



# MALTA 2021

Main developments in migration  
and international protection,  
including latest statistics



## EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

August 2022



### OVERARCHING CHANGES

No significant developments in 2021.



### LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

#### FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The Family Members Policy was launched. It defined the sources of income considered when declared with the Commissioner of Revenue. It set out that reunification is possible only after one year of residence of the sponsor (inadmissible if the application is submitted or family member enters prior to this date). Finally, it also defines the eligible family members and specific documentation to be submitted.



### INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

#### LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Legislative amendments to the International Protection Act (Cap 420 of the Laws of Malta), the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations (S.L. 420.06) and the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection (S.L. 420.07) were drafted to more accurately transpose the provisions of the [Directive](#)

### KEY POINTS



A Returns Unit was created to assist third-country nationals to acquire travel documents, access voluntary return programmes, and meet COVID-19 requirements.



The first Anti-Racism Strategy 2021–2023 was published to combat and eliminate racism.



Several legislative amendments were adopted to finalise the transposition of European legislation, strengthen protection and increase effectiveness of procedures for unaccompanied minors.

on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection, the Recast Qualifications, and [the Recast Reception Conditions Directive](#). In March 2021, the International Protection Agency (IPA) and the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the procedure for referrals of female applicants for international protection with female-genital mutilation (FGM)-based asylum claims to the national health service for the purpose of verifying their claim.

## RELOCATION AND RESETTLEMENT<sup>1</sup>

During the reporting period Malta pledged to resettle 1 Afghan National and 20 asylum seekers from Egypt (5) and Libya (15). Moreover Malta also pledged to evacuate 1 Afghan national and 2 dependants from Afghanistan.

A total of 238 asylum applicants were relocated from Malta to other Member States. New national legislation on the issuance of care orders for unaccompanied minors changed national procedures to transfer unaccompanied minors to other Member States.

## MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

### MINORS

AWAS signed a bilateral agreement with the Child Protection Services, and Maltese courts began to issue pending care orders for all unaccompanied minors in reception centres and to appoint representatives (previously known as legal guardianship) (Article 21, Chapter 602 of the Laws of Malta). Those claiming to be minors on arrival, without documentation, and where there were serious doubts about their age were issued with a provisional care order and appointed a representative until the age assessment was completed. Confirmed minors were issued with a care order, including the appointment of a representative.

### OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Special Needs and Vulnerability Assessment (SNVA) Adult Referral Assessment Procedure was updated. New procedures were set out to ensure early identification of people with vulnerabilities in initial reception centres, to identify vulnerable applicants and their special needs at any stage of the asylum procedure, and to ensure timely access to appropriate services and special procedural guarantees. AWAS updated the age assessment procedure and the age assessment tool, in line with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) guideline on age assessment.

## INTEGRATION

### NATIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGY

The Human Rights Directorate (HRD) provided courses in Maltese, English and cultural orientation to applicants to the 'I Belong' programme. Between its opening in November 2019 and end-2021, it received 5 217 applications. In 2021, there were 657 graduations from Stage 1, with 409 more students awaiting Stage 1 certification.

The HRD and University of Malta developed the Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation, which started in October 2021. It was designed to produce trained cultural mediators, both local and of migrant origin, and to assist professionals and clients to overcome language, cultural and other barriers, thereby facilitating integration.

## FIGHTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The HRD opened a public consultation on Malta's first Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023, which was published on 30 September 2021. The Strategy set out its aim to confront and eliminate racism and to stimulate and support intercultural inclusion. Some measures were implemented in 2021, with others to follow between 2022 and 2024 (through a successful project application under the CERV programme 2021-2027).

The HRD set up a high-level Interministerial Committee on Anti-Racism to ensure a whole-of-government approach to anti-racism and intercultural inclusion to reach all policy fields and public services, while also mainstreaming anti-racism and intercultural inclusion across all policy fields and public services. The first Interministerial Committee action plan meeting was held on 6 December 2021.

The HRD collaborated with each ministry to design an intraministerial anti-racism action plan to address policy-making, employment, service provision, and contribution to intercultural inclusion.

The Rights, Equality and Citizenship-funded EU project 'Equality for all in Malta' tackled the underreporting of discrimination on the grounds of race/ethnic origin and belief/religion. This two-year project began in October 2020 and was led by the Ministry for Equality, Research and Innovation, in partnership with Aditus Foundation, the European Network on Religion and Belief, and the European Network Against Racism. It targeted racial, ethnic and religious minority organisations and communities, as well as the general public. Training was provided to 120 members of racial, ethnic and religious minorities (including victims of racial/ethnic/religious discrimination) to empower them to enjoy their rights and the new remedies laid down in the law. A public information campaign to raise awareness of non-discrimination and equality (e.g. posters, social media) started in December 2021 and will conclude in January 2022.

