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GREECE 2021

Main developments in migration
and international protection,
including latest statistics

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

August 2022



OVERARCHING CHANGES

The implementation of the new Organization of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Presidential Decree 106/2020) began in January 2021, with the aim to address needs in the fields of migration and asylum and coordinate all services for an improved application of the legislation.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum undertook several legislative and operational initiatives. These included: a) implementing policy responses to overcome challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, b) implementing *ad hoc* provisions related to the rejection of applications of residence permits and effective returns, c) adopting measures to facilitate residence permit applications through the extensive use of new technologies and d) setting out temporary arrangements to cover the labour market needs on temporary/seasonal workers, during the COVID-19 period. In 2021, a series of initiatives were prepared in legal migration: innovative procedures for the admission of temporary workers; the necessary actions for the transposition of Directive 1883/2021/EU 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.

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

An amendment of national provisions on employment of seasonal workers in the agricultural sector was

KEY POINTS



Implementation of the new Organization of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Presidential Decree 106/2020, Government Gazette A' 255/ 23-12-2020).



Issuance of the Law 4825/2021 (Government Gazette A' 157/4-9-2021) "Reform of deportation and return procedures of third-country nationals, attracting investors and digital nomads, issues of residence permits and procedures for granting international protection, provisions of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Ministry of Citizen Protection and other urgent provisions."



Issuance of the National Strategy for Integration for Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection which includes four main pillars: (a) Pre-integration of asylum seekers (b) Social inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection - promotion of European way of life, (c) Prevention and effective protection against all forms of violence; exploitation and abuse by strengthening reporting mechanisms and (d) Monitoring and supervising the accession process through public indicators.

introduced, by [Law 4825/2021](#). More specifically, the amendments provides for: a) granting an extension of the working time period to nine months in any 12-month period during which an employer is allowed to hire seasonal workers, and b) establishing an authorisation, which allows seasonal workers to stay and be employed

for up to five years, depending on the application of the employer.

A [Joint Ministerial Decision \(5269/139\)](#) was issued for the determination of the maximum number of paid employment posts offered to third-country nationals for the years 2021-2022, per region and speciality, according to specific criteria and procedure defined in the law. This includes the posts offered for seasonal employment, hiring of fishermen and highly qualified employment.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

A new provision was introduced by [Law 4825/2021](#), according to which third-country nationals who enter and reside in Greece as digital nomads, on the basis of certain preconditions, may be accompanied by their family members who are granted a national visa/residence permit for family reunification, expiring simultaneously with the national visa/residence permit of the sponsors.

OTHER MEASURES

Several key developments included:

- A new codification of national migration law started in 2020 and is expected to be finalised by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum within 2022.
- [Law 4825/2021](#) introduces amendments regulating issues that arise during the implementation of the return process of third-country nationals residing illegally. The aim is to reform the current process for granting a voluntary departure deadline by reducing the time-period, limiting the provisions concerning the extension of the relevant deadline, as well as introducing a provision rejecting any notification granting a period for voluntary return if there is a risk of absconding or if the third country national is considered to be a threat to public safety, public order or national security. Moreover, amendments addressing gaps related to the delays in delivering the rejection notices, withdrawals of residence permits or administrative appeals were introduced. The new provisions also set out the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the process of withdrawal or rejection decisions.
- Provisions for safeguarding the legal stay of third-country nationals were introduced (extension of the validity of their residence permits, as well as for deadlines for applications).
- A new IT process was established allowing electronic submission of applications for the renewal of residence permits of third-country nationals, as well as for first applications of residence permits for exceptional reasons.
- Several emergency measures were taken by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included: facilitating the entry of temporary workers in the agricultural sector under strict health and security conditions, introducing public health measures for migration authorities like the temporary closure of migration authorities during specific periods of time, and requiring that all documentation for residence permits should now be introduced by e-mail or by post to facilitate the work of the migration authorities and reduce the physical

presence. Additionally, there was a reshuffling of the competent authorities granting residence permits for investment reasons.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Provisions were adopted in accordance to the Corrigendum to Directive 2016/801, according to article 15 of [Law 4825/2021](#).

The [Joint Ministerial Decision 171509/9.8.21](#) was issued which established which documents third-country nationals who have been granted a residence permit for the purpose of job-searching or entrepreneurship for researchers and students needed to submit.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Two main developments took place. First, [Law 4825/2021](#): “Reform of deportation and return procedures of third country nationals, attracting investors and digital nomads, issues of residence permits and procedures for granting international protection, provisions of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Ministry of Citizen Protection and other urgent provisions”, was passed. Second, multi-purpose reception and identification centers (Closed Controlled Access Centers) were opened to ensure the decent living conditions of the resident population and the proper implementation of the necessary reception and identification procedures. The new centers were created with adequate infrastructure procedures, which will contribute to the full coverage of the needs of the residents.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Reception and Identification Service (RIS), in collaboration with the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors (SSPUAMs), established an Emergency Referral Mechanism for minors living in precarious situations. The service also created emergency shelters so that each child is visible to the national authorities and within the protection system.

MIGRANT WOMEN, REFUGEE WOMEN AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.

