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The EMN Quarterly provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 44<sup>th</sup> edition provides information from **July-September 2023**, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

The Quarterly is organised by policy theme. You can directly access your area of interest by clicking on one of the following themes:

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## SPECIAL NOTE

This edition contains only national level updates. In June 2024, the EMN launched an updated version of the newsletter - EMNews - covering updates from the first quarter of 2024. EMNews will provide more focused and concise information covering EU and national level developments in the field of migration and asylum.

Recent EMN publications:

- [EMN study on the Integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market](#)

#### Stay tuned for upcoming EMN publications:

- EMN inform on Access to autonomous housing in the context of international protection
- EMN inform on Family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection
- EMN inform on the Digitalisation of identity and residence documents issued to third-country nationals
- EMN inform on Monitoring the integration of third-country nationals
- EMN inform on Practices and challenges in processing victims of torture and ill treatment in the context of international and temporary protection

## TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

**Croatia:** On 24 August 2023, the Minister for science and education [passed a Decision](#) on co-financing the programme for providing additional support to primary and secondary school students displaced from Ukraine in the 2023/2024 school year.

**Estonia:** In September 2023, a decision was made regarding the duration of the temporary protection. When [applications for temporary protection](#) are made after 10 September 2023, temporary protection will last until March 2025. Before that deadline, temporary protection lasted for a year, after which the person had to submit a new application for an extension. Similarly, if an extension application was submitted on 10 September 2023 onwards, temporary protection will be extended until March 2025.

**Finland:** On 7 September 2023, the [Government decided](#) that Finland would no longer apply temporary protection and grant new residence permits to those third-country nationals who fled Ukraine and who were not granted international protection or a permanent residence permit by Ukraine. The decision does not affect the protection already granted or the validity of the residence permits already issued.

**Greece:** On 20 August 2023, by [decision](#) of the Minister of Migration and Asylum, the validity period of temporary protection status was extended for a duration of six months from 4 September 2023 to 4 March 2024; this followed a [previous decision](#) which had extended protection from 4 March 2023 to 4 September 2023. During the above-mentioned extension period, the Residence Permit documents, already in the possession of the beneficiaries of temporary protection, will automatically be extended until 4 March 2024.

**Luxembourg:** On 1 September 2023, several [legislative changes entered into force](#). The changes entail that beneficiaries of temporary protection will benefit from the same redefined material conditions as applicants of international protection, mainly comprising housing, food, hygiene and clothing, provided in kind, in cash or in the form of vouchers, as well as a monetary allowance and care medical.

**Netherlands:** On 31 July 2023, The Minister for Migration [extended](#) the temporary remigration policy for third-country nationals with a (temporary) residence permit from Ukraine until 15 September 2023. The policy originally expired on 1 August 2023. Third-country nationals receive support and a financial contribution upon voluntary remigration, under strict conditions. This assistance enables third-country nationals to build towards a future in their country of origin, or a country outside the European Union, where their stay is ensured to be durable.

On 2 September 2023, the Minister for Migration [decided](#) to freeze the termination of the Temporary Protection Directive for third-country nationals with a Ukrainian residence permit due on 4 September 2023, until the Administrative Jurisdiction of the Dutch Council of State (*Afdeling bestuursrechtspraak Raad van State*, AbRvS)

had provided a definitive ruling. This means that the abovementioned group is at least allowed to remain in the Netherlands until the ruling is made. The Minister's decision [follows](#) recent diverging court rulings on individual cases.

**Portugal:** A [Resolution of the Council of Ministers was published](#), which extends the validity of temporary protection titles for a period of six months starting from 1 September 2023.

## 1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Austria:** On 1 September 2023 the "Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of India on a Comprehensive Partnership for Migration and Mobility" [entered](#) into force. The agreement aims, among other things, at establishing and developing cooperation in various areas of migration.

**Czech Republic:** On 7 July 2023, an amendment to the Asylum Act came to force. The amendment also includes clarifications of the procedure for granting stateless status, including the addition of a definition of statelessness to the legal system.

On 13 September 2023, the Czech Government approved an amendment to the so-called Lex Ukraine that is now also expected to be approved by the Parliament. This amendment prolongs temporary protection until March 2025. Furthermore, it introduces the possibility to start a programme on assisted voluntary returns to Ukraine for those who wish to go back to Ukraine.

**Finland:** On 25 August 2023, the Finnish Immigration Service [reported](#) that the number of first applications for residence permits for studies has shown a dramatic increase from the previous year. By the end of July 2023, 8 762 non-EU applicants had submitted their first application for a residence permit on the basis of studies. At the same time in 2022, the number of first applications for residence permits for studies submitted was 5 911. This represents an increase of approximately 48%.

**Ireland:** On 2 August 2023, the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023 was [commenced](#), which includes amendments to the Immigration Act 1999 and the International Protection Act 2015 to allow documents related to immigration decisions, including deportation orders, to be delivered electronically rather than solely by post.

On 25 September 2023, the Central Statistics Office [published](#) the annual Population and Migration Estimates report. According to the report, immigration was at a 16-year high in the year to April 2023, with 141 600 individuals establishing residence in the state over the previous 12 months.

**Latvia:** On 15 September 2023, during an extraordinary sitting of the *Saeima*, a [vote of confidence](#) was given to Evika Siliņa and her Cabinet of Ministers. The *Saeima* approved the new Cabinet after Krišjānis Kariņš resigned from the post of Prime Minister on 14 August 2023, thus dissolving the government.

**Lithuania:** On 4 August 2023, the [Ministry of the Interior reported](#) that since the end of November 2022, when a special questionnaire was introduced for citizens of Russia and Belarus, requiring them to provide certain information and to express their views on Russia's aggression in Ukraine, a total of 1 164 citizens of these countries had been recognised as a threat to Lithuania's national security.

On 9 August 2023, in response to hostile and provocative actions by Aleksander Lukashenko's regime against Lithuanian citizens who were already in Belarus or who had entered it recently, the [national authorities provided recommendations](#) to Lithuanian citizens not to travel to Belarus.

On 30 August 2023, the [Government agreed with the proposal](#) from the Ministry of Interior to amend the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners by clarifying the provisions of the Law that were deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. The proposed amendments clearly define the institution responsible for decisions on the accommodation of migrants. The Migration Department decides on matters related to the accommodation of asylum seekers, while the State Border Guard Service is responsible for decisions relating to irregular migrants. The proposal also outlines an individual assessment for the accommodation of each asylum seeker.

**Netherlands:** On 7 July 2023, the Dutch coalition government led by prime minister Mark Rutte offered its [resignation to the Head of State](#). After prolonged discussions, the four governing parties were unable to reach an agreement. A part of the draft legal and policy changes related to migration and asylum will still be [debated](#) in Parliament. However, due to the outgoing status of the government, few significant policy changes are expected until after the elections (November 2023), and the subsequent formation of a new government.

**Poland:** On 1 July 2023, two regulations of the Minister of the Interior and Administration entered into force, which allow for increasing the availability of Polish travel documents for foreigners to citizens of Belarus, through:

- [First](#), not charging a fee for issuing the document; and
- [Second](#), establishing a new simplified basis for issuing the document, applicable from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023.

**Portugal:** On July 14 2023, a new Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 71/2023, was published, which [reintroduced passport/ID control](#) for people at national borders during World Youth Day Lisbon 2023, between 00:00 hours on 22 July 2023 and 00:00 hours on 7 August 2023.

On 10 August 2023, Law 41/2023, [established amendments to the status of stateless persons](#). The Portuguese Parliament was given 90 days to approve the status through:

- The procedure for determining statelessness;
- The guarantees for applicants, including those specifically tailored to protect women, children and people with disabilities;
- The competent entity for assessing and deciding on these matters, its composition, powers and framework;
- The rights that arise from the recognition of Stateless status.

**Sweden:** On 30 August 2023, [the Swedish Government appointed](#) Maria Mindhammar as the new Director-General of the Swedish Migration Agency. When introducing the new Director-General, the Migration Minister, Maria Malmer Stenergard explained why Mindhammar was appointed: “In her previous assignments, Maria Mindhammar has demonstrated a great ability to lead and to implement necessary changes in a strategic, effective and in a legally certain way.”

**Georgia:** On 4 September 2023, the second round of Expert Meetings in the framework of the implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the Migration Partnership between the Swiss Confederation and Georgia [took place in Tbilisi](#). Bilateral consultations concentrated on asylum-related issues (with a focus on health-related claims), prevention of illegal migration, thematic projects funded by the Swiss Government and other sectoral areas in the MoU.

As part of the preparatory work of the General Population Census 2024, trained staff from Geostat visited additional regions of Georgia ([Shida Kartli](#) and [Samtskhe-Javakheti](#) in July) to collect relevant data on households and buildings. Starting in October 2023, preparatory work [will be concluded in Tbilisi](#) in several phases, due to the high population in the capital city.

**Republic of Serbia:** On 27 June 2023, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia [adopted the Law on Amendments of the Law on Foreigners](#). The changes were introduced to further harmonise national legislation with the EU acquis. The main changes are related to temporary and long-term residence. The amendments establish the possibility to apply electronically for different permits.



## 2. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Austria:** In September 2023, the Ministry of the Interior and the City of Vienna [presented a pilot project](#) for cost transparency in basic care. The goals are less bureaucracy, more transparency and a fair distribution of real costs. Initially, this project will be applied to children, adolescents and persons with increased care needs,

including unaccompanied minor refugees. From 2024, this model will be applied to all persons in basic care in organised accommodation in Vienna.

**Belgium:** On 13 September 2023, the [Council of State ordered the suspension](#) of the execution of the decision of the Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration to temporarily exclude single male asylum seekers from reception. The Secretary of State took this decision on 29 August 2023 because of the saturation of the reception network.

**Bulgaria:** During the reporting period, a total of 103 children seeking international protection who are accommodated in the centres of the State Agency for Refugees, have been enrolled in school for the 2023/2024 school year. Their number has increased compared to the previous 2022/2023 school year, when 90 children were enrolled.