An outreach model was developed to target the grassroots through local councils and bring them on board in the fight against discrimination. Outreach to 68 local councils will help to develop further non-discrimination tools for action at local level.

### INVOLVEMENT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The HRD used a number of different migrant empowerment forums. The Forum on Integration Affairs (FIA) encourages representatives from a range of migrant community organisations active in Malta to meet and discuss policies and social matters. Two meetings were held in 2021. Its 'Turning the Tables (TTT) project was set up in collaboration with the HRD and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to empower migrant and refugee communities to strengthen their capacity to engage with policy and legislative processes. An Anti-Racism Platform, comprising representatives from civil society, academia and the social partners, was convened and supported by the HRD. Four Anti-Racism Platform meetings were held on 22 July, 6 September, 4

<sup>1</sup> Includes Humanitarian Admission Programmes

October and 8 November, with an average of 14 attendees.

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS AND RECEIVING SOCIETIES IN INTEGRATION

As pointed out above, HRD has set up the FIA, TTT and the Anti-Racism Platform with representatives from a range of migrant community organisations active in Malta to meet and discuss policies and social matters.



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

No significant developments in 2021.



## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

### SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

A Schengen Taskforce was set up to oversee measures relating to the implementation of the Schengen acquis. Members of the Task Force presented at the Schengen evaluations in 2021.



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

No significant developments in 2021.



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The HRD was tasked with leading the government's reform of anti-trafficking and coordinating stakeholders. Reforms aimed to enhance multi-agency cooperation, improve the coordination of existing processes, and take an active approach to combating trafficking in all its forms. The HRD carried out intensive research on international minimum standards and other Member States' legislative frameworks on trafficking in human beings, including prominent case-law from national and international courts. The 'Legislation, Policies, Strategies and Guidelines concerning Trafficking in Human Beings' report will shortly be published and distributed to stakeholders.

The HRD held several meetings with national stakeholders and agreed sustainable measures for further collaboration. The Human Rights Initiatives Unit also submitted an application to the Office of the Prime Minister under the Technical Support Instrument to secure financial and technical assistance for support in the design and implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. That assistance will strengthen domestic capacity to enhance the national coordination, reporting and monitoring structures, as well as facilitating

an effective reform strategy that meets international minimum standards. Expected outputs included (i) technical expert analysis of local and international scenarios; (ii) drafting and publishing an expert strategic planning report; (iii) drafting and launching a national strategy to combat trafficking in human beings; (iv) working visits; (v) technical and financial assistance for implementation and monitoring; (vi) communication and events.



## RETURN AND READMISSION

### MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In January 2021, a Returns Unit was set up under the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement. It sought to:

- Enhance the national approach on voluntary return.
- Provide return counselling from a very early stage (following disembarkation).
- Formulate, implement and monitor in-cash and in-kind support schemes.
- Joint implementation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other stakeholders.
- Research funding opportunities for return initiatives and implement EU-funded projects on return.
- Formulate and implement a communications strategy (information, outreach).
- Establish stronger communication channels between national migration stakeholders (non-governmental organisations (NGOs), human rights activities, migrant communities, etc.).

The Returns Unit introduced a cash incentive for voluntary return (given before boarding). The Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement (MHSE) started providing financial support to eligible migrants to engage in return counselling.

The Returns Unit assisted migrants to meet COVID-19 requirements (e.g. booking COVID-19 tests). It facilitated the procurement of travel documentation for undocumented migrants wishing to return voluntarily, provided a free flight ticket to their country of origin, and accompanied migrants from the check-in desk through to boarding.

Return counselling (walk-in service) was introduced for all third country nationals residing in Malta. All persons arriving irregularly by sea were counselled on return procedures, as well as individual/group information sessions with a cultural mediator.

More than 700 migrants were counselled on return, and a Facebook page was set up by the MHSE, with information and contact on voluntary return.

In conjunction with the IOM, the MHSE introduced a cash incentive for those in congested reception centres. Returnees were offered €1 500-2 000 in cash before

departure or a €3 800 in-kind grant on arrival in their country of origin.

IOM produced leaflets and posters in English, French and Arabic, as well as posters in English, French, Arabic, Amharic and Somali for display in reception centres, NGOs, homeless shelters, etc. It also produced a 'Stories of Return' booklet, translated into English, French and Arabic.

Tailored assistance and promotional material was made available for unaccompanied minors.



## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Malta's policy on providing overseas development assistance was adjusted to ensure each project focuses on the creation of sustainable jobs.

A decision was taken by the Government of Malta to participate in the Team Europe Initiative on Migration through the Central Mediterranean Route.



