

SWEDEN

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



OVERARCHING CHANGES

In 2020, migration to and from Sweden was strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many public and private actors active in the area of migration having to adapt their tasks and activities as a result. Overall, the number of people coming to Sweden as legal migrants decreased substantially, as did the number of asylum seekers. Return procedures were also affected.

The cross-party parliamentary committee on Sweden's future migration policy appointed by the government in 2019 presented its [proposals](#) in September 2020. If adopted by parliament, the proposals are likely to affect both legal migration and the asylum system, including: (1) duration (period of validity) of residence permits granted for protection reasons (refugee status, subsidiary protection) and other reasons (e.g. family reunification, family formation, humanitarian reasons); (2) conditions and requirements for permanent residence permits (e.g. language and financial support requirements); (3) conditions and requirements for granting residence permits for humanitarian reasons; (4) conditions for family reunification and family formation, including financial support requirements for family-related immigration; (5) legal and safe pathways to Sweden; (6) legal certainty in the asylum process. Much of the public debate and policy-making in Sweden in 2020 centred around the work of this committee.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) entered into force as a national law in Sweden.

KEY POINTS



Migration in Sweden was strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many public and private migration actors forced to adapt their tasks and activities in light of the pandemic.



The cross-party parliamentary committee on Sweden's future migration policy appointed by the government in 2019 presented its proposals in September 2020.



New regulations on the reception system for asylum seekers entered into force, with the aim of preventing asylum applicants from moving to areas with socioeconomic challenges.

The Swedish Migration Agency took over some migration-related tasks at Swedish missions abroad. These tasks were previously under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

In February 2020, the government appointed an [inquiry](#) to review important parts of the Swedish labour migration system. The inquiry is expected to propose a new type of residence permit for highly skilled third-country nationals seeking employment or to start a business in Sweden. It is also expected to present legislation to solve the issue of labour migrants being

expelled for minor deviations from work permit requirements, and to propose measures to prevent system abuses and exploitation of workers.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

In January 2020, new [legislation](#) on residence permits for study purposes, research, training, voluntary service and au pairs transposed EU Directive 2016/801 and addressed national policy priorities. The overall purpose of the legislation was to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and competence to Sweden and reinforce the country's attractiveness as a destination for foreign researchers, students and other highly qualified people. On completing their studies, foreign students may now remain in Sweden for up to 12 months to look for job or business opportunities.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

As mentioned above, the cross-party committee of inquiry on migration finalised its work in September 2020. Its [proposals](#) included new rules for family reunification and family formation. It also proposed that residence permits issued for family reasons should initially be temporary and to impose a financial support (maintenance) requirement.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

New regulations on the reception system for asylum seekers entered into force on 1 January 2020. The new rules aimed to prevent asylum seekers from moving to areas with socioeconomic challenges.

In December 2020, the government submitted a [legislative proposal](#) to parliament on the safe country of origin concept, seeking to authorise the Swedish Migration Agency to decide on a list of safe countries of origin in 2021.

To maintain the functioning of the asylum system during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Swedish Migration Agency introduced more flexible approaches for asylum interviews and meetings with applicants. It enhanced and widened the use of digital/electronic tools, including the digital transfer of case files between the Agency and the migration courts and the analysis of an asylum seeker's language/dialect if this is needed to help establish where they come from.

The Swedish Migration Agency tightened the quality requirements for legal counsels for asylum seekers.

Sweden pledged 5 000 places under the EU resettlement framework but resettled only around 3 600 refugees, due to COVID-19. Still, this was one of

the highest figures in Europe and worldwide. Those refugees who were selected but not transferred in 2020 will be included in the 2021 resettlement quota. Sweden did not participate in any intra-EU relocation initiatives.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Developments included improved information for minors, including unaccompanied minors, on the asylum process. For example, the Migration Agency developed an app for this particular target group.



INTEGRATION

OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS

A new [website](#) was launched to provide relevant information to newcomers, including material on civic orientation courses for newly arrived immigrants. The website is funded by the government and run by the County Administrative Boards.

The government instructed the Swedish Migration Agency to prepare the introduction of mandatory civic orientation sessions for asylum seekers.