**Cyprus:** On 7 July 2023, the Deputy Director-General of DG HOME, Mrs. Beate Gminder visited Cyprus' First Reception Centre, where reconstruction and expansion works took place. The €22 million large-scale upgrades of the centre, held in cooperation with the Cypriot authorities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and are co-funded by the 2021–2027 Asylum Migration and Integration Fund.

**Estonia:** In August 2023, the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) [signed a cooperation agreement](#) with UNHCR. In its monitoring activities in the cooperation agreement, UNHCR focuses on how the entry of applicants for international protection into Estonia is organised and how they are granted access to asylum, as well as their protection against return. UNHCR also supports measures that increase the knowledge and skills of PBGB staff on refugee law and refugee protection standards. On the basis of the agreement, UNHCR has the right to control the activities of the PBGB in relation to people in need of asylum, both at border points, at asylum interviews and in accommodation centres for asylum seekers.

**Finland:** On 26 September 2023, the Ministry of the Interior [launched a project](#) to examine the reception allowance granted to applicants for international protection and beneficiaries of temporary protection. The aim is to reduce the reception allowance to seek savings in accordance with the government programme.

**France:** On 26 July 2023, a [decision](#) of the CNDA, provided protection to an Iranian national because of the risks incurred as a result of his homosexuality, recognised the existence of a "social group" of homosexuals in Iran, entitling them to refugee status in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention.

On 6 September 2023, the National Court for the Right of Asylum (*Cour nationale du droit d'asile - CNDA*) [ruled](#) that Russian nationals refusing to submit to the partial mobilisation of the decree of 21 September 2022 or to forced recruitment in connection with the war in Ukraine, which is marked by the large-scale commission of war crimes by the Russian armed forces, must be recognised as refugees on the basis of the provisions of Article 9.2(e) of Directive 2011/95/EU of 13 December 2011 (the Qualification Directive), insofar as they would be led to commit such crimes, directly or indirectly.

**Ireland:** On 14 July 2023, the government [extended](#) the suspension of the Council of Europe Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees, to be reviewed in 12 months. This suspension, originally introduced in July 2022, means that beneficiaries of international protection from other European countries must obtain a visa to travel to Ireland.

On 12 September 2023, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth [published](#) a commissioned report on LGBTI+ people living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) accommodation: best practices and lived experiences.

**Italy:** On 21 September 2023, a decree was issued containing the amount and methods for the provision of voluntary financial guarantees by foreigners for applicants for international protection under accelerated procedure, according to specific conditions. During the reporting period, the law was under analysis by jurisprudence.

**Luxembourg:** On 29 July 2023, legal amendments relating to international protection and temporary protection [entered into force](#). The law aims to materialise the lessons learned from two recent judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) regarding the protection of the rights of applicants for international

protection. The law establishes, among other things, objective criteria on the reasons for fearing an applicant for international protection who is the subject of a transfer procedure under the Dublin Regulation will abscond. According to the judgments of the CJEU, these objective criteria are imposed on Member States, in a binding provision of general application, by this Regulation.

On 1 September 2023, legal amendments on the free movement of people and immigration and to the reception of applicants for international protection and temporary protection [entered into force](#). In accordance with the new law, applicants for international protection in Luxembourg are exempt from the labour market test. The material conditions of applicants of international protection have been redefined. The law determines the amount of monetary allowance as well as the amount of aid for food and hygiene.

**Malta:** On 23 August 2023, the International Protection Agency decided to extend the suspension of the examination of applications for international protection lodged by Sudanese nationals until the end of October 2023.

**Netherlands:** On 5 July 2023, the Administrative Jurisdiction of the Dutch Council of State (Afdeling bestuursrechtspraak van de Raad van State, AbRvS) [ruled](#) that the time limit for the transfer of a third-country national to another Member State under the Dublin regulation cannot be exceeded (suspended) if the applicant has objected in another procedure. Suspending the transfer period in such cases violates the Dublin Regulation, which stipulates that applicants must be referred back to the country in which they first applied for international protection within six months. Netherlands will become responsible for the examination of the application after expiration of the time limit.

**Portugal:** Between July and September 2023, 547 asylum applications were registered.

During the reporting period, evacuations from Afghanistan were ongoing. An additional group of 20 Afghans were brought to Portugal, which makes a total of 1 217 Afghan arrivals since mid-August 2021.

**Slovenia:** In August 2023, a record number of 919 applications for international protection were lodged.

**Spain:** On 6 July 2023, [Order ISM/922/2023 was published](#) on developing the disciplinary regimen of the reception system in the field of international protection.

On 7 August 2023, a Resolution of the Directorate-General for the Management of the International and Temporary Protection Reception System amending the section “IV Aid to Recipients” of the Management Manual (version 5.0) of the International Protection Reception System was adopted.

**Georgia:** On 17 August 2023, Order №62 of the Minister of Internal Affairs (MIA) on “The Rule for Accommodation of the asylum-seeker in the Reception Centre or Another Place” [was adopted](#), repealing the old one. The new rule aims to further improve reception conditions and to approximate legislation to EU regulations.

On 25-29 September 2023, representatives from the MIA’s Border and Patrol Police and the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia were (re)trained in international protection issues. The trainings were held in cooperation with UNHCR’s office in Georgia.



### 3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Bulgaria:** During the reporting period, experts from the Child Protection Directorate at the Agency for Social Assistance participated in interinstitutional working group meetings on the elaboration of a draft Instruction on the terms and conditions for assessing the age of unaccompanied minors seeking international protection in Bulgaria, as well as in a working group for preparing a draft Law amending and supplementing the Law on Asylum and Refugees. Both working groups are chaired by the State Agency for Refugees.

**Greece:** In July 2023, the Integration and Support Unit for unaccompanied minors [continued the dissemination](#) of the “Roadmap to adulthood: Milestones towards a Smooth Transition into Adulthood” and the “Transition of Unaccompanied Children to Adulthood Compendium of good practices” under the AMIF project “Building Futures, Sharing good practices: Migrant Children’s Transition to Adulthood – UAC Futures”.



Since July 2023, there has been close cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Religion Affairs and Sports and the Refugee Education Coordinators regarding unhindered access to school for unaccompanied children and the subsequent support of their school attendance throughout the school year.

Since July 2023, the Integration and Support Unit of Unaccompanied Minors has cooperated with UNICEF and Youth Achieve Greece regarding the [dissemination of online educational tools](#) preparing unaccompanied children for the labour market and education.

On 2 August 2023, the [launch of the pilot project](#) "Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interest Procedures" took place.

On 22 August 2023, the [Operation Regulation for the Tracing Telephone Line of the National Emergency Response Mechanism](#) was published.

**Italy:** Published on 10 August 2023, the [Semi-Annual Report on Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in Italy](#) provided the following information: as of June 30, 2023, there were 20 926 unaccompanied minors in Italy, with the majority being males (86.6%). The most common ages among them were 17 years old (44.7%), 16 years old (24.7%), and 15 years old (12.1%). They primarily come from Egypt (5 341 minors), Ukraine (4 512), Tunisia (1 781), Guinea (1 174), and Albania (1 137). The report tracks their presence, characteristics, and reception, including new arrivals and departures, requests for international protection, family investigations in their countries of origin, and considerations regarding the conversion of residence permits upon reaching the age of majority. It also outlines new Italian and international procedural and regulatory developments and measures for social and labour integration. The data can be accessed in English through a dedicated [dashboard](#).

The [report](#), titled "Listening and Participation of Unaccompanied Minors as an Intervention Methodology", is based on the feedback of young residents in facilities managed by municipalities. This project was carried out by the Authority for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in collaboration with municipalities, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

**Portugal:** During the reporting period, nine unaccompanied minors applied for Asylum in Portugal.

**Georgia:** On 11-13 September 2023, representatives of the MIA Migration Department completed a training course on the topic of "Communication Standards with Vulnerable Groups".



## 4. LEGAL MIGRATION

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Austria:** On 20 July 2023, an amendment to the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals [entered into force](#). The amendment had become necessary due to the repeal of the previous provision by the Constitutional Court, according to which the previous provision was contrary to the principle of the rule of law.

**Belgium:** On 1 September 2023, Flanders published a new list of medium-skilled [shortage occupations](#) open to migration. The new list has been adapted to the current economic reality and labour market situation; it now contains 29 positions.

**Croatia:** On 26 September 2023, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce held a "[Conference on employment of foreign workers: positioning Croatia as an attractive destination for immigrants](#)". The lack of workers is a pressing problem for the Croatian economy. The conference discussed how employers are reaching out to foreign workers and what challenges they face in doing so. Recommendations were made for further activities in order to improve the quality of the system for hiring foreign workers.

**Estonia:** On 1 September the [Foreign Investment Reliability Assessment Act](#) came [into force](#). The purpose of the Act is to ensure the security and public order of Estonia and other EU Member States by assessing the reliability of foreign investments. According to the Act, as of 1 September, a permit must be applied for when investing in an enterprise outside the EU that is operating in an economic field important to the security or public order of Estonia.

**Finland:** On 8 September 2023, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment [launched preparations for legislative amendments](#) that will clarify the effects of unemployment on valid work-based residence permits. In future, persons with a work-based residence permit would have to leave Finland if the employment relationship ended and no new employment relationship was concluded within three months.

On 20 September 2023, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) [published a study](#), which found that immigrants in Finland find employment best by asking for work directly from employers. It is also quite common for them to find employment through acquaintances. On the other hand, few immigrants find employment through the Employment and Economic Development Office (aka TE Office) or private employment services.

**France:** On 29 June 2023, a [decision](#) by the Council of State clarified that the age of the child for whom a request is being made to join their refugee parent on the basis of article L. 561-2 of the Code on Entry and Residence of Foreign Nationals and Right of Asylum, must be assessed on the date of the request for family reunification, i.e. the date on which the visa application for this purpose is submitted, without any time limit condition being imposed. Furthermore, when a new visa application is submitted after a first definitive refusal, the child's age should be assessed on the basis of the new application, and not the first.

