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Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022 - Inform

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Explanatory note

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Statistics were sourced from Eurostat, national authorities and other (national) databases.

Full study publication

More detailed information can be found in the EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022.

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

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

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This EMN Inform offers a concise overview of the main topics covered in the EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022. This includes developments in the fields of the response to the influx of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine; legal migration to the EMN member and observer countries; international protection; unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups; integration and inclusion of migrants; citizenship and statelessness; Schengen area; irregular migration, including migrant smuggling; trafficking in human beings; return and readmission; and migration and development.



1. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN EMN MEMBER AND OBSERVER COUNTRIES IN 2022

- Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022, the European Migration Network (EMN) Member and Observer Countries focused their responses on providing safe shelter to people from Ukraine fleeing the war. European Union (EU) Member States implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) (2001/55/EC),¹ which was activated on 4 March 2022 for the first time since its adoption in 2001. Norway activated a national framework – temporary collective protection from 11 March 2022, while Moldova and Georgia each implemented national measures to support people fleeing the war. In 2022, a total of 4 331 200 temporary protection statuses were granted by EU Member States. On 31 December 2022, 3 826 600 non-EU citizens benefited from temporary protection in the EU.²
- 2022 was the first ‘post-COVID-19 year’, as the spread of the virus was less severe compared to 2020 and 2021. This resulted in the lifting of restrictions at borders, as well as for return operations. Extensions of stay on EU Member States’ territory due to travel restrictions were also phased out during the year. The improved epidemiological situation allowed health measures in reception and detention centres to be relaxed, freeing capacity.
- In 2022, several EMN Member and Observer Countries saw overarching strategic developments in migration and asylum. Changes in government in Sweden prompted new approaches to migration management, whilst in Latvia it was due to crises at the border with Belarus. Belgium audited its asylum and migration services. Georgia adopted a comprehensive policy document ‘Vision 2030 – Development Strategy of Georgia’, including measures to facilitate labour migration and strengthen the Georgian diaspora abroad.
- Pressures at external borders from the Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Eastern routes continued to impact on the migration and asylum systems of EMN Member Countries in 2022. The number of irregular border crossings increased noticeably from 2021 by 64%,³ and the resulting security risks prompted several EU Member States to reintroduce internal border controls.
- The rise in asylum applications (first-time asylum applications were up by 65% compared with 2021)⁴ put pressure on the asylum systems of Member States and Norway. This was the first increase since 2019, as applications had dipped during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Syria and Afghanistan were once again the top nationalities of asylum applicants in the 27 EU Member States (EU-27) and Norway, as had been the case since 2018. The activation of the TPD ensured that asylum systems across EU Member States would not be overwhelmed with protection requests. Nevertheless, Ukrainian nationals were still the eleventh largest group to apply for international protection during 2022 (25 460).⁵
- Some EU Member States reported that the large inflows of people fleeing the war in Ukraine put additional strain on migration management (e.g. leading to processing delays) and on reception systems.
- 2022 saw a number of developments in solidarity and cooperation measures on migration in the EU. Key developments included the adoption of a joint roadmap⁶ between the European Parliament and five rotating Presidencies of the Council of the EU to work together to adopt the reform of the EU migration and asylum legislative framework before the 2024 EU elections and a Declaration on Solidarity establishing a Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM),⁷ endorsed by 23 European countries to support cooperation with the EU Member States most affected by migratory flows in the Mediterranean. Croatia acceded to the Schengen area, with full application of the *acquis* and removal of internal border controls.
- Attracting and retaining talent, including qualified workers to meet labour market needs, and addressing demographic change continued to be a significant priority at EU and national level. In April 2022, the European Commission adopted an ambitious policy for legal migration, the ‘Skills and Talents Package’ to attract talent and facilitate the EU’s transition to a green

1 Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ L 212, pp. 12-23; in accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty establishing the European Community, Denmark is not participating in the adoption of this Directive and is therefore not bound by it nor subject to its application.

2 Eurostat, News Articles, 23 March 2023: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=DDN-20230323-2>, last accessed on 5 June 2023.

3 Frontex, EU’s external borders in 2022: Number of irregular border crossings highest since 2016, <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/eu-s-external-borders-in-2022-number-of-irregular-border-crossings-highest-since-2016-YsAZ29>, last accessed on 9 June 2023.

4 Idem.

5 Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/migr_asyappctza)), extracted on 8 June 2023.

6 Co-legislators’ roadmap, 2022, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220907RES39903/20220907RES39903.pdf>, last accessed on 21 April 2023.

7 Declaration on Solidarity, 2022, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/Declaration%20on%20solidarity_en.pdf, last accessed on 5 June 2023.

and digital economy. In response to increasing labour shortages, several EU Member States introduced major reforms to attract qualified workers. While a Talent Pool Pilot for Ukraine was launched on the European Employment Services Network (EURES) platform in October 2022, plans to establish a fully-fledged 'EU Talent Pool' for facilitating job-matching began in 2022. Talent Partnerships, as a tool for cooperation on legal migration between EU Member States and partner countries, as well as strategic engagement on migration management, were also announced in 2022. At national level, Skills Mobility Partnerships promoting

a sustainable approach to skilled migration and mobility were carried out by several EU Member States.

