

COUNTRY FACTSHEET | JULY 2024

Main developments
in migration and
international
protection, including
latest statistics

CYPRUS 2023



OVERARCHING AND CROSSCUTTING CHANGES

In 2023, the arrivals of migrants decreased because of several measures, including control of crossings from the Green Line, transitions through Brussels to Turkey, and information campaigns in Nigeria, Congo and Cameroon. Although there was an increase in arrivals from the sea, there was a 50% decrease in total arrivals and an 80% increase in returns.

On 15 June 2023, the Council of Ministers approved the draft Bill for the establishment of a Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum. This substantial development is expected to contribute towards more effective management of migration and asylum.

The European Funds Unit (EFU) in the Ministry of the Interior launched approximately 40 significant projects within the framework of the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Internal Security Fund, and the Border Management and Visa Instrument. These target efficient management of migration flows, including efficient return procedures, improved infrastructure and services within the asylum procedures, cross-border cooperation and combating crime.



LEGAL MIGRATION

In 2023, Cyprus amended the Private Employment Agencies Law, No 126(I)/2012. The amending Law No

KEY POINTS

An emphasis on return measures meant that more migrants left Cyprus than arrived in 2023.

Important steps were taken to combat the exploitation of asylum seekers and illegal employment.

The first steps to establish a Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum were completed.

142(I)/2023 was adopted and entered into force on 13 December 2023. It aims to prevent labour exploitation and protect vulnerable third-country jobseekers.

An interdepartmental team was established with representative officials from the ministries and Cyprus Police, supervised by the Ministry of the Interior, to safeguard the rights of third-country workers legally residing in Cyprus.

On 20 May 2023, the Ministry of the Interior revised the investors' residence permit scheme. The four main changes concern the eligibility of investors' parents and/or the parents of their spouses to receive permanent residence permits under the new scheme as dependent parents. The required annual income of the investor and their family was increased, a clean criminal record is required for all interested parties, and a control mechanism was introduced.

On 22 March 2023, the Council of Ministers increased the percentage of foreign workers a company can employ to 50% if it cannot find local or community staff and apply collective agreements. The objective of the new foreign labour employment strategy is to secure a foreign labour force for businesses.

On 24 March 2023, the Civil Registry and Migration Department introduced more accessible procedures for the employment of domestic workers, based on reduced income criteria and needs. The amendment facilitates vulnerable people's access to home workers.

The Council of Ministers decided to abolish deadlines for entry permit submissions and student arrival timeframes for higher education institutes (colleges). The decision also set stricter rules for students' academic qualifications.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

The Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Centre was upgraded and expanded.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) Exit Information Package was completed and released for dissemination at the information kiosk in the First Reception Centre (FRC) in Pournara. It describes all rights and obligations that applicants for international protection and/or beneficiaries of international protection should enjoy and/or have access to once they leave Pournara.

A needs assessment is carried out on arrival at Pournara. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on vulnerabilities were drafted and agreed, together with a new vulnerability assessment form and referral.

Files for which an appeal has been submitted to the Administrative Court for International Protection against the first instance decision of the Asylum Service were digitalised.

To address the abuse of asylum procedures, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance decided that asylum

seekers are permitted to access the labour market nine months from the date of submission of their application for international protection.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance Information System was linked to the Asylum Seekers Service Information System to inform employers when an asylum application is rejected. In that case, employment cannot proceed or, in the case of existing employment, it can be terminated.

There was a concerted effort in 2023 to strictly observe deadlines set by the Dublin Regulation, with fewer delays in procedures. Dublin transfers were facilitated more quickly.



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

A new procedure was introduced for the renewal of temporary protection. Renewals are facilitated through an official announcement from the Ministry of the Interior, stating that individuals do not need to renew their residency permit cards separately to maintain the validity of their temporary protection status. Additionally, beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP) can approach the asylum service if they needed help.

As of November 2023, there was no longer a provision for free hotel accommodation. Rather, individuals apply for and receive support through the government's Rent Subsidy Scheme.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

SOPs were established on vulnerability identification, assessment and referral, as well as a safe zone space for vulnerable groups within the Pournara FRC.

The Refugee Law was amended by the Refugee (Amending) Law of 2023, N.86(I)/2023. A new phase was added to the age assessment procedure in Article 10 to further safeguard the rights of unaccompanied minors.



INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

In late 2023, the first draft of the National Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion 2024-2026 was prepared and approved by the Ministry of the Interior, followed by the first round of consultation with public sector stakeholders.

The project 'Building Structures for Intercultural Integration in Cyprus' is implemented by the Intercultural

Cities Programme and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), in partnership with the Ministry of the Interior (Civil Registry and Migration Department), local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and migrant organisations. The project developed a toolkit to measure social cohesion.

The Learning Greek in Preschool programme was established, providing support for preschool teachers supporting children with migrant backgrounds through training, seminars, teacher guides, and parent guides, and developing material for teaching Greek as a second language (flashcards, online games, applications, audiobooks, and videos).

There was an increase in the number of transitional classes in secondary education.



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

In November 2023, the Civil Registry Law was amended to modernise the legal framework for the qualification and criteria for citizenship and strengthen control and due investigation.



BORDERS, VISA AND SCHENGEN

Cyprus made the technical and legal arrangements necessary for the processing of Schengen Information System (SIS) data and the exchange of supplementary information.

The Law on Operation and Use in the Republic of the Schengen Information System (SIS Recast) was approved in December 2023 by the House of Representatives. Decision (EU) 2023/870 allowed the transfer of SIS data to Cyprus and the SIS became operational in Cyprus on 25 July 2023.

The European Commission carried out an on-site visit to Cyprus between 1 and 7 October 2023 and evaluated SIS/ supplementary information request on national entries (SIRENE). The conclusions were very positive, with no serious deficiencies or weaknesses identified.

The Aliens and Immigration Unit stopped extending visas for reasons beyond those in the Visa Code.

The Cyprus Police Central System was upgraded to connect to the National Entry Exit System, National European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), e-gates, self-service systems, and automated border control systems.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

A sub-directorate of 200 members of staff was established by the Aliens and Immigration Unit of the Cyprus Police to

continuously monitor the Green Line border and combat irregular migration.

A campaign by the Aliens and Immigration Unit, in cooperation with the Department of Labour Inspection, was launched for joint checks and operations on combating undeclared and illegal employment. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the Labour Inspectorate and the police.

The link between the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance Information System and the Asylum Seekers Service Information System also aims to reduce irregular migration.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The new National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings 2023-2026 was ratified in December 2023 by the Council of Ministers. It emphasises training for frontline officers from all stakeholder services (police officers, social welfare officers, labour inspectors, other Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance officers, asylum service officers, Department of Labour officers, migration officers, Attorney General officers, mental health officers, local government staff, NGOs). Hosted in Cyprus and abroad, the training falls under the first pillar of the new action plan, 'Strengthening prevention and reducing the risks of victimisation'. The plan aims to prevent cases of trafficking in human beings and discourage demand through public awareness and a stronger framework for respect of human rights and the elimination of stereotypes, discrimination, and racism based on gender, nationality, or sexual orientation.