**Germany:** On 29 September 2023, the Federal Government and Kyrgyzstan signed a [declaration of intent](#) to establish comprehensive cooperation on migration matters. In view of Germany's need for skilled workers, the intended migration agreement aims to open further opportunities for legal labour migration to Germany and will also obligate Kyrgyzstan to readmit its nationals who have no legal right to stay in Germany. The Federal Government is also holding talks with the Republic of Uzbekistan on comprehensive migration cooperation.

**Greece:** On 16 August 2023, a [joint ministerial decision](#), determined the required documents for the issuance of a ten-year residence permit to persons who have entered Greece as unaccompanied minors, according to the provisions of the new Migratory Code (L5038/2023, GG A'81), who have not interrupted their residence in Greece for more than two consecutive years and who have successfully completed at least three years of secondary education in a Greek school before they turn 23 years old.

**Ireland:** On 12 September 2023, Bolivian nationals were [designated](#) as "visa-required", meaning that they must obtain a visa before traveling to Ireland or must have a transit visa if they are travelling through Ireland to another destination.

**Italy:** On 7 July 2023, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies adopted Guidelines on professional and civic-linguistic training programmes abroad. These programmes are aimed at employment integration in Italy. As per the law, foreign workers trained abroad can come to Italy and be employed outside of the "flow decrees" quotas. Additionally, these training activities will contribute to the development of productive or entrepreneurial activities in countries of origin.

On 7 August 2023, the [maximum limit for entries](#) into Italy for training/internship purposes between 2023-2025 was established as follows:

- 7 500 entries for attending vocational training courses aimed at obtaining a qualification or certification of acquired skills with a duration not exceeding 24 months;
- 7 500 entries for completing educational and orientation internships aimed at concluding a vocational training programme started in the country of origin.

On 14 August 2023, an [increase of 40 000 quota places for seasonal workers](#) has been planned in addition to the existing 44,000 quota places, which were quickly exhausted (with over 150,000 applications for seasonal work). The new quota places pertain to the agricultural and tourist-hospitality sectors.

On 15 September 2023, the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Chamber has expressed a positive opinion on the draft decree of the Prime Minister [implementing the Blue Card Directive](#) (EU) 2021/1883, introducing new rules for the entry and residence of highly skilled foreign citizens. The new rules aim to:



- Expand the opportunities for highly skilled workers from third countries to access the EU Blue Card, amending the objective and subjective requirements for access.
- Modify the procedure for the employer's work permit request.
- EU Blue Card holders can engage in self-employment in addition to highly skilled subordinate work and seek employment in case of unemployment.
- Provide greater flexibility in both short-term and long-term mobility.
- Update and modify family reunification procedures.
- Facilitate entry and residence in Italy for foreign nationals holding an EU Blue Card issued by another EU member state.

On 27 September 2023, the Council of Ministers granted final approval for the Prime Minister's decree regarding [the planning of legal entry flows of foreign workers](#) in Italy for the three-year period 2023-2025, with a total of 450 000 foreign workers.

**Latvia:** On 1 July 2023 the [Amendments to the Repatriation Law](#) came into force, providing that as of 1 January 2024, persons will no longer be granted repatriate status. The decision was made, because in recent years citizens of Russia and other countries who had a Latvian or Liv predecessor wished to receive residence permits, but at the same time often had no previous connection with Latvia (e.g. they have no relatives with whom they maintain regular contacts in Latvia, they have not visited Latvia before, although they have travelled to other European countries, and their future life plans and residence are not related to Latvia).

On 1 July 2023, amendments to the Immigration Law also prescribe that in the case a seasonal worker's visa has been issued for a period not exceeding six months within a 12-month period, but the foreigner wishes to continue the seasonal employment legal relationship with the same employer or to enter into a new seasonal employment contract with another employer, he or she is entitled, without leaving Latvia, to request a new visa, if the maximum period of stay specified is not exceeded and the application for a new visa has been submitted not later than three working days before the expiry of the validity period of the previous visa. During the examination of the visa application, the employment relationship may be continued if it is intended to continue with the same employer. Please see below in the 'Updates on EU legislation transposition' section for more information.

On 19 September 2023, [amendments to the Immigration Law](#) came into force which provide that citizens of the Russian Federation who have failed the State language test or whose permanent residence permits expired on 2 September 2023 because they have failed the Latvian State language test are entitled to apply for a residence permit, undertaking to learn the State language and successfully pass the test within its validity period. A person may apply for a residence permit for a period of up to two years if he or she has previously applied for the State language test but failed to pass it successfully and applied for a second State language test or has failed to pass it so far for justified reasons. Justifiable reasons may be considered to be serious health-related reasons or other reasons beyond the person's control. The application for a permit to reside in the Republic of Latvia must be submitted to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs within the period of legal residence, but not later than 30 March 2024.

**Lithuania:** On 1 July 2023, the [new Description of the National Visa Issuance Procedure](#) entered into force. From now on, students studying full-time in Lithuania, teachers and researchers coming to work in higher education institutions under employment agreements, as well as foreigners coming to work when their profession is entered in the list of Professions in Demand will be required to apply for a temporary residence permit instead of a national visa. Additionally, all applications for national visas will be submitted through the Lithuanian migration information system 'MIGRIS'.

On 11 August 2023, the [Migration Department reported](#) that two-thirds of the quota for foreigners coming to Lithuania to provide services by working as drivers of international freight vehicles, computer technicians, train drivers, public transport drivers, or chefs has been used up. Once the quota is used up and employers want to

invite more workers in the above-mentioned professions, they will need to contact the Employment Service which will provide an assessment of the Lithuanian labour market needs.

On 15 September 2023, to improve the quality of the electronic services provided and ensure the swift operation of the Lithuanian migration information system 'MIGRIS', the [Migration Department implemented changes](#). Foreigners who have left Lithuania for a short period and have damaged or lost their temporary residence permit will have the opportunity to submit a request to reissue the said permit through the external service provider.

**Luxembourg:** As of 4 July 2023, all jobseekers registering with the National Employment Agency (ADEM) [must take an online test](#), in the languages they declared to have knowledge of when they registered. The four main languages relevant for the Luxembourgish labour market are: Luxembourgish, French, German and English. The main aim is to promote an objective and uniform assessment of the language level of jobseekers.

As of 10 July 2023, [several immigration procedures can be carried out online](#). They concern EU citizens, third-country nationals who are family members of an EU citizen and third-country nationals who hold a residence permit.

On 1 September 2023, amendments on the free movement of people and immigration and the reception of applicants for international protection and temporary protection [entered into force](#). The law aims to remedy the shortage of qualified labour by facilitating access to the labour market for third-country nationals (including people holding a "family member" residence permit), by extending the validity period of the residence permit for the purpose of a job search or business creation from nine months to twelve months, and by simplifying the procedures allowing the hiring of third-country nationals not yet present in Luxembourg, for recruitment requests in one of the professions appearing on the list of professions declared to be in serious shortage.

**Portugal:** On 10 August 2023, a new law established [stateless status and travel permits](#) for stateless persons.

**Slovakia:** On 15 September 2023, the Slovak Republic [revoked the extraordinary situation](#) in relation to COVID-19. This may restore, depending on the individual situation of a third-country national, the need to fulfil obligations towards the foreign police that were suspended during the crisis situation (e.g. renewal of the residence, the expiry of deadlines etc.). The revocation of the COVID-19 extraordinary situation does not affect the validity of [the extraordinary situation declared in connection with the war in Ukraine](#). This state of emergency remains in force.

**Slovenia:** In September 2023, amendments to three regulations (which cover EU citizens, Swiss citizens and third-country nationals) were adopted, which had to be harmonised with the latest amendment to the Foreigners Act, which entered into force on 27 April 2023. The relevant application forms and certificates for submitted applications were also updated.

On 2 September 2023, [the Act Determining Intervention Measures for Recovery from the Floods and Landslides](#) of August 2023 entered into force. For the purpose of eliminating the consequences of floods and landslides, [the law enables workers](#), citizens of third countries, who do not need a visa to enter and stay in the Republic of Slovenia, to start work more quickly in professions that are already in short supply and absolutely necessary to eliminate the consequences of floods and landslides.

**Georgia:** On 1 September 2023, amendments to the "Law on Labour Migration" and the "Law on The Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons" [entered into force](#). According to the new regulations, prior to applying for a work residence permit, a labour immigrant employed in Georgia must be registered by a local employer in the electronic system of the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoH). In this regard, an electronic exchange has been launched between the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) and the MoH to exchange information on labour immigrants to issue work-related residence permits.

On 11 September 2023, [an amendment was introduced](#) to Governmental Ordinance N.255 "On Approval of the List of Countries Whose Citizens May Enter Georgia without a Visa". Accordingly, citizens of the People's Republic

of China, traveling to Georgia for tourism purposes, are now allowed to enter and stay in Georgia without a visa for 30 days.

On 18 September 2023, an agreement between the Governments of Georgia and the Republic of Peru "On Exemption of Tourist/Ordinary Visas" [was signed](#). After the ratification procedures, holders of ordinary passports of the contracting parties will be allowed to enter and stay on the territory of the other contracting party without a visa for a period not exceeding 90 days in any 180-day period.

**Moldova:** On 21 August 2023, the Government approved [Decision No. 618/2023](#) regarding the approval of the Concept of the "Migration" Information System. This project will allow online applications for services provided by the General Inspectorate for Migration, transparency in all processes, and the elimination of abusive practices related to personal data protection. It will also reduce the examination time for a file, taking into account the interconnection with other databases. With the help of the new information system, the quality of services provided by the General Inspectorate for Migration to foreigners, individuals, and legal entities will increase, based on the digitisation and standardisation of processes.