The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDFPGE) continued to operate the Protocol of Cooperation on joint actions to protect asylum-seeking women, refugee women and their children, victims of gender-based violence or multiple discrimination. The GSDFPGE's scope was to coordinate all competent authorities through the National Network of Structures for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women (43 Counselling Centres, 19 Shelters, and a 24h helpline).

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The GSDFPGE and UNICEF conducted a study on “Programmatic Review of Services available and accessible

to children in the shelters of the Network of the General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality". The objective was to map the special needs of children that were hosted with their mothers in the Network of Structures Against Gender-Based Violence and Multiple Discrimination. Furthermore, in cooperation with UNHCR, GSDFPGE formed the Gender-Based Violence Working Group, which served as a forum for discussion and information-sharing aimed, *inter alia*, at coordinating and strengthening the actions of stakeholders active in preventing and responding to gender-based violence against refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons (including victims of trafficking in human beings and members of LGBTQI+ community). EASO has supported RIS with the appointment of Vulnerability Experts deployed both at the central service and at the regional services in the field (border and mainland locations).



INTEGRATION

NATIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGY

Published in 2021, the National Strategy for Integration for Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection was designed by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to be implemented in cooperation with various agencies and services at the central, regional, and local level. It includes four main pillars: (a) Pre-integration of asylum seekers, (b) Social inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection -Promotion of European way of life, (c) Prevention and effective protection against all forms of violence; exploitation and abuse by strengthening reporting mechanisms, and (d) Monitoring and supervising the accession process through the public acceptable and comparable indicators.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS/ LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS

The 2nd pillar of the National Strategy for Integration is entitled: "Social inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection through the development of intensive education and training programs to facilitate beneficiaries' access to the labour market - Promoting the European way of life". The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the National Kapodistrian University of Athens signed a Memorandum of Cooperation for the drafting of an educational manual, which will provide the opportunity to develop the basic language and communication skills in Greek (and English) of third-country nationals and will be used for the needs and the goals of the National Strategy for Integration. Furthermore, programmes and actions to inform third-country nationals were developed about: a) the role of the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) and the relevant services that it provides, b) the social security system in Greece, and c) the channels and ways to seek for job.

FIGHTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

One of the four main pillars of the National Strategy for Integration provided for tackling racism and discrimination. The pillar is entitled: "Prevention and effective protection against all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse by strengthening reporting mechanisms". The pillar

contains certain general objectives and goals, subdivided into specific actions.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS AND RECEIVING SOCIETIES IN INTEGRATION

The National Strategy for Integration was based on the principle that social inclusion was achieved through a "two-way integration process", which presupposed the cooperation, dialogue and engagement of all relevant actors at all integration stages.

INVOLVEMENT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The implementation of the National Strategy involved cooperation among multiple stakeholders, both at government and non-government level. The following paragraphs lay out the cooperation. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) approved the job profile of the "Intercultural Mediator", which was developed by the Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in collaboration with social partners and other specialised bodies. Through the Project "Strengthening intercultural mediation services in Community Centres and Migrant Integration Centres", which was financed by ESF, 34 persons were trained as intercultural mediators and placed in municipalities and regions of the country.

In October 2021, the Ministry of Migration & Asylum and the Office of the UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the implementation of pre-integration and integration initiatives concerning applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection in the areas of enabling integration through investment in refugee talent, and monitoring of integration.

The Greek National Academic Recognition Information Centre (DOATAP), as well as the International Hellenic University participated in the consortium of experts on the recognition, admission and inclusion of refugees into higher education, in the framework of ARENA (Refugees and Recognition -Toolkit 3) ERASMUS+ supported project.

Non-profit organizations joined the National Vaccination Program against COVID-19 for vaccination of vulnerable groups with their mobile medical units and/or their office/facility.

PRE-DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL PROGRAMMES

The first pillar of the National Strategy for Integration was entitled: "Pre-integration of asylum seekers" and contained certain general objectives for the smooth transition of adults into working life and of minors into formal education.

BASIC SERVICES

The National Strategy for Integration referred to the social integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection through their access to basic services (such as access to basic information, access to health services and access to housing). In this framework, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to implement the programme

«Mixed supported living houses». This targeted persons with disabilities over 18 years old (both beneficiaries of international protection and Greek citizens).

The Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on issues related to the independent living of recognised refugees in Greece



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

In 2021, Law 4735/2020, came into force and established a written examination for applicants who wish to acquire Greek citizenship by naturalisation, paying a 150-euro deposit fee.

Law 4873/2021 provided for the evaluation of applicants in terms of their economic and social integration, based on objective criteria (income and tax criteria, fulfilment of tax and insurance liabilities and the formation of stable ties with the country) and supporting documents that have been clearly predetermined in the Decision 9845/16-4-2021.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

Article 40 of Law 4825/2021 provided that Greek and international volunteer organisations (including NGOs) may be active in an area of responsibility of the Hellenic Coast Guard if, among other things, they are registered in the “Registry of Greek and Foreign NGOs” (Law 4686/2020), and their members, employees and associates were registered in the “Registry of Members of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)” (Law 4662/2020).