## 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 Malta 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.

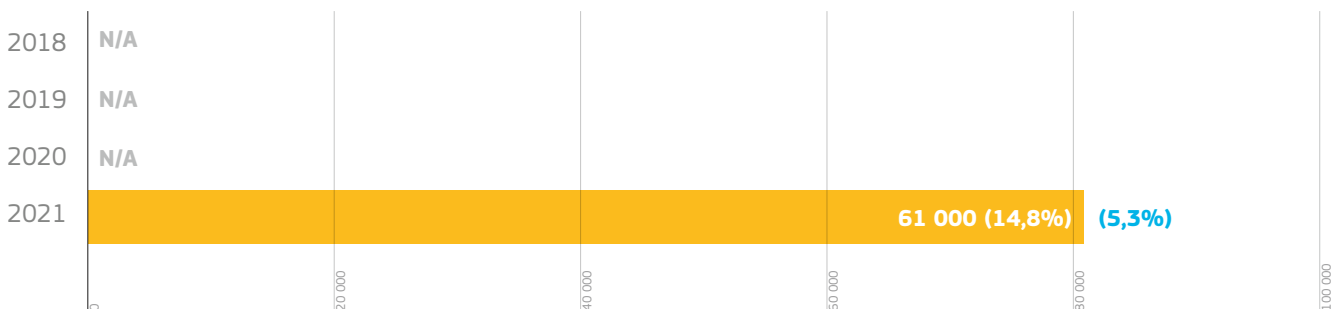
Data relative to Malta

Data relative to EU

## LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

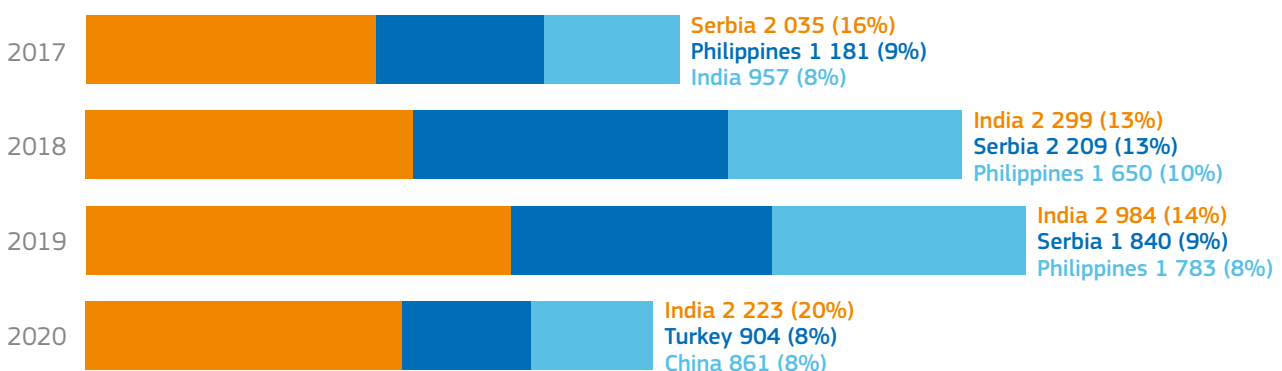
### Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) as % of total population in the country (and in the EU) and in absolute numbers

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctz)



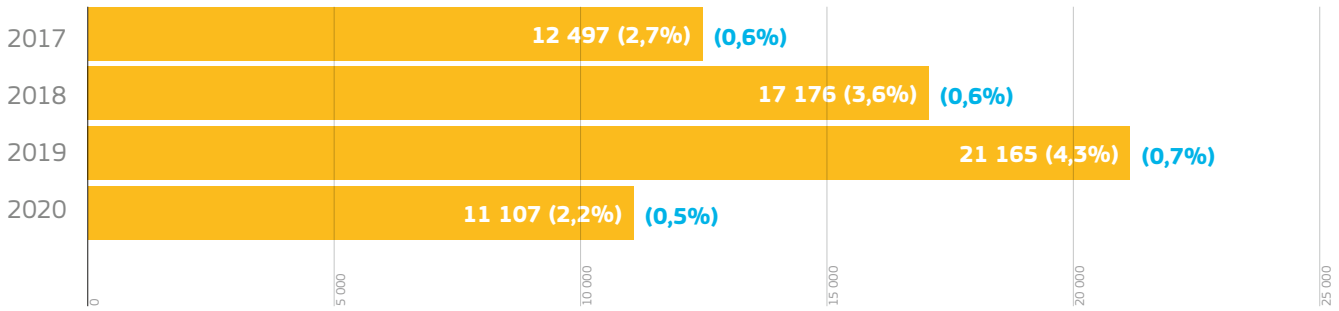
### Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



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

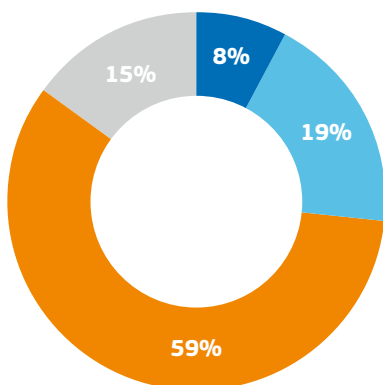
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst, migr\_pop1ctz)