- The protection of migrants and asylum seekers, including minors and other vulnerable groups, remained an important area of legislative and policy development. At national level, measures to protect vulnerable groups in reception centres were strengthened, including the opening of new dedicated centres for vulnerable groups and/or the creation of special places in mainstream reception centres.

2. INTRODUCTION

2022 saw new developments and continued challenges and opportunities in migration and asylum. It was marked most starkly by the inflow of large numbers of displaced people from Ukraine and the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) (2001/55/EC) for the first time, over 20 years after its adoption. The European Union (EU)'s unified and immediate response ensured that people fleeing the war in Ukraine were provided with accommodation, healthcare, and access to other services to meet their needs.

In 2022, the spread of the COVID-19 virus was much less severe than in the previous two years, which allowed travel restrictions to be lifted and migration-related activities and processes to be resumed.

There were continued and increased pressures on external borders, for the Mediterranean countries (Med5),⁸ along the Western Balkan route, and at the EU's external borders with Belarus. The security implications of increased migratory flows and the conflict in Ukraine, combined with the accompanying risks of migrant smuggling and cross-border crime more generally, prompted many EU Member States to enhance their border control measures.

A continued priority from previous years was attracting and retaining qualified workers across the EU. The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on many national labour markets, which intensified ongoing labour shortages and bottlenecks. Several EU Member States introduced major reforms to respond to labour shortages and attract qualified workers.

In 2022, several European Migration Network (EMN) Member and Observer Countries saw overarching strategic and organisational developments in migration and asylum. Changes in government in Latvia and Sweden prompted new approaches to migration management. In Latvia, a key focus of the government declaration was

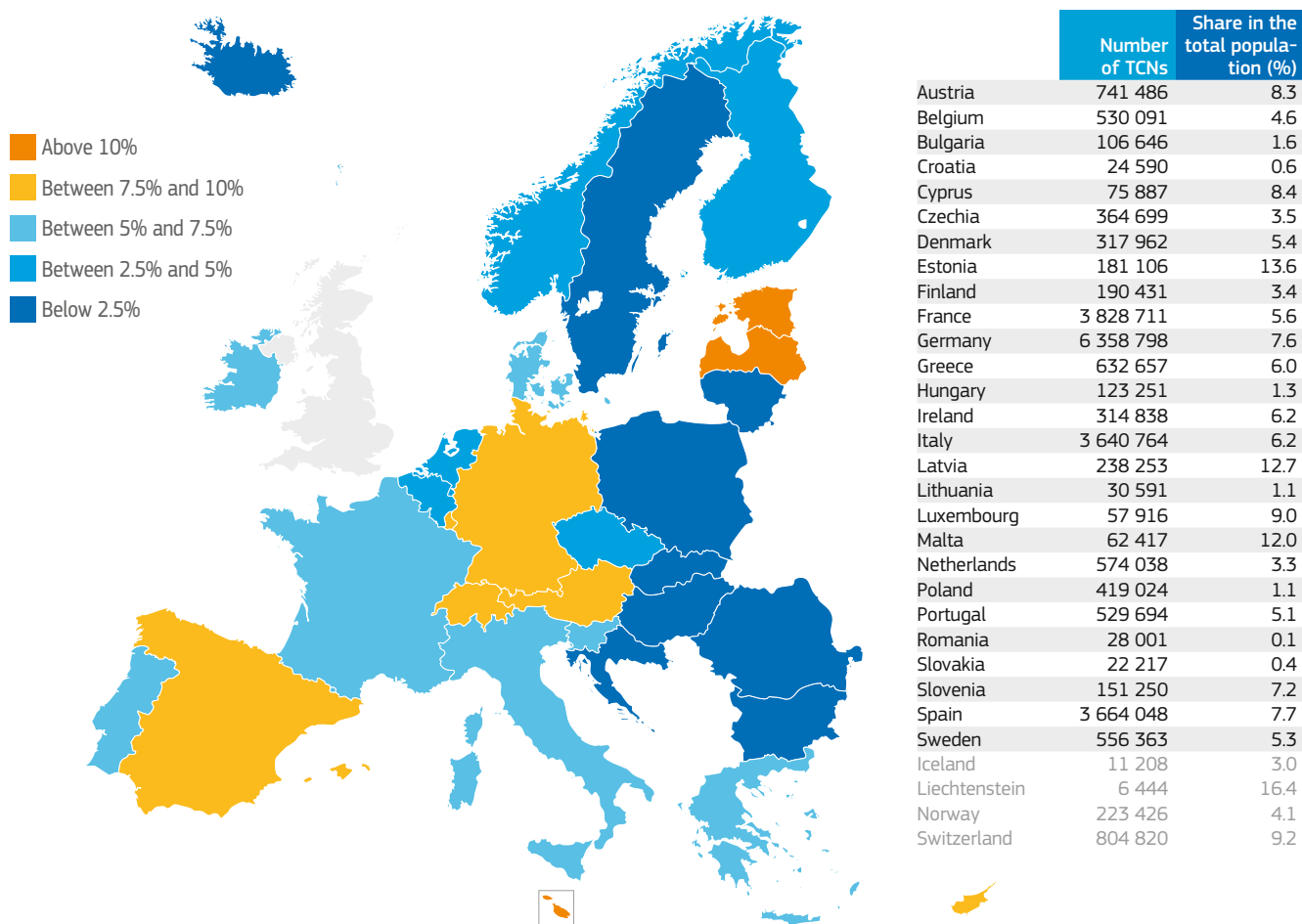
implementing an effective strategy to prevent the risks of irregular immigration and cross-border organised crime at the external border. A shift in Swedish migration policy was noted as the new government took office on 18 October 2022, with stricter conditions for obtaining family reunification and citizenship. In the Netherlands, the coalition that took office on 10 January 2022 reiterated its commitment to a just, humane and effective asylum and migration policy, with an emphasis on well-managed migration. In Belgium an audit of Asylum and Migration Services was presented to the parliament on 4 October 2022. It recommended organisational changes, including merging the three asylum and migration agencies⁹ into one single, target-oriented and efficient organisation. On 3 November 2022, Georgia adopted a comprehensive policy document 'Vision 2030 – Development Strategy of Georgia'. Along with major policy directions, the Strategy includes goals related to the 2021-2030 Migration Strategy that contribute to the country's development, such as the facilitation of labour migration and the strengthening the Georgian diaspora abroad. Armenia introduced a major institutional reform, leading to the creation of the Migration and Citizenship Service, comprising the staff of the Migration Service and Visa and Passport Department of the Police. All migration-related structures will be consolidated, with the centralisation expected to increase the efficiency of migration management.