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the [Joint Ministerial Decisions 42799/2021](#) and [458568/2021](#) on safe third countries, including Turkey.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

In July 2021, the Strategy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection to combat human trafficking was published which included the planning and priorities of the Ministry

and the Greek Police for the period 2021-2025 as well as the actions that will be implemented to effectively address human trafficking.

IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Strategy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection to combat human trafficking provided for prompt identification and protection of victims, with emphasis on the prevention of secondary victimization and the protection of minors and especially those coming from vulnerable social groups. In this framework, the RIS’s Trainings and Procedures Department carried out trainings in collaboration with other state actors such as the National Centre of Social Solidarity and the National Referral Mechanism (EKKA-EMA) under the umbrella of the European Initiative “Activate”. RIS in collaboration with EASO also launched trainings on the protection of other categories of vulnerable persons.



RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Law 4825/2021 was issued, providing for the “Reform of Deportation and Return procedures of third country nationals, attracting investors and digital nomads, issues of residence permits and procedures for granting international protection”.

COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

In 2021, there was an improvement in cooperation with Bangladeshi Authorities in the field of returns. Furthermore, the EU-Serbia Readmission Agreement (Law 4861/2021) and the EU-Montenegro Readmission Agreement (Law 4862/2021), were ratified.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

No significant developments in 2021.



STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex was prepared by ICF, the European Migration Network Service Provider, with statistics provided by Eurostat. It provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Greece on aspects of migration and international protection (2018-2021), 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”.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

! GENERAL NOTES

This 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 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. For this edition, figures for Third Country Nationals refer to 'non-EU27 nor reporting country' across all indicators and years. The How to Read Guide is available [here](#).

COLOUR LEGEND

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

Data relative to Greece

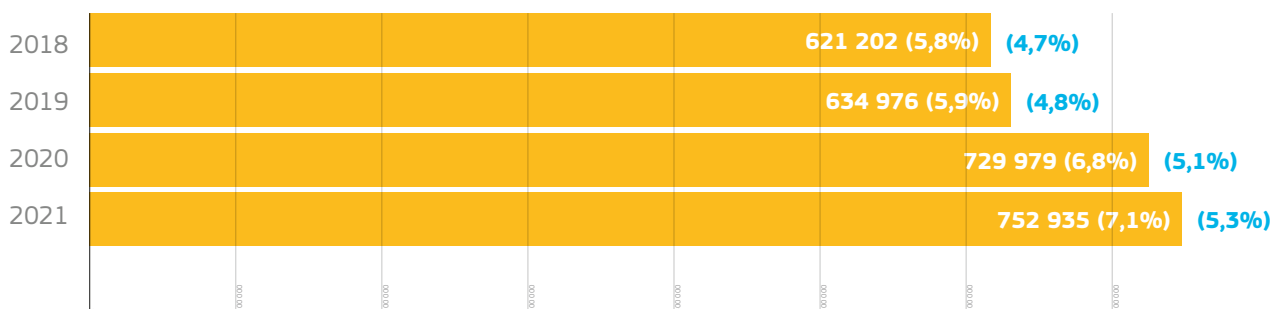
Data relative to EU



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

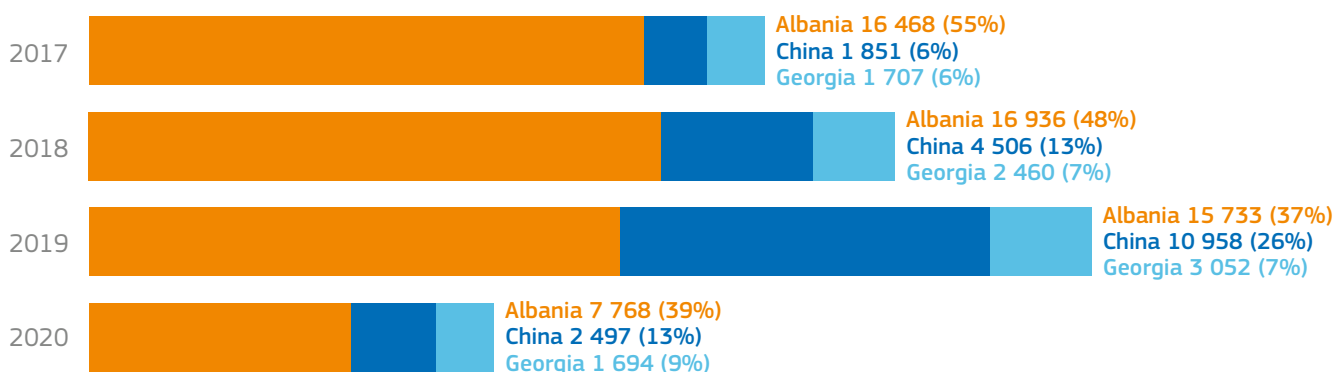
Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) as % of total population in the country (and in the EU) and in absolute numbers

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)