## First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)

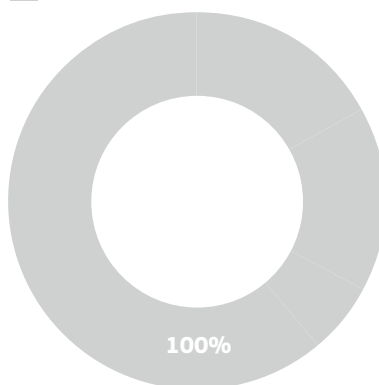
- Family
- Education
- Work
- Other



## First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2020

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resocc)

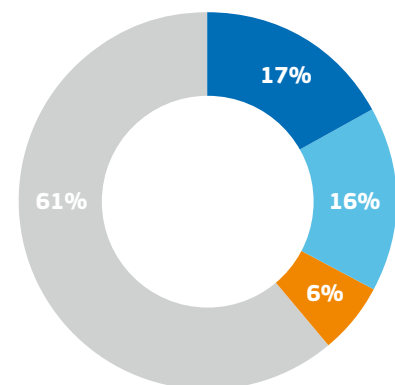
- EU Blue Card
- Highly skilled
- Researchers
- Seasonal workers
- Other



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resoth)

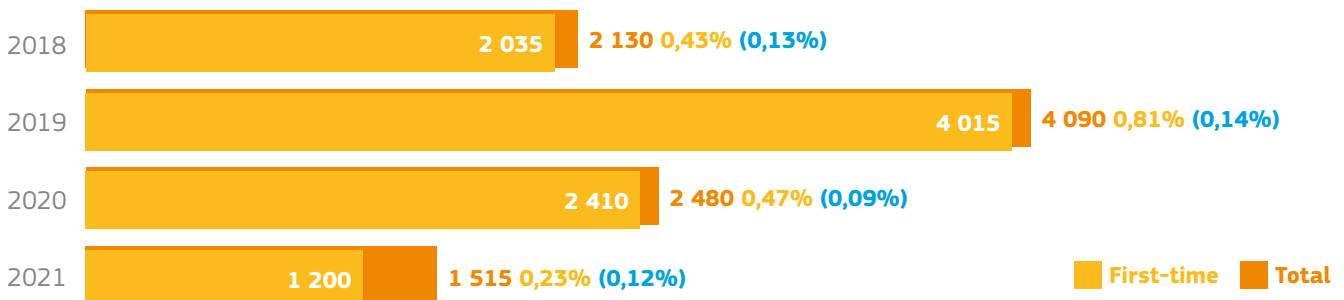
- Refugee/sub prot.
- Residence only
- Humanitarian
- Not specified



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

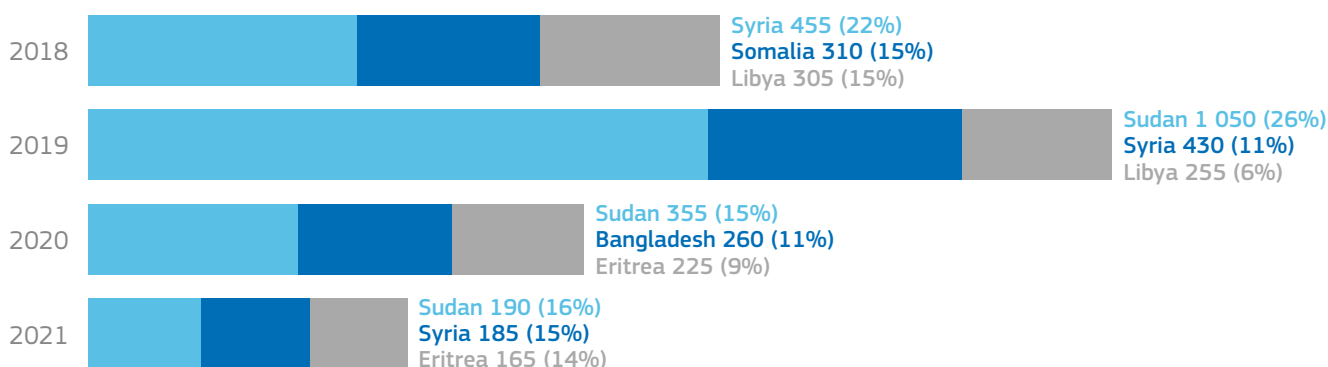
### Total/first-time asylum applications; first-time asylum applications as % of population in the country (and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza, migr\_pop1ctz)