RETURN AND READMISSION

In total, 9 193 irregular migrants were returned from Cyprus in 2023 (not including relocations).

Cyprus participated in 14 Joint Return Operations (JROs) coordinated by Frontex.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

No significant developments to report in 2023.



STATISTICAL ANNEX

The statistical annex available on the next pages complements the Country Factsheet and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Cyprus on aspects of migration and international protection. It was prepared by Eurostat and it is organised in ten thematic sections, including legal residence, temporary protection, asylum, unaccompanied minors, integration, irregular migration, return and visas. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators.

The data presented in the annex regard third-country nationals, which means persons who are not EU citizens, including stateless persons. The data cover the period 2020-2023. Since 2023 data were not available at the time of publication for certain datasets, in these cases the

period 2020-2022 is covered. Exceptionally, the monthly data on temporary protection covers the period until March 2024. **The data were extracted during April–May 2024. The manuscript was completed in May 2024.**

The Eurostat website is constantly updated. Therefore, it is likely that more recent data will have become available since. An online data code available under each figure can be used to directly access the latest data on [Eurostat's website](#).

For some indicators, data are rounded at the source. Due to this, in some cases, the sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value.

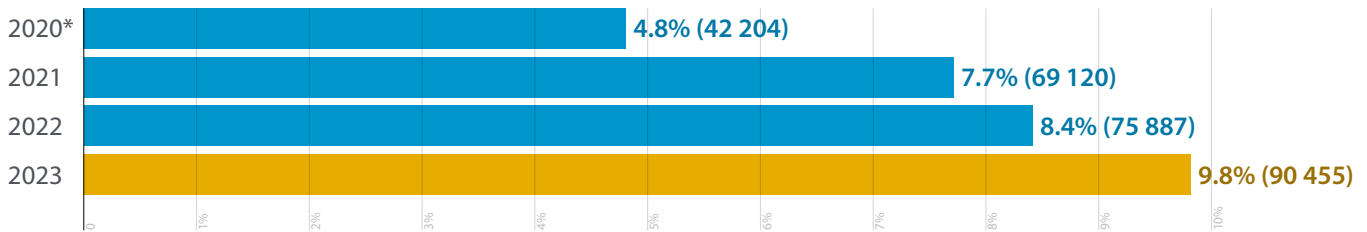
A 'How to read the statistical annex' guide, describing each individual chart and providing links to the data sources, is available [here](#).



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2020–2023

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

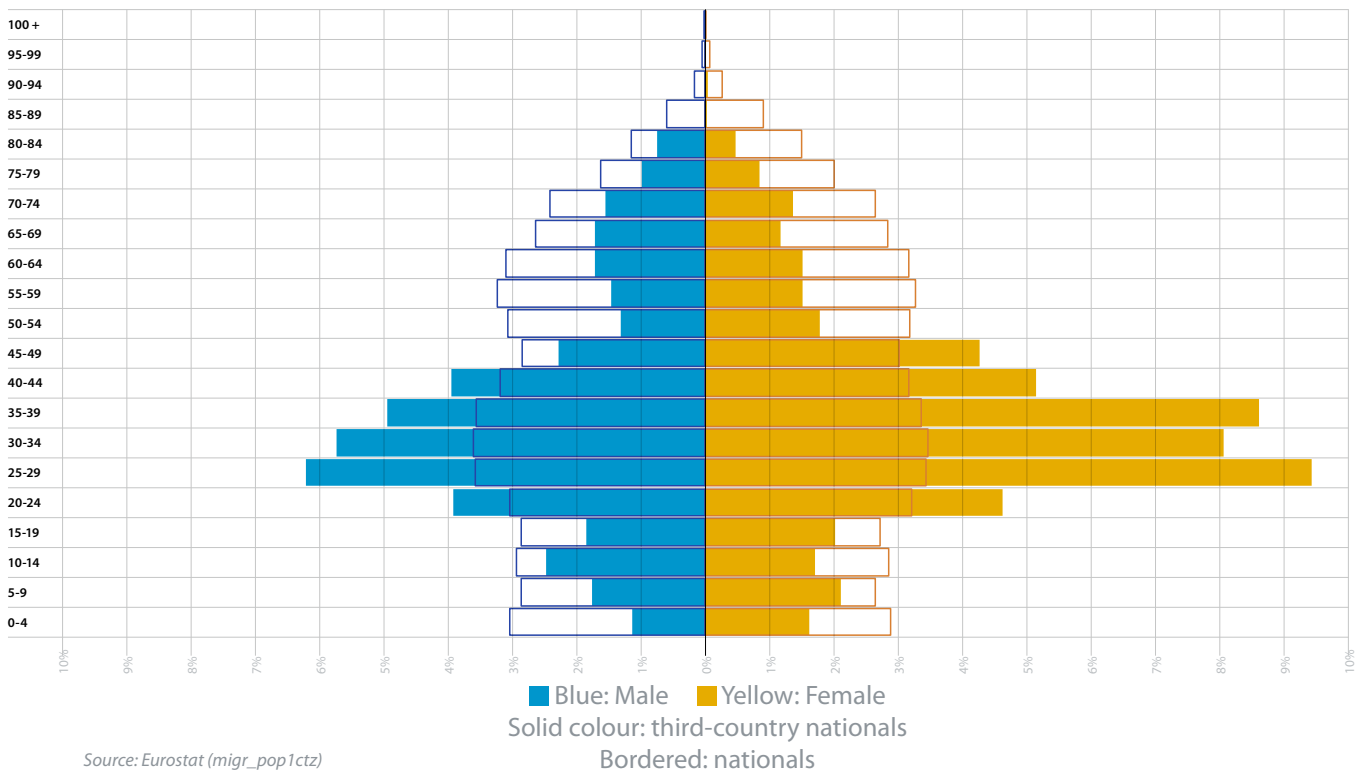


* Citizens of the UK are not included in the number of third-country national population.

Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

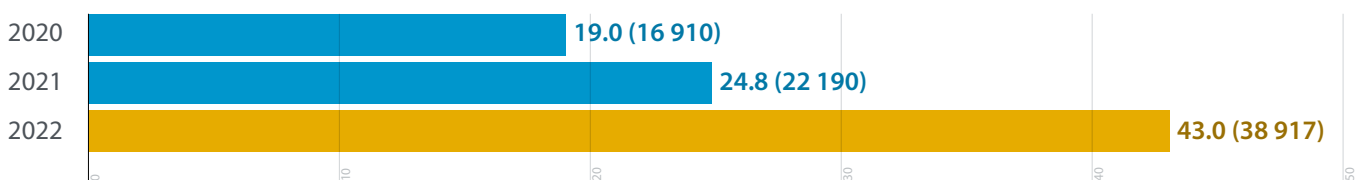
Age structure of nationals and third-country nationals, 1 January 2023

%



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

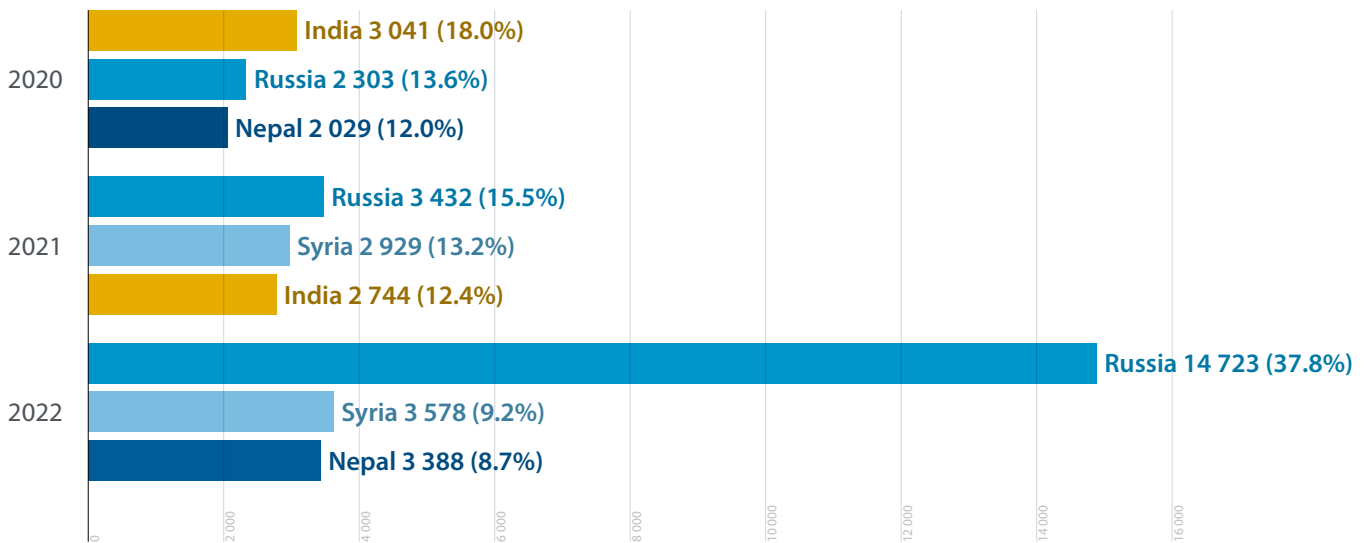
Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_pop1ctz and migr_respop)

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

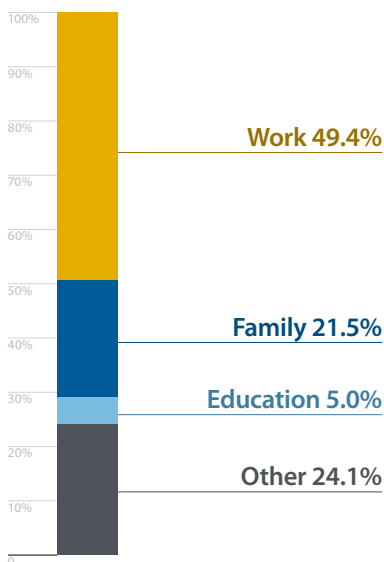
Absolute number (and the share in total number)



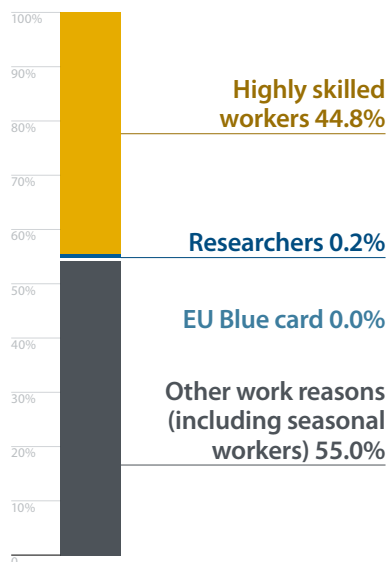
Source: Eurostat (*migr_resfirst*)

