

COUNTRY FACTSHEET | JULY 2024

Main developments
in migration and
international
protection, including
latest statistics

GREECE 2023



OVERARCHING AND CROSS-CUTTING CHANGES

A new [Migration Code](#) was passed by the Greek parliament on 29 March 2023, codifying existing legislation (provisions of the previous migration Law 4251/2014, amendments, regulatory acts) to ensure legal security. With new and modified provisions, it required focused legislative interventions to make the law more logical, functional and relevant to the country's socioeconomic circumstances. The law will come into force on 31 March 2024.

A new [Presidential Decree](#) was issued on 27 June 2023 amending the organisational structure of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to better coordinate the work of its directorates and units. The Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was abolished and its competencies transferred to the newly established General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, which aims to strengthen the protection provided to minors and other vulnerable groups. The Special Secretariat for the Coordination of Stakeholders was also abolished and its competencies

KEY POINTS

On 29 March 2023, the Greek parliament passed a new [Migration Code](#), codifying existing legislation, amendments, regulatory acts and new provisions.

A new [Presidential Decree](#) amended the organisational structure of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, including establishing a new General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection.

Article 191 of Law 5078/2023 introduced the positions of a National Coordinator against Smuggling and a National Coordinator for Returns to enable better planning, cooperation and implementation of European Union (EU) and national policies.

transferred to the General Secretariat for the Reception of Asylum Seekers.

Article 191 of [Law 5078/2023](#) introduced the positions of a National Coordinator against Smuggling and a National Coordinator for Returns. The former is responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of national and EU policy to combat smuggling, as well as cooperation with national, international and EU competent bodies. The latter is responsible for planning, cooperation, coordination and implementation of national and EU returns policy in cooperation with all the co-competent national and EU services, authorities and institutions, including the Ombudsman and international organisations and institutions.



LEGAL MIGRATION

The new [Migration Code](#) codifies existing migration law, regulating provisions relating to third-country nationals, including unaccompanied minors. It rationalises all residence permit categories, in full compliance with EU law, and improves services for third-country nationals. The new legislation also establishes a process for the electronic submission of applications for granting and renewal of all types of residence permits.

Work-related migration

To tackle labour exploitation, the new [Migration Code](#), together with [Law 5078/2023](#), define the obligations and penalties for employers and third-country national employees. They contain a series of interventions to address circumvention of legal employment procedures for third-country nationals.

The new Migration Code provides that third-country nationals may apply for a change of purpose of residence and employment in Greece. In addition, the duration of the residence permit and its renewal for dependent work was extended to three years (two years in the previous Migration Law).

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum introduced the five-year residence permit for seasonal work, which applies to third-country nationals residing outside the territory of Greece who apply to be admitted for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers. It entitles holders to stay and work in the territory of Greece for a maximum of nine months in any 12-month period.

Finally, Greece concluded a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) on migration and mobility with Bangladesh](#) and a [Bilateral Agreement with Egypt](#) on seasonal employment (agriculture and tourism sectors). Bilateral agreements with India, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, the Philippines and Vietnam are at the negotiation stage among the contracting parties. These agreements will ensure safe and orderly seasonal migration and facilitate labour mobility and decent work conditions.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In 2023, the Greek Asylum Service database was replaced by ALKYONI II, a new integrated information system. The new database is detached from the Hellenic Police database system (POL-Police Online), providing more flexibility for access from personal servers and remote working. The system allows the different departments of the Greek Asylum Service, as well as different authorities (Reception and Identification Service (RIS), Asylum Service, Appeals Authority) to safely share information and data in real time. Connectivity is also assured with the Hellenic Police. The new database is more user-friendly, contains templates for documents, provides a wide range of automated procedures, and features a case management and assignment system.

Pursuant to [Joint Ministerial Decision 538595/15/12/2023](#), Albania was designated a safe third country for applicants for international protection entering Greek territory illegally through the borders with Albania, North Macedonia was designated a safe third country for applicants entering the Greek territory illegally through the borders with North Macedonia, and Turkey was designated a safe third country for applicants from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia.

[Joint Ministerial Decision 527235/1.12.2023](#) provided that the same 16 countries included in the [2022 list](#) (Egypt, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Georgia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Morocco, Bangladesh, Benin, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia) were still designated as safe third countries.

Following the legal revision of the General Regulation on the operation of Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs) in accordance with Law 4939/2022, the General Secretary for the Reception of Asylum Seekers issued [Decision 553695/31.12.2023](#), [General Regulation on the operation of the closed-controlled access centres](#), which sets out rules for the operation of CCACs.

To enhance social policy and stimulate the market, [L. 5078/2023](#) provides the right to access the labour market 60 days (instead of six months) after lodging an application for international protection in cases where a first instance decision has not been issued by that time and provided the applicant has a valid international protection applicant card.

In February 2023, the RIS issued Circular 80433, defining and delimiting the responsibilities of RIS staff members assigned the role of 'reference person' for child protection and unaccompanied minors. The reference person supports the regional service on matters concerning the vulnerable person, as well as facilitating cooperation and coordination with other employees or authorities to reinforce the childhood protection framework in RIS structures.

On 31 March 2023, the Voluntary Relocation Programme (implemented since April 2020) was successfully completed, with a total of 1 368 unaccompanied children residing in Greece transported to other European

countries, in a practical expression of solidarity among EU Member States.

TEMPORARY PROTECTION AND OTHER MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Temporary protection status was automatically extended pursuant to two Ministerial Decisions ([the first](#) extended its duration from 4 March 2023 to 4 September 2023 and [the second](#) from 4 September 2023 to 4 March 2024). Procedures for registration and access to medical care, suitable accommodation, social welfare, the labour market and education remained the same in 2023. [Law 5078/2023](#) provides explicitly for beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP) to be able to apply for one of the residence permits of the Migration Code while holding a valid temporary protection residence permit. This is a new development and will be possible from the entry into force of the new Migration Code, which is expected between 31 March 2024 and 4 March 2025.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

To implement the [National Guardianship System Law](#) of 2022, [Ministerial Decisions](#) defined standard operating procedures (SOPs), the framework for the accommodation of unaccompanied minors, and the procedure for the supervision and evaluation of long-term accommodation facilities. A new programme has been in operation since November 2023, funded by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (with European and national resources from the National Programme Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2021-2017) and implemented by two Greek civil society non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The project includes training and education programmes for guardians and coordinators, as well as legal guidance from lawyers. Finally, to ensure the best interests of children in guardianship, [a special complaints mechanism](#) was designed for guardianship services for minors. The project for the implementation of the National Guardianship System ensures the provision of guardianship services to 2 700 unaccompanied and separated minors throughout the territory of Greece.

Article 161 of the [new Migration Code](#) introduces a new provision specifically guaranteeing the right to grant a 10-year residence permit to adult third-country nationals or stateless persons who entered Greece as unaccompanied minors and who have successfully completed at least three secondary education classes of Greek school in Greece before reaching 23 years of age.

The management programme for safe areas for unaccompanied minors in reception centres was

reinforced to ensure smooth operations and provide support by specially trained staff.

INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

Throughout 2023, the HELIOS Integration Programme, Supported Living Houses (SYD) for adult beneficiaries and Greek citizens with Disabilities Programme, the Social Inclusion Platform (designed by MiNetwork Technical Support 2022), and Migrant Integration Centres continued to promote integration, including independent living for beneficiaries, employability support, integration monitoring services, recreational activities, sensitisation of the host society, and access to basic services in general.

The MOMENTUM action for promoting young third-country national women's access to targeted vocational training and labour market opportunities through the social economy was completed in December 2023. It offered integrated services, combining advanced local language courses, targeted vocational training and employment support for refugee women aged 18-35 in the three EU countries most affected by migrant flows (Greece, Italy, Spain) and two countries with a positive and critical approach to integration (Portugal and Hungary).

CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

No significant developments to report in 2023.

BORDERS, VISA AND SCHENGEN

No significant developments to report in 2023.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

[L. 5078/2023](#) introduced the position of National Coordinator against Smuggling at the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The role is responsible for planning, cooperation, coordination and implementation of national and EU policies to combat smuggling.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

[Law 5028/23 \(GG A' 54\)](#) established the appointment of special investigators for cases of trafficking in human beings. This is expected to strengthen the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking, as well as speeding up the efficient investigation of such cases.