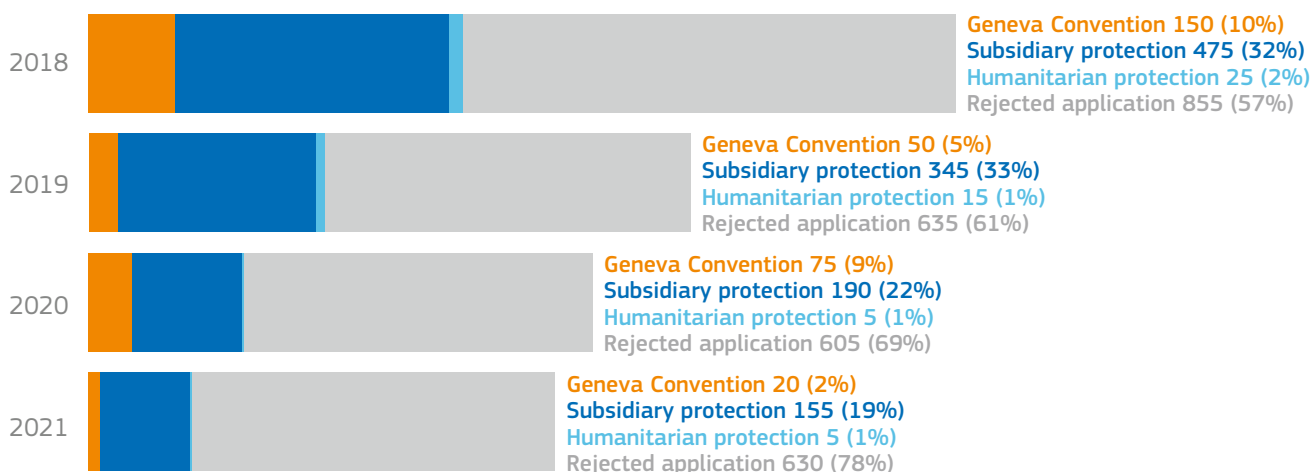
## Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza)



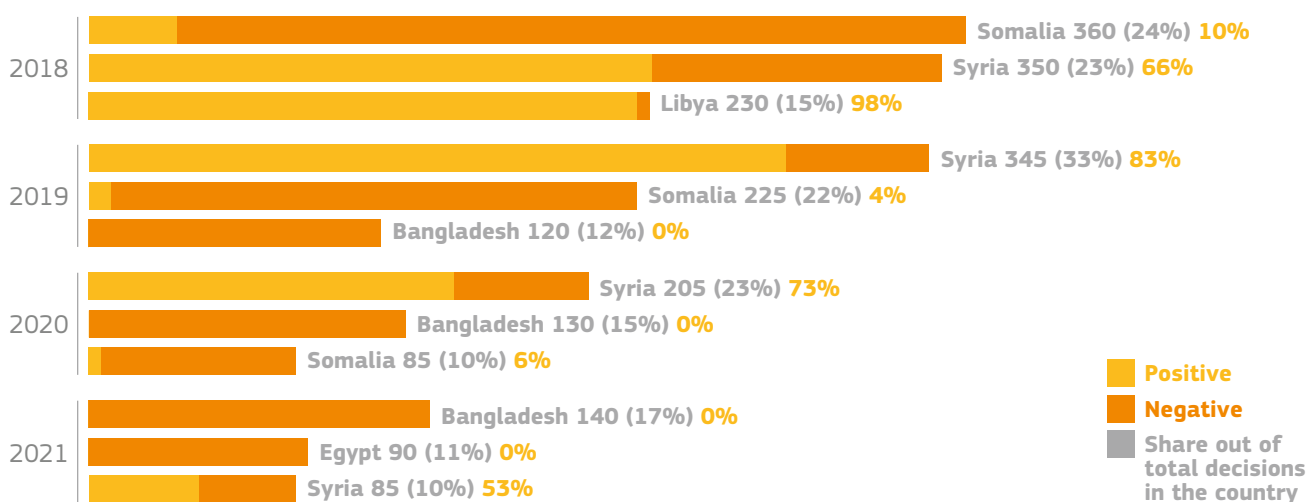
## Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

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)



■ Positive  
■ Negative  
■ Share out of total decisions in the country

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

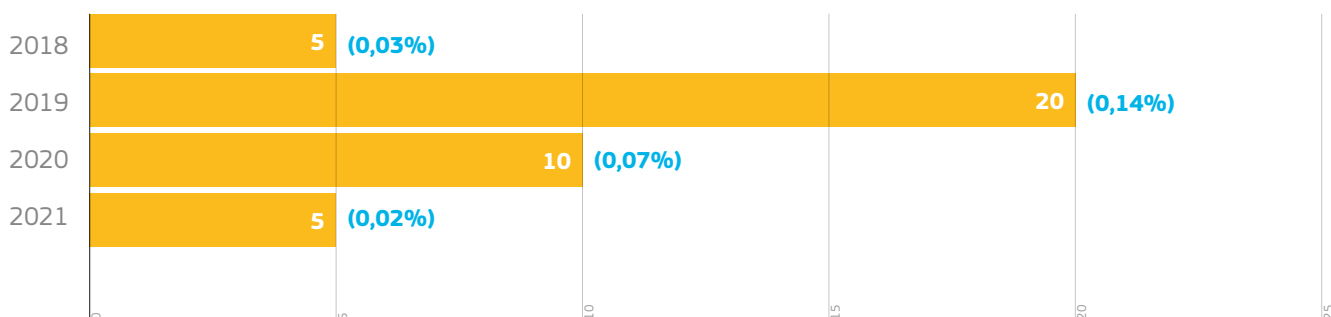
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyresa)



## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

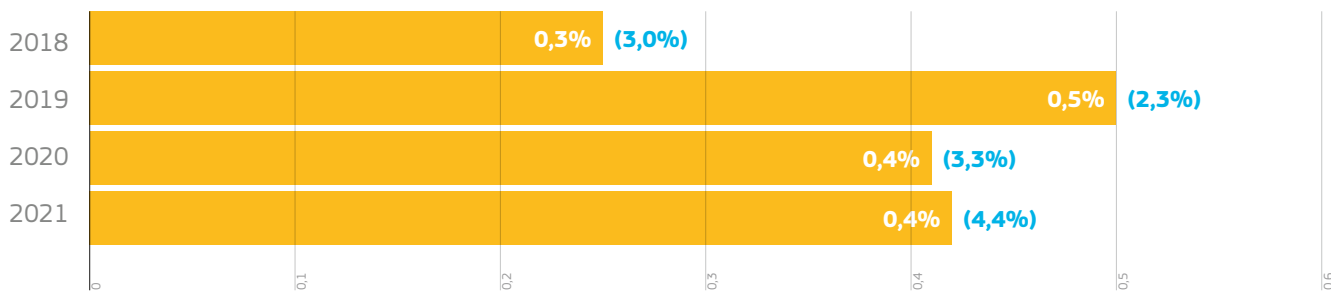
### Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa, migr\_asyappctza)

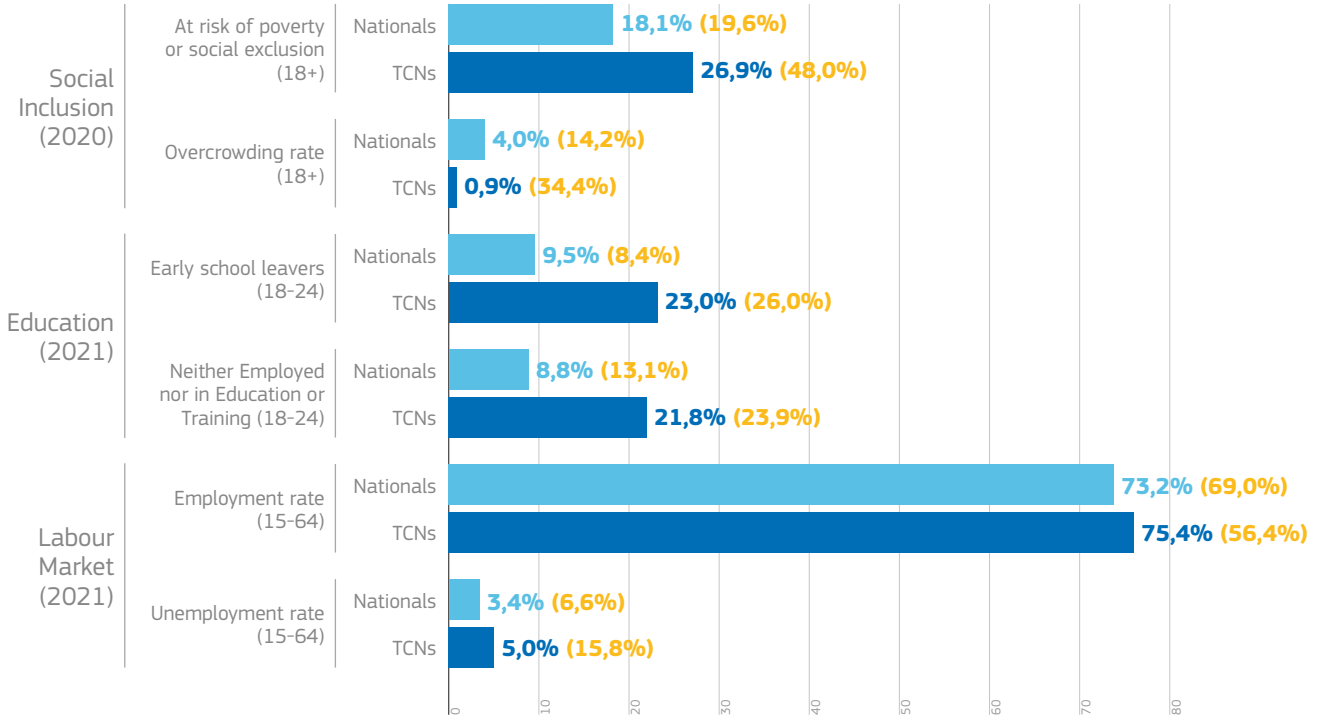




## INTEGRATION

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.