On 30 August 2023, the Government approved [Decision No. 627/2023](#) amending Government Decision No. 1187/2010 on the implementation of the Single Desk for Foreigners' Documentation. Implementing this decision simplifies the procedures for documenting foreigners, allowing applicants to obtain the final document in one place with less effort. Procedures related to the issuance of identity documents (payment of state fees, payment for the completion of identity documents by the Public Services Agency) are carried out at the One-Stop Shop. This is achieved by eliminating duplicate activities at the One-Stop Shop and optimising the provision of services to individuals and legal entities.

**Republic of Serbia:** On 27 June 2023, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia [adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on Employment of foreigners](#). Amendments were proposed with the aim of further simplifying the procedure through which foreigners are allowed to work in the Republic of Serbia. The amendments follow simultaneous changes in the Law on Foreigners which also simplifies the procedure and introduces a single permit as a permit for temporary residence and work.

## STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

**Finland:** On 22 August 2023, the Ministry of Education and Culture [appointed a working group](#) to prepare an increase in tuition fees for non-EU and non-EEA university students. The working group is also expected to propose legislation to prevent the circumvention of tuition fees and to re-introduce university application processing fees.



## 5. INTEGRATION

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Austria:** In August 2023, the [Integration Report 2023 was published](#) by the Expert Council for Integration, including recommendations. Furthermore, Statistics Austria and the Federal Chancellery [published the Statistical Yearbook "Migration & Integration 2023"](#). It presents a compilation of relevant data in the field of integration, showing current developments and challenges.

**Finland:** On 19 September 2023, the Government [proposed amendments](#) to the Integration Act, which will enter into force in 2025. The proposed changes would, for example, increase an immigrant's own responsibility for integration and improve the position of immigrant mothers.

On 29 September 2023, the [Startup Refugees programme](#) reached the finals of the European Entrepreneurship Promotion Awards. The inclusive Startup Refugees entrepreneurship programme supports asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants in the path towards work, entrepreneurship and skills development. [Read more.](#)

**Greece:** In July 2023, a training project for Intercultural Mediators -which was designed on the initiative of the Ministry for Migration and Asylum- started being implemented under the funding and operational support of UNHCR. The project's partners are: the NGO METAdrasi (Leader), the Labour Institute of the General Federation

of Greek Workers (INE GSEE), and the Small Enterprises' Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (KEK GSEVEE). This pilot project will set up an educational and accreditation framework for trainees wishing to pursue the profession of intercultural mediator and will be addressed to a group of 30 trainees in the Region of Attica.

**Ireland:** On 13 July, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth [published](#) an independent evaluation of three equality strategies, including the Migrant Integration Strategy.

On 2 August 2023, the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023 [commenced](#), introducing changes to laws on naturalisation, including a reduction in the minimum period of residence prior to naturalisation for children born in Ireland without an automatic right to citizenship.

**Italy:** Published on 4 July 2023, the [Report on the Activities Carried Out in 2022 by Associations Working for Migrant Citizens](#) contains an overview of the organisations' work, including their legal structure, geographical distribution, areas of intervention, participation in territorial or thematic networks, and their primary activities. It also provides insights into the projects undertaken by the organisations, detailing the types of activities, funds used, beneficiaries of the interventions, and human resources employed. The report includes a focus on "Activities for Ukrainian Citizens".

Published in July 2023, the [Reports on "Migrant Communities in Italy"](#) contain data from various institutional sources and describe the characteristics and processes of inclusion for each of the 16 largest communities in Italy, including Moroccan, Albanian, Chinese, Ukrainian, Indian, Filipino, Egyptian, Pakistani, Moldovan, Sri Lankan, Senegalese, Tunisian, Nigerian, Peruvian, and Ecuadorian communities. In addition to the 16 individual reports, there are Executive Summaries, a comparative analysis notebook that provides insights into the various communities, and a statistical appendix.

On 2 August 2023, the 13<sup>th</sup> ["Report on "Foreigners in the Italian Labour Market"](#) was published. The report provides an overview of the employment status of foreigners in 2022, including the conditions of both employed and self-employed non-EU workers, access to social safety nets, workplace injuries, social security, and social assistance. It also examines the integration of foreign workers, such as their employment status, perceived discrimination, alignment of job roles with qualifications, education, skills, and knowledge of the Italian language. Additionally, the report investigates the participation of Ukrainian refugees in the Italian labour market.

**Luxembourg:** On 24 July 2023, the law of 14 July 2023 relating to the reception, orientation, integration, educational support of newly arrived students and [the creation of the School Integration and Welcoming Service](#) (SIA) came into force. The SIA is a central starting point that helps newly arrived families find the right school for their children by providing parents and students with information on the different formal and non-formal educational offers available in Luxembourg.

On 25 August 2023, the law of 23 August 2023 relating to intercultural living together and amending the amended law of 8 March 2017 on Luxembourg nationality [was published](#). The law will not come into force until 1 January 2024. [One of the changes](#) introduced by this law is that the concept of integration will be replaced by that of intercultural living together.

**Netherlands:** On 11 July 2023, the Dutch government announced plans to reserve [€37.5 million](#) over the next three years to help beneficiaries of international protection find a job more quickly. Municipalities are responsible for helping beneficiaries to find paid work, but in practice, they do not always have the financial means to do so adequately. With this subsidy, the government aims to improve beneficiaries' position on the labour market, in turn also promoting their integration in Dutch society in general.

**Portugal:** On 17 July 2023, the Observatory for Migration (OM) launched the 2023 [Statistical Report on Asylum – Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection in Portugal](#). The document takes stock of key figures and highlights trends relating to International Protection in Portugal. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Report on this subject produced by the Observatory for Migration with the objective of disseminating reliable information and offering

a complete picture of the current state of affairs in Portugal. The full text and a summary of its main findings are available online.

On 13 September and 12 October 2023, [two new Local Support Centres for Migrant Integration \(CLAIM\) were inaugurated](#), at the Polytechnic Institute in the city of Guarda and in the city of Viseu, respectively. On 20 September 2023, an extension of Beja's National Support Centre for Migrant Integration (CNAIM) was opened in Odemira. These two events mark the continued expansion of the National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants (RNAIM), which currently include four CNAIM – one-stop shops – that offer a wide range of integration services under one roof and 155 CLAIM set up in partnership with municipalities, civil society organisations and institutions of higher education, with the aim of delivering decentralised information and support to migrants.

**Spain:** On 4 July 2023, the Council of Ministers approved, at the proposal of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, the granting of a subsidy to the Spanish Olympic Committee (COE) to contribute to the promotion of sport in centres of the public reception network for applicants for international protection and migrants. The subsidy, of €1.5 million until 2026, will allow the COE to collaborate in the design of plans to achieve the optimal use of sports spaces and promote the use of sports facilities by both residents of the centres host as well as the neighbours of the areas where they are located. In addition, the COE will collaborate in the design of training plans and programmes and will select former elite athletes as “ambassadors” for each of the centres.

Also on 4 July 2023, the Council of Ministers approved the [Strategic Framework on Citizenship and Inclusion, against Racism and Xenophobia \(2023-2027\)](#). This document is offered as a proposal for comprehensive, voluntary and flexible action to inspire the public policies of national, regional and local authorities, as well as the actions of civil society and all actors who can contribute to the integration of people of foreign origin (including beneficiaries of international protection), with a focus on an intercultural model; and on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and associated intolerance.

On 9 August 2023, the State Official Bulletin published the extract of the resolution of the calls for grants for the development of actions of general interest in the field of migration aimed at defending the human rights of foreign individuals and promoting coexistence and social cohesion, co-financed by European Union funds of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration Issues.

**Moldova:** On 6 September 2023, a meeting of the [National Coordination Commission in the field of migration and asylum](#) was held to discuss issues related to the integration of displaced persons from Ukraine. Commission members reviewed the results of actions taken over six months to document, provide support for socio-economic integration, ensure the right to social services and education for displaced persons.

**Republic of Serbia:** On 6 September 2023, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration for the period from 2023 to 2029. In this context, the term "refugees" refers to the forcibly displaced population in the region, namely refugees from the former republics of Yugoslavia while internally displaced persons are persons who have been forced to leave Kosovo and Metohija. The launch of this activity has been announced on online platform e-consultations.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Estonia:** In July 2023, the Police and Border Guard Board sent the police unit [ESTPOL7](#) to Lithuania to help Lithuanian colleagues ensure security on the Lithuanian-Belarus border during the NATO Summit.

As of 13 September 2023, Estonia [prohibited](#) motor vehicles with Russian Federation license plates from entering Estonia at the external border, as they fall under the scope of current sanctions. The ban on entering with a motor vehicle applies regardless of the basis of its owner's or user's stay in Estonia or the European Union. Motor vehicles bearing a number plate of the Russian Federation are allowed to leave Estonia through its external border or cross the internal borders of the European Union.

On 20 September 2023, the Police and Border Guard Board sent the police unit [ESTPOL8](#) to Latvia to help tackle irregular Migration at the Latvian-Belarus border.

**France:** On 30 June 2023, a decree and an order [have extended the public eligible for the automated rapid external border crossing system](#) known as "PARAFE" when leaving the territory to all third-country nationals, and set the list of third countries whose nationals are authorised to benefit from the system when entering the territory. They also [added national gendarmerie officers](#) to the list of persons able to access the "PARAFE" automated personal data processing system, and put an end to the collection of fingerprints.

**Italy:** On 13 June 2023, it was clarified by law that judicial appeals against border rejections fall under the jurisdiction of the Regional Administrative Court. This provision clarifies the competent authority for challenging border rejections, which previously was not specified in any legal text.

**Latvia:** On 1 July 2023, [Amendments to the State Border Guard Law](#) came into force, which clearly specify the right of the State Border Guard to prevent irregular entry into the State in a place and at a time not intended for him or her (if necessary, by providing the person with primary provision of food in conformity with the law), if there are no objectively justified circumstances due to which immediate entry is necessary. The previous regulation of the State Border Guard Law did not provide sufficiently clearly for the right of the State Border Guard to prevent irregular entry into Latvia.