In October 2023, a nationwide conference on the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking in Greece was organised by the National Centre for Social

Solidarity. Field practitioners (both state and non-state actors) attended and discussed current trends, such as independence of the procedure from criminal proceedings.

Throughout 2023, capacity-building activities, training sessions and workshops were organised by different competent authorities (the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), responsible for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the Asylum Service, in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government) under the supervision and/or in cooperation with the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking. These actions targeted national authority and NGO staff, front line professionals, prefectural and municipal authorities to promote cooperation and raise awareness of indicators for identifying victims, the existing legal framework, SOPs and tools, good practices and challenges. [Multilingual information leaflets on human trafficking indicators](#) were developed by the EKKA/NRM team targeting (presumed or potential) victims.

RETURN AND READMISSION

[L. 5078/2023](#) introduced the position of National Coordinator for Returns in the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The role is responsible for planning, cooperation, coordination and implementation of national and EU returns policy.

In 2023, six joint return operations (JROs) were organised by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), with the participation of the competent services of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. These JROs returned 194 Pakistanis and 60 Georgians to their countries of origin via charter flights.

The new [Samoa Agreement](#) was signed on 15 November 2023 and succeeded the Cotonou Agreement. It reaffirmed the political commitment of the signatory parties (mostly African states) to stem irregular migration flows and foster cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration management.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

No significant developments to report in 2023.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The statistical annex available on the next pages complements the Country Factsheet and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Greece 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 regard third-country nationals, which means persons who are not EU citizens, including stateless persons. The data cover the period 2020-2023. Since 2023 data were not available at the time of publication for certain datasets, in these cases the

period 2020-2022 is covered. Exceptionally, the monthly data on temporary protection covers the period until March 2024. **The data were extracted during April–May 2024. The manuscript was completed in May 2024.** The Eurostat website is constantly updated. Therefore, it is likely that more recent data will have become available since. An online data code available under each figure can be used to directly access the latest data on [Eurostat's website](#).

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](#).

LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2020–2023

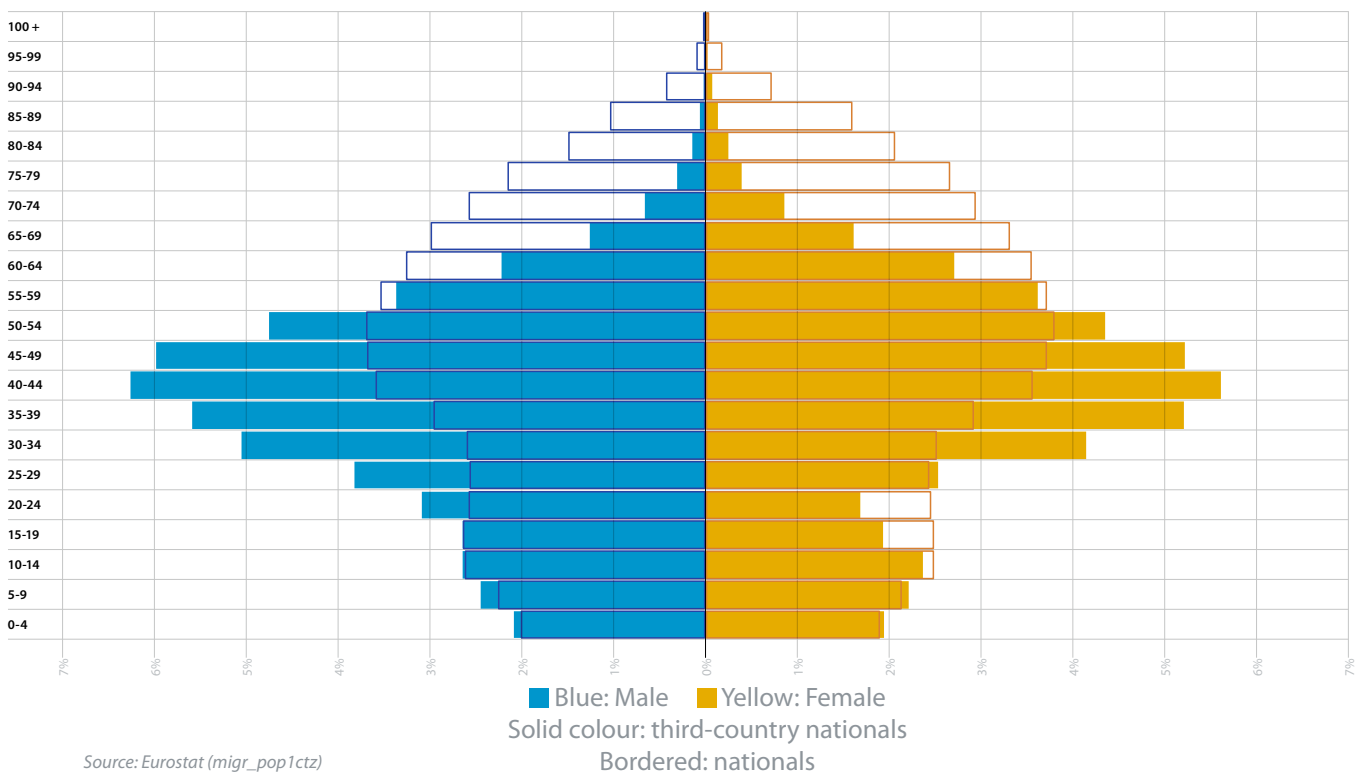
Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Age structure of nationals and third-country nationals, 1 January 2023

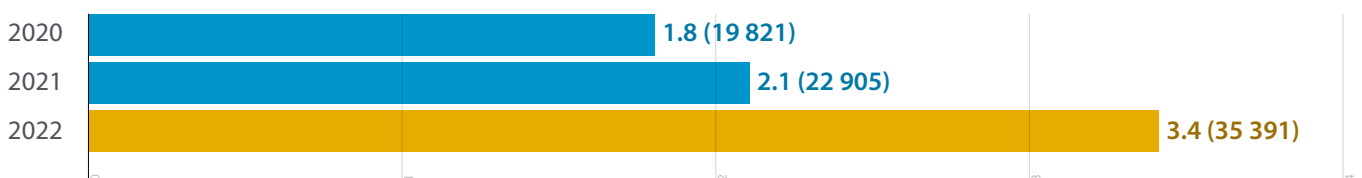
%



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

First residence permits issued to third-country nationals, 2020–2022

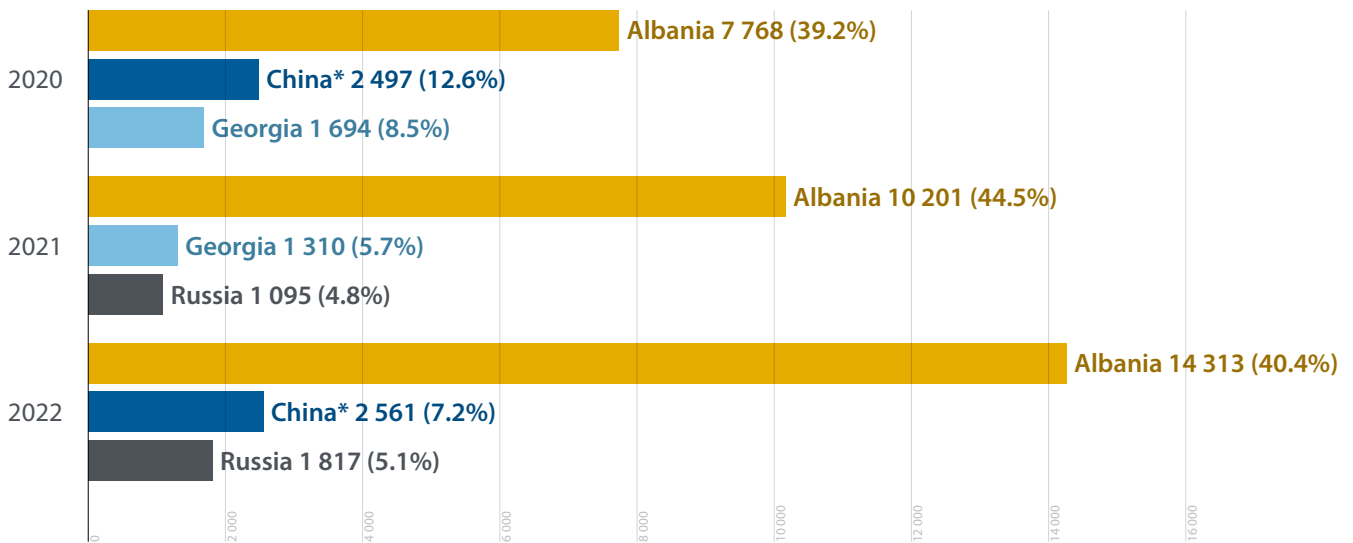
Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_pop1ctz and migr_respop)