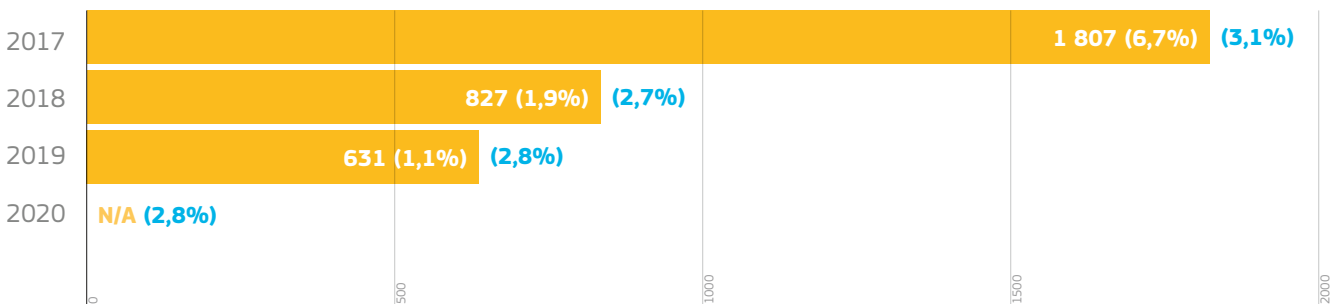
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc\_peps05, ilc\_lvho15, edat\_lfse\_01, edat\_lfse\_23, lfsa\_ergan, lfsa\_urgan)



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

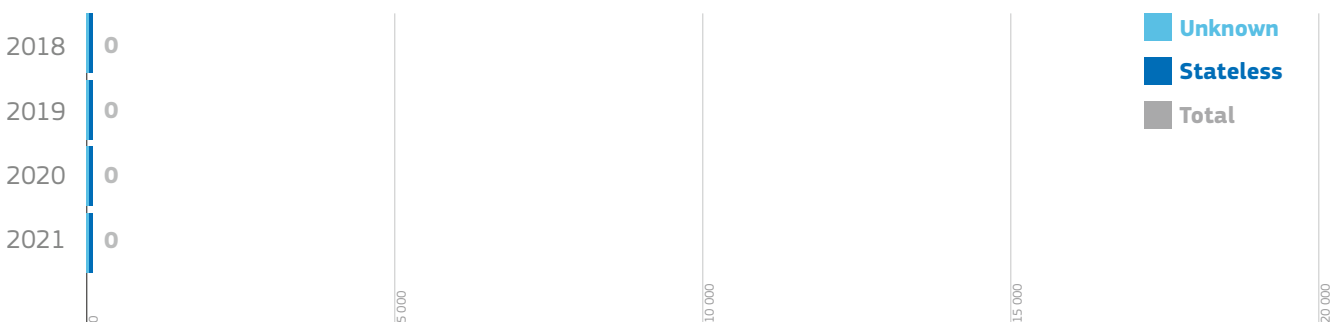
Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute numbers

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

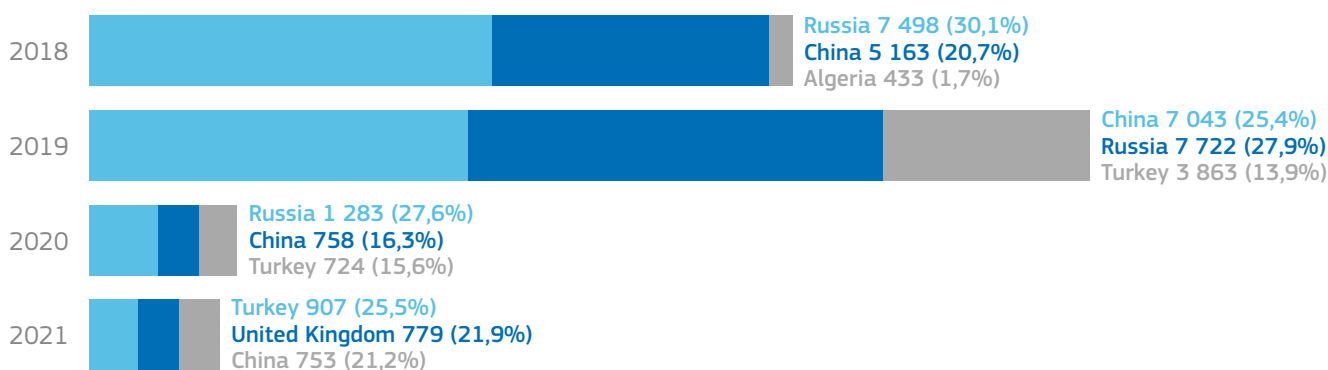
### Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



