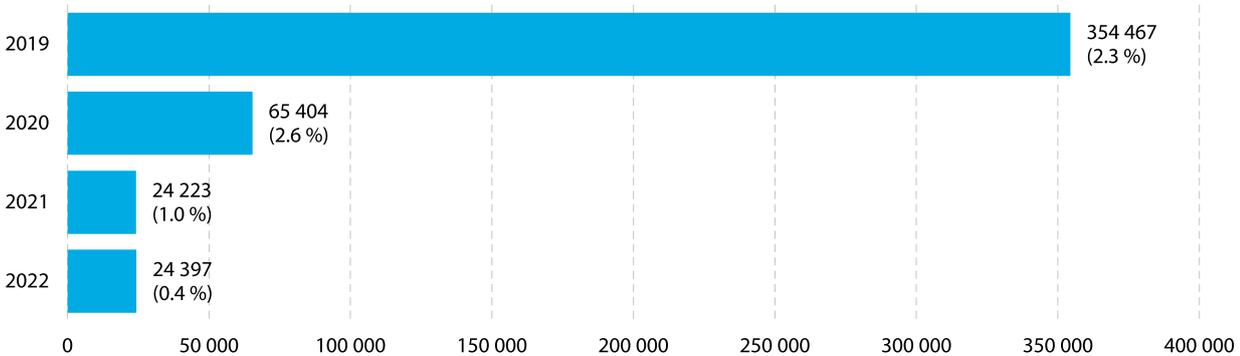
Top 3 countries of previous non-EU citizenships of persons acquiring citizenship, 2021
 Absolute number (and the share of all acquisitions by third-country nationals plus stateless)



Source: Eurostat (migr_acq)

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

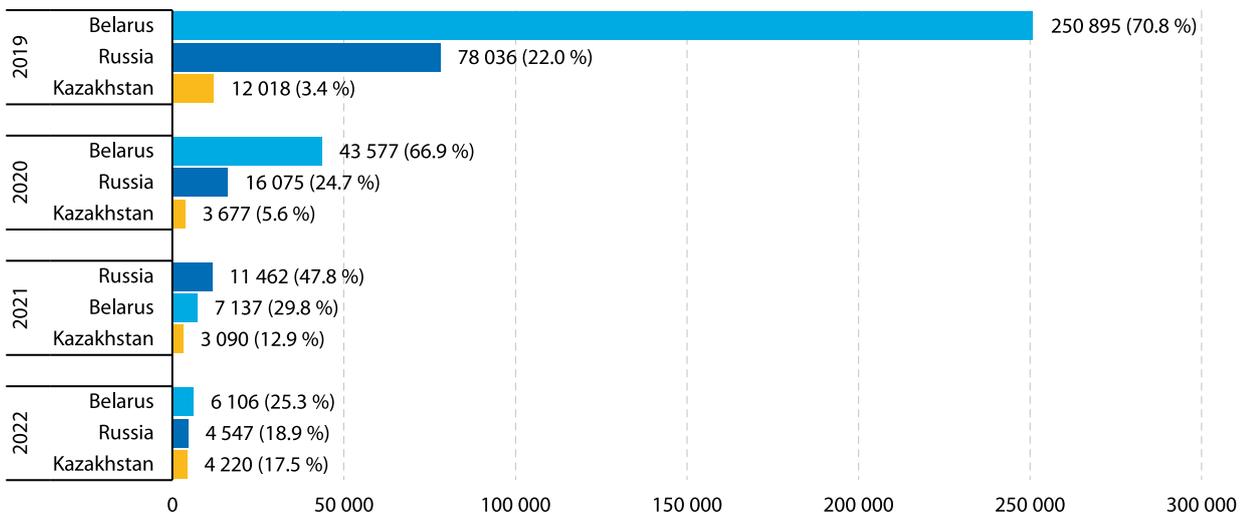
Schengen uniform short-stay visas issued, 2019–2022
 Absolute number (and the share of all uniform short-stay visas issued within the Schengen Area)



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.