On 14 July 2023, the Law "[Amendments to the Law on the State Border of the Republic of Latvia](#)" came into force, which constitutes a mechanism directly for situations related to irregular crossing of the border or attempting thereof, including the regulation to be used in order to ensure the guarantee of the inviolability of the State border and prevention of threats to the State. The regulation focuses on dealing with situations where there is a disproportionate number of irregular State border crossings or attempts. Upon establishing indicators of this nature, or upon receiving information regarding clearly identified risk or preparation for mass large numbers of border crossers to cross the State border unauthorised, it would be justified to announce the reinforced regime for the operation of the Border Guard System provided for in the Law on Amendments to the State border Law of the Republic of Latvia.

On 8 August 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers announced a reinforced border security regime for six months from 11 August 2023 to 10 February 2024 in the administrative territories of Ludza, Krāslava, Augšdaugava municipalities and Daugavpils. [Cabinet Order No 514](#) was issued to ensure the inviolability of the State border and to prevent a threat to the State, in view of the disproportionately high number and increasing trend of cases of irregular and attempted crossing of the Latvian-Belarusian border.

On 19 September 2023, Cabinet Order No 611 came into force which [suspended](#) the operation of the Silene border crossing point on the Latvian-Belarusian border in order to ensure the integrity of the State border and the prevention of threats to the State in relation to irregular migration.

**Lithuania:** On 5 July 2023, the [Government approved the updated State Border Protection Shelter Plan](#) aimed at swiftly and effectively responding to threats to national and state border security. The Plan outlines assistance measures for border guards according to changing threat levels at the border. It also encompasses coordinated inter-institutional and international actions to ensure reliable state border protection and control.

On 27 September 2023, [national authorities decided to install a physical barrier](#) in wet and marshy areas near nationally protected areas along the state border. The Ministry of the Interior deems these additional border protection measures necessary as Belarusian authorities began using these areas for organising new irregular migration flows and smuggling.

On 29 September 2023, the [National Security Commission agreed](#) to regularly assess the security situation at the Belarus-Lithuania border using approved indicators based on objective criteria. According to an analysis based on these indicators, national authorities will decide on Lithuania's response measures, which may range from restricting the flow of people, transport and goods to Belarus or closing the state border with the country.



**Poland:** At the beginning of August 2023, the Commander-in-Chief of the Border Guard requested the Ministry of National Defense to move another thousand soldiers to the border with Belarus to support the operation of the Border Guard officers. At the Security Committee, Minister Mariusz Błaszczak [decided to strengthen the Border Guard by 2 000 soldiers](#) (which now amounts to over 3 000 soldiers).

On 28 August 2023, a meeting of the heads of the ministries of internal affairs of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia was held in Warsaw. [A joint declaration of these countries towards Belarus was adopted](#). It was decided that actions will be taken jointly and that if there is a security incident, all border crossings with Belarus, both passenger and goods, will be closed.

On September 15, 2023, a tender was announced for the [construction of an electronic dam](#) on the Bug River along the border with Belarus.

From 17 September 2023, there is a [ban on importing passenger cars](#) registered in Russia to Poland. The purchase, import or transfer into the European Union, directly or indirectly, of cars and other motor vehicles designed to transport 10 people is prohibited. The above prohibition results from Council Regulation (EU) No. 833/2014 of 31 July 2014 concerning restrictive measures in connection with Russia's actions destabilizing the situation in Ukraine (OJ L 229 of 31/07/2014, as amended).

**Portugal:** On 14 July 2023, the Portuguese Government decided, in accordance with articles 25 and 26 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016, to temporarily reintroduce border controls at Portuguese internal borders. The purpose was to guarantee internal security and public order during Youth World Day (YWD) which took place between 1 and 6 August and to prevent the entry into Portugal of persons who could pose a serious threat to public order or internal security. During this period, national inter-agency cooperation and information exchange were key, in addition to cooperation at European neighboring level (in particular with the Spanish National Police, resulting in enhanced manpower at BCPs and the permanent exchange of information), with advanced risk analysis steering the course of activities to minimally hinder legitimate border crossings.

Throughout the International Air Transport Association (IATA) summer, Frontex's standing corps officers supported air border checks in Lisbon, Porto and Faro.

**Spain:** During the reporting period, [Operation Crossing the Strait](#) announced the results for 2023 on vehicle traffic, presenting a historic figure of a total of 775 366 vehicles, representing 11.5% more than in 2022. This is the highest figure reached on vehicles since it was put in place in 1987. Operation Strait Passage has taken place between June 15 and September 15 of each year since 1987, although in 2020 and 2021 it was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, a total of 3 219 534 passengers (10.6% more than last year) crossed the Strait fluidly and safely in the largest movement of people between two continents. In addition, the General Directorate of Civil Protection and Emergencies of the Ministry of the Interior coordinated a total of 11 084 ship rotations (11.9% more than in 2022).

**Georgia:** On 27 July 2023, "Integrated Risk Analysis Model of the State Border of Georgia" was adopted by Order No. 1/290 of the Minister of Internal Affairs. The document is based on the Frontex Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM 2.1).

On 30 August 2023, an Action Plan for the Integrated Border Management Strategy of Georgia (2023-2027) [was approved](#) by Governmental Ordinance N 338. The Strategy and its Action Plan determine the priorities and activities for 2023-2027 to further enhance the state's integrated border management system.

On 25 September 2023, a working group was established by MIA Ministerial Order N.1/384 tasked to facilitate the implementation of "Integrated Risk Analysis Model of the State Border of Georgia". The working group is responsible for elaborating the action plan and focused on enhancing analytical and IT capabilities, defining risk analysis criteria at various levels (tactical, operational, strategic) and refining mechanisms for sharing information.

On 29 September 2023, within the framework of EU Funded projects ([SAFE IBM](#), [BMMAG](#)) 60 passport readers [were handed over](#) to the Patrol Police Department of the MIA.

Based on Entry/Exit Law requirements, within the reporting period 691 citizens of Georgia intending travel to the EU/Schengen area were refused permission to depart from the country.

In September 2023, in the framework of the [EU funded project Prometheus II](#) a Georgian Patrol Police Officer was deployed to the airport in France (Aéroport Paris-Beauvais), supporting French colleagues in profiling citizens of Georgia.

Within the reporting period, employees of the Patrol Police Department of MIA (immigration-border controllers) were placed in the airports of EU/Schengen associated countries to reduce the flow of illegal migrants from Georgia. Six officers participated in Joint Operations (JO) held in Latvia, Poland and Italy. In addition, Georgian Patrol Police officers were placed at the Border Check Points of Giurgiulești (the Moldova-Romania Border), Palanca (the Moldova-Ukraine Border) and Terehova the (Latvia-Russia Border) in the framework of Joint Operation Staff Exchange Land 2023 of the MIA-Frontex cooperation working arrangement, to exchange best practice and share experience.

**Republic of Serbia:** On 6 of July 2023, the [Serbian Schengen Action plan was adopted](#) and the National Coordination Body for the Serbian Schengen Action plan was established. The Serbian Schengen Action plan aims to fulfill the obligations arising from the negotiations for the accession of the Republic of Serbia to membership of the European Union, to achieve the standards necessary for the country to enter the Schengen area, strengthen institutional, administrative and technical capacities and to harmonize with the legal acquis of the European Union in the area of external borders and Schengen, all with the aim of preparing for the Schengen evaluation process.



## 7. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Cyprus:** On 8 August 2023, the Ministry of Interior concluded contracts for the construction of a new Reception Centre for Applicants for International Protection and a new Pre-departure Detention Centre in the area of Limnes, Larnaca. The two centres, costing around € 85 million, are expected to be finished within 24 months and thus improve Cyprus' infrastructure, leading to faster processing of asylum procedures and the acceleration of returns.

**Estonia:** On 20 July 2023, the migration surveillance system (MIGIS), which enables automatic and manual data-based checks against different databases, creates risk profiles, plans and reports inspections, draws statistics and exchanges information with other state authorities, went live. The MIGIS, as an automated migration surveillance IT-solution, assists officials to track persons' compliance with the legal requirements to reside in Estonia and to prevent misuse or irregular stay.

**Finland:** On 28 July 2023, the Ministry of the Interior launched [a new legislative project to introduce a border procedure](#) in Finland. The legislative project will introduce into Finnish law the accelerated procedure referred to in the Asylum Procedures Directive for processing, where needed, the applications of asylum seekers who have entered Finland. Applications would be processed immediately at or near the border.

**Italy:** On 19 September 2023, a Legislative Decree containing new regulations concerning "Return Centres" was published. The maximum detention period for irregular migrants has been extended to 18 months, and an extraordinary plan to build new facilities across Italy has been initiated.

**Lithuania:** In September 2023, [national authorities recorded](#) an increase in irregular migration from Belarus to Latvia, which, in turn, led to a rise in secondary migration from Latvia to Lithuania. As of 25 September 2023, 822 third-country nationals who had entered Lithuania from Latvia had been detained. It is a 20-times increase compared to the same period in 2022.

**Luxembourg:** On 1 September 2023, legal amendments regarding the national labour code, free movement of people and immigration, and the reception of applicants for international protection and temporary protection [entered into force](#). The law aims to strengthen the fight against the illegal employment of third-country nationals. At the same time sanctions against employers who resort to the employment of irregularly staying third-country nationals have been increased. The law introduces prohibition on the employment of legally residing third-country nationals who do not have a work permit.

**Poland:** On 3 October 2023, information was given to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU and the Ministers of Interior of the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries on the restoration of [border controls on the border with the Slovak Republic](#) for the period from 4 October 2023 to 13 October 2023 along the entire section of the state border with the Slovak Republic.