Figure 1 presents an overview of the total number of third-country nationals currently residing in the EU and Norway, and their share of the total population on 1 January 2022. As of 1 January 2022, third-country nationals represent 5.3% of the total population in the EU Member States and Norway, on average. Figure 2 shows that the share of third-country nationals of the total population in the EU has remained relatively stable over the last four years.

8 Med5 – Five Member States of the Mediterranean Basin (Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Italy, Spain).

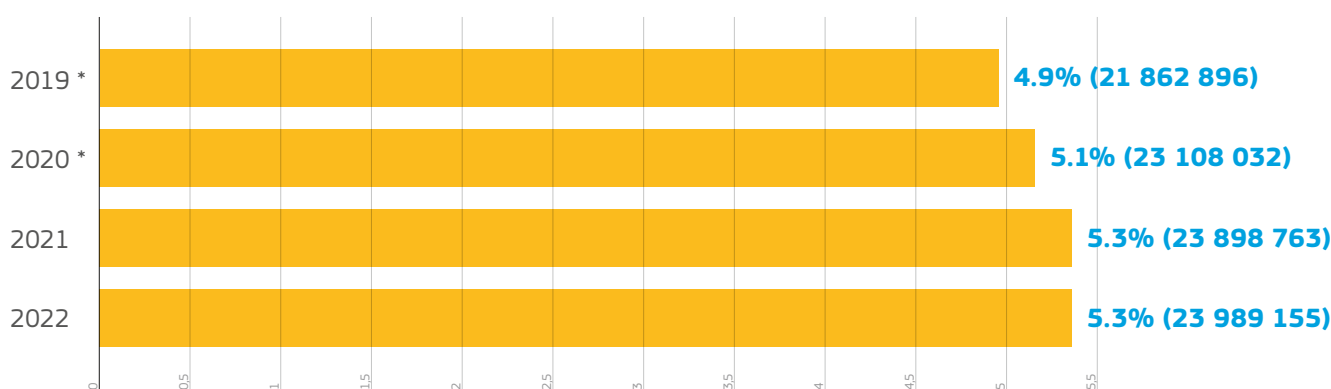
9 Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers (Fedasil), Immigration Office and the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS).

Figure 1: Share of third-country nationals in the total population, 1 January 2022



Source: Eurostat ([migr_pop1ctz](#)), extracted on 8 May.

Figure 2: Share of third-country nationals in the total population, 2019-2022



* Excluding Cyprus and Malta for which data are not available.
Source: Eurostat ([migr_pop1ctz](#)), extracted on 8 May.



