

CROATIA

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



OVERARCHING CHANGES

Croatia held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) from 1 January until 30 June 2020. The slogan 'A strong Europe in a world of challenges' emphasised its priorities: i) A Europe that develops; ii) A Europe that connects; iii) A Europe that protects, and iv) An influential Europe. During the Croatian Presidency, Council conclusions were adopted on strengthening migration and security cooperation with partners from the Western Balkans, with an EU-Western Balkans summit also taking place on 6 May 2020. EU leaders adopted the Zagreb Declaration, emphasising cooperation on migration challenges (including combating smuggling of migrants) and the benefits of cooperation with Frontex, EASO and EUROPOL. The EU will continue to support the improvement of reception capacity in the Western Balkans.

On 24 June 2020, EMN Croatia held an e-conference in the framework of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Conference focused on the challenges of irregular migration on the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans route during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various policy changes to the national migration and international protection system were introduced in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptations included working conditions, a shift towards electronic communication, and alignment of certain policies with public health recommendations.

KEY POINTS



Various policy changes responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. adapting working conditions, a shift to electronic communications, adapting policies in accordance with public health recommendations.



Measures impacting migration included a temporary prohibition on border crossings.



The new Foreigners Act was drafted, which entered into force on 1 January 2021.

To protect public health, the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia brought decisions, to temporarily prohibit border crossings in the Republic of Croatia. Decisions regulated or expanded the range of people allowed to cross the border. By the end of the year, Croatia had introduced a colour-coded country mapping system based on the epidemiological situation.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

The Government of the Republic of Croatia passed the [Decision on the establishment of the annual quota of work permits for the employment of foreigners for the year 2020](#). The Decision stipulated a quota of 64 604 annual permits for new employment of foreigners, 12 770 for seasonal workers, 96 for transfer of people within companies, and 1 000 to implement strategic

investment projects (78 470 permits in total). It also established an annual quota of 25 000 extensions to existing permits for the employment of foreigners.

[The Act on the amendments to the Foreigners Act](#) was adopted in response to COVID-19-related challenges in issuing residence permits, postponing certain administrative proceedings. Some of the amendments permitted third-country nationals to use their expired biometric residence permits. Although they were still obliged to apply for renewal of expired temporary residence, they were not subject to fines for failing to do so on time.

Migration offices were not closed during the pandemic, and were working in line with epidemiological standards, with applications for temporary and permanent residence continuing to be submitted and processed throughout 2020.

In order to resolve residence status and find favourable solutions, third-country nationals whose temporary residence permits or visas had expired were allowed to apply for temporary residence for other purposes. The conditions prescribed by the Foreigners Act still had to be met, however.

[The Act amending the Act on EEA Member State Nationals and their Family Members](#) entered into force on 1 January 2021. The Act prescribes the implementation of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland from the European Union.

The new [Foreigners Act](#) was drafted and entered into force on 1 January 2021, nullifying the former Foreigners Act and its amendments. The new Act introduced certain changes into national legislation, most notably a new approach to labour migration by implementing labour market tests instead of a quota system. The objective of the labour market test is to respond to the needs of the economy in real-time and protect the domestic market. Residence permits were also introduced for digital nomads.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, key changes were made to reception conditions and the procedure for international protection. Policy changes relied on implementing epidemiological measures prescribed by the competent national authorities. The policy changes also ensured the accessibility to the phases of the procedure while maintaining procedural standards by adjusting deadlines in proceedings, and reorganizing the work of the officials to secure continuous processing of applications. New projects funded by the

Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) sought to improve reception conditions, digitalisation, access to legal aid, and interpretation. The resettlement programme was temporarily suspended from March 2020, due to COVID-19 and a number of earthquakes in Croatia.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Guidelines on the protection of unaccompanied children in situations of risk of threat or pandemic were developed by the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health and the State Inspectorate. Adopted on 25 March 2020, the guidelines sought to minimise the COVID-19 health risks to unaccompanied minors during identification and registration.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the implementation of the Dublin procedure for unaccompanied minors were created by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, and representatives of social welfare centres.