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

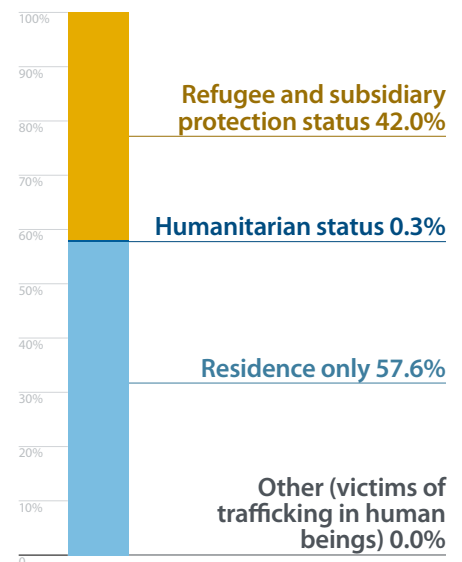
All permits,
by reason, %



Work reason,
by type, %



Other reason,
by detailed reason, %



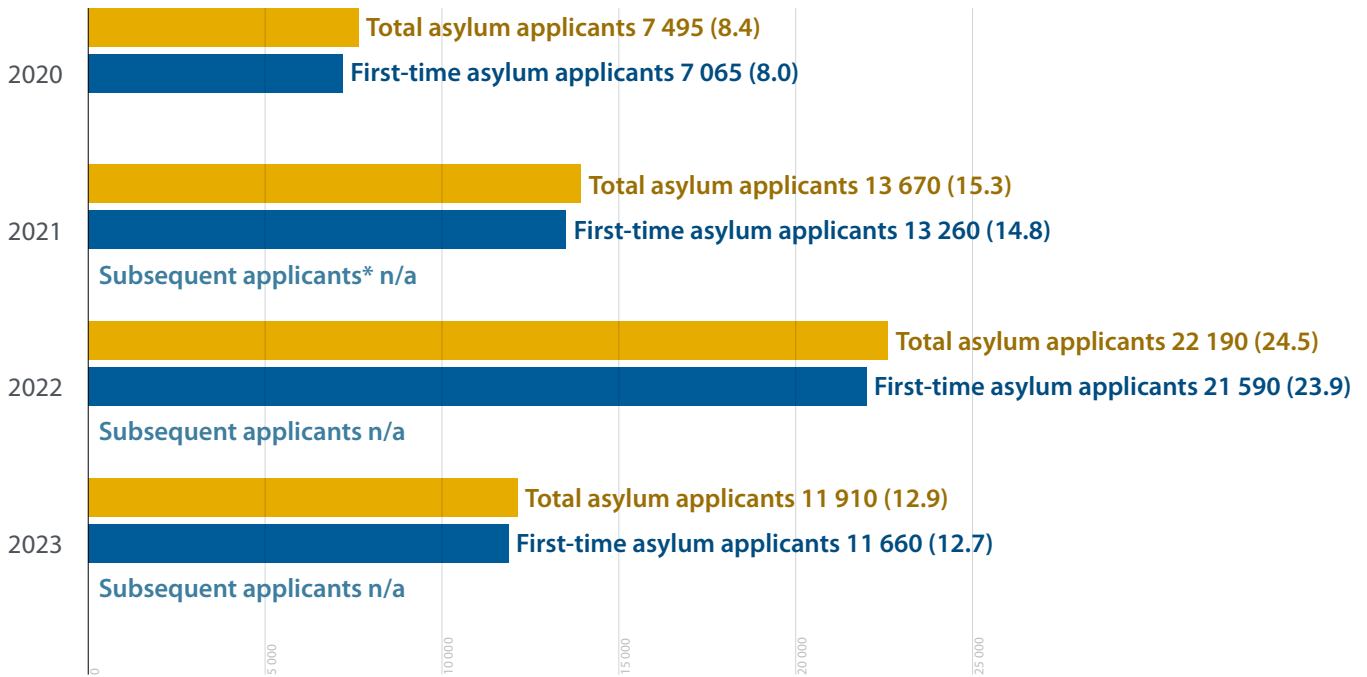
Source: Eurostat (*migr_resfirst*, *migr_resfpc*, *migr_resocc* and *migr_resoth*)



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Asylum applicants by type of application, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

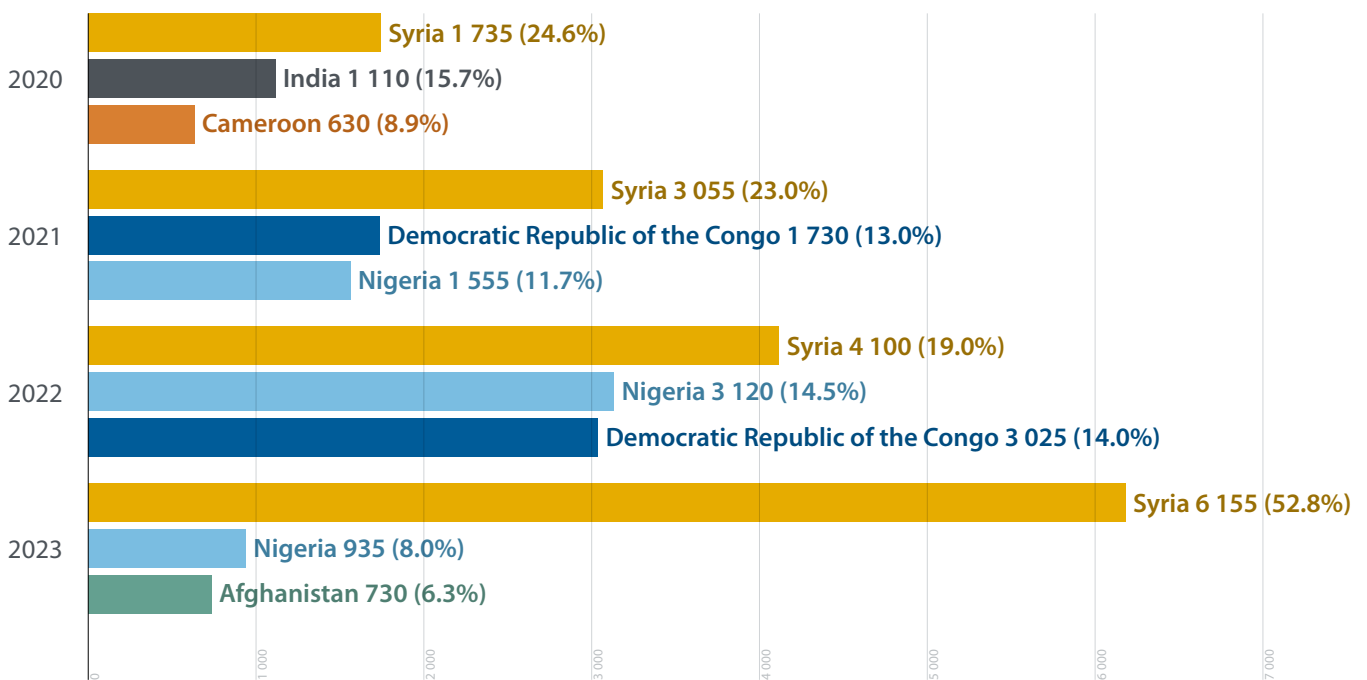


* Data collection from 2021, not available.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz and migr_asyapp1mp)

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

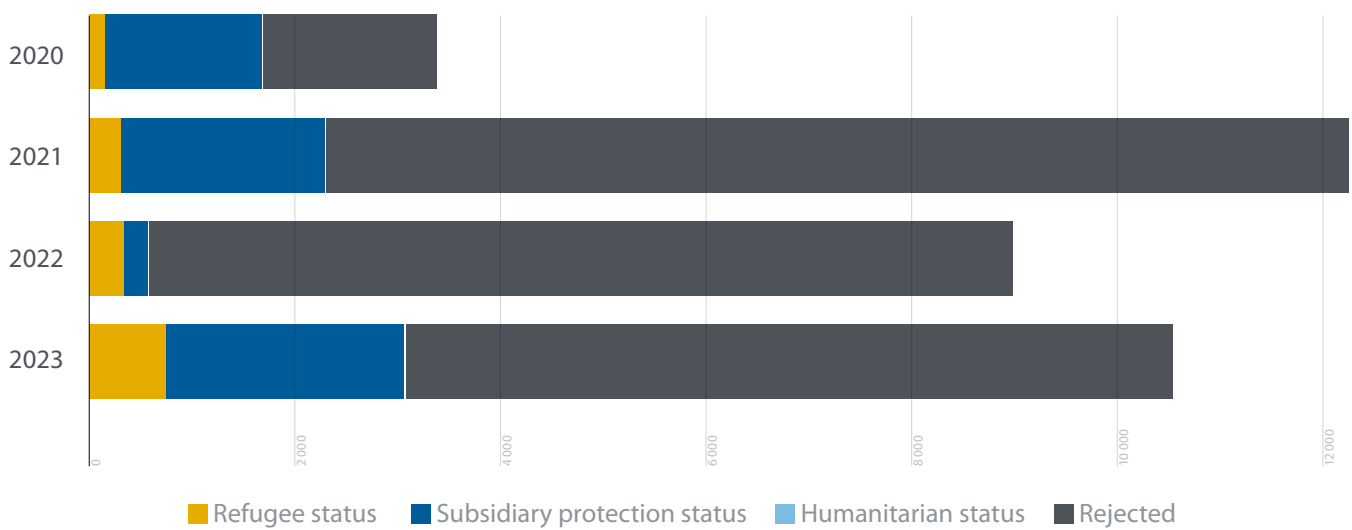
Absolute number (and the share in total number of first-time applicants)