**Slovakia:** In September 2023, the Slovak Republic introduced several measures to tackle increased transit migration pressure from the Western Balkan route. This included restriction of the operation of the foreign police departments, assistance from the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic and/or the creation of temporary standpoints.

**Georgia:** On 25 July 2023, Ministerial Order №48 on the “Approval of the Procedure for Detaining and Accommodating Aliens in the Temporary Accommodation Centre” [was amended](#), with the aim to further improve the proper recording of the body injuries of the detainees at the Temporary Accommodation Center.

Within the reporting period, the representatives of the Migration Department of the MIA have completed the following training courses: “Effective Communication and Conflict Management”, “CPT Standards,” and “Practice of the European Court of Human Rights regarding Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights”.

## 8. RETURN

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Croatia:** On 13 July 2023, the Croatian Government [passed conclusions on the Memorandum of Understanding \(Action Plan\)](#) in the field of return between the Republic of Croatia and Frontex. For the implementation of return procedures, Frontex will deploy experts in Croatia for a period of six months to provide technical assistance with identification, as well as operational assistance in the implementation of voluntary and forced returns and promote voluntary returns.

**Finland:** On 28 August 2023, the Ministry of the Interior [set up a project to update the Decree on Assistance for Voluntary Return](#). The new Decree will enter into force on 1 January 2024. The aim is to stagger the assistance for voluntary return so that it encourages those who have been refused asylum to leave the country as quickly as possible and refrain from requesting a review of their asylum decision.

**Greece:** On 22 August 2023, a Joint Return Operation organised by Frontex took place, in which the Asylum Service and the Directorate of Returns and Withdrawals of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum participated. A total of 40 third-country nationals from Pakistan and ten from Georgia departed for their countries of origin via charter flights.

On 26 September 2023, a Joint Return Operation organised by Frontex took place, in which the Asylum Service and the Directorate of Returns and Withdrawals participated. A total of 40 third-country nationals from Pakistan and ten from Georgia departed for their countries of origin via charter flight.

During the reporting period, IOM Greece (through its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme) provided counselling to administratively detained third-country nationals against whom a return decision had been issued, in order to motivate them to depart. Out of 39 beneficiaries, two expressed they would voluntarily return to their country of origin. In addition, according to IOM Greece, during the reporting period, 579 third-country nationals also departed voluntarily for their country of origin. Furthermore, according to the data provided by the Hellenic Police, 818 forced returns were carried out during July, August, and

September. Finally, 188 third-country nationals also departed voluntarily to their country of origin according to Article 22 of L.3907/11.

There are no significant changes regarding the joint EU-Turkey statement, as the Turkish authorities are not accepting readmission operations up to the present day.

**Ireland:** On 2 August 2023, the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023 was [commenced](#), which introduced changes to deportation procedures. Now individuals who have been convicted of serious offences, or for whom the Minister has reasonable grounds to consider them a danger to the security of the State, can be deported without the option to leave the State voluntarily.

**Italy:** On 7 July 2023, an Evaluation Commission regarding Assisted Voluntary Returns was established to select the project that will be responsible for implementing the measure over the next three years.

On 10 August 2023, an explicit re-entry ban was included in the measures adopted by the Questore (police chief) concerning irregular foreigners at the time of their departure from the national territory.

**Netherlands:** Since 1 July 2023, migrants from Algeria, Belarus, Egypt, Lebanon, Mongolia, Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia can again [apply](#) for reintegration assistance. The Dutch government has given its approval to IOM in the Netherlands to extend voluntary return and reintegration support (AVRR) to migrants from these countries, which were temporarily excluded from the reintegration programme. Besides the logistical support of applying for new travel documents and booking a flight, migrants from the AVRR country list can benefit from reintegration assistance after return.

**Poland:** Since 1 September 2023, the Border Guard has been using assistance from Frontex for all types of returns (voluntary and forced). Support under the Frontex programme consists of covering the cost of the return ticket and reintegration assistance under the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS) project.

**Portugal:** During the reporting period, detention centres saw a decrease of migrants detained. On 4 September 2023, the JRS programme - which is dedicated to providing a variety of daily support measures, such as psychological, medical, vocational integration, and housing support to vulnerable migrants and applicants for international protection - began its daily social and psychological support, medical and legal programmes with the processing of 5 cases (Tunisia, Brazil, Gambia and Algeria).

**Spain:** On 18 July 2023, the Order of bases for the new call of grants for voluntary return has been approved, the [amount of the grant was increased](#) to €6 140 000, and the execution period covers from January to December 2024.

A new agreement with IOM has been signed for €1 700 000 for voluntary return programmes.

**Georgia:** Within the reporting period, the Migration Department of the MIA participated in four Collecting Return Operations (CROs) coordinated by Frontex. As a result, 233 Georgian citizens were safely returned from EU Member States. Moreover, on 19 September 2023, a CRO fully organized by Frontex, was successfully conducted and 35 citizens of Georgia returned to the country (14 voluntary returnees from France and 21 forced returnees from Spain).

Within the reporting period, expulsion decisions on 76 foreigners were issued and 52 foreigners left Georgia based on expulsion decisions.

## 9. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Finland:** On 13 September 2023, the Government announced it would prepare an action [plan to prevent and combat labour exploitation](#). The Government aims to tackle the exploitation of foreign labour with broad-based and effective measures. It has also been recognised that abuse must be identified and detected better and that the position of foreign workers must be improved by promoting their integration and social inclusion. Employers' social responsibility and awareness should also be increased.

**Greece:** On 11 July 2023, in Athens, the Office of the National Rapporteur on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (ONR) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, co-organised a workshop on strengthening the prevention of trafficking in human beings, with the participation of all relevant Ministries/Bodies. The workshop focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) and on the need to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows. The workshop aimed to inform policy makers and practitioners in the field to prevent the current humanitarian crisis from turning into a Human Trafficking crisis.

On 25 July 2023, an *on-line training* on the *National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings*, was organised by the Greek Asylum Service (GAS), targeting GAS case workers from Lesbos and Leros Regional Asylum Offices, aiming at providing information on the NRM operation, including its structure and objectives, the NRM SOPs, and its tools, such as the NRM Referral Form. The training session was delivered by the NRM management team in the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA).

On 29 August 2023, the final conference on the A4 project, “Crossing Borders for Effective Police Investigation to Protect Female Victims of Sex Trafficking and Enhance Accountability Mechanisms”, was organized by the Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA). The purpose of the conference was to provide an overview of the A4 project, the outcomes, and the way forward regarding the future policy landscape in the EU ([www.a4project.eu](http://www.a4project.eu)). The general objective of the A4 Project was to counter impunity for all actors involved in the trafficking in human beings, particularly women and girls for sexual exploitation, through enhancing Law Enforcement Agencies’ (LEAs) investigation capacities, from one of the major trafficking in human beings’ gateways to EU territory, as well as through the exchange of knowledge and improvement of cooperation among three European countries with a key common characteristic: low conviction rates for trafficking in human beings and other related offenses.

On 29 September, 2023, an on-line training on “The Role of the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking (NRM) in Promoting Intersectoral Cooperation among Agencies in the Process of Victim Identification and Protection” was conducted, in the context of the educational programme entitled “Educating and Informing Beneficiaries of International Protection and other Categories of Third-Country Nationals Legally Residing in Greece in Matters of Prevention of and The Combat Against Human Trafficking”, designed and organised by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The training session, delivered by the NRM management team in the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), was focused on the role of the NRM in a holistic provision of services to ensure victims’ support and protection.

On 11 July 2023, a training on the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) Reception of Vulnerable Persons (Part A) was delivered to 16 members of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum Reception and Identification Service (RIS) staff working in RIS reception and accommodation facilities.

On 29-30 August 2023, and 31 August and 1 September 2023, an IOM train-the-trainers training on gender-based violence was delivered to 33 competent Reception Identification Service (RIS) staff working in RIS HQs, but also in reception and accommodation facilities.

On 27–29 September 2023, three one-day consecutive IOM training sessions on gender-based violence were delivered to 41 staff members of RIS and EODY (the National Public Health Organization), who work in RIS reception and accommodation facilities.

**Ireland:** On 17 July 2023, the bill with the revised National Referral Mechanism for victims of human trafficking [was published](#), which among other things proposes to expand the number of bodies (competent authorities and NGOs as ‘trusted partners’) that can identify a victim beyond the national police.

On 13 September 2023 the Irish Human Rights and Equality Authority [published](#) its second evaluation of the implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive.

**Italy:** On 5 July 2023, the project “Migration as a Resource: Mobilisation of the Tunisian Diaspora and Stabilization of Disadvantaged Communities in Tunisia” (MOBI-TRE) was initiated. The project’s general objective is to strengthen the positive impact of the diaspora on Tunisia’s socioeconomic recovery, particularly in regions with high migration potential.

On 12 July 2023, a delegation from the IOM and 16 representatives from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger were host at the Department for Equal Opportunities to share experiences and best practices adopted by Italy in the fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

On 13 July 2023, the first meeting of the Technical Committee of the National Action Plan against Trafficking and Serious Exploitation of Human Beings for the years 2022-2025 took place at the Department for Equal Opportunities. Priorities for implementing the plan were decided, considering the evolution and trends of the phenomenon and emerging categories of vulnerability. It was also agreed to proceed with the update of the national referral mechanism.

**Malta:** The Working Group on Criminal Justice and Legislative Amendments convened on the 3 July, 2 August, 5 and 18 September 2023 in order to provide proposals to the GRETA recommendations and any possible legislative changes.

During July and August 2023, Human Rights Initiatives Unit (HRIU) continued to raise awareness through local media, articles on news portals and a series of designs for billboards and bus shelters installed around Malta & Gozo during the Blue Heart Campaign.

Moreover, collaboration was established with UN’s the FAST Project during the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit (FIAU) Roundtable and the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) and Dar Hosea on the prevention of sexual exploitation.