3. RESPONSE TO THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The most significant development in 2022 was the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, which was strongly condemned by the EU as an

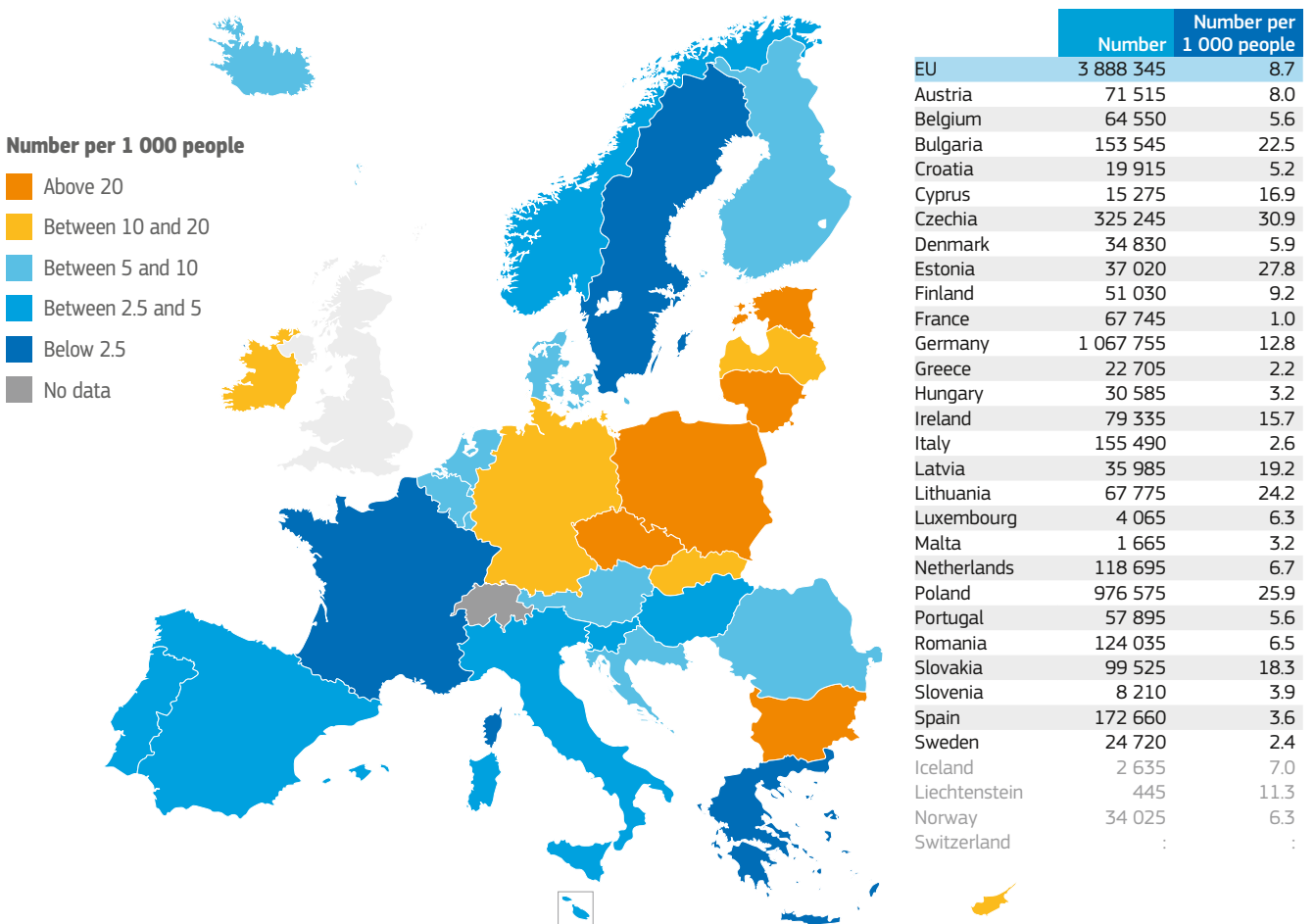
unprovoked and unjustified military aggression.¹⁰ The response to the Russian military invasion was twofold, focusing on protecting and supporting those fleeing the

war in Ukraine, and sanctioning Russia, including restricting Russian (and sometimes Belarusian) nationals' access to visas or to preferential visa/residence schemes. The European Commission presented updated guidelines on visa procedures for nationals of the Russian Federation and called on EU Member States to boost border controls.¹¹

The TPD was activated for the first time in 2022, over 20 years since its adoption in 2001. This was a key component of the EU's unified response. On 4 March 2022, Council Implementing Decision 2022/382¹² established temporary protection for those fleeing the war in Ukraine,¹³ providing EU Member States with a common framework to assist people fleeing Ukraine. The right to

temporary protection was established not only for Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine on or before 24 February 2022 and their family members, but also to stateless persons and nationals of third countries who had benefited from international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine, and their family members. EU Member States also extended temporary protection to Ukrainian nationals who were already legally in their country before 24 February 2022 or who fled shortly before 24 February 2022. Norway activated a national framework, temporary collective protection – from 11 March 2022, and Moldova and Georgia each implemented national measures to support those fleeing the war.

Figure 3: Third-country nationals who fled Ukraine and were granted temporary protection, 31 March 2023



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asytpsm](#) and [migr_pop1ctz](#)), extracted on 8 June.

The war caused large flows of people to move towards the border areas of Ukraine in search of safety, with border crossings reaching a peak of 800 000 entries from Ukraine and Moldova into the EU during the early

months of the war.¹⁴ From April onwards, the number of border crossings subsided to around 240 000 per week.