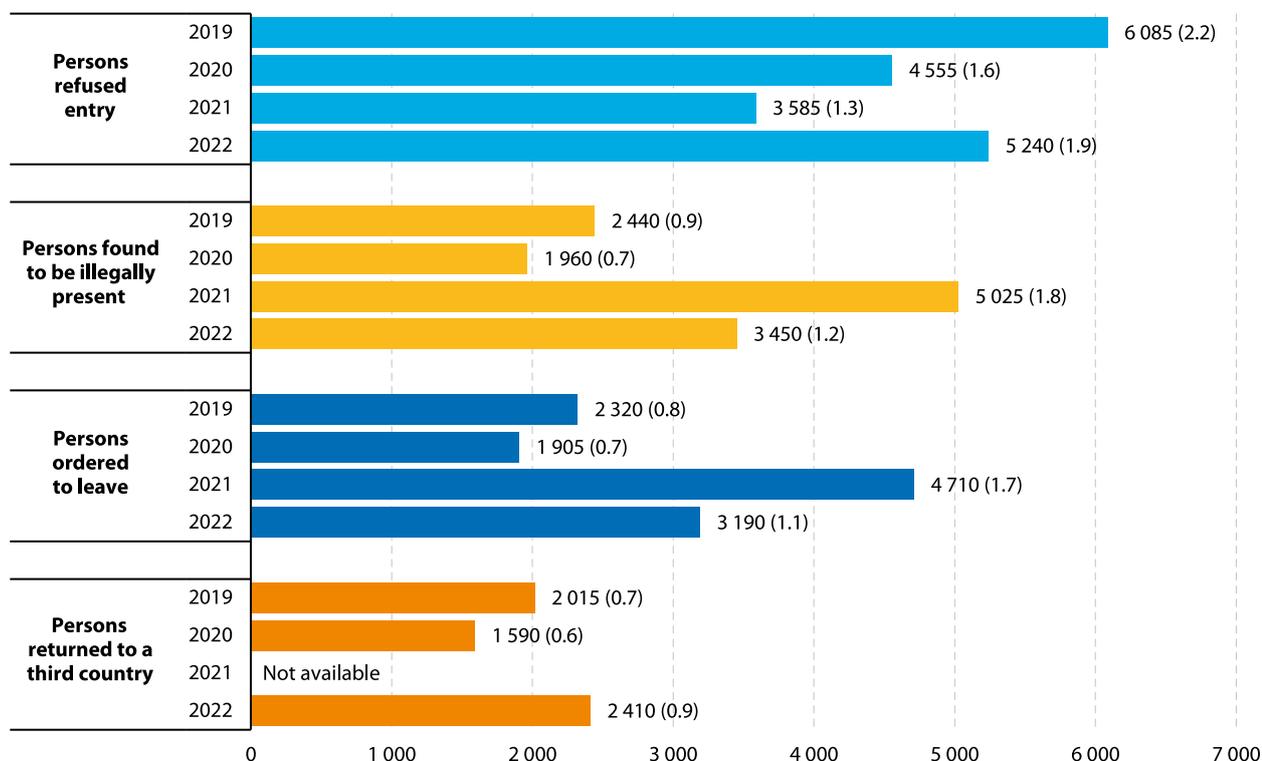
Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

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

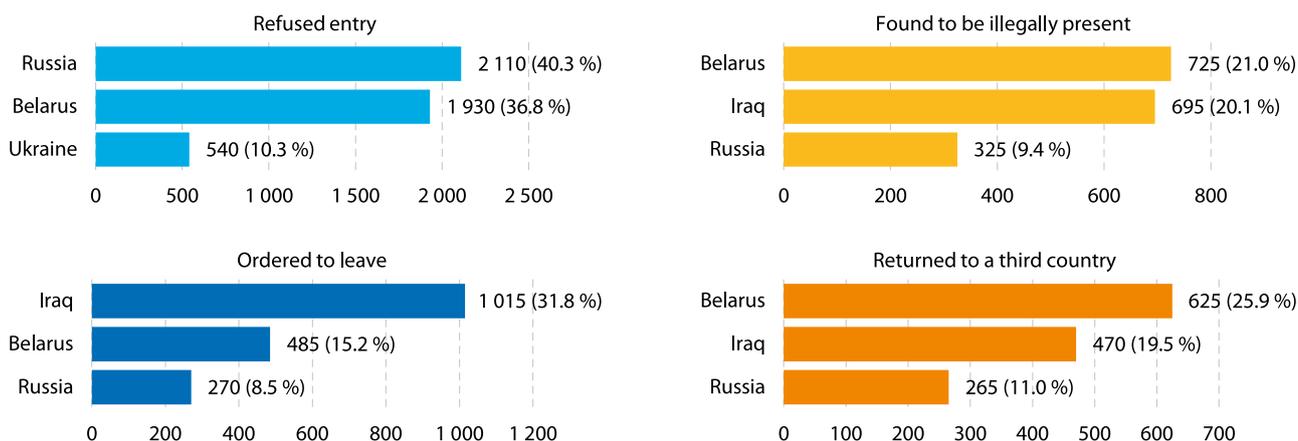
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