INTEGRATION

OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS

The Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities prepared a draft Action Plan for Integration of Persons granted International Protection 2021 to 2023.

INTEGRATION OF ADULTS

Projects co-funded by AMIF to integrate beneficiaries of international protection into Croatian society were implemented in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In December 2020, EMN Croatia organised a virtual roundtable on the challenges of integration in Croatia.

FIGHTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Preventing Discrimination 2021–2027 was drafted and is now in the enactment phase. It foresees the adoption of the Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2021–2023 and the Action Plan for Preventing of Discrimination 2021–2023.



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

[The Act amending the Croatian Citizenship Act](#) entered into force on 1 January 2020. Notable amendments introduced the possibility for persons deprived of legal capacity to acquire Croatian citizenship, repealed the generational restriction on acquiring Croatian citizenship for the descendants of emigrants, and increased the age limit when acquiring citizenship on the ground of origin.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

To protect public health, the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia issued regular decisions on the temporary prohibition on crossing the country's borders.

Those who met the conditions for exemption from the Decision could speed up the process at the border and flag their entrance in advance through a specially designed app, '[Enter Croatia](#)'.

The technical equipment for border checks and surveillance was procured and border police officers were trained in its use. 250 new police officers were employed and deployed to the external borders of the Republic of Croatia/EU. Croatia prepared to join EU systems (the Entry/Exit System, ETIAS) by drafting documents defining the establishment of the Entry/Exit System and ETIAS in Croatia and setting out the tasks required in the coming period.

VISA POLICY

The Foreigners Act entered into force on 1 January 2021 and introduced long-stay visa (D visa) for the first time.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, processing of applications for Croatian short-stay visas was temporarily suspended from March 2020. Categories exempted from the suspension were identified and expanded several times during the year.

SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

In November 2020, the Schengen evaluation team for management of land external border undertook a

targeted revisit to Croatia. The European Commission then confirmed that Croatia met the technical conditions for entry into the Schengen area and had successfully completed the Schengen evaluation process that began in June 2015.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Decisions were made on the allocation of AMIF resources for technical equipment and improvement of the IT database for registration of illegal migrants in the return process.

Following the amendments to the EU and national legislation frame, the border police adopted new instructions for risk analysis by the border police.

Good practices were developed to provide solutions for third-country nationals whose visa or residence permits expired, but who were not able to leave Croatia due to COVID-19. For example, third-country nationals on a short-stay visa or whose residence permit expired and who were unable to leave (cancelled flights, etc.) could remain in Croatia until conditions to leave Croatia were met. They were advised to contact competent police administrations by telephone to register their 'tolerated' stay and avoid issues when exiting Croatia.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

On 7 December 2020, the government adopted the [Decision on the Establishment of the National Committee for the Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings](#), including the representatives of the judiciary on the National Committee.

The Protocol on the Exchange of Data on Identified Victims of Human Trafficking was drafted. It sought to improve the existing legislative framework and ensure the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as detection, prosecution and sanction of the perpetrators of trafficking.



RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

COVID-19 saw the temporary suspension of returns. The Ministry of the Interior applied the instructions of the Croatian Institute for Public Health on COVID-19 in the return procedure.

The assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programme continued, with 40 people returned to their country of origin.

Other projects co-funded by AMIF were implemented relating to the return procedure and improvement of living and working conditions in the Detention Centre for Foreigners.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

No significant developments in 2020.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex was prepared by the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Croatia on aspects of migration and international protection (2017-2020), including legal residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, integration, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics were not available at the time of publication, this is indicated in the Annex as 'N/A'.

A How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available [here](#).



GENERAL NOTES

This four-page statistical annex complements the Country Factsheet with relevant migration-related data organised in up to nine thematic sections – depending on data availability. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators.

Whenever data are not available, the relative chart is left blank or indicated with 'N/A'. Data are provided for the latest available year or the latest available four-year period. For some indicators, data are rounded in the source. The sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value. This is due to rounding and confidence intervals in the original data.

A How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available on the EMN website.