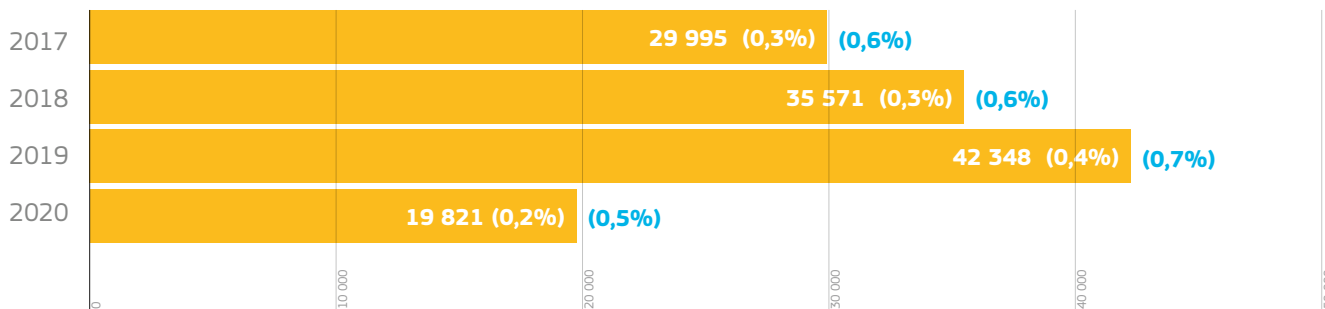
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



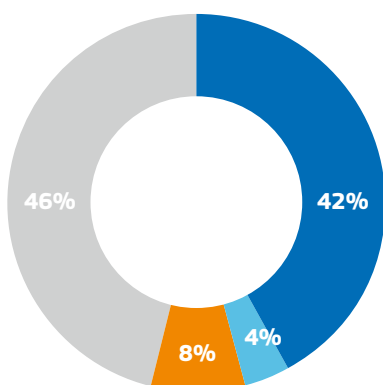
First residence permits annually issued: total number and % of total population in the country (and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_pop1ctz)



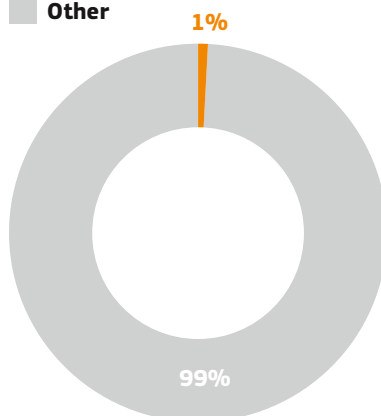
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



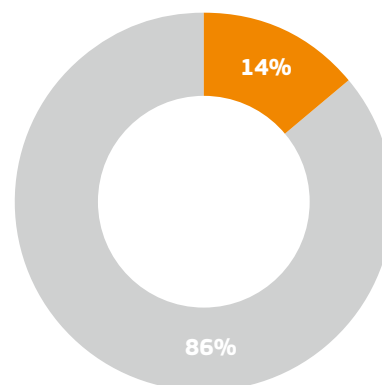
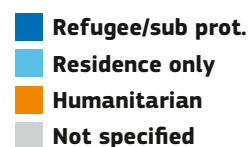
First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resocc)



First residence permits annually issued for 'other reasons' in 2020

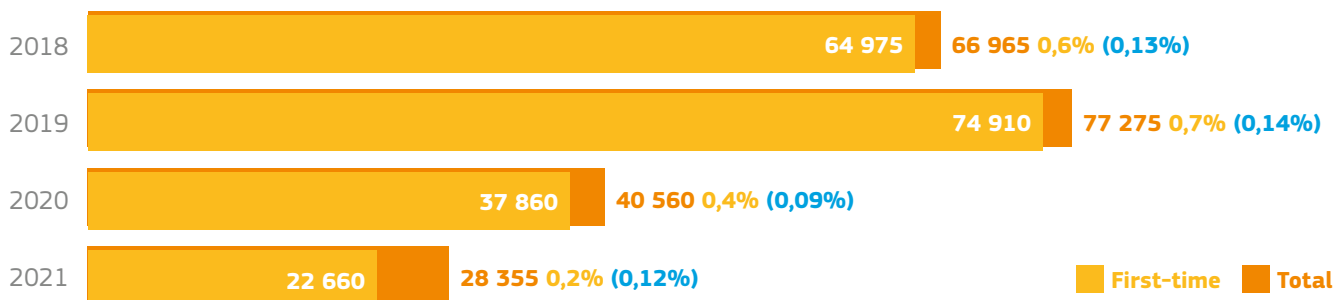
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

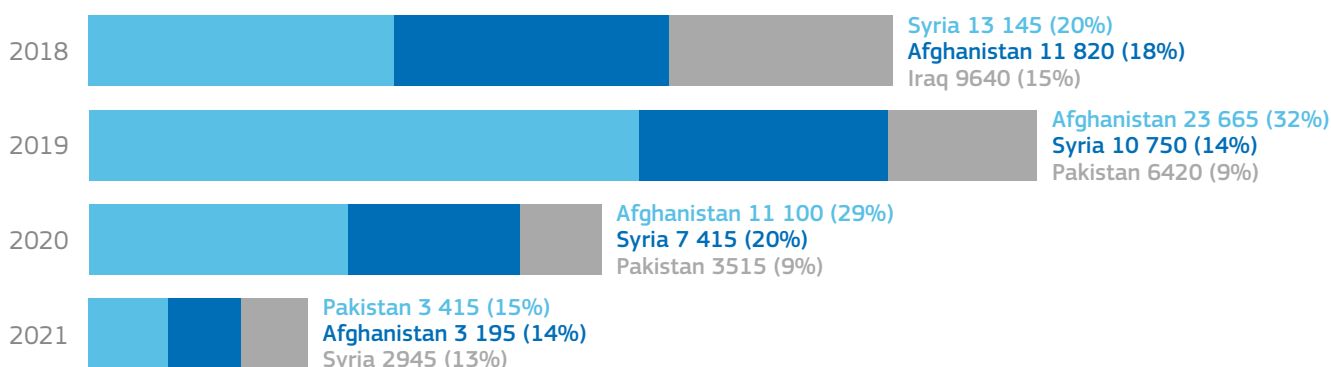
Total/first-time asylum applications; first-time asylum applications as % of population in the country (and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz)