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)

First instance asylum decisions by outcome, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the share of the total)

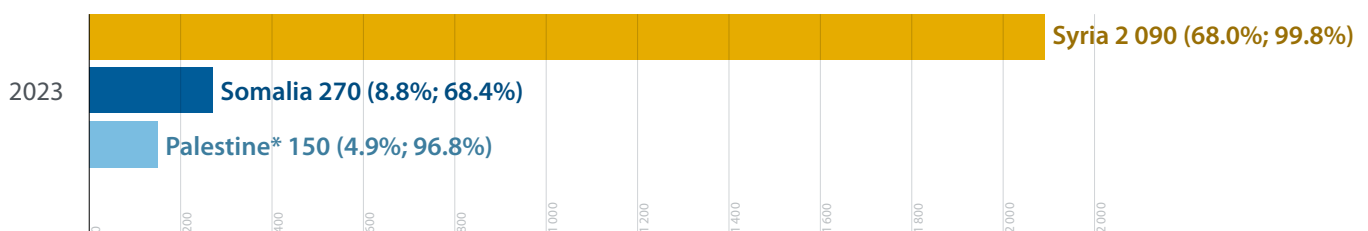


Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2020	150 (4.4%)	1 530 (45.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 695 (50.3%)
2021	310 (2.5%)	1 985 (16.2%)	0 (0.0%)	9 980 (81.3%)
2022	335 (3.7%)	235 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	8 425 (93.7%)
2023	750 (7.1%)	2 320 (22.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 480 (70.9%)

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta and migr_asydec1pc)

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

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

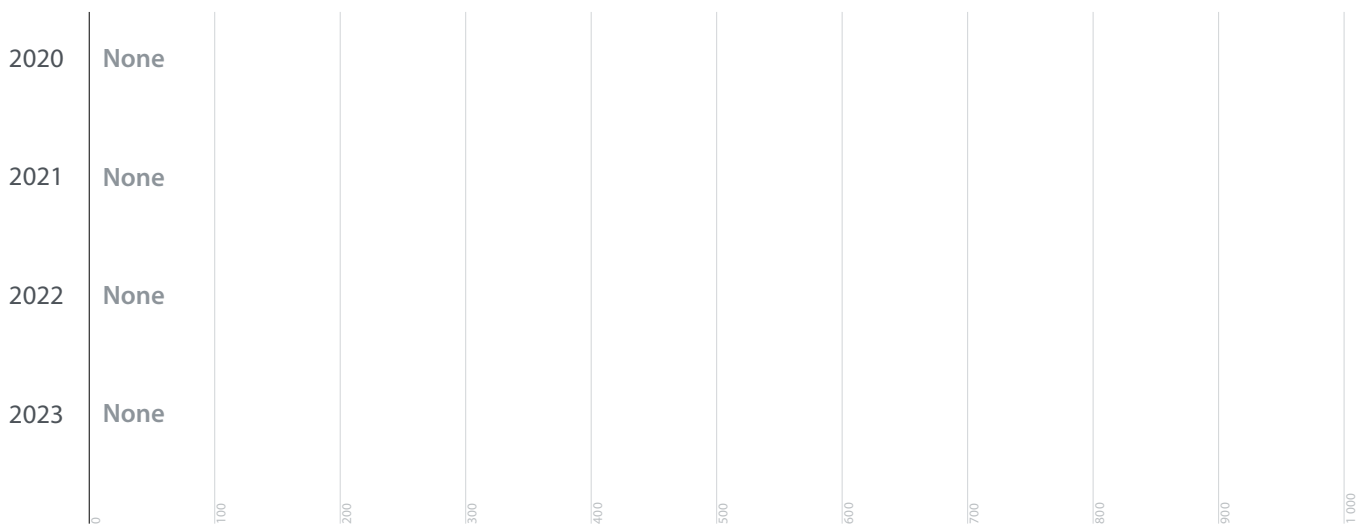


* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the reporting country on this issue.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

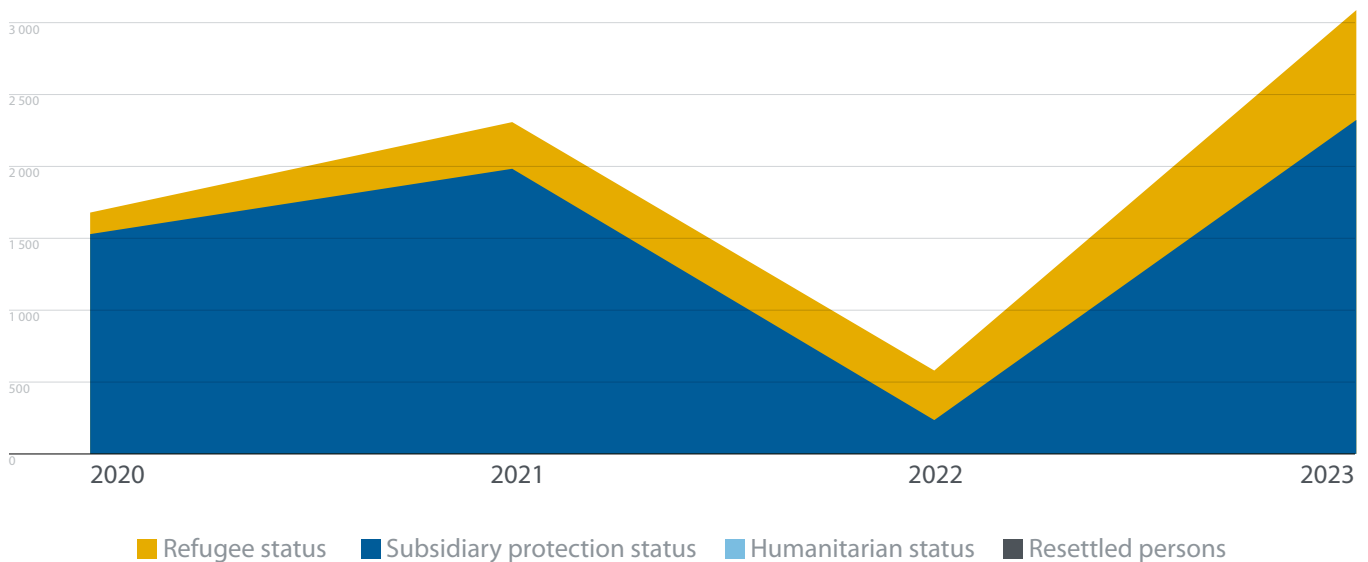
Resettled third-country nationals by sex, 2020–2023