On 24 – 29 September 2023, the HRIU and Attorney General’s office also attended the Council of Europe’s regional simulation entitled “Referral of victims of trafficking in human beings: towards a victim-centred approach in criminal proceedings” which was held in Spain.

**Poland:** On 26 September 2023, the Polish Prime Minister signed a new Ordinance on the [establishment the Inter-ministerial Team for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings](#).

The establishment of the inter-ministerial team as a supporting body of the Prime Minister is a response to the growing need to increase the effectiveness of actions taken by the government in the area of counteracting trafficking in human beings.

The task of the inter-ministerial team will be to strengthen and improve the current system for combatting the crime of trafficking in human beings and protecting and supporting victims, expanding the possibilities of joint action and intensifying work in the above-mentioned areas, in particular in the situation related to the displacement crisis caused by Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine.

On 20-22 September 2023, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration and the Police Headquarters organised a conference and workshops for coordinators and members of anti-human trafficking teams at provincial police headquarters.

**Portugal:** Between 6-8 September 2023, a Training Action was held, aimed at health professionals, in particular for the Focal Points for Vulnerable Communities, Teams for the Prevention of Violence in Adults (EPVA), Support Centres for Children and Young People at Risk (NACJR). This training was given by the Ministry of Health, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings and Family Planning Association.

On 29 September 2023, the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings (OTSH) began the Action Training for Regional Health Administrations on the “[National Referral Mechanism for Children \(presumed\) Victims of Human Trafficking](#)”. This initiative is the result of a joint effort between the OTSH and the General Directorate



of Health and aims to increase the knowledge of health professionals, improve their training in detecting suspected victims of trafficking and strengthening the protection of children.

**Slovenia:** On 12 July 2023, an [amendment to the Crime Victims Compensation Act entered into force](#), which now extends the right to compensation for victims of crime to citizens of third countries. The amendment to the law eliminates the formal condition of citizenship of Slovenia or another EU member state for obtaining compensation under this law and provides for obtaining compensation from the state scheme regardless of the victim's citizenship.

**Spain:** In order to stop and prevent human trafficking, The Directorate General of Humanitarian Attention and Social Inclusion of Immigration carried out various actions, including the following:

- On 28 July 2023, the protocol on vulnerabilities in the context of Humanitarian Attention was approved.
- On 28 September 2023, the final version of the operational Protocol for the prevention and response to violence against women was presented in Madrid.
- Specific materials on the topic of Human Trafficking were approved within the Framework of the information provision protocol.
- Contributions to the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023) were issued by the Directorate General.
- Contributions to the draft report issued by GRETA regarding its last round of evaluation on the topic of trafficking in human beings were issued by the Directorate General.
- The economic quantification of measures adopted under the State Pact against Gender Violence 2018-2022 and forecasts for 2023 was confirmed.
- The Directorate General contributed to the Institutional Declaration on the International Day against Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Children.
- Contributions to the report of the Group of Experts on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) was issued by the Directorate General.
- Contributions on the situation and approach to trafficking from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration for the 2nd International Congress on Human Trafficking with Strategies to Abolish Sexual Exploitation was issued by the Directorate General.

**Sweden:** On 31 August 2023, the Swedish Migration Agency announced its increased efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. A new structure was implemented to ensure that case officers can identify and prove suspected cases. Further training was also planned in September, applying the 'train the trainer' model to increase the level of knowledge among case officers.

**Georgia:** On 28-29 July 2023, Ministry of Justice of Georgia as the chair of the Interagency Coordination Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings within the EU funded project ([STREAMinG](#)) [organised a training](#) on trafficking in human beings for employees (28 staff members in total) of the Agency for State Care and Assistance for (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.

In July-August 2023, a series of trainings were also conducted for the employees (45 staff members in total) of the Public Service Development Agency on trafficking in human beings.

**Republic of Serbia:** On 14 August 2023, a working group for was developed. The main task of the working group is preparation of the text of the proposal for a policy document in the field of combatting human trafficking.

## 10. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Czech Republic:** On 16 August 2023, the Czech Government approved three financial donations provided within the framework of the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism. Firstly, a project of the Maltese Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality implemented in Libya will be supported with € 1 million. Secondly, reintegration of returnees in Senegal will be supported with € 1 million and finally, the construction of an accommodation centre for unaccompanied minors in Cyprus will be supported with € 500 000.

**Finland:** On 1 September 2023, [Finland's Embassy in Moscow](#) took on the duties for consular and immigration matters previously handled in St Petersburg. From that date onwards, the Embassy in Moscow was responsible for all passport and notarial services and deal with all cases of Finnish nationals needing help in Russia.

**Italy:** On 25 July 2023, a [ratification agreement was signed between Italy and Moldova](#), ensuring the portability of pensions and benefits for workplace injuries and occupational illnesses. The two countries commit to providing legal certainty in protecting rights related to work activities under conditions of reciprocity and the transferability of pension benefits for all citizens who have worked or are currently working in Italy or the Republic of Moldova. As of 1 January 2022, there were 113 579 Moldovan citizens legally residing in Italy. The Moldovan community has a higher average age than the overall non-EU population. Currently, 5.9% of non-EU old-age pension recipients in Italy have Moldovan citizenship.

Within the scope of international cooperation on migration matters, the Central Directorate of Immigration and Border Police continues to implement the following projects funded by the European Union:

- SIBMMIL (Support to Integrated Border and Migration Management in Libya)
- Border Programme for the Maghreb Region – Tunisia Component
- ITEPA (International Training at Egyptian Police Academy)
- CIVIT (Strengthening the Operational Capacities of Ivorian Authorities Responsible for Border and Migration Management) where preliminary activities are ongoing to identify sites for the construction of four border posts.

From 24 July to 21 September 2023, a mission of two experts from the Turkish Ministry of the Interior took place in Italy under the bilateral cooperation agreement with Turkey.

**Luxembourg:** On 17 July 2023, the Minister of Cooperation and Humanitarian Action of Luxembourg and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion of Costa Rica, [signed a Framework Cooperation Agreement between Luxembourg and the Costa Rica](#). This agreement formalises the development cooperation relations between the two countries and determines the framework for the activities and presence of Luxembourg Cooperation in Costa Rica. At the level of bilateral cooperation between Costa Rica and Luxembourg, the formulation of projects aimed at supporting migration management and the socio-economic inclusion of migrants, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as well as the digital transformation of Costa Rica, is underway.

**Georgia:** On 27 July 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the launch of two annual grant programmes: 1) "[Support for Diaspora Initiatives](#)" and 2) "[Supporting Georgian Dancing and Singing Groups Abroad](#)". The aim of these programmes is to deepen the Georgian Diaspora's links with their homeland and to popularise Georgia and its culture abroad, also carry out measures to support the country's European integration and upholding its national interests.

### UPDATES ON EU LEGISLATION TRANSPOSITION

**Czech Republic:** On 1 July 2023, a new amendment to the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals came into force. This amendment transposes the EU Blue Card Directive 2021/1883 into the national legislation.

On 7 July 2023, an amendment to the Asylum Act came into force. This amendment includes an improvement in the transposition of the so-called Qualification Directive (Cat.11), Directive 2011/95/EU.

**Finland:** On 8 August 2023, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment requested comments on the draft government [proposal for transposing the new Blue Card](#) rules into Finnish law. The Commission revised the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment, known as the Blue Card Directive, in October 2021.

**Italy:** On 10 August 2023, a new law containing "Urgent Provisions for the Implementation of Obligations Arising from Acts of the European Union and Ongoing Infringement and Pre-Infringement Procedures against the Italian State" was published, in compliance with Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. When more favourable, the law extended the applicability of provisions to non-Italian family members of Italian citizens who have exercised their right to free movement within the European Union. These individuals may be issued an EU family residence card. Conversely, foreign family members of Italian citizens who have not exercised the right to free movement will be granted a national residence permit for family reasons.

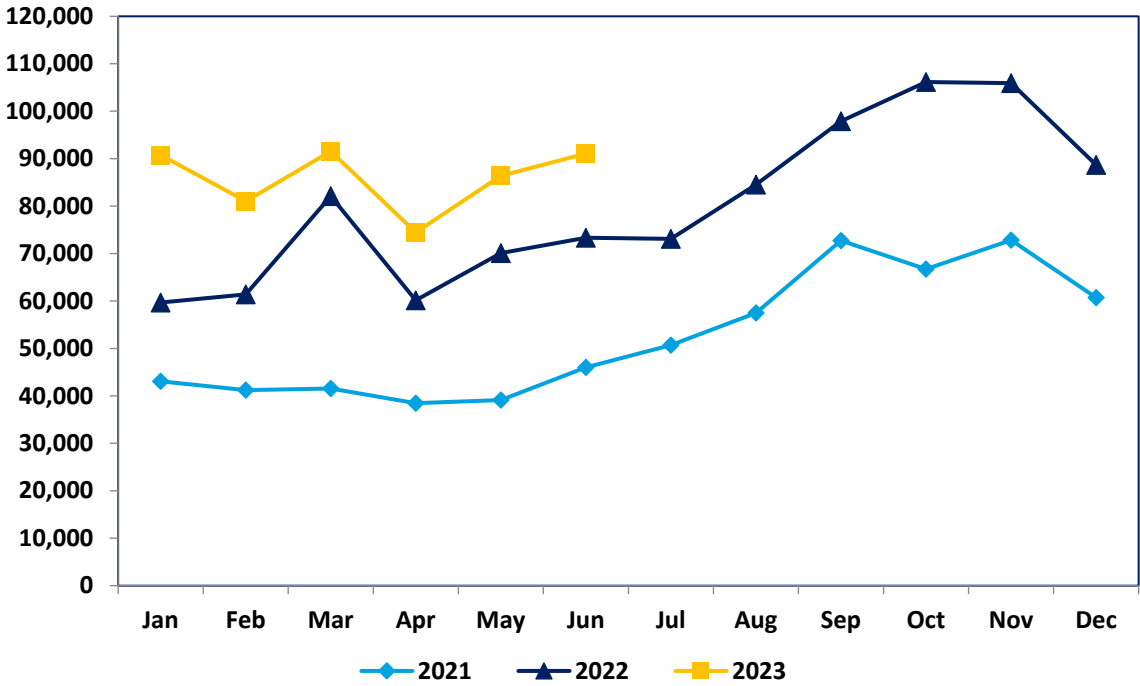
**Latvia:** On 1 July 2023 [Amendments to the Immigration Law](#) came into force which transposes the [Blue Card Directive \(EU\) 2021/1883](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC.