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)



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)

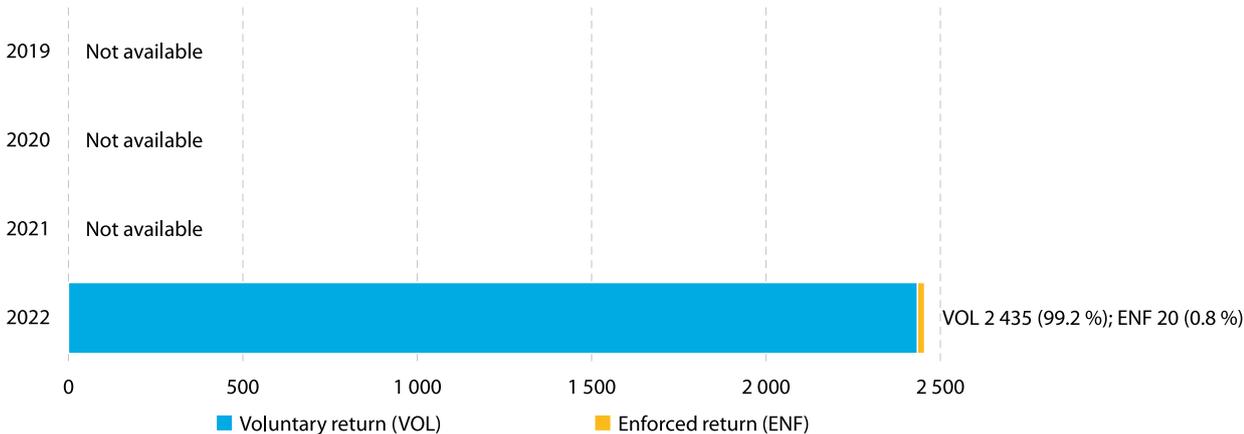


Source: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

RETURN AND READMISSION

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of return, 2019–2022

Absolute number (and the share within the total)

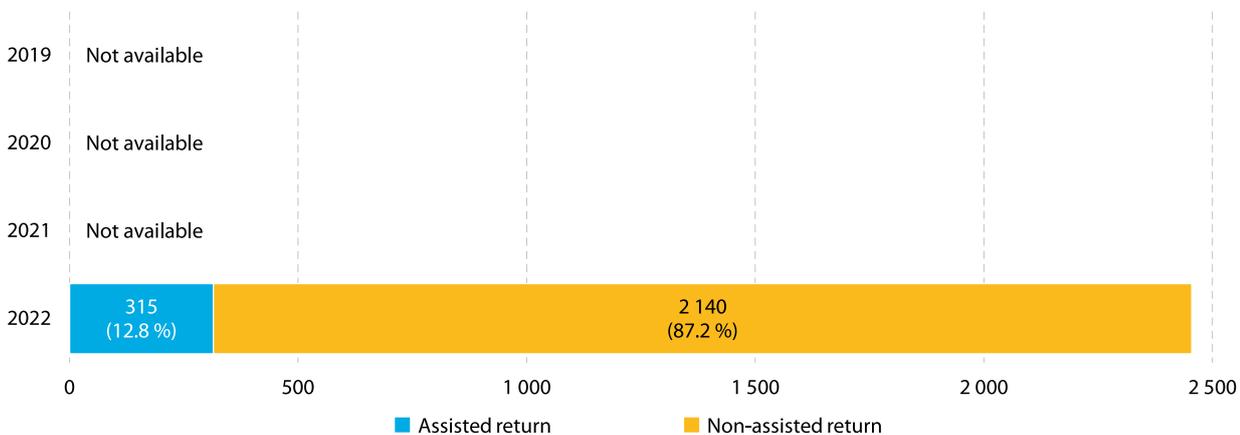


Note: data for 2019 and 2020 are from migr_eirt_vol. Data for 2021 and 2022 are from migr_eirtn1.

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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For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex (eur-lex.europa.eu).

EU open data

The portal data.europa.eu provides access to open datasets from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. These can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. The portal also provides access to a wealth of datasets from European countries.



For more information

EMN website: <http://ec.europa.eu/emn>

EMN LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network>

EMN Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/emnmigration>

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

EMN National Contact Points

Austria www.emn.at/en/

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>