It also decided to continue, extend or change a number of initiatives for labour market integration of newly arrived beneficiaries of protection and other migrants in Sweden.

INTEGRATION OF ADULTS

The government launched a new Swedish language training initiative for newly arrived, non-working parents of small children, including those on parental leave. It also introduced a one-year targeted grant for municipalities with relatively high refugee intake and launched an 'intensive introduction year' for newly arrived immigrants, as part of the existing induction programme. The 'intensive introduction year' includes intensive language tuition and vocational measures, and targets jobs for participants within one year.

To mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment of newly arrived migrants and beneficiaries of protection, the government extended the maximum period for state-subsidised labour market programmes (employment support, extra jobs, introductory jobs, new start jobs) from two to three years.



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

A government-appointed [inquiry on citizenship](#) was undertaken in 2020. It looked at the possible introduction of Swedish language tests and basic knowledge of Swedish society as requirements to acquire citizenship.

A minor amendment to the [Law on Swedish Citizenship](#) entered into force on 1 December 2020 to ensure that UK citizens enjoying certain rights under the Withdrawal Agreement could fulfil the conditions to acquire Swedish citizenship after the transition period.

STATELESSNESS

The government engaged in dialogue with the responsible national agencies to discuss challenges in respect of the registration of statelessness, nationality and 'unknown' nationality, and to limit inconsistencies.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the government restricted non-essential travel to Sweden across an external border from countries outside the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA), except Switzerland and certain other countries. Technical implementation processes continued or were launched in 2020, including the European Entry-Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS).

SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

The government reintroduced internal border controls until 11 May 2021.

Amendments to the Swedish Aliens Act and the national law on the Schengen Information System (SIS) entered into force. Aliens at an entry or exit check at the border or an internal check within the country are now obliged to accept being photographed and fingerprinted so that they can be identified in the SIS.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

In December 2020, the government submitted a [legislative proposal](#) to parliament on the safe country of origin concept, proposing that the Swedish Migration Agency be authorised to decide on a list of safe countries of origin. The legislation is proposed to enter into force in May 2021.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

No significant developments in 2020.



RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Several measures were taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on returns. The Swedish Migration Agency reimbursed returnees for certain costs incurred, such as COVID-19 tests and quarantine costs in the country of destination. Pre-departure COVID-19 tests were made available to facilitate returns to countries requiring a recent test.

The Swedish Migration Agency temporarily reduced the number of detention places from 520 to just under 300 to adapt detention facilities to the COVID-19 rules imposed by the Swedish Public Health Agency. Third-country nationals were not detained if their return decision was considered unenforceable in the near future.

The government tasked the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Migration Agency with analysing factors preventing the enforcement of refusal of entry/return decisions, and the two authorities are expected to propose measures to overcome these barriers. The task also included analysis of the exchange of data and information (e.g. on returnees) between the two authorities. The government tasked the Swedish Agency for Public Management to analyse how the Swedish Migration Agency, the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service can improve their effectiveness in respect of returns.

The Swedish Migration Agency, in cooperation with the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), developed a pilot project, '[Sustainable Reintegration in Afghanistan](#)' (ERRIN-SRA). The project aims to improve long-term opportunities for reintegration of Afghan citizens returning from Europe.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Sweden continued to be active in the area of migration and development cooperation. It also facilitated and supported actions within the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, ethical recruitment of workers, and remittances. However, there were no major legal developments or policy shifts.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

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

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



GENERAL NOTES

This four-page statistical annex complements the Country Factsheet with relevant migration-related data organised in up to nine thematic sections – depending on data availability. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators. Whenever data are not available, the relative chart is left blank or indicated with 'N/A'. Data are provided for the latest available year or the latest available four-year period. For some indicators, data are rounded in the source. The sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value. This is due to rounding and confidence intervals in the original data. A How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available on the EMN website.