¹⁵ Figure 3 shows that as of end of March 2023, close to four million third-country nationals who fled Ukraine had

- 11 Communication from the Commission updating guidelines on general visa issuance in relation to Russian applicants following Council Decision (EU) 2022/1500 of 9 September 2022 on the suspension in whole of the application of the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the European Union and the Russian Federation and providing guidelines on controls of Russian citizens at the external borders, [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C\(2022\)7111&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C(2022)7111&lang=en), last accessed on 11 March 2023.
- 12 Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, 4 March 2022: OJ L 71, pp. 1–6.
- 13 Temporary protection is an exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin.
- 14 Communication from the Commission on temporary protection for those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: one year on, <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/Temporary%20protection%20for%20those%20fleeing%20Russia%E2%80%99s%20war%20of%20aggression%20against%20Ukraine%20one%20year%20on.pdf>, last accessed on 13 March 2023.
- 15 Ibid.

benefited from temporary protection in the EU,¹⁶ more than three million of whom were in the first half of 2022 (see also Figure 4 further below for a monthly overview). From June 2022, the number of registrations for temporary protection declined steadily, albeit with some fluctuations.¹⁷

The EU Member States bordering Ukraine and Moldova were the first to respond to the crisis. In Poland, from 24 February 2022, all border crossing points at the Ukrainian-Polish border were opened for foot traffic, and all persons crossing the border were checked in the border guard information technology (IT) systems. Border crossing was enabled for the persons without travel documents, authorising them to cross the border for a limited period of time for humanitarian reasons. To facilitate entry, EU Member States, Norway, Georgia, and Moldova introduced visa waivers or other simplified entry procedures in the absence of biometric passports or valid travel documents.

Initial registration for temporary protection generally took place in specially designated areas at border crossing points, in airports, registration centres and regional offices. Police, border guards and/or immigration authorities were primarily responsible for registering people arriving from Ukraine. These initial registration structures subsequently transformed, in some countries developing into more established one-stop-shop service points, where various authorities provided a range of services, such as information, emergency healthcare, and assistance with accommodation.¹⁸ In some cases, digital procedures were introduced to facilitate the registration process.¹⁹

Following registration, providing suitable accommodation and housing assistance to millions of beneficiaries of temporary protection was a key priority. In the initial stages of emergency reception, temporary accommodation was provided in reception centres, hotels, and other available housing. Private individuals also offered space in their homes to host people fleeing the war in Ukraine, which alleviated the burden on reception systems across the EU. This included private housing initiatives, organised in some cases in cooperation with NGOs.²⁰ Under the 'Safe Homes' initiative, the European Commission issued guidance to assist EU Member States, regional and local authorities, and civil society in organising private housing initiatives.²¹ Building on this guidance, in November 2022, the European Commission awarded €5.5 million to a project managed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support private housing initiatives in several EU Member States.

More permanent solutions were offered through national authorities and municipalities, as well as private sponsors and the housing market. In Belgium, reception and housing for beneficiaries of temporary protection was organised into two phases: emergency reception was offered in the initial stages of arrival, with longer-term accommodation to be coordinated through the regions. Norway, Georgia and Moldova reported similar measures to host people fleeing Ukraine in safe and suitable accommodation.

The Solidarity Platform 'Ukraine' was launched on 23 March 2022 to ensure coordination and cooperation among EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, European institutions and EU agencies, international organisations, as well as Ukrainian and Moldovan authorities. It provides a framework for regular exchanges and ensures coherence between existing fora at EU level. The Solidarity Platform's dedicated sub-groups (e.g. on the transfers of displaced persons from Moldova and on the Temporary Protection Registration Platform²²) played a crucial role in strengthening cooperation and meeting continuously arising challenges. The Temporary Protection Registration Platform allows EU Member States to exchange information on beneficiaries of temporary protection and adequate protection under national law, while limiting abuse.²³

The TPD provides for rights that include access to employment and self-employment activities, vocational training, education, medical care, social welfare and means of subsistence, and access to the education system for those under 18 years old. EU Member States implemented measures to ensure swift access to such rights. In many cases, access to social services was enabled through the one-stop-shop service points. Recognising the risk of mental trauma among those fleeing the war, most EU Member States²⁴ reported that beneficiaries of temporary protection had access to mental healthcare and psychological assistance. Similarly, Norway, Georgia and Moldova provided access to public services to people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The EU guidance on 'Helping people fleeing Russian aggression to access the labour market, vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning' called on EU Member States to provide targeted upskilling and reskilling opportunities, VET or practical workplace experience, including language training.²⁵

EU Member States provided a range of measures to facilitate beneficiaries of temporary protection accessing the national labour market. This included career counselling,²⁶ job-matching,²⁷ subsidised employment and financial

16 Eurostat, Beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of the month by citizenship, age and sex – monthly data, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYTPSM/default/table?lang=en&category=migr.migr_asymigr_asytp, last accessed on 28 May 2023.