COLOUR LEGEND

Whenever not specified, the following colour legend is adopted. Colours for multiple nationalities are randomly chosen.



data relative to Croatia



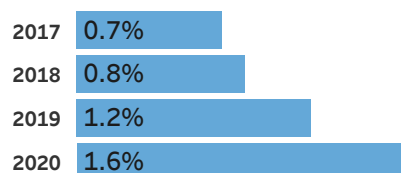
data relative to EU



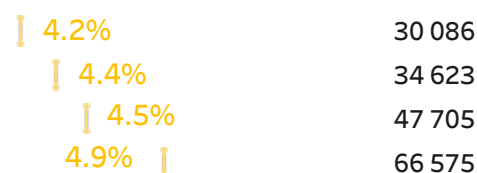
LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) as % of total population (in the country and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

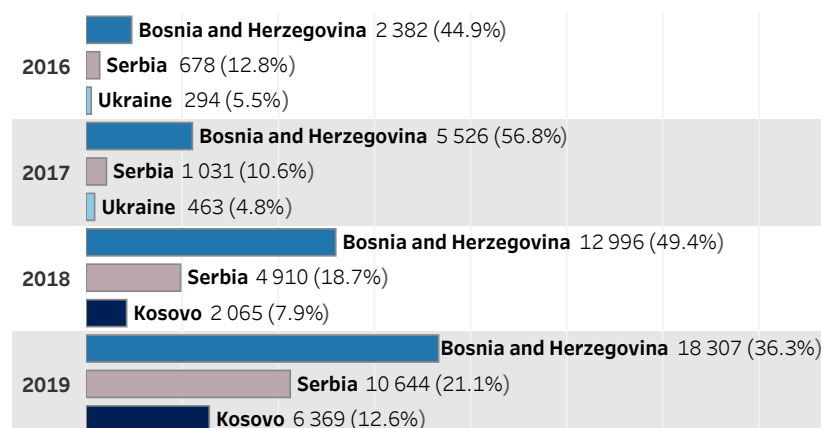


Number of TCNs



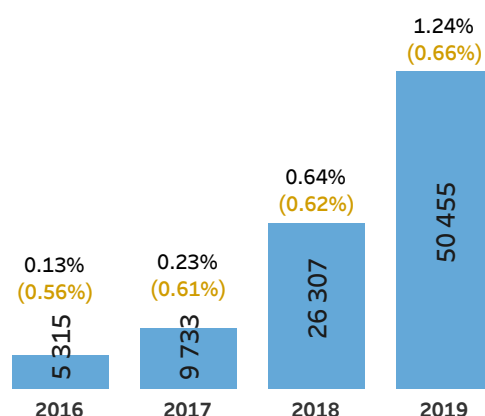
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



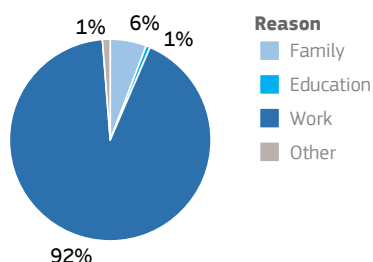
First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



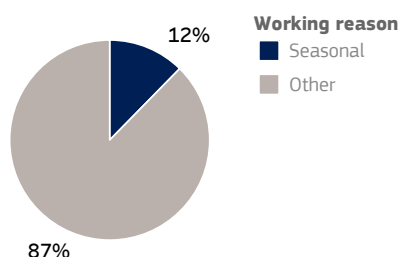
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



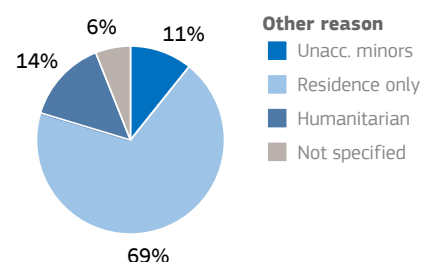
First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resocc)