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

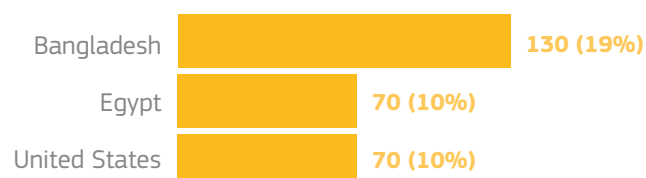
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

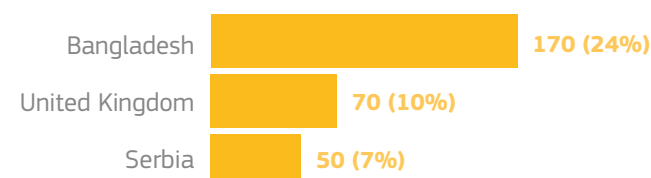
### Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country in 2021, in absolute number and as a share of all nationalities ordered to leave the country

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_eiord)



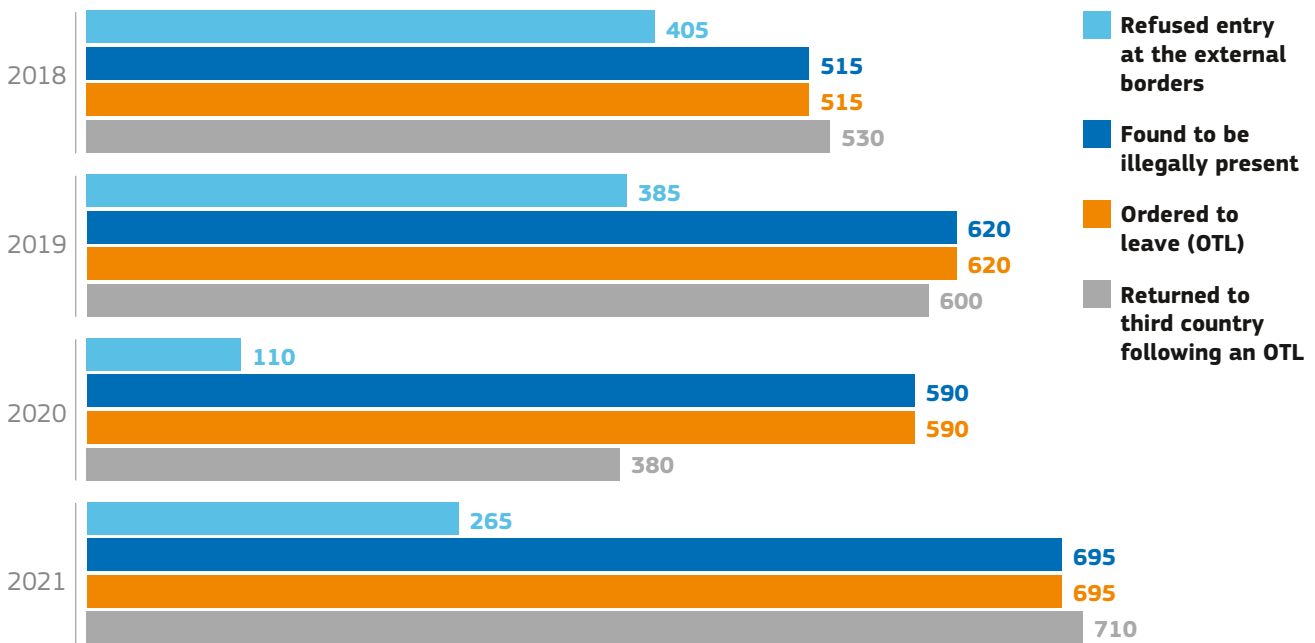
### Top 3 nationalities returned to third country in 2021, in absolute number and as a share of all nationalities ordered to leave the country

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_eirtn)



## General statistics on irregular migration

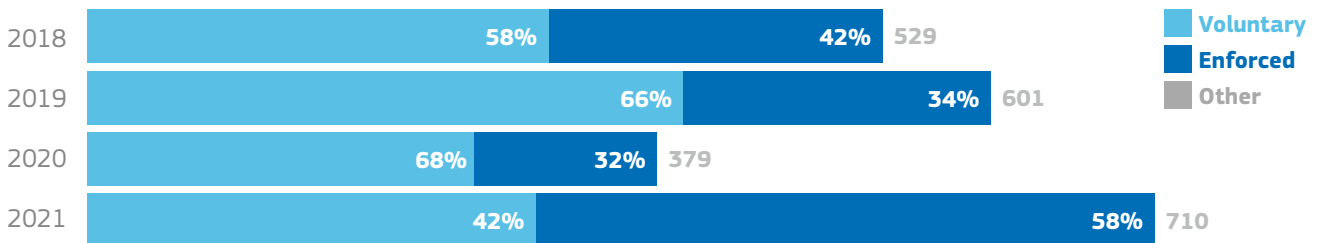
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_eirfs, migr\_eipre, migr\_eiord, migr\_eirtn)



## 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)