Top 3 countries whose citizens received first residence permits, 2020–2022

Absolute number (and the share in total number)

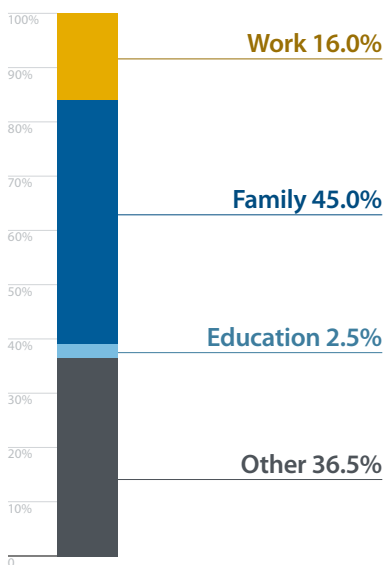


* Including Hong Kong

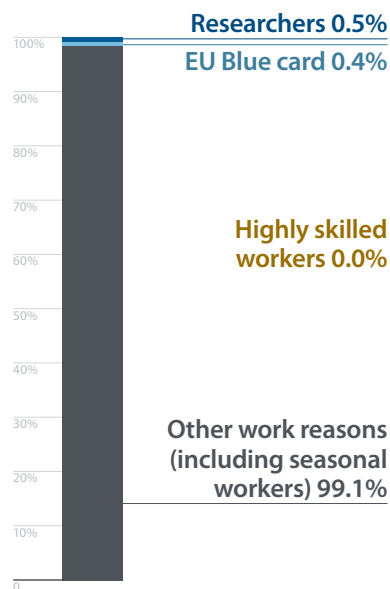
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

First residence permits issued, distribution by reason or type, 2022

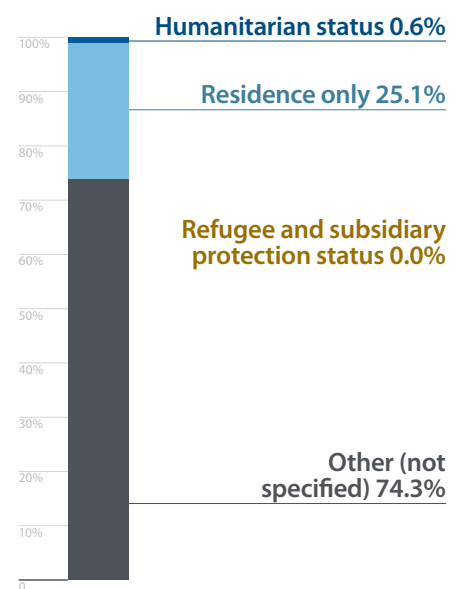
All permits, by reason, %



Work reason, by type, %



Other reason, by detailed reason, %



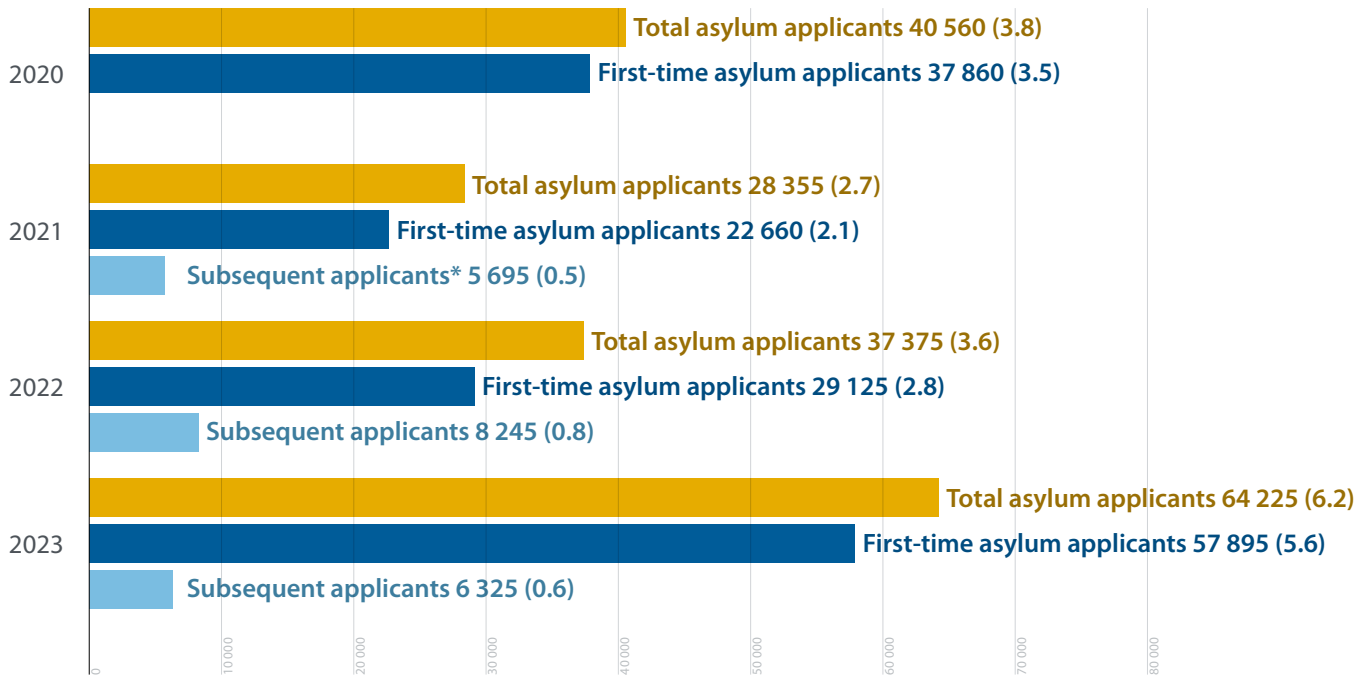
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_resfpc, migr_resocc and migr_resoth)



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Asylum applicants by type of application, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

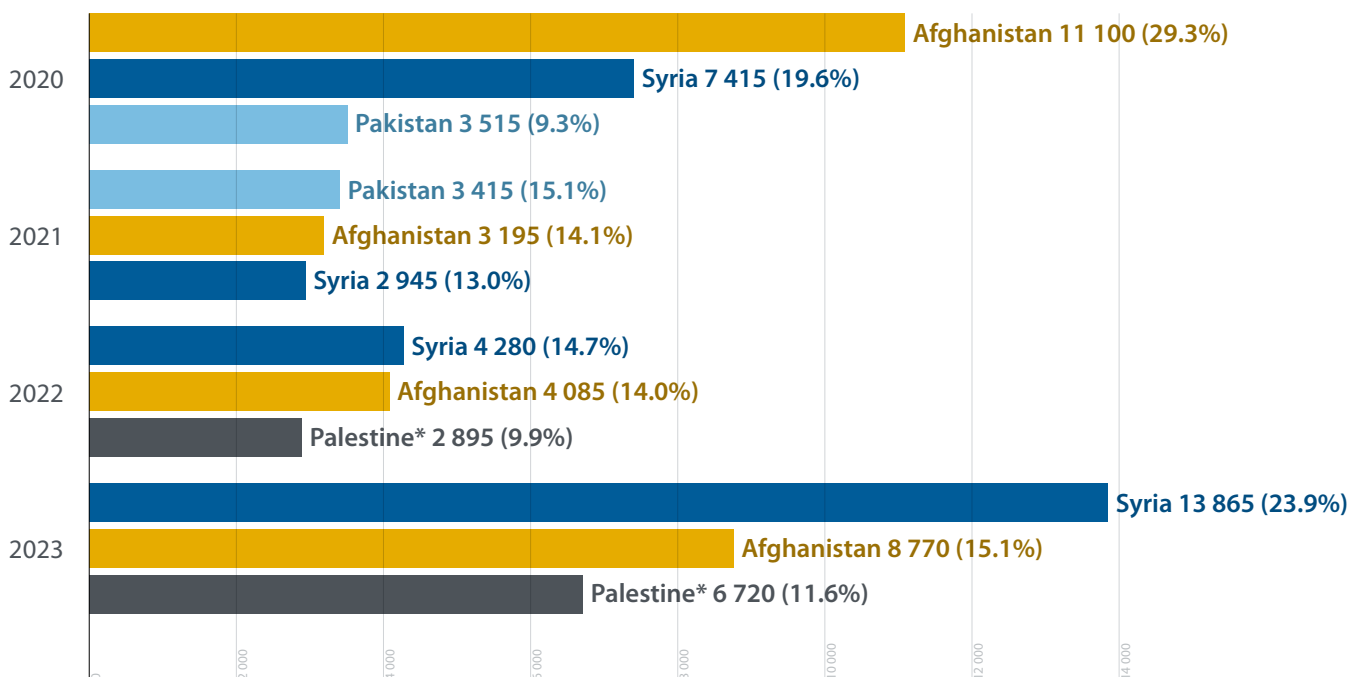


* Data collection from 2021.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz and migr_asyapp1mp)