First residence permits annually issued for 'other reasons' in 2019

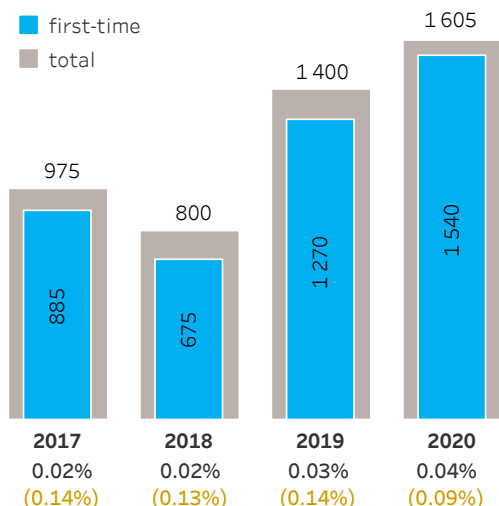
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)



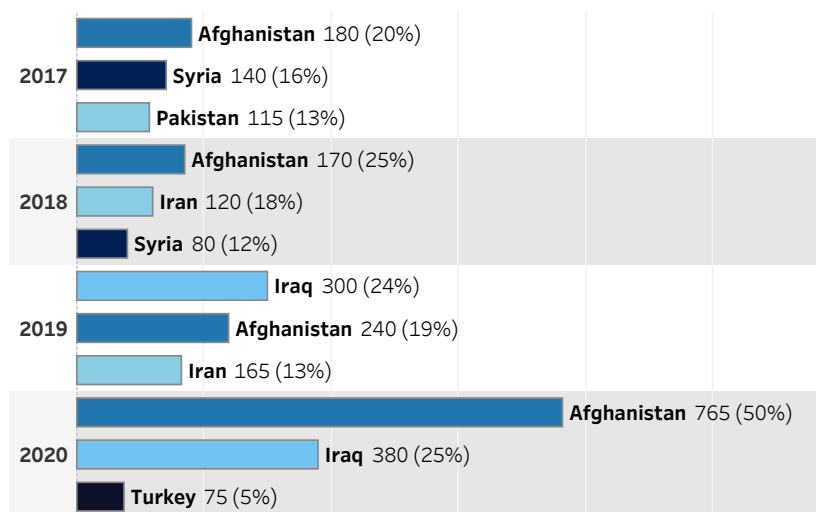


INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Total/first-time asylum applications; first-time asy app as % of population in the country (and in EU) SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz)

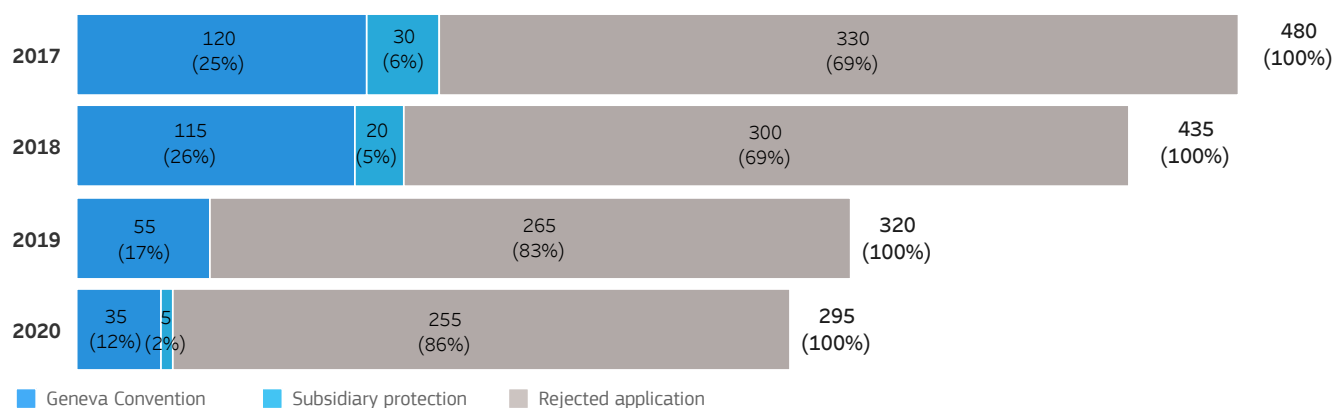


Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)