17 Communication from the Commission on temporary protection for those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: one year on, <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/Temporary%20protection%20for%20those%20fleeing%20Russia%E2%80%99s%20war%20of%20aggression%20against%20Ukraine%20one%20year%20on.pdf>, last accessed on 13 March 2023

18 CZ, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, SK.

19 BE, CY, EE, EL, FI, HR, LT, LV, SK.

20 AT, BE, CZ, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, SE, SK.

21 Safe Homes initiative, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/safe-and-suitable-homes-people-fleeing-war-ukraine-2022-07-06_en, last accessed on 5 April 2023.

22 European Commission, Temporary Protection Registration Platform, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/solidarity-ukraine-commission-launches-eu-platform-registration-people-enjoying-temporary-protection-2022-05-31_en, last accessed on 27 April 2023.

23 Communication from the Commission on temporary protection for those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: one year on, <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/Temporary%20protection%20for%20those%20fleeing%20Russia%E2%80%99s%20war%20of%20aggression%20against%20Ukraine%20one%20year%20on.pdf>, last accessed on 13 March 2023.

24 AT, BE, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, SE, SK.

25 Communication from the Commission on Guidance for access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022XC0616\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022XC0616(01)), last accessed on 08 June 2023.

26 AT, BE (regional competence), BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.

27 AT, BE (regional competence), BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, SK.

incentives for employers,²⁸ language classes,²⁹ orientation courses,³⁰ vocational training,³¹ facilitation of recognition of qualifications,³² and childcare.³³ France reported that as beneficiaries of temporary protection mainly comprised women and children, children up to three years old were welcome in local nurseries free of charge up to 31 December 2022. As of November 2022, almost 500 children under three had been welcomed as part of this initiative. At EU level, the European Commission launched the pilot

of the Talent Pool initiative on the EURES platform in October 2022³⁴ to facilitate access to the labour market, including setting up an online job search tool for beneficiaries of temporary protection looking for a job in the EU. Jobseekers can upload their CVs to the portal and connect with employers across the EU. Seven EU Member States³⁵ participated in the pilot initiative in 2022, although all EU Member States participate in principle.



4. MOVING ON FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2022, the spread of the COVID-19 virus was much less severe, and this was reflected in migration management. Several restrictions were lifted, contingency measures phased out, and activities resumed.³⁶

Where previously EU Member States had allowed for extensions of stay due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, such extensions expired or were lifted during the year.

The improved epidemiological situation allowed health measures in reception and detention centres to be relaxed, improving capacity. EU Member States continued

to offer voluntary vaccination to third-country nationals, including those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

As part of the gradual standing-down of COVID-19 measures, some EU Member States³⁷ took steps to increase their return operations and resume related activities. Belgium reported that COVID-19 measures in third countries, which had made forced returns particularly challenging, were gradually lifted and Ireland resumed issuing deportation orders, following a period where they had only been issued in limited circumstances.



5. MANAGING MIGRATION PRESSURES AT EXTERNAL BORDERS AND IN RECEPTION SYSTEMS

With COVID-19 measures gradually lifting, the migratory pressures on the Mediterranean countries (Med5), along the Western Balkan route, and at the EU's external borders with Belarus, returned with full force in 2022, impacting the migration and asylum systems of EU Member States. Throughout 2022, some 330 000 irregular border crossings were detected at the external borders of the EU, the highest number since 2016,³⁸ with the Western Balkan and Central Mediterranean routes alone accounting for 75% of detections.³⁹ Despite a 25% decrease compared to 2021, 6 127 illegal border crossings were detected at the Eastern land border route in 2022.⁴⁰

The security implications of increased migratory flows and the movement caused by the conflict in Ukraine, combined with the accompanying risks of migrant smuggling and cross-border crime more generally, prompted many EU Member States to enhance their border control measures, amend their visa regimes, and reintroduce internal border controls.⁴¹

Developments reported by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were partly an extension of measures introduced following the 2021 border crisis, which saw Belarus instrumentalise⁴² migration. Latvia, for example, declared an emergency situation to reinforce control of its borders in a number of areas adjoining the Russian Federation, but also extended the state of emergency declared in 2021 to counter the surge in irregular border crossings at the border with Belarus.⁴³ Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania each continued the installation of a physical barrier on their external borders, with Lithuania's completed in August 2022.

EU Member States experienced pressures in their asylum and migration management systems, with first-time asylum applications increasing by 65%, from 538 950 in 2021 to 889 280 in 2022.⁴⁴ While the TPD provided displaced persons fleeing Ukraine with protection so as to reduce pressure on the national asylum systems of the EU Member States, Ukrainian nationals were nevertheless

28 BE (regional competence), BG, CZ, FI, LT, LU, LV, SE, SK.

29 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SE, SI, SK.