Top 3 countries of citizenship – first-time asylum applicants, 2020–2023

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

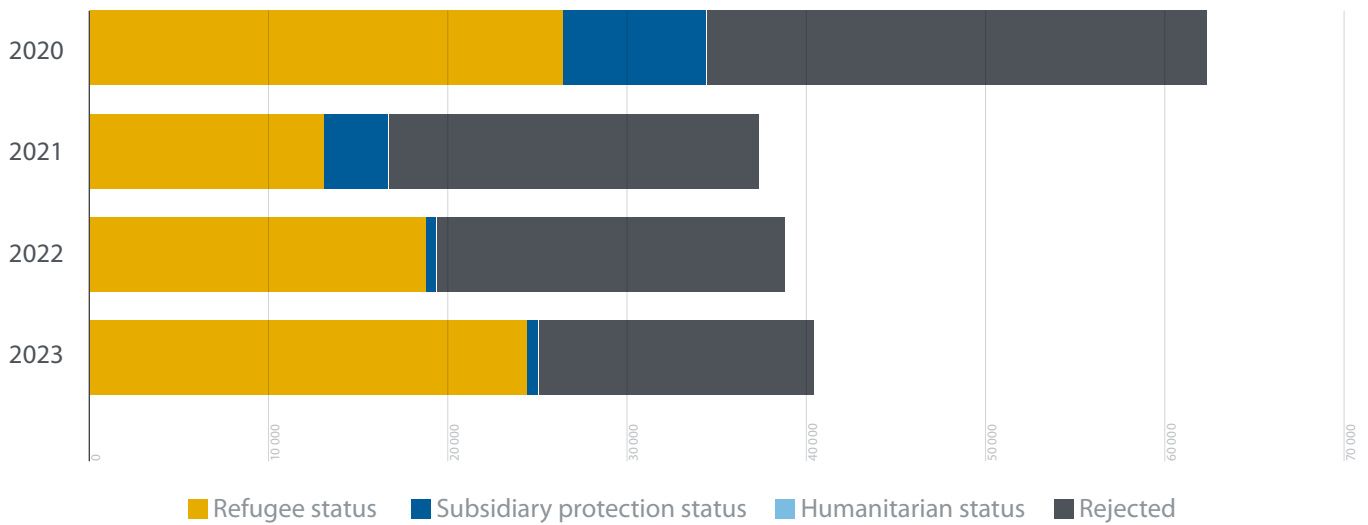


* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the reporting country on this issue.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)

First instance asylum decisions by outcome, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the share of the total)

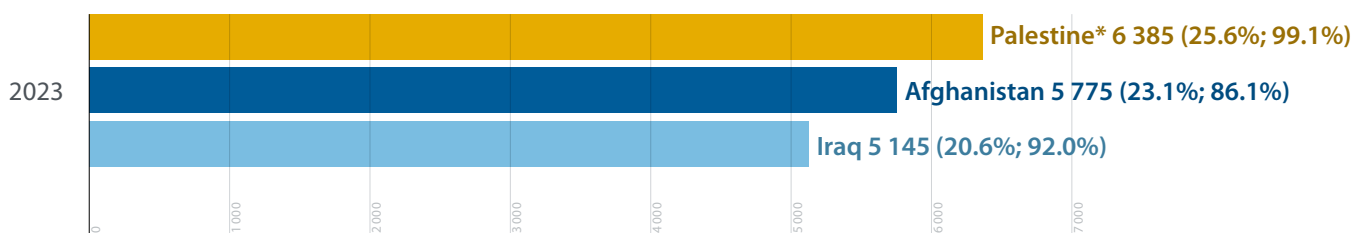


Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2020	26 370 (42.4%)	7 955 (12.8%)	0 (0.0%)	27 830 (44.8%)
2021	13 035 (35.0%)	3 535 (9.5%)	0 (0.0%)	20 630 (55.4%)
2022	18 730 (48.5%)	515 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	19 405 (50.2%)
2023	24 360 (60.5%)	590 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	15 305 (38.0%)

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta and migr_asydec1pc)

Top 3 countries of citizenship granted positive asylum decisions at first instance, 2023

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

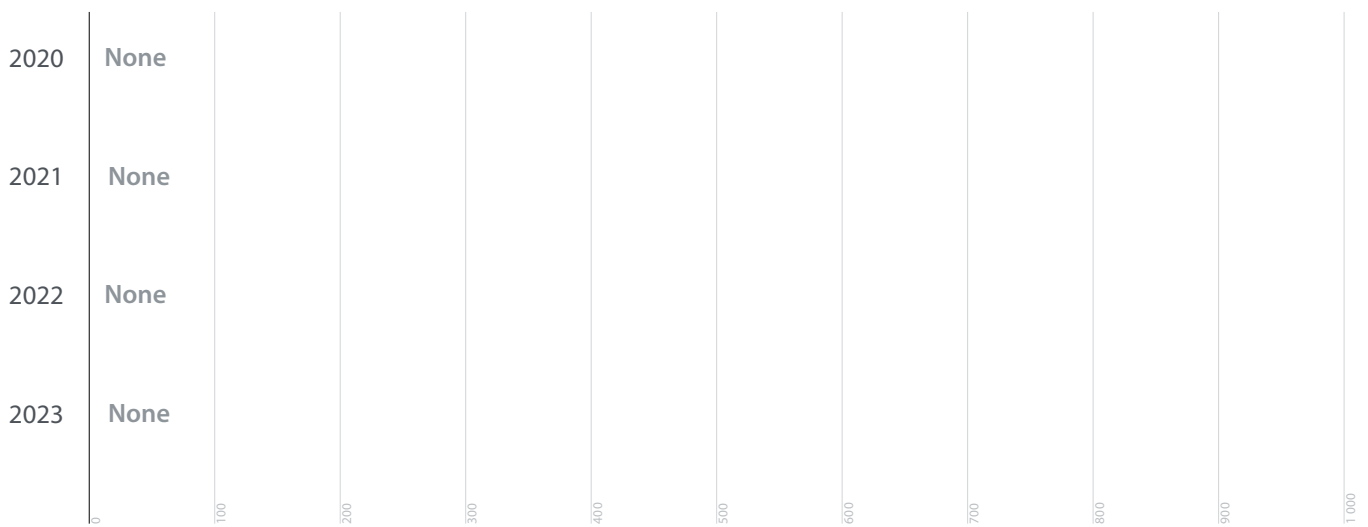


* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the reporting country on this issue.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