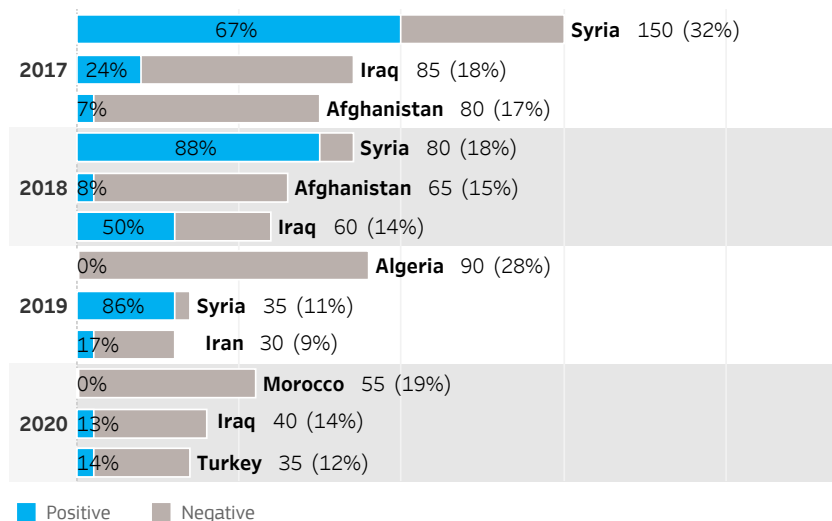
Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



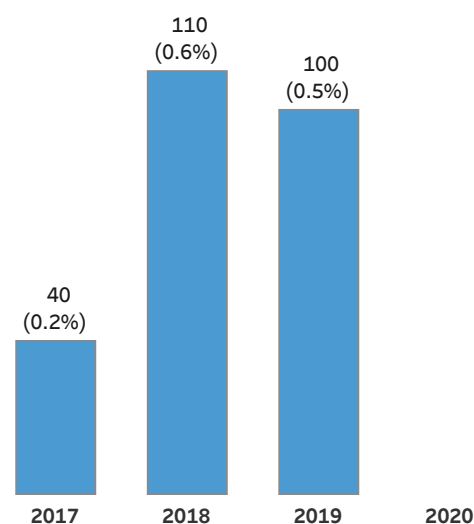
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



Third-Country Nationals resettled: absolute number and as % of total resettled in EU

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

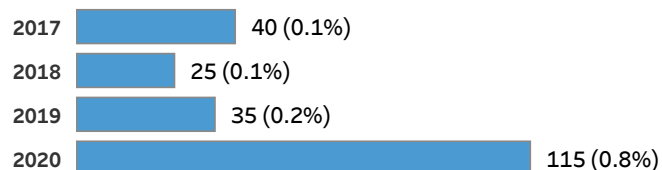




UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

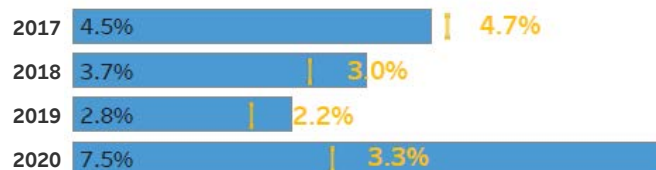
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



Unaccompanied minors as % of first asylum applications (in the country and in EU)