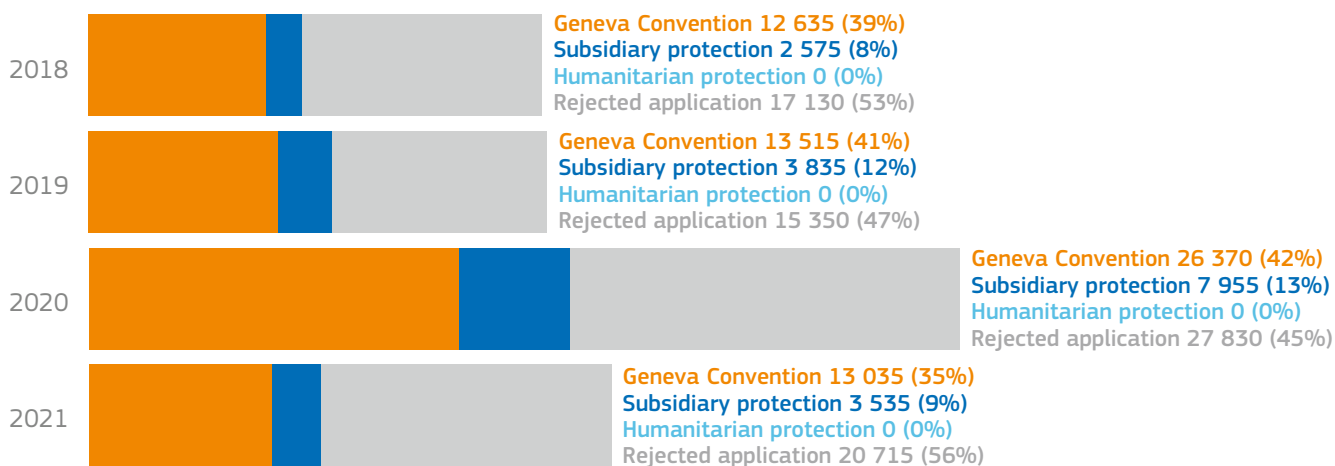
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)



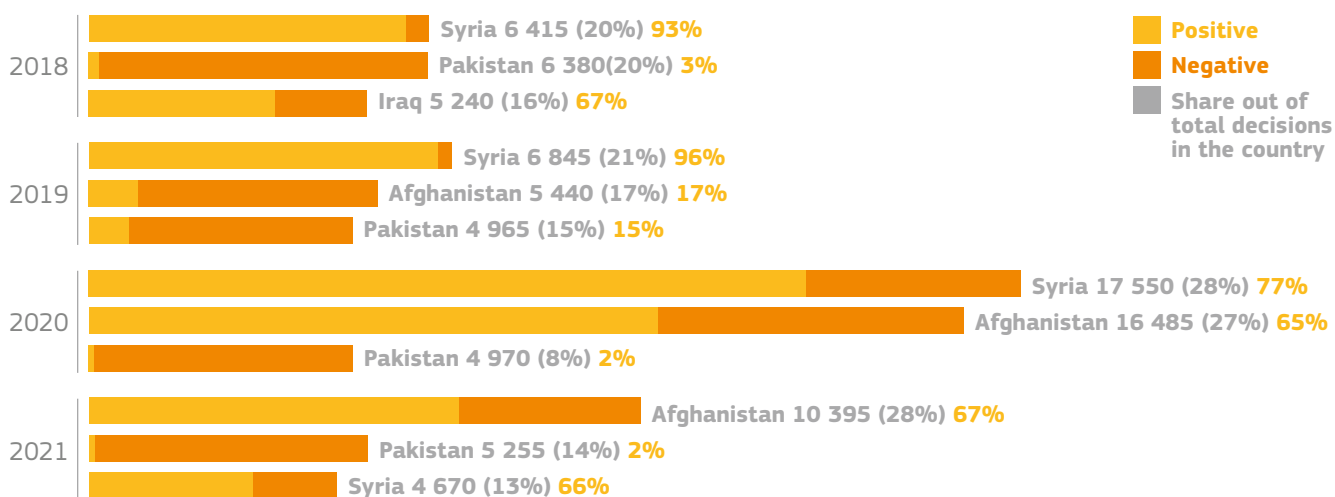
Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