COLOUR LEGEND

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



data relative to Sweden



data relative to EU



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

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

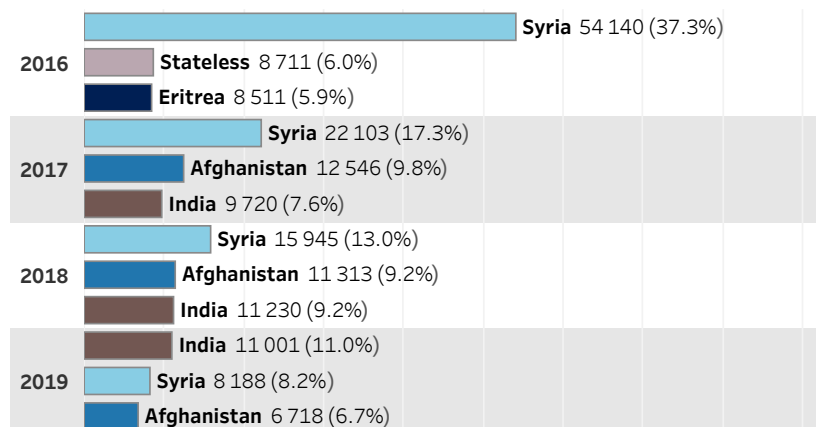
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Number of TCNs



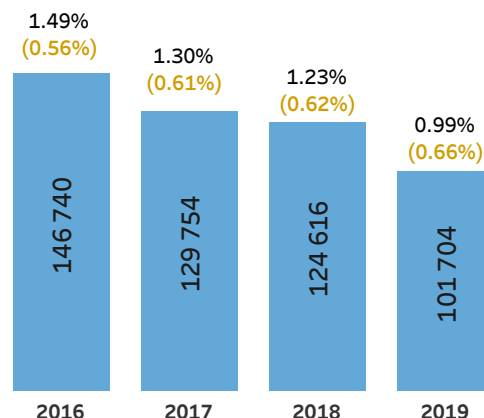
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



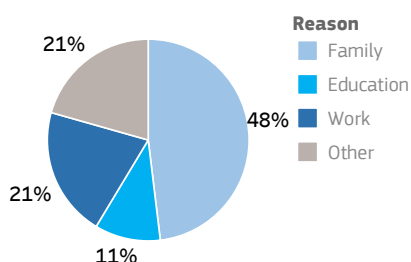
First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



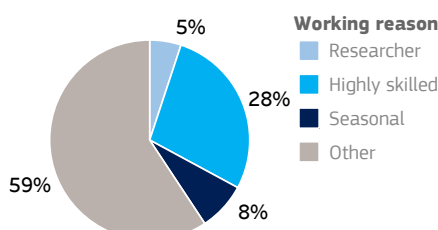
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



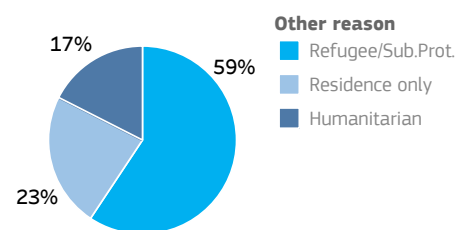
First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resocc)



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

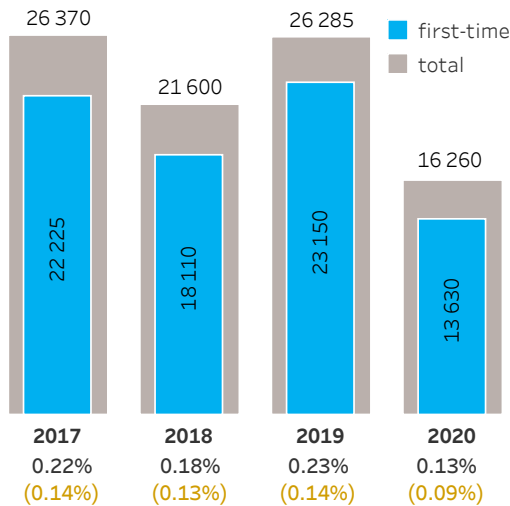
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)