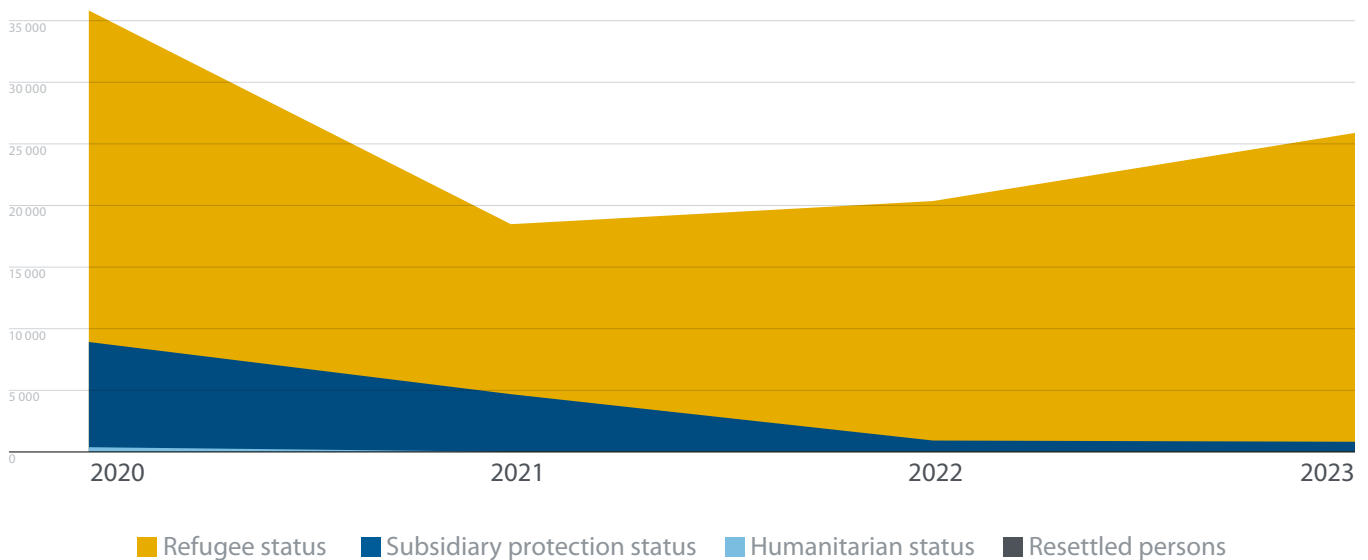
Resettled third-country nationals by sex, 2020–2023

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

Number of positive decisions for third-country nationals, by outcome, 2020–2023



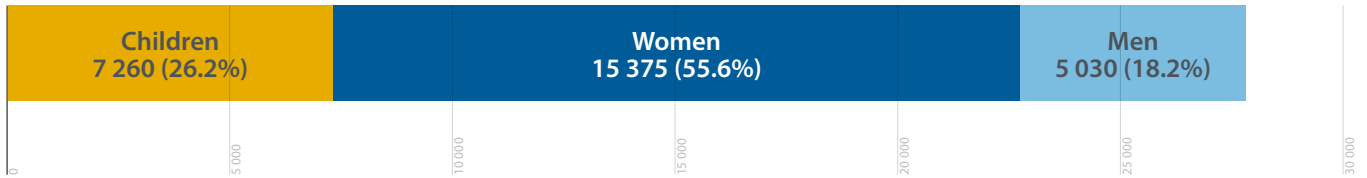
Year	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection status	Humanitarian status	Resettled persons
2020	26 850	8 520	370	0
2021	13 765	4 665	0	0
2022	19 395	910	0	0
2023	25 015	810	0	0

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyresa)

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

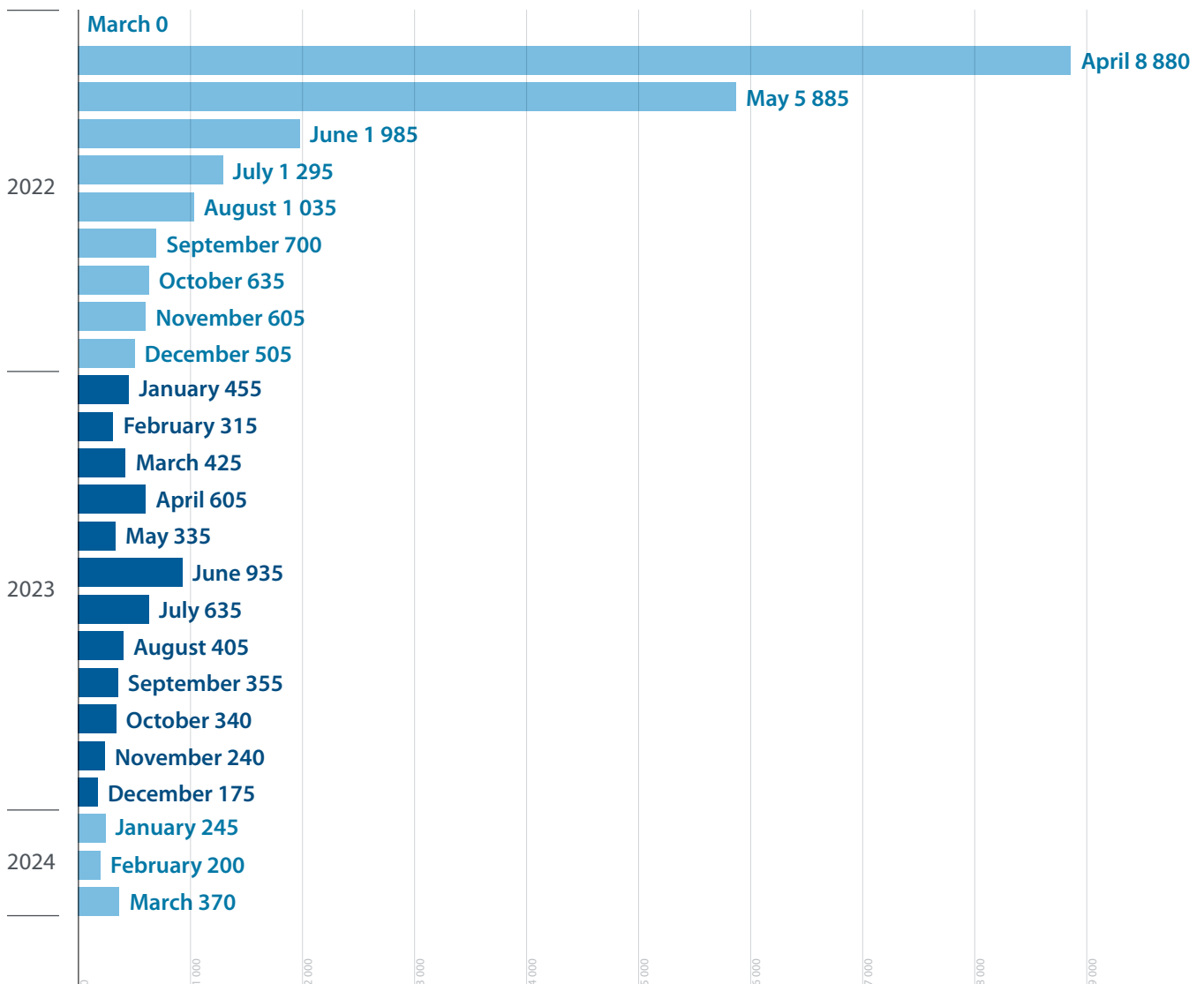
Beneficiaries of temporary protection by age and sex at the end of March 2024

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



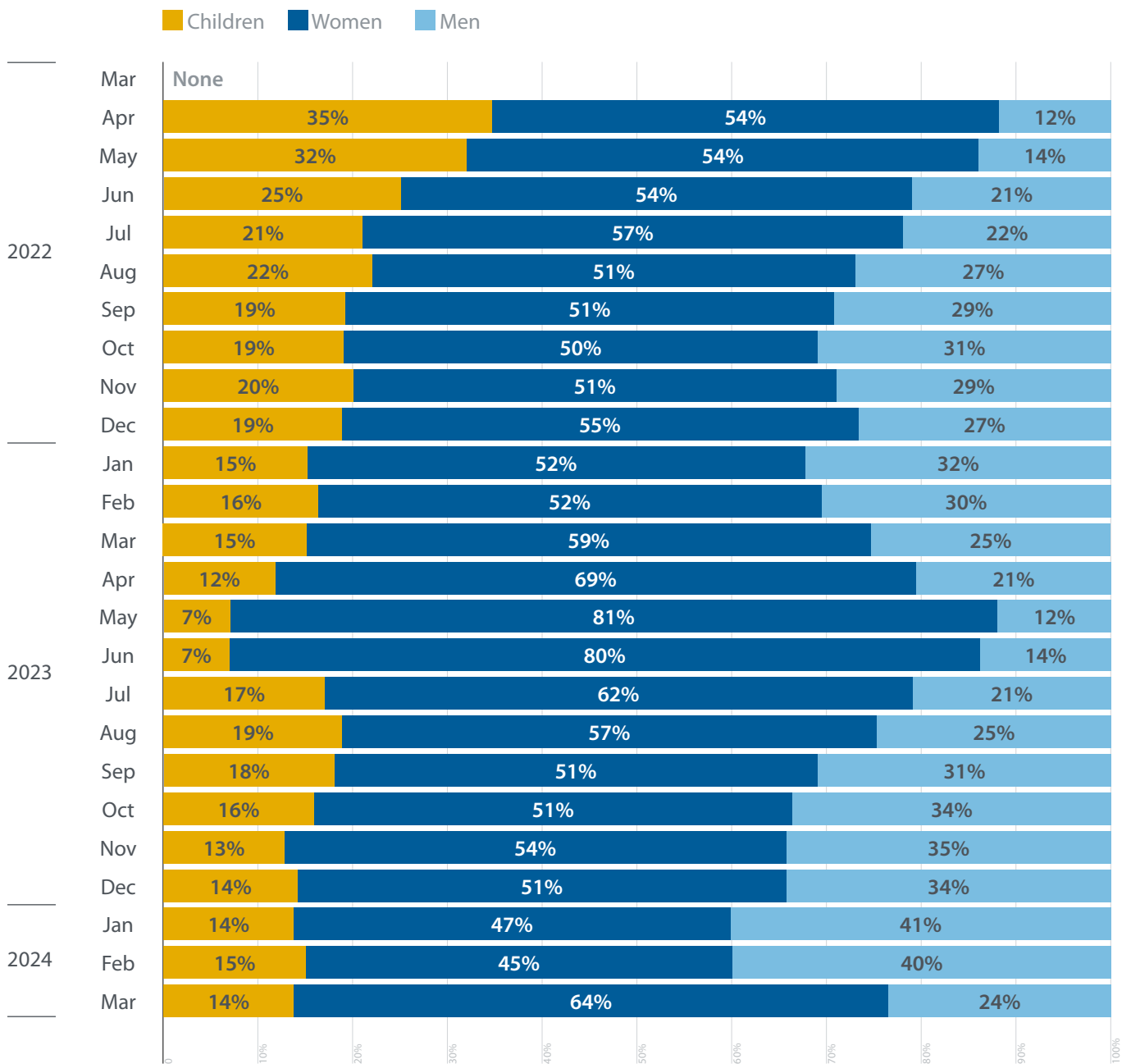
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpsm)