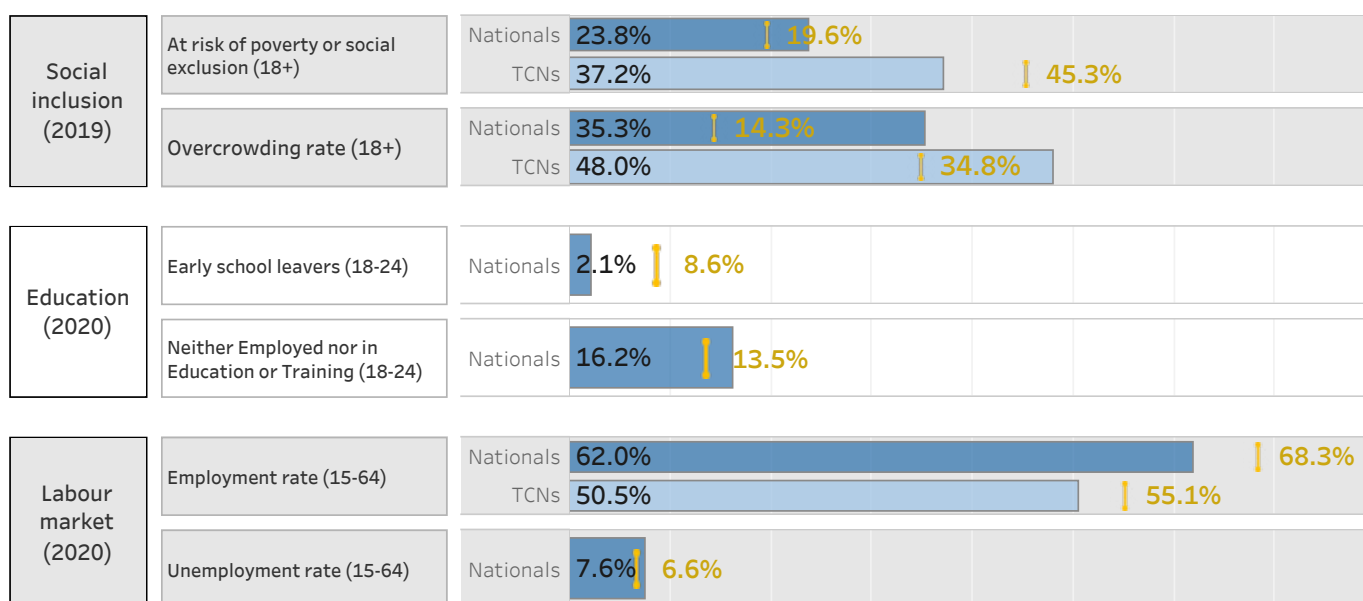
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



INTEGRATION

Integration indicators for nationals of the country (blue) and Third-Country Nationals (TCNs - light blue) in the country (when available). The same indicator is provided in yellow for EU. Data are relative to the last available year.

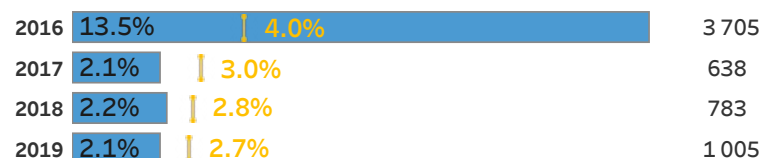
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc_peps05, ilc_lvho15, edat_lfse_01, edat_lfse_23, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_urgan)



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

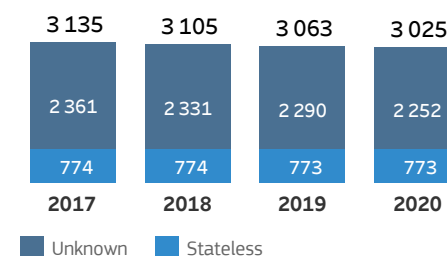
Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acqs, migr_acq)



Stateless, unknown citizens and recognised non-citizens (RNC) - where present

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1cta)



Top 3 nationalities by number of citizenship acquisition in 2019: absolute number and % of total acquisitions in the country by Third-Country Nationals

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acq)