30 AT, BE (regional competence), BG, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, IT, LV.

31 BE (regional competence), DE, CY, EL, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.

32 AT, BE, CZ, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, SK.

33 BG, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SE, SK.

34 Talent Pool pilot, https://eures.ec.europa.eu/eu-talent-pool-pilot_en, last accessed on 21 April 2023.

35 CY, ES, FI, HR, LT, PL, SK.

36 BE, CY, CZ, EE, ES, FI, IE, LU.

37 BE, CY, FI, IE.

38 Frontex, 'EU's external borders in 2022: Number of irregular border crossings highest since 2016', 31 January 2023, <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/eu-s-external-borders-in-2022-number-of-irregular-border-crossings-highest-since-2016-YsAZ29>, last accessed on 8 March 2023.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, LT, SE.

42 Instrumentalisation: extraordinary circumstances of migrants being used for political purposes, see Factsheet: New Pact Migration and Asylum, 20 April 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_23_1850. For a discussion of the impact of instrumentalisation by Belarus see EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2021, section 1.3

43 Cabinet Order No. 518 'Regarding Proclamation of the Emergency Situation', adopted on 10 August 2021. – *Latvijas Vēstnesis* No.152A, 10.08.2021, entered into force on 10 August 2021.

44 Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)), extracted on 8 June 2023.

the eleventh-largest group applying for international protection in the EU (25 460 applications).

The large inflows of people fleeing the war in Ukraine put additional strain on migration management systems and national authorities. In Poland, the time limits for the authorities to respond to applications for residence permits

were temporarily suspended to alleviate the administrative burden.

Some countries, such as Belgium, reported extreme pressure on their reception networks due to an increased influx of applicants for international protection, coupled with reduced outflows.



6. SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION AT EU LEVEL

In 2022, the implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum remained a key priority for policy makers at EU and national level, providing the basis for several reforms of national asylum and migration systems in Europe. On 7 September 2022, political agreement was reached on a joint roadmap⁴⁵ between the European Parliament and five rotating Presidencies of the Council of the EU. The roadmap laid the ground for an increased dialogue on the New Pact and aimed to provide an impetus for the conclusion of negotiations by February 2024 on all pending legislative files related to asylum and migration management.⁴⁶

In order to support the EU Member States most affected by migratory challenges in the Mediterranean, a Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM) was established when the Declaration on Solidarity was endorsed by 23 European countries in June 2022.⁴⁷ The VSM aims to provide a concrete response to the migratory difficulties of the Mediterranean EU Member States through the voluntary relocation of persons, or through financial contributions.

The European Commission coordinates the relocation processes under the VSM in close collaboration with participant countries and with the operational support of the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A significant number of pledges were made available, especially by Germany and France. Relocation transfers under the VSM started in August 2022.

One of the milestones of 2022 was the appointment of an EU Return Coordinator, Mari Juritsch, a function created under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, as part of establishing an effective European return system. Reintegration measures post-return were high on the agenda in a number of EU Member States,⁴⁸ including through the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS) project implemented by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

Finally, the Schengen area was expanded when Croatia acceded, with full application of the *acquis* and removal of internal border controls.



7. ATTRACTING SKILLS AND TALENT TO ADDRESS LABOUR SHORTAGES

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on many national labour markets, intensifying ongoing labour shortages and bottlenecks. Against this backdrop, attracting and retaining qualified workers continued to be a key priority across the EU.

In April 2022, the Commission adopted the 'Skills and Talent Package',⁴⁹ which recognises that sustainable EU legal migration would help to attract talent and facilitate the EU's transition to a green and digital economy, with many sectors requiring additional labour and new skills.

As part of the Package, the Commission proposed revising the Directive on Long-Term Residents⁵⁰ and the Single Permit Directive.⁵¹ Another building block of the Skills and Talent Package is the proposal to establish the first

EU-wide platform and matching tool, the EU Talent Pool, to make the EU more attractive to non-EU nationals looking for opportunities and to help employers find the talent they need. A pilot Talent Pool initiative was launched in October 2022 on the EURES platform.⁵²

At national level, several EU Member States introduced reforms to respond to labour shortages and attract qualified workers and international talent.⁵³ Given its ageing population, Finland implemented new actions under the Talent Boost Programme, with the goal of doubling work-based immigration and tripling the number of new foreign students by 2030. In Sweden, an inquiry into labour immigration resulted in a number of legislative changes entering into force to counteract the exploitation of workers and to attract and retain international talent.

45 Co-legislators' roadmap, 2022, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220907RES39903/20220907RES39903.pdf>, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

46 Migration and Asylum: Roadmap on way forward agreed between European Parliament and rotating Presidencies covers the following legislative proposals: Regulation for Asylum and Migration Management, Regulation for Crisis and Force majeure, Screening Regulation and proposal amending several regulations to facilitate the Screening, Qualification Regulation, Reception Conditions Directive (recast), Amended Asylum Procedures regulation, Return Directive (recast), Amended EURODAC Regulation, Union Resettlement Framework Regulation, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220905IPR39714/migration-and-asylum-roadmap-on-way-forward-agreed>, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

47 European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM), https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/relocation-eu-solidarity-practice_en, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

48 BE, BG, CY, CZ, IT, PL, SE, SI.

49 European Commission, 'Attracting skills and talent to the EU', COM(2022) 657 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A657%3AFIN&qid=1651223944578>, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

50 Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (recast), COM/2022/650 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A650%3AFIN&qid=1651218479366>, last accessed on 24 April 2023.