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 outcomes

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



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

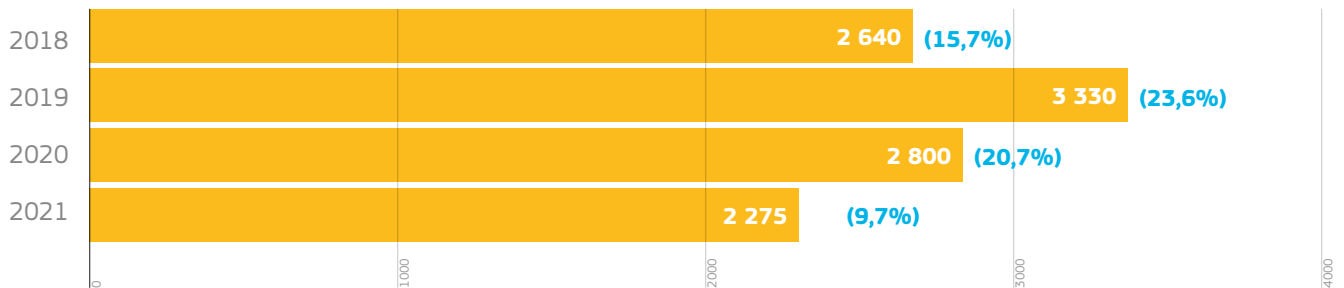
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

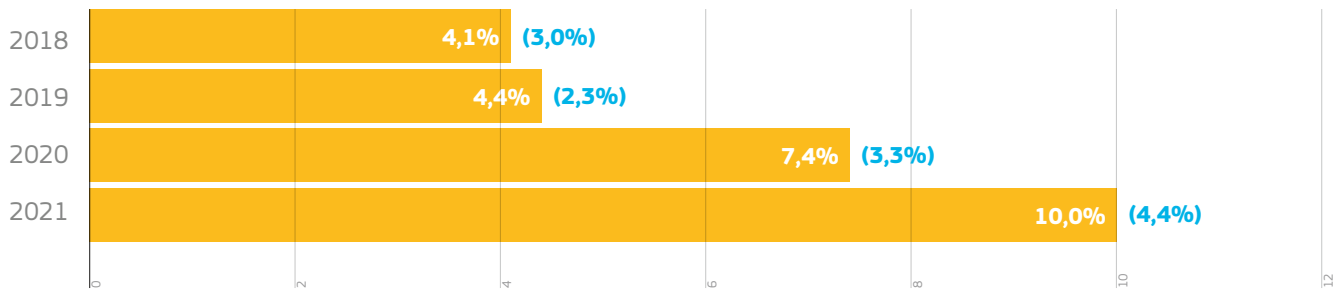
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



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

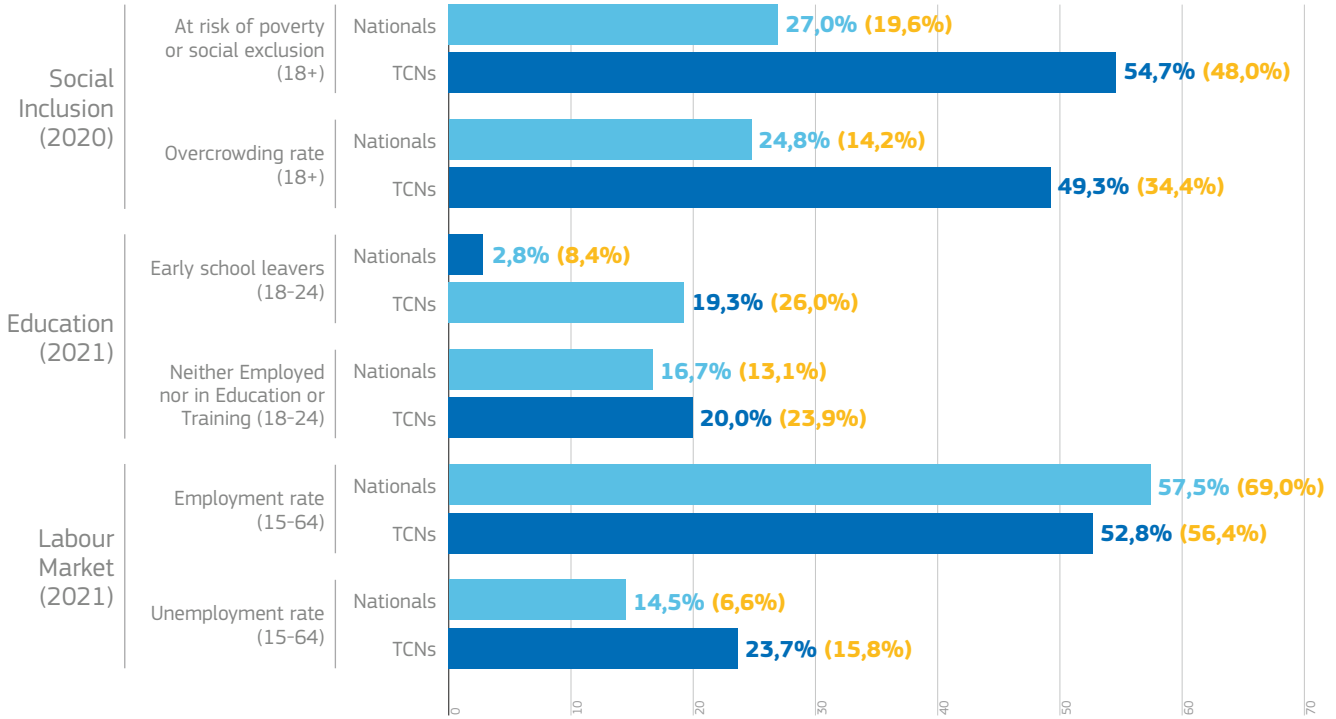
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa, migr_asyappctza)



INTEGRATION

Integration indicators for nationals (light blue) and Third-Country Nationals (dark blue) in the country (when available). The same indicator is provided in yellow for the EU.