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

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



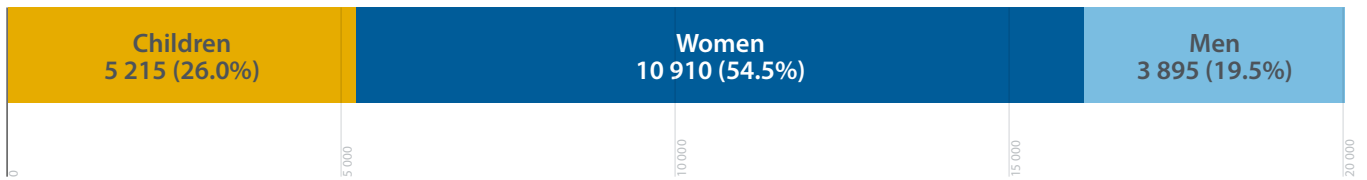
Year	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection status	Humanitarian status	Resettled persons
2020	150	1 530	0	0
2021	325	1 985	0	0
2022	345	235	0	0
2023	765	2 325	0	0

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyresa)

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

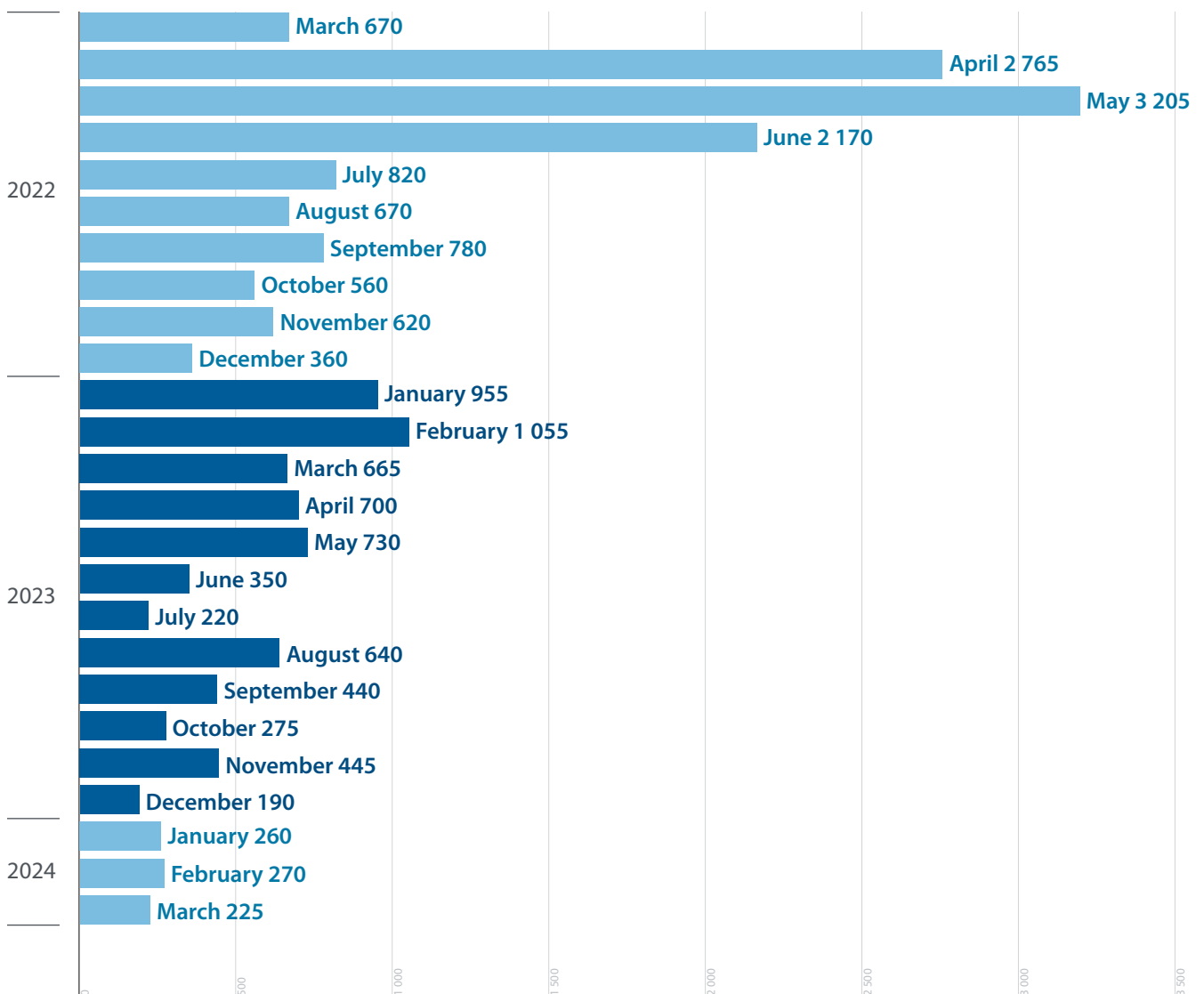
Beneficiaries of temporary protection by age and sex at the end of March 2024