51 Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State (recast), COM/2022/655 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A655%3AFIN&qid=1651221925581>, last accessed on 24 April 2023.

52 EU Talent Pool Pilot, https://eures.ec.europa.eu/eu-talent-pool-pilot_en, last accessed on 17 March 2023.

53 AT, BE, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, SK, SE.

A new residence permit was also introduced for highly skilled third-country nationals wishing to come to Sweden to look for employment.

Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) and related initiatives were implemented in some EU Member States⁵⁴ and third countries to boost mutually beneficial international mobility based on better matching of labour market needs and skills between the EU and partner countries. The Belgian Development Agency, Enabel, launched a new Circular

Mobility Scheme between Belgium and the Ivory Coast to provide mobility opportunities to 120 talented Ivorian entrepreneurs and support local SMEs. In the second half of 2022, discussions were launched with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan on establishing Talent Partnerships. The Commission also started to assess the feasibility of launching Talent Partnerships with Nigeria and Senegal, as one of the key component of reinforced migration management cooperation with these countries.



8. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS, INCLUDING CHILDREN

The protection of migrants and asylum seekers, including minors and other vulnerable groups, remained an important area of legislative and policy development at EU and national level in 2022. The number of unaccompanied minors applying for asylum increased by almost 60% in 2022 and represented 4.5% of total asylum applications, including a high share from Afghanistan, as in the previous year.⁵⁵ Significant increases were observed in the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain.

2022 saw several EU-level developments to protect children generally, including unaccompanied minors. As part of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child,⁵⁶ adopted in 2021, the European Commission launched the EU Network for Children's Rights on 31 March 2022.⁵⁷ A new Proposal for a Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse⁵⁸ was put forward, while a new Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) was adopted on 11 May 2022, seeking to ensure that children are protected, respected and empowered online, in line with the European Digital Principles.⁵⁹

The Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU) was evaluated in 2022.⁶⁰ Originally adopted in 2011, the evaluation

resulted in the Commission putting forward a proposal for an amending directive,⁶¹ alongside the accompanying impact assessment⁶² and full evaluation.⁶³

At national level, measures were strengthened to protect vulnerable groups in reception centres, including opening new reception centres for vulnerable groups or providing special places.⁶⁴ In Italy, as part of the Reception and Integration System project network, 803 places were financed in 2022 for people with disabilities and/or suffering from mental or psychological disorders and/or with a need for specialised or longer-term health, social and home care. Actions to support individuals with vulnerabilities due to gender identity⁶⁵ and sexual orientation⁶⁶ were highlighted in several countries. Germany introduced measures to strengthen the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) applicants for international protection. An Action Plan of the Federal Government for the Acceptance and Protection of Sexual and Gender Diversity was published on 18 November 2022 and contains recommendations for measures in six areas of action, including legal recognition, participation, security, health, the strengthening of advisory and community structures, and international affairs.

54 BE, DE, FR, LT.

55 Eurostat (migr_asyunaa and migr_asyappctza), see also Figure 4: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum, EU and Norway, 2019–2022, date of extraction: 8 June 2023.

56 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee_en, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

57 European Commission, 'EU Network for Children's Rights', https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-network-childrens-rights_en#:~:text=Documents-,The%20Network%20%E2%80%93%20what%20is%20it%3F,2022%20by%20Vice%20President%20%20Cs%20A0uica, last accessed on 10 March 2023.

58 Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, COM/2022/209 final.

59 European Commission, 'A European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+)', <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-better-internet-kids#:~:text=The%20new%20strategy%20for%20a,with%20the%20European%20Digital%20Principles>, last accessed on 21 April 2023.

60 Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0036>, last accessed on 17 March 2023.

61 European Commission, Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13106-Fighting-human-trafficking-review-of-EU-rules_en, last accessed on 17 March 2023.

62 European Commission, Impact Assessment Report accompanying the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13106-Fighting-human-trafficking-review-of-EU-rules_en, last accessed on 17 March 2023.

63 European Commission, Evaluation of the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13106-Fighting-human-trafficking-review-of-EU-rules_en, last accessed on 17 March 2023.

64 CY (creation of 'safe zone' in Pournara First Reception Centre: one zone for vulnerable women and single mothers with minors up to 12 years old, and one zone for minor girls. This measure safeguards the provision of special procedural and reception needs of vulnerable persons in Pournara First Reception Centre) DE ('BeSafe', which identifies special reception needs of vulnerable groups), ES (Protocol of action on violence of gender in the reception system, was developed together with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)).

65 DE, ES, IE, LU implemented measures on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

66 Several initiatives were undertaken by DE.



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>