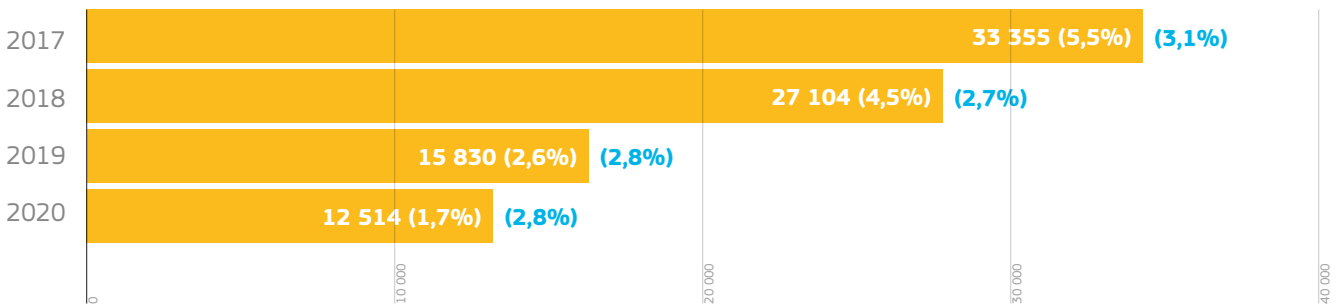
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc_peps05, ilc_lvho15, edat_lfse_01, edat_lfse_23, lfisa_ergan, lfisa_urgan)



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 numbers

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acqs, migr_acq)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)



Top 3 nationalities by number of citizenship acquisition in 2020: absolute number and % of total acquisitions in the country by Third-Country Nationals

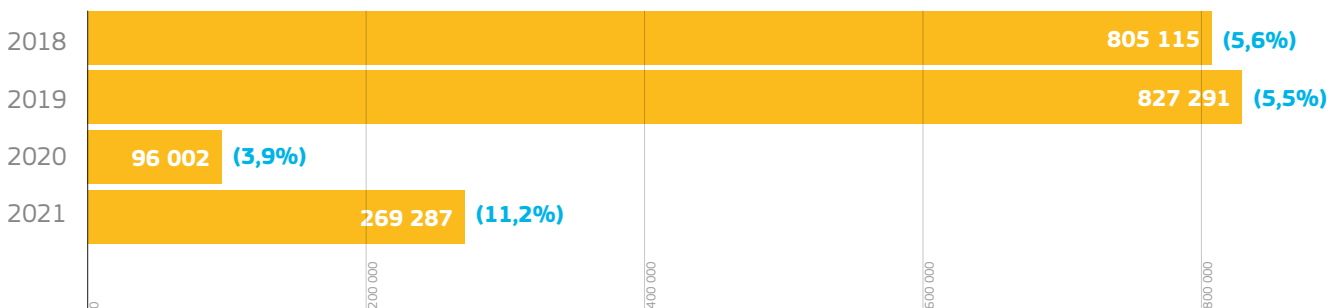
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acq)



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

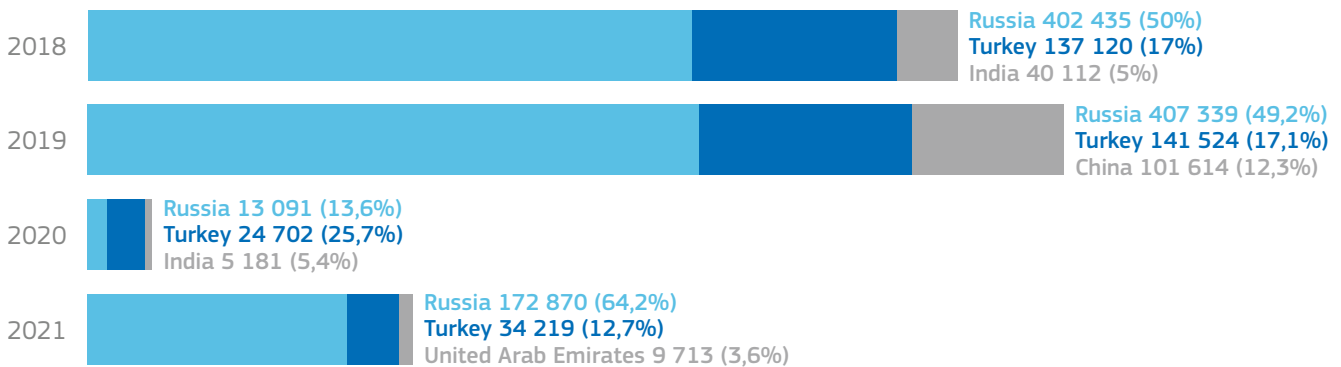
Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