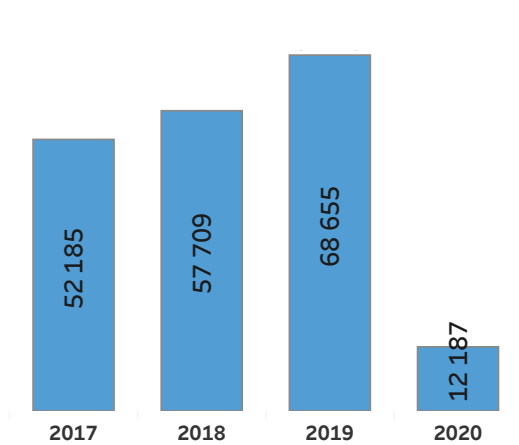




BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

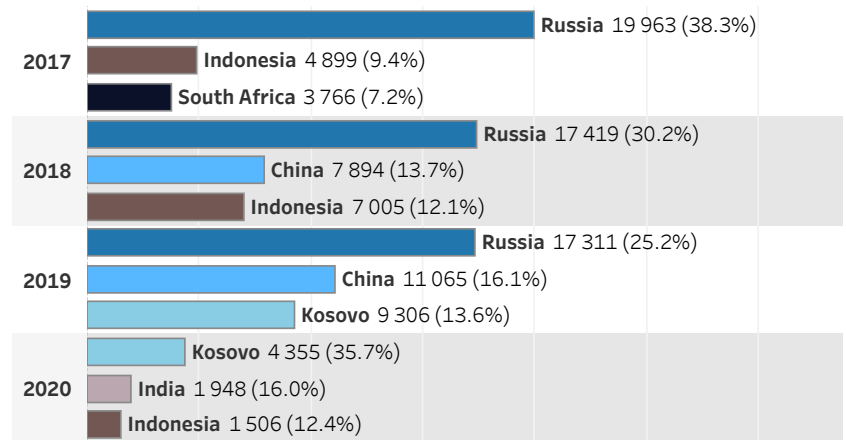
Short-term visa issued

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



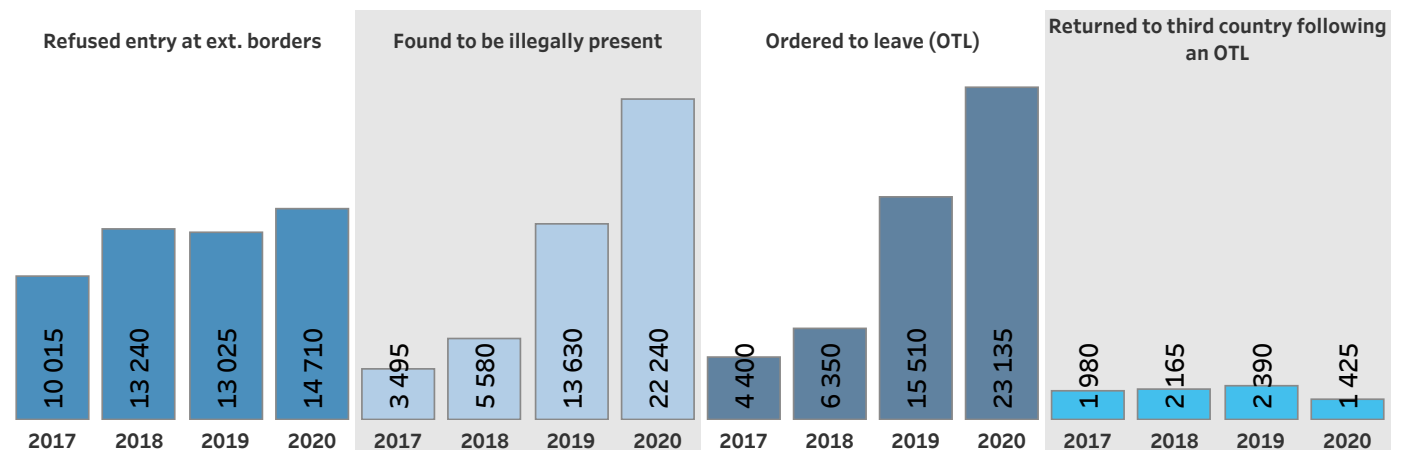
Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



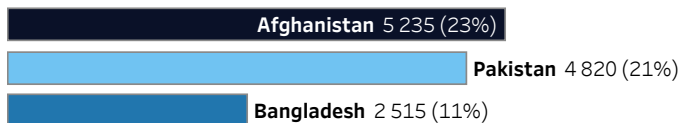
IRREGULAR MIGRATION

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn)



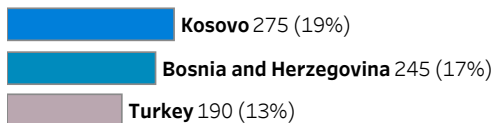
Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country, 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eiord)



Top 3 nationalities returned to third countries, 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirtn)



RETURN AND READMISSION

Number of Third-Country Nationals who left the territory by type of return (in %) and total returns

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirt_vol)