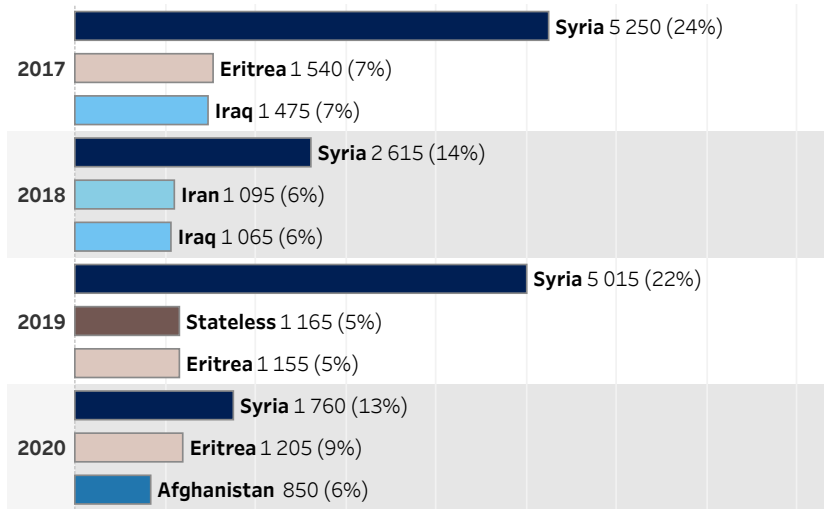


INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

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

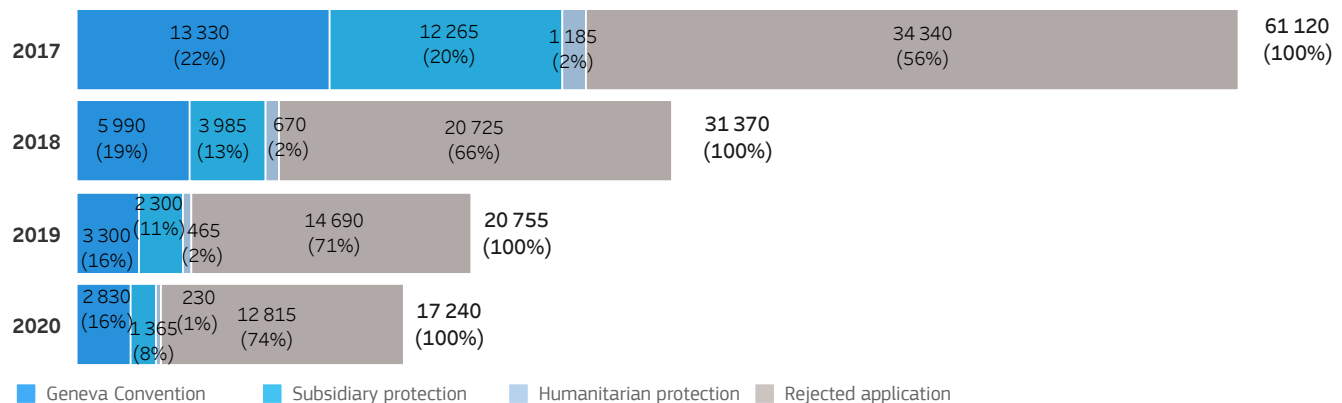


Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)



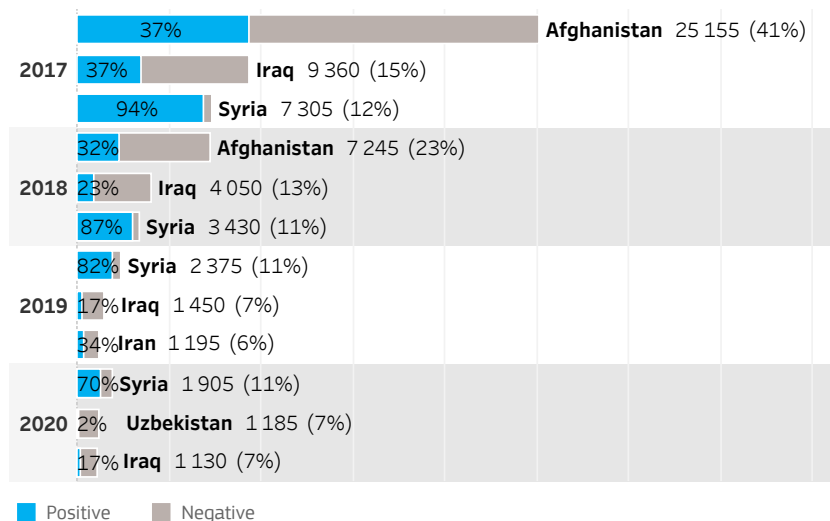
Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