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

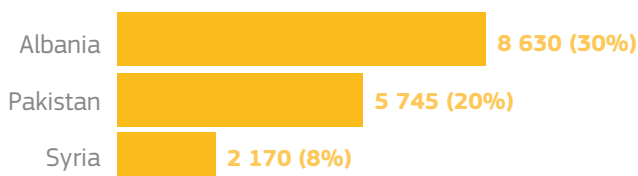
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

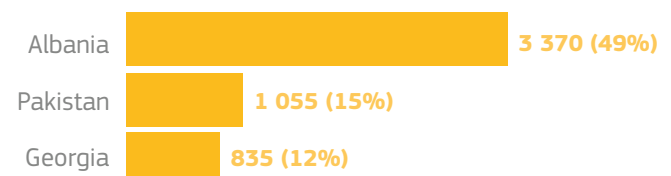
Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country in 2021, in absolute number and as a share of all nationalities ordered to leave the country

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eiord)



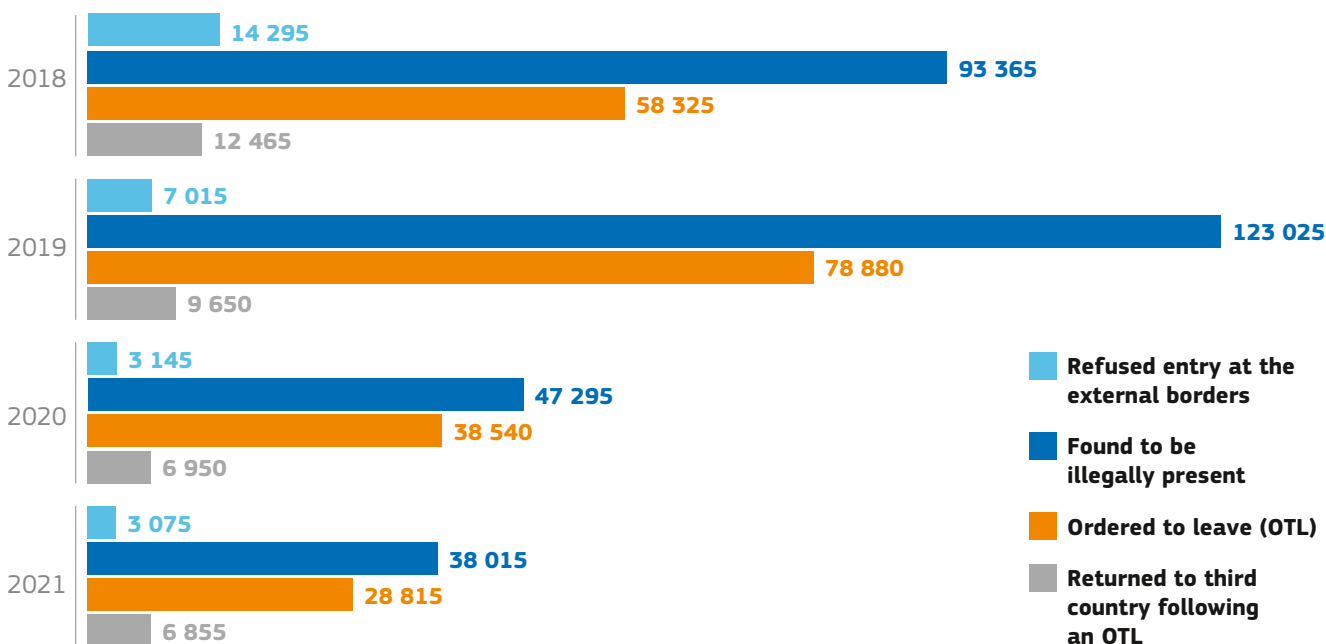
Top 3 nationalities returned to third country in 2021, in absolute number and as a share of all nationalities ordered to leave the country

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirtn)



General statistics on irregular migration

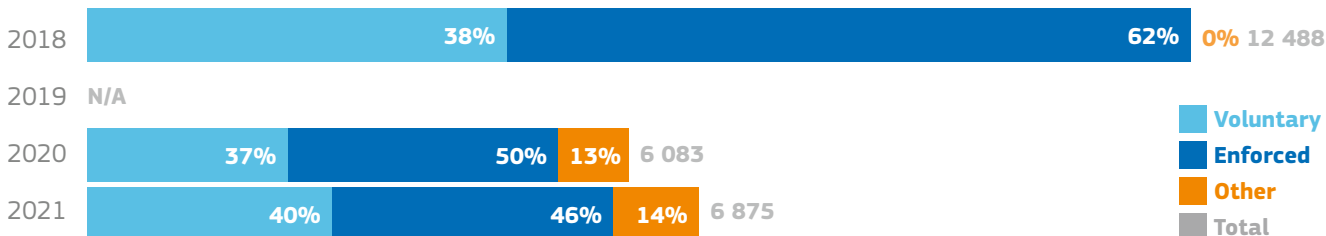
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn)



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 first residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