Number of decisions providing temporary protection to people displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, March 2022–March 2024



Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpfm)

Distribution by age and sex of decisions providing temporary protection to people displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, March 2022–March 2024



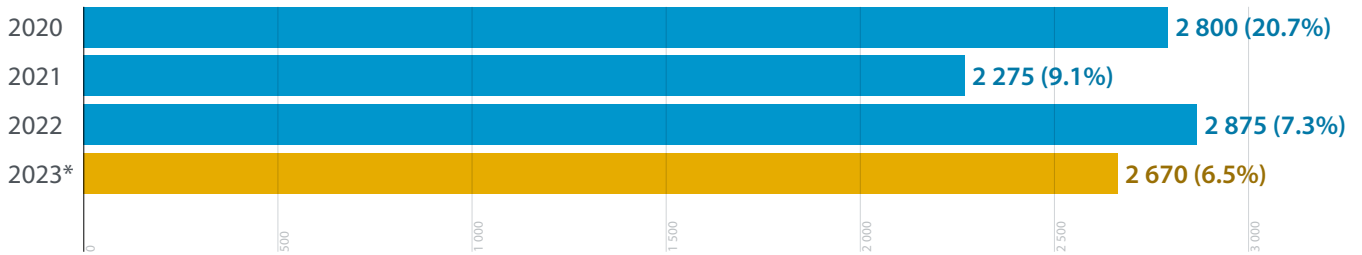
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpfm)



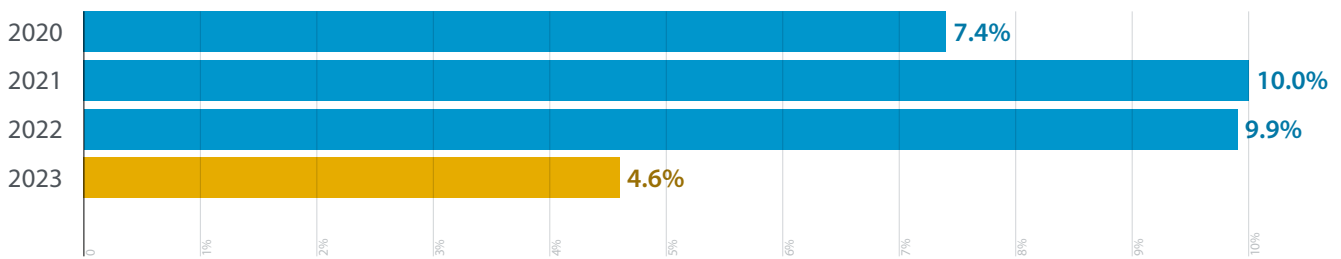
UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum, 2020–2023

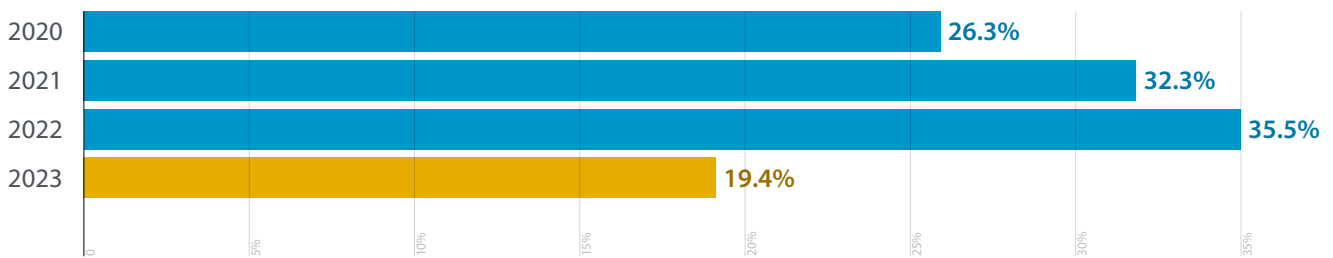
Number (and the share in total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU)



Share of all first-time asylum applicants



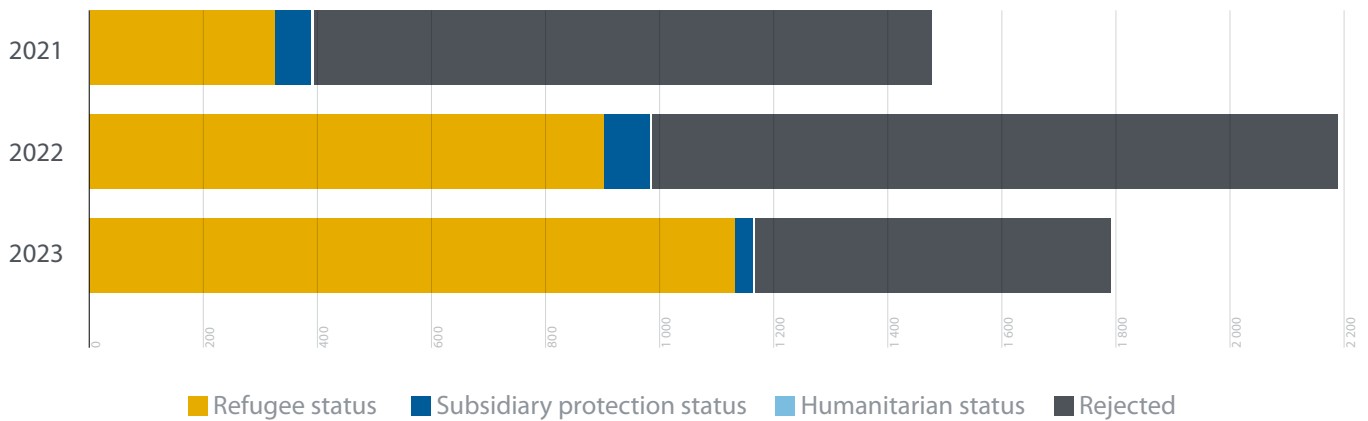
Share of all first-time asylum applicants aged less than 18 years



* The total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU used to calculate the share includes 2022 data for Cyprus.
Source: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa and migr_asyappctza)

First instance asylum decisions on applications lodged by unaccompanied minors by outcome, 2021-2023

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2021	325 (22.1%)	65 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 085 (73.8%)
2022	905 (41.3%)	80 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 205 (55.0%)
2023	1 135 (63.4%)	30 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	625 (34.9%)

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyumdca)

INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2022 or 2023

Education, 2023

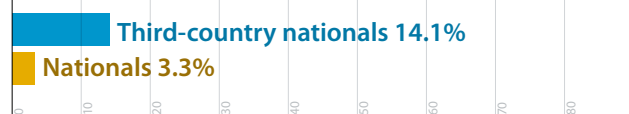
Share of tertiary educated (levels 5-8), persons aged 25-35 years