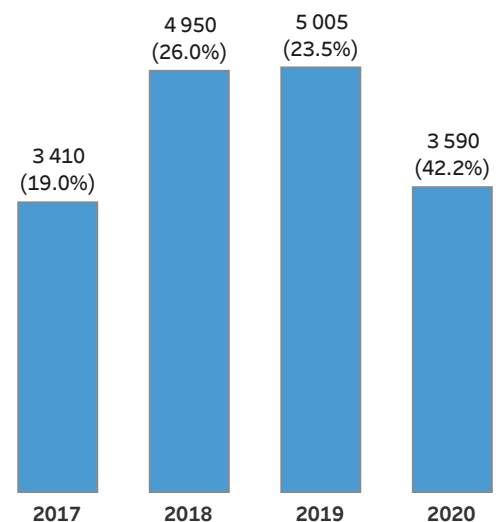
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

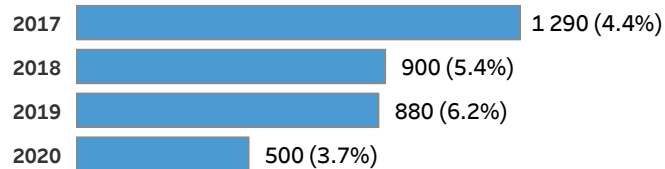




UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

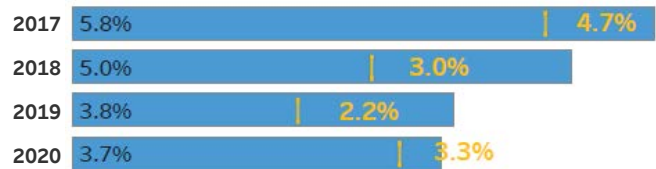
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



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

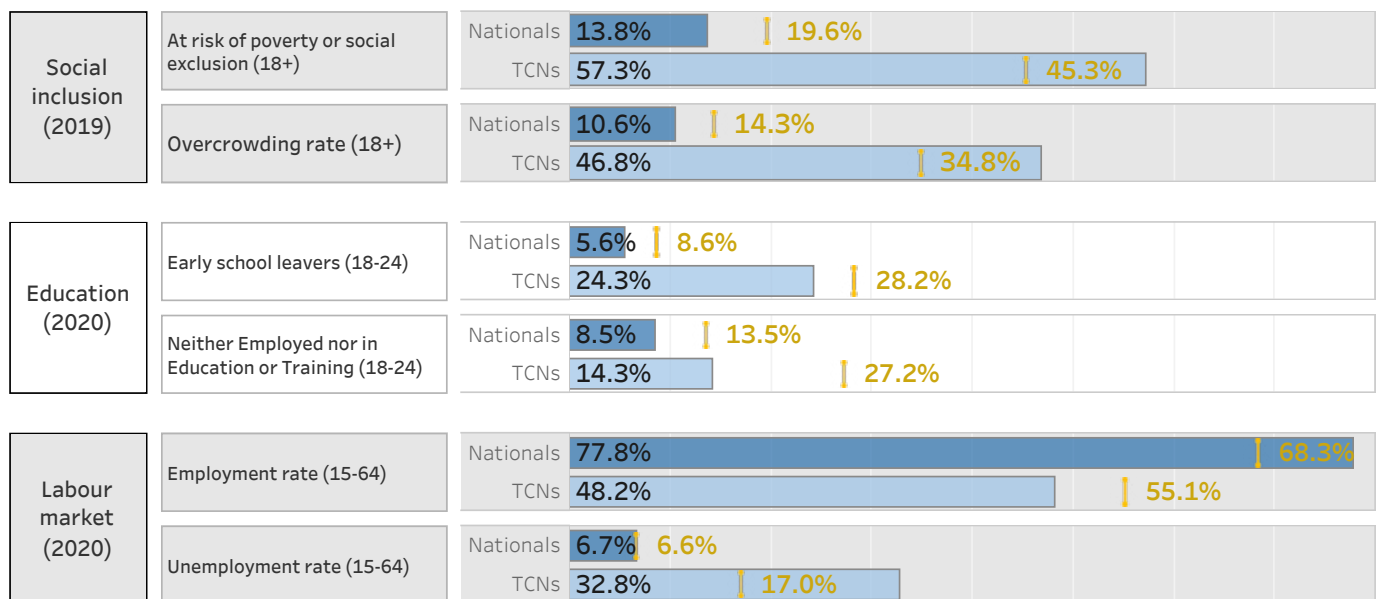
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