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



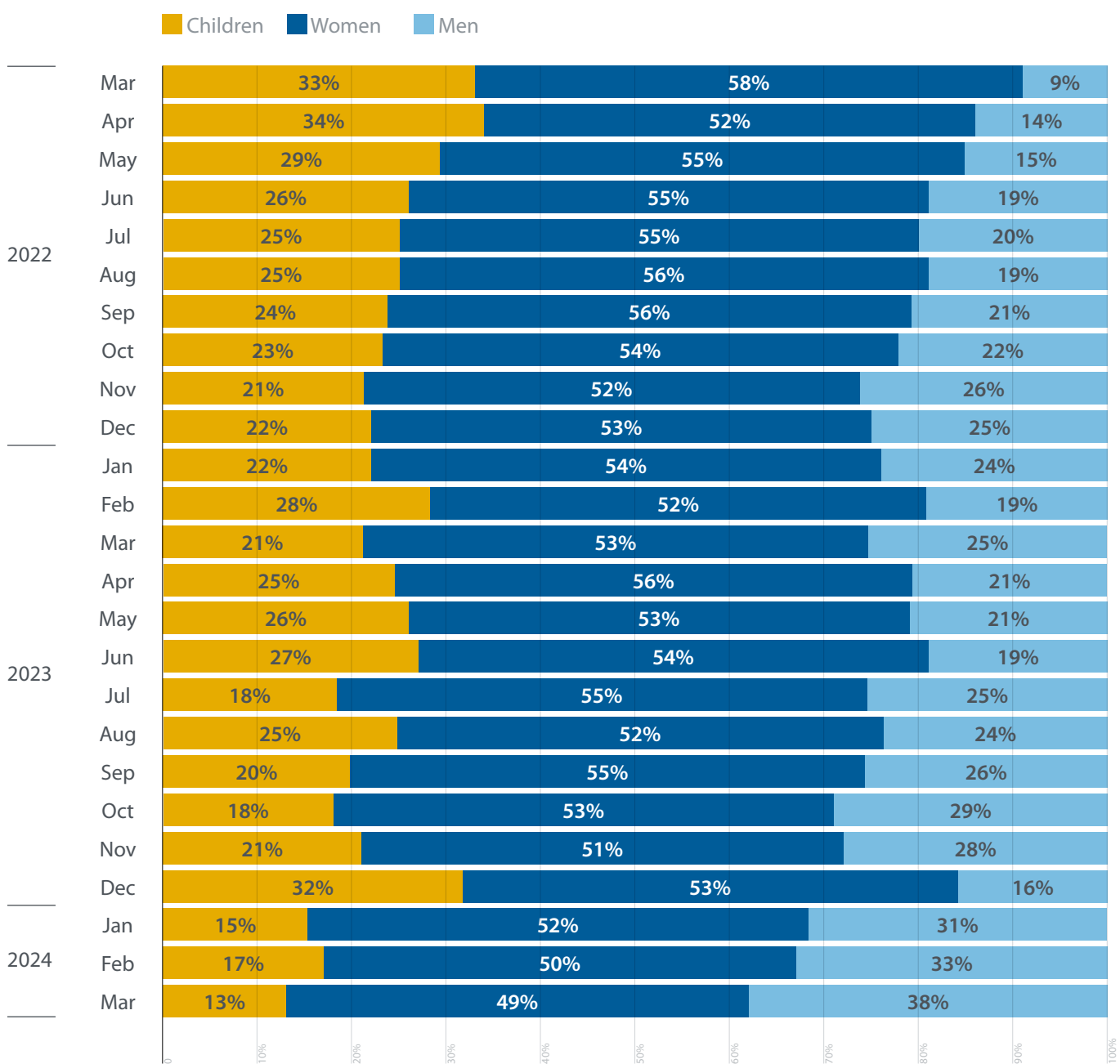
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytspm)

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_asytprm)

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



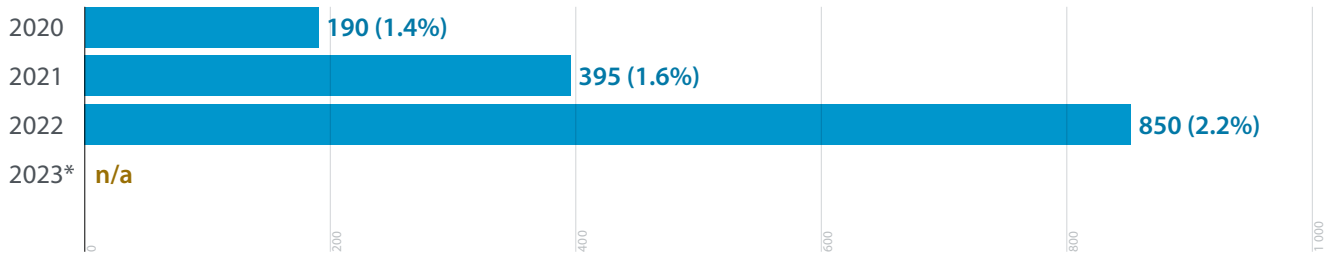
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytprm)



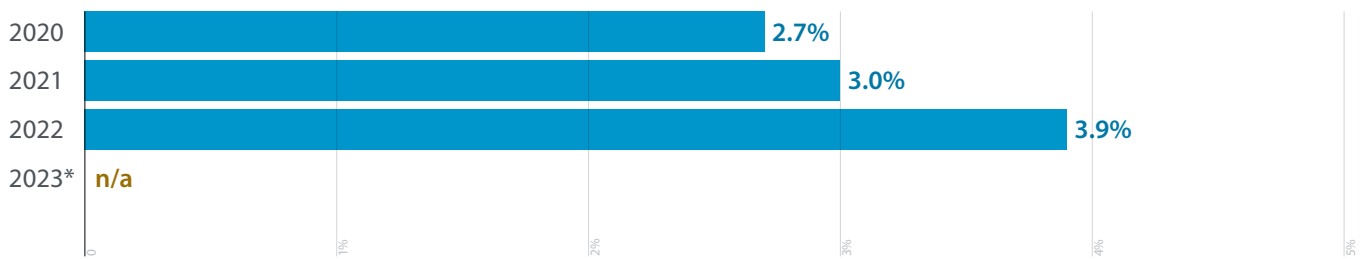
UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum, 2020–2023

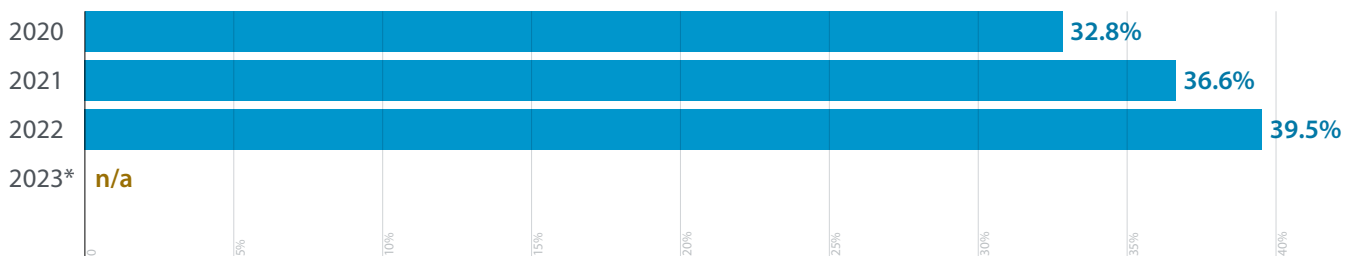
Number (and the share in total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU)