Participation rate in education and training (previous 4 weeks), persons aged 25-64 years



Share of early leavers from education and training, persons aged 18-24 years

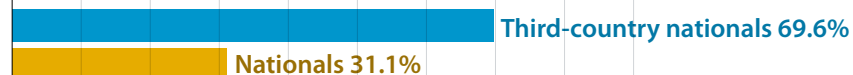


Labour market, persons aged 20-64 years, 2023

Employment rate



Over-qualification rate



Unemployment rate



Social inclusion, 2023

Share of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion, persons aged ≥ 18 years



Share of persons living in a household with a very low work intensity, persons aged 18-64 years



Share of persons in severe material and social deprivation, persons aged ≥ 18 years

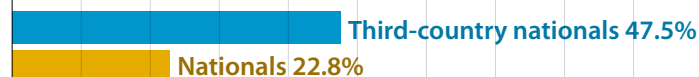


Housing, persons aged ≥ 18 years, 2023

Home ownership rate



Overcrowding rate



Health, persons aged ≥ 16 years, 2022

Share of persons who perceive their health as very good or good



Self-reported unmet needs for medical care

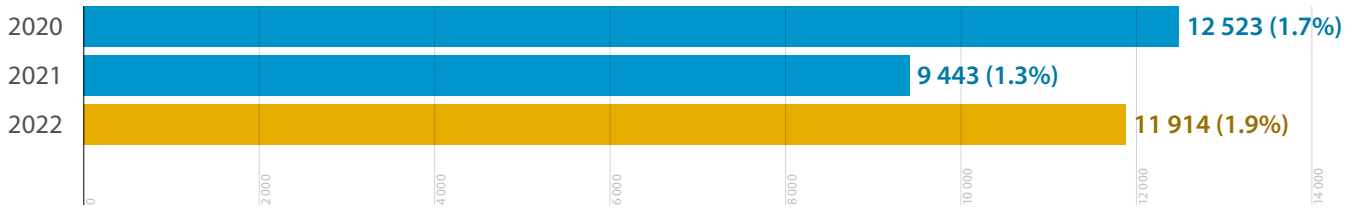




CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2020–2022

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz)

Stateless persons and persons with unknown citizenship, 2020–2023

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, 2020–2022

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

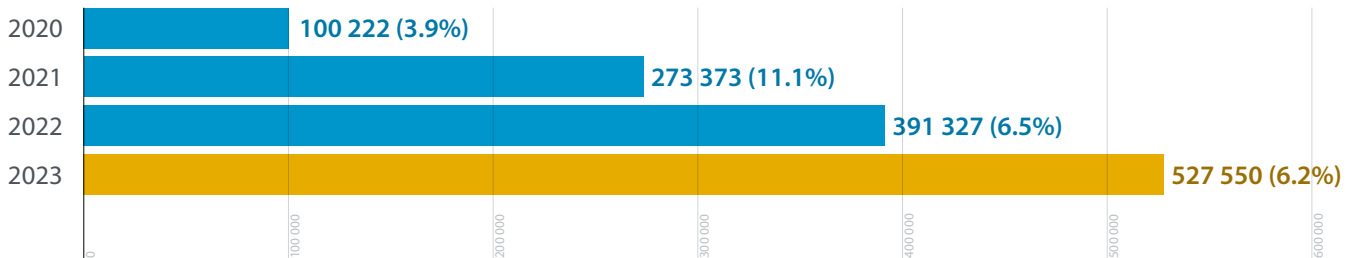


Source: Eurostat (migr_acq)

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Schengen uniform short-stay visas issued, 2020–2023

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

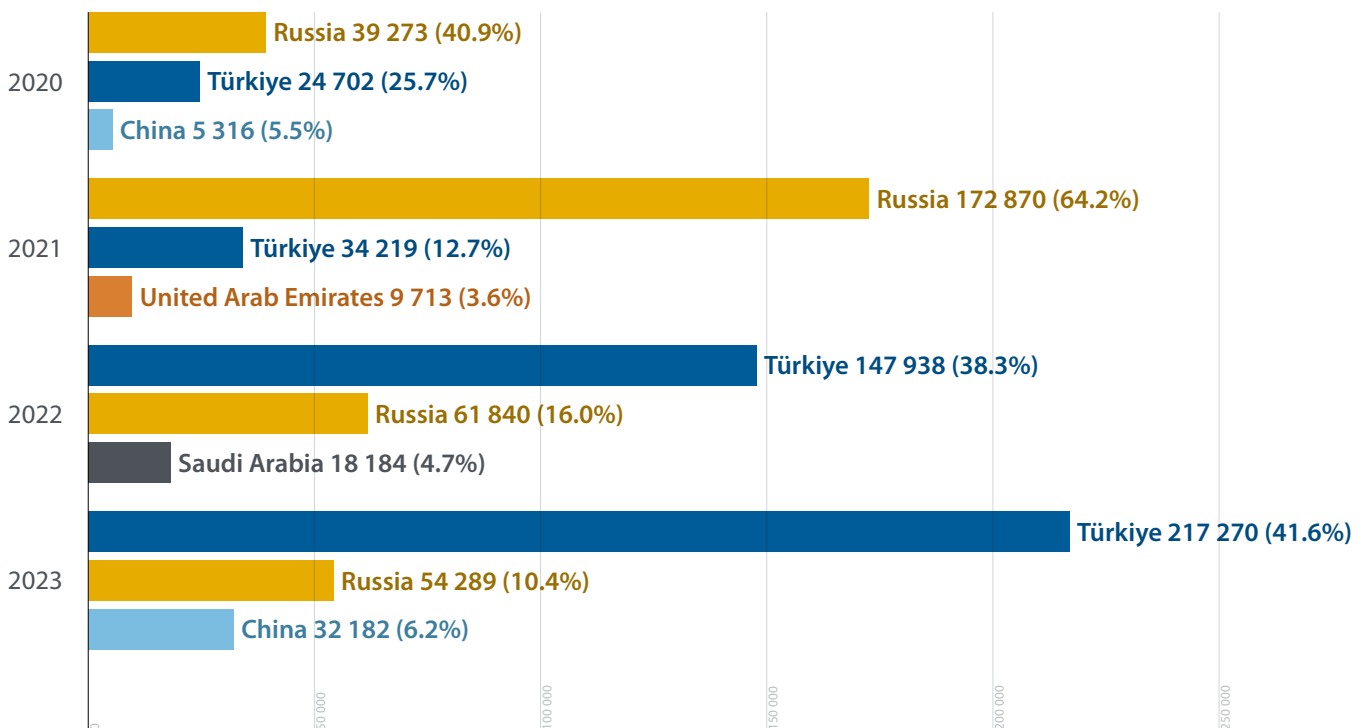


Note: Uniform short-stay visas (C visas) entitle the holder to stay in the territories of all Schengen States for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Such visas may be issued for the purpose of a single entry or multiple entries.

Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

Three consulate countries in which the most Schengen uniform short-stay visas were issued, 2020–2023

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

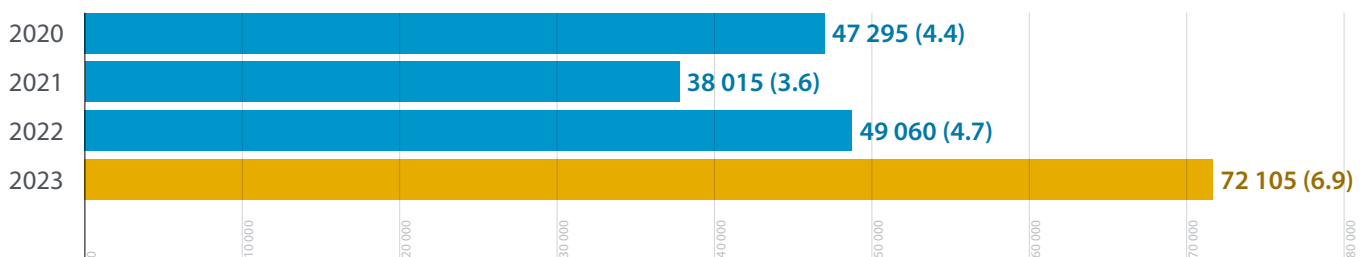
Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