**Luxembourg:** On 1 September 2023, legal amendments regarding the national labour code, free movement of people and immigration, and the reception of applicants for international protection and temporary protection [entered into force](#). The law provides that the travel authorisation for visa-exempt third-country nationals now constitutes a mandatory precondition for entry into the territory of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2018/1240.

**Portugal:** On 31 August 2023, Law n.º 53/23 [transposed the Blue Card Directive](#) (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment.

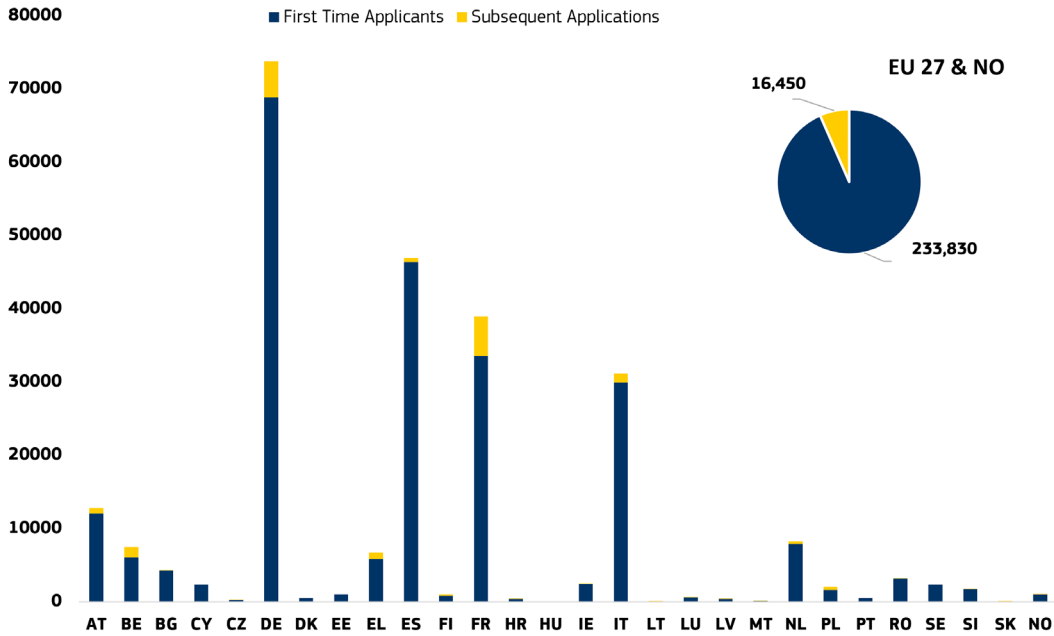
## 11. ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, January – June 2023



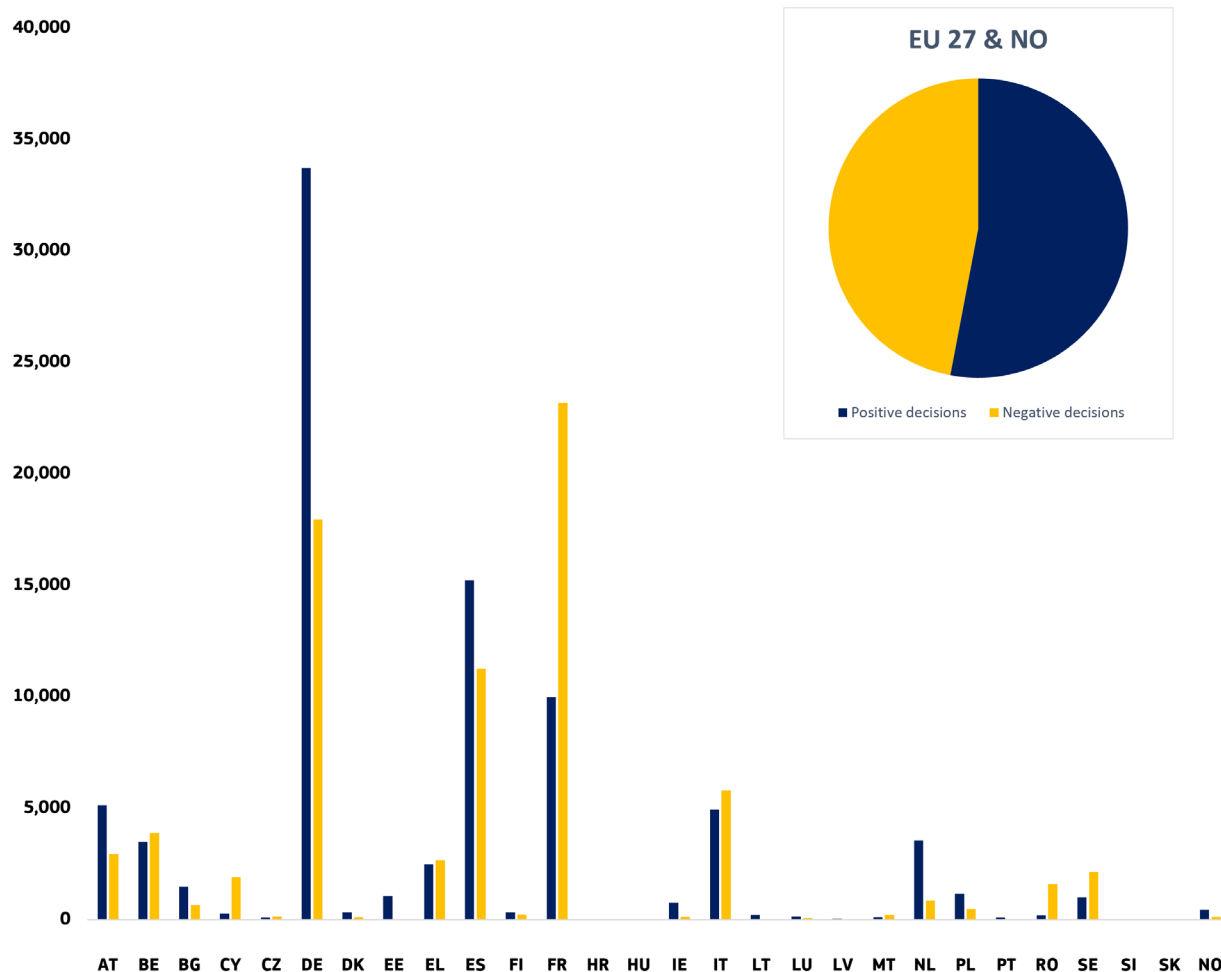
Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 25 October 2023.

Figure 2: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-27 and Norway, Q2 2023 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 25 October 2023.

Figure 3: First instance asylum decisions in EU-27 and Norway for non-EU citizens, Q2 2023



Source: Eurostat [[miqr\\_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 25 October 2023.

## EMN National Contact Points: National Events and Publications

### Recent National EMN conferences:

- **Austria:** On 26 September the EMN Austria National Conference 2023 titled “[Opportunities and Challenges in the Management of EU’s External Borders](#)” took place in Vienna. More than 20 speakers presented the status quo as well as recent policy and legal developments on the EU’s external borders. The conference provided room for discussion on the effective and humanitarian protection of the EU’s external borders, shortcomings of the Schengen system, sustainable solutions for maritime borders and preventing the “instrumentalization of migration”.
- **Estonia:** In July 2023, the [Migration statistics booklet](#) 2018-2022 was published in Estonian, English and Russian, giving an infographic overview of all relevant migration related trends in Estonia.
- **Malta:** On 12 July 2023, the EMN Stakeholders’ Capacity Building Event took place. This capacity building event was intended to be an informal but informative meeting targeted at officials within the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality and other stakeholders whose collaboration is crucial. The aim was to present the current migration scenario as well as basic migration practices to new officials who may have little background knowledge on migration

matters. Practical information and practices were shared by experts who have worked closely in migration.

- **Slovakia:** On 3-5 July 2023, EMN Slovakia held its 9<sup>th</sup> EMN Educational Seminar on Migration entitled the Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations. Speakers shared their valuable insights and unveiled the realities of migrants and their vulnerabilities, explored the impact of passports on global mobility and opportunities, while unpacking the phenomenon of migrant caravans. Furthermore, the experts discussed modern slavery, its legal implications, and effective protection measures for victims of human trafficking. The Seminar brought together over 110 speakers and participants from 23 countries. Lectures from the seminar are available as podcasts on the [EMN Slovakia Podcasts](#) channel and the presentations are available on the [seminar website](#). See also the short [showreel](#) from the seminar.
- **Finland:** On 10 November 2023, EMN Finland organised its annual national conference. The title of conference was “Children in migration – Assessing the best interests of the child in migration processes.” The aim of the conference was to promote dialogue between different actors and to find new perspectives on how to develop the assessment of the best interests of the child in migration processes. [Read more.](#)
- **France:** On 8 November 2023, EMN France held its annual conference in Paris, on “Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes in France and the EU”. Bringing together various national and European stakeholders, the conference addressed resettlement programmes, legal complementary pathways, and the integration of resettled refugees.
- **Republic of Serbia:** On 8 December 2023, EMN Serbia held its first EMN National Conference entitled “Circular Migration schemes and initiatives for diaspora moving back home: supporting economic development in countries of origin.” The Conference was a one-day event in hybrid format, held in Belgrade.