INTEGRATION

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

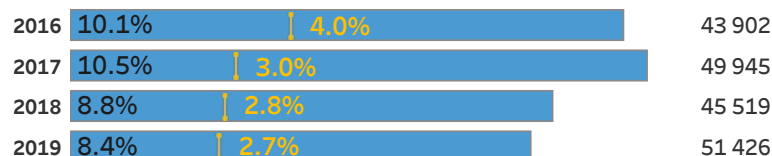
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc_peps05, ilc_lvho15, edat_lfse_01, edat_lfse_23, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_urgan)



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

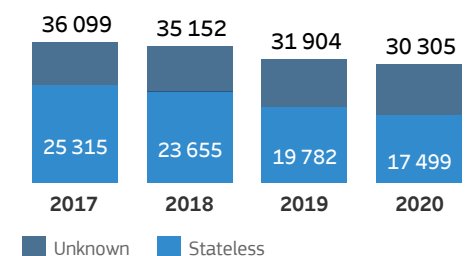
Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acqs, migr_acq)



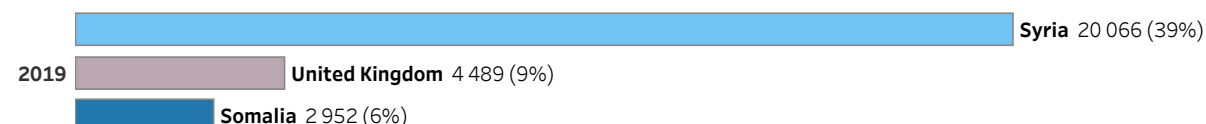
Stateless, unknown citizens and recognised non-citizens (RNC) - where present

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctza)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acq)

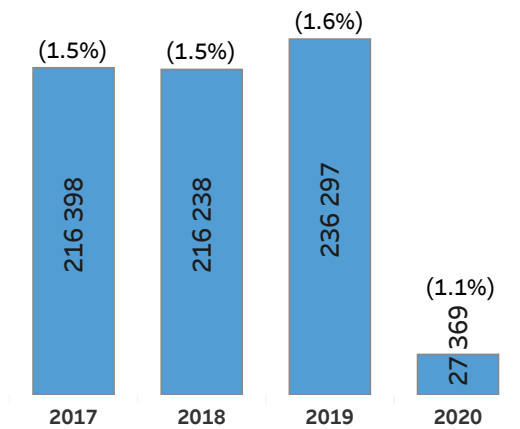




BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

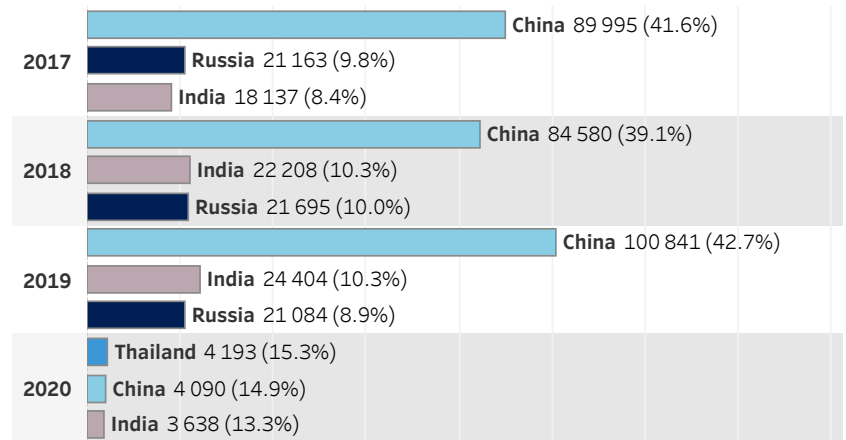
Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