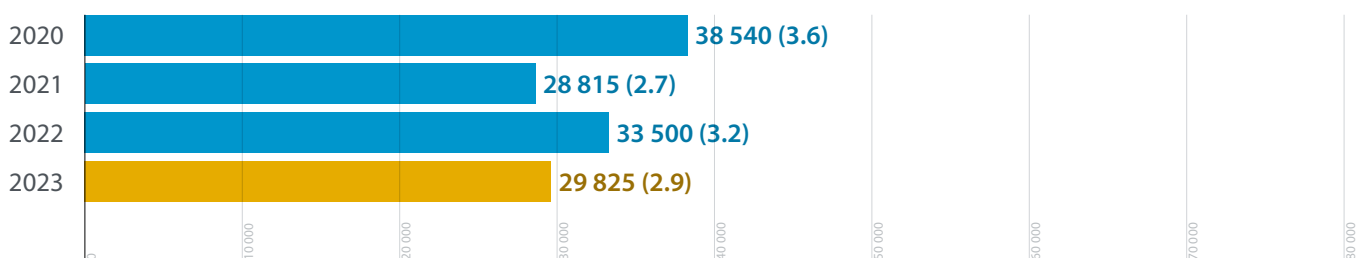
Persons refused entry



Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

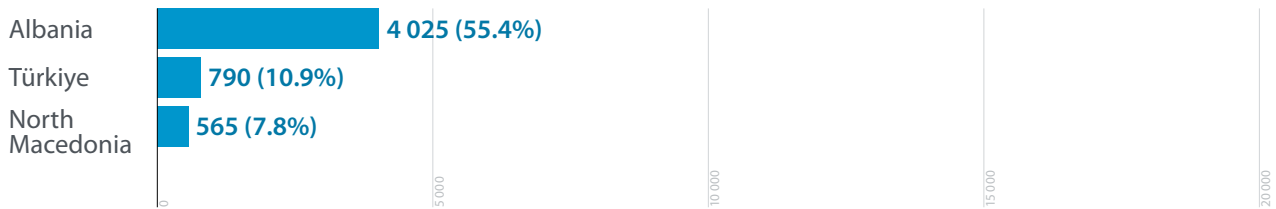


Source: Eurostat (*migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn, demo_gind and migr_eilpop*)

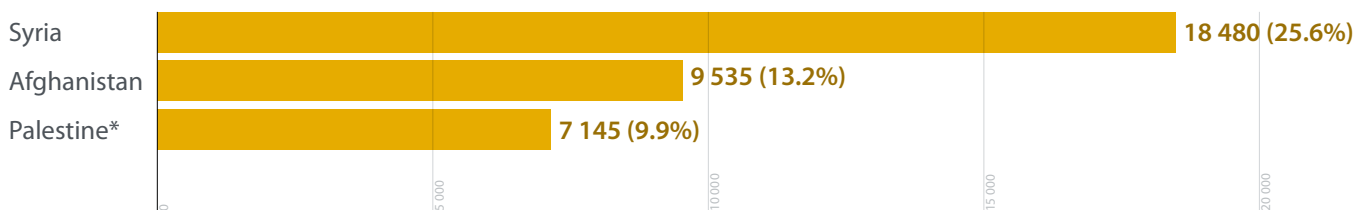
Top 3 countries of citizenship of third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2023

Absolute numbers (and the shares in the respective totals)

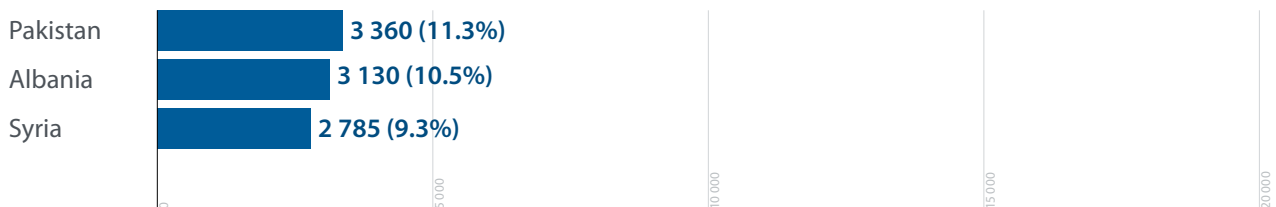
Persons refused entry



Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

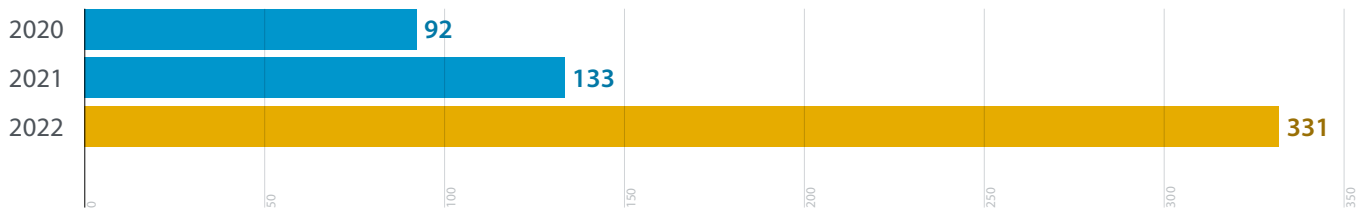


* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the reporting country on this issue.
Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord and migr_eirtn)



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of third-country nationals victims of trafficking in human beings, 2020-2022



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_vctz)

Number of first residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings, 2020-2022

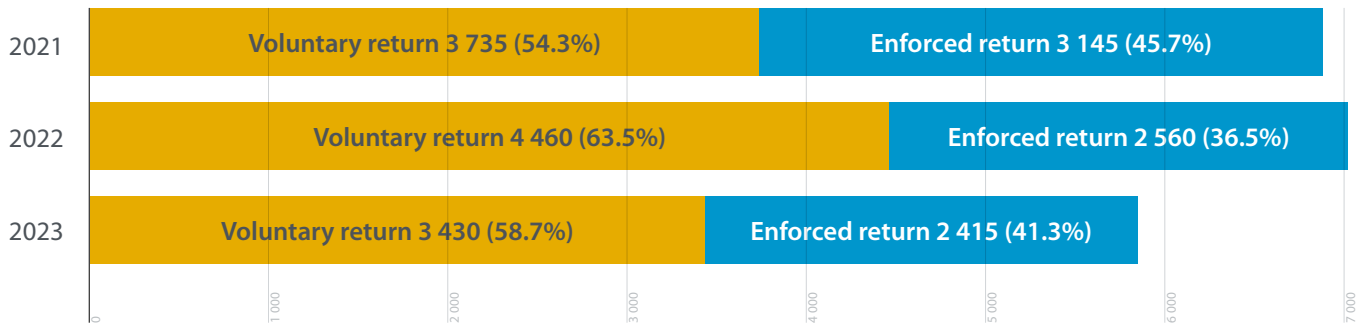


Source: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

RETURN AND READMISSION

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of return, 2021–2023

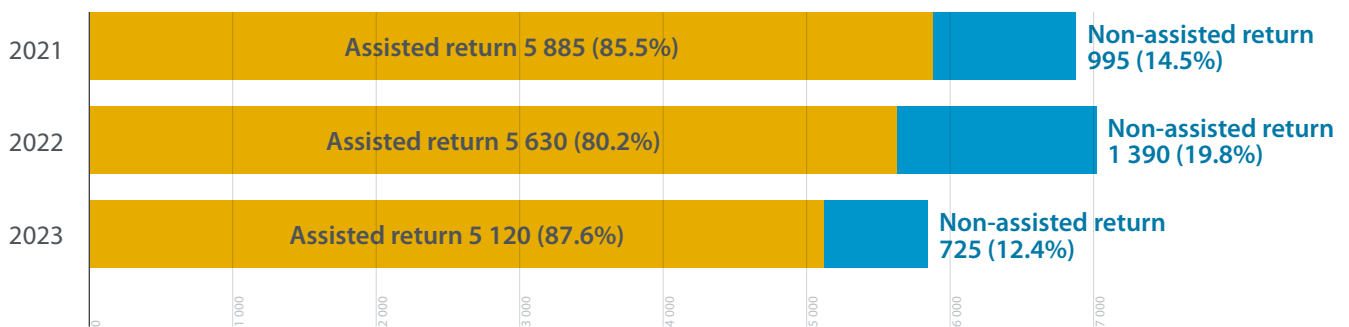
Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat (migr_eirtn1)

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of assistance received, 2021–2023

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat (migr_eirtn1)