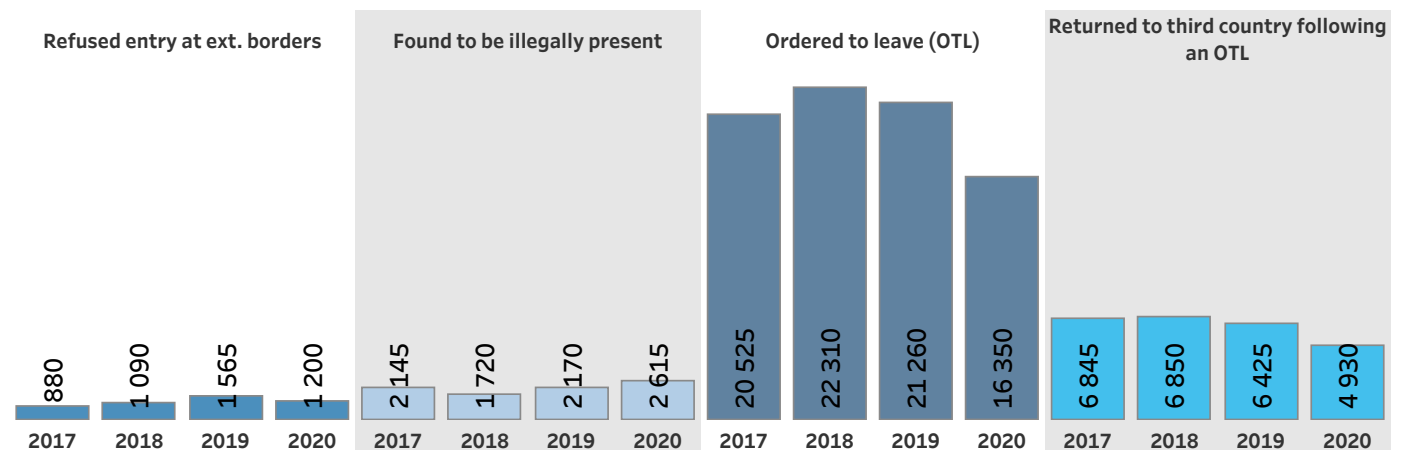
Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



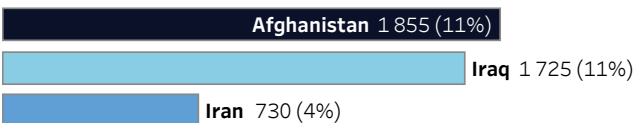
IRREGULAR MIGRATION

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



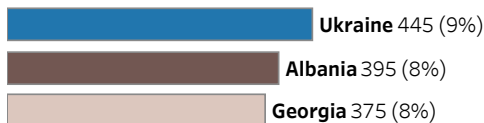
Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country, 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eiord)



Top 3 nationalities returned to third countries, 2020

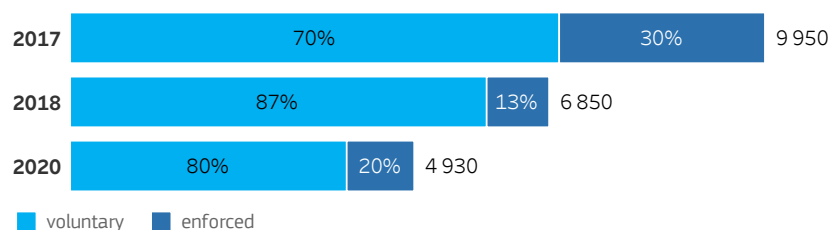
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirtn)



RETURN AND READMISSION

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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirt_vol)



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