Share of all first-time asylum applicants



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

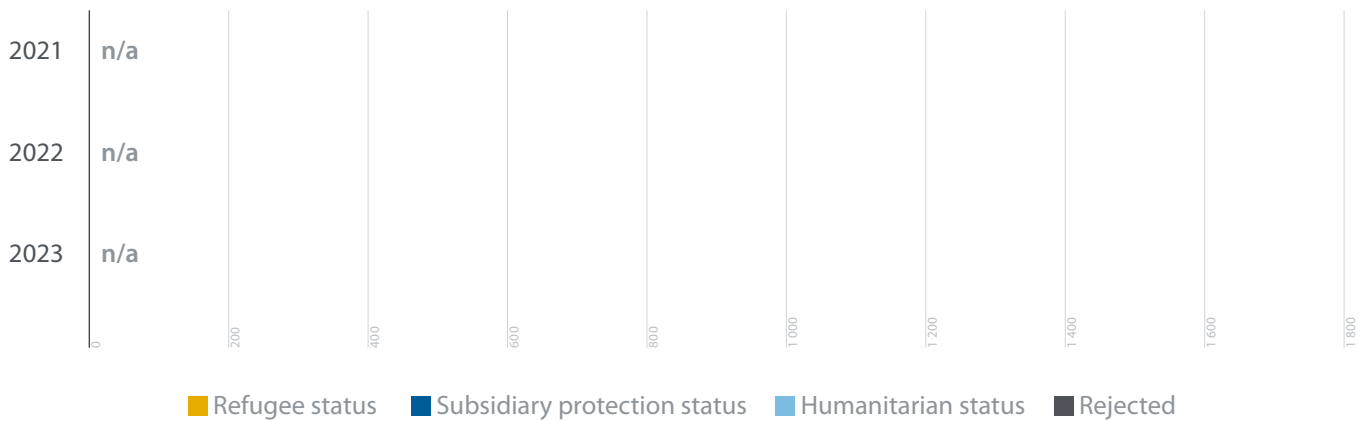


* 2023 data not available.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa and migr_asyappctza)

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

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



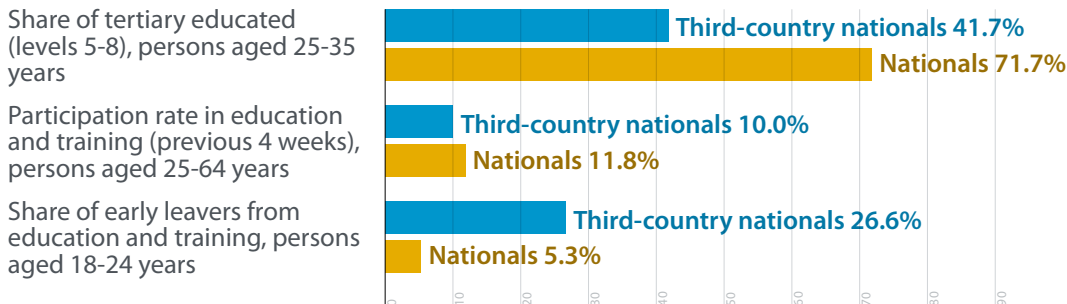
Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2022	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2023	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyumdca)

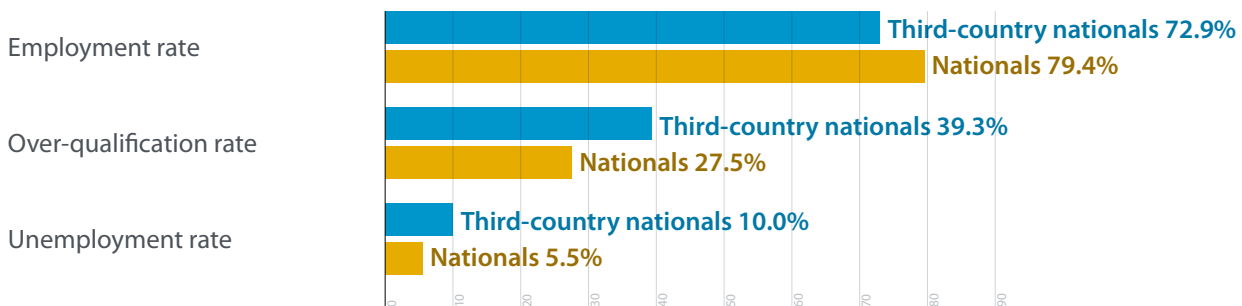
INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2022 or 2023

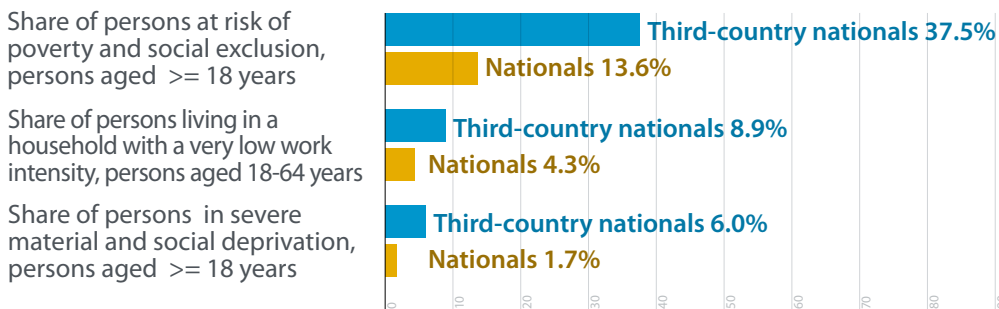
Education, 2023



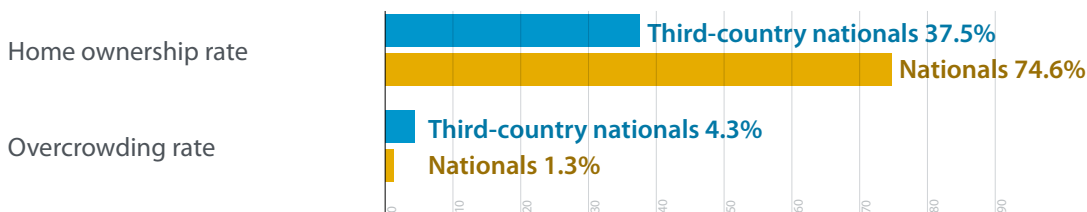
Labour market, persons aged 20-64 years, 2023



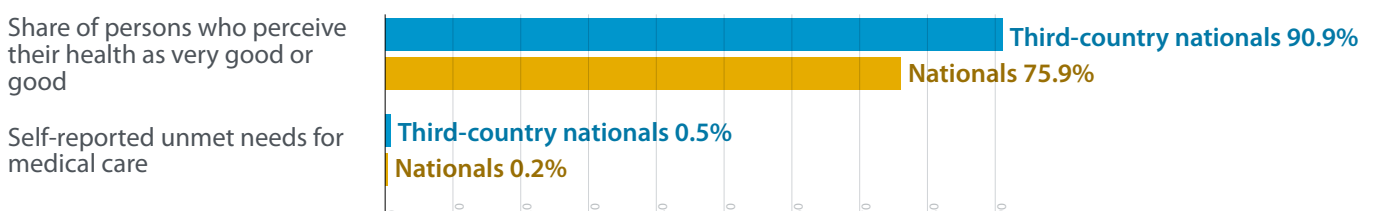
Social inclusion, 2022



Housing, persons aged ≥ 18 years, 2022



Health, persons aged ≥ 16 years, 2022





CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2020–2022

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



(*) For calculating the share for 2020, the citizens of the UK are not considered as third-country nationals.

Source: Eurostat (migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz)

Stateless persons and persons with unknown citizenship, 2020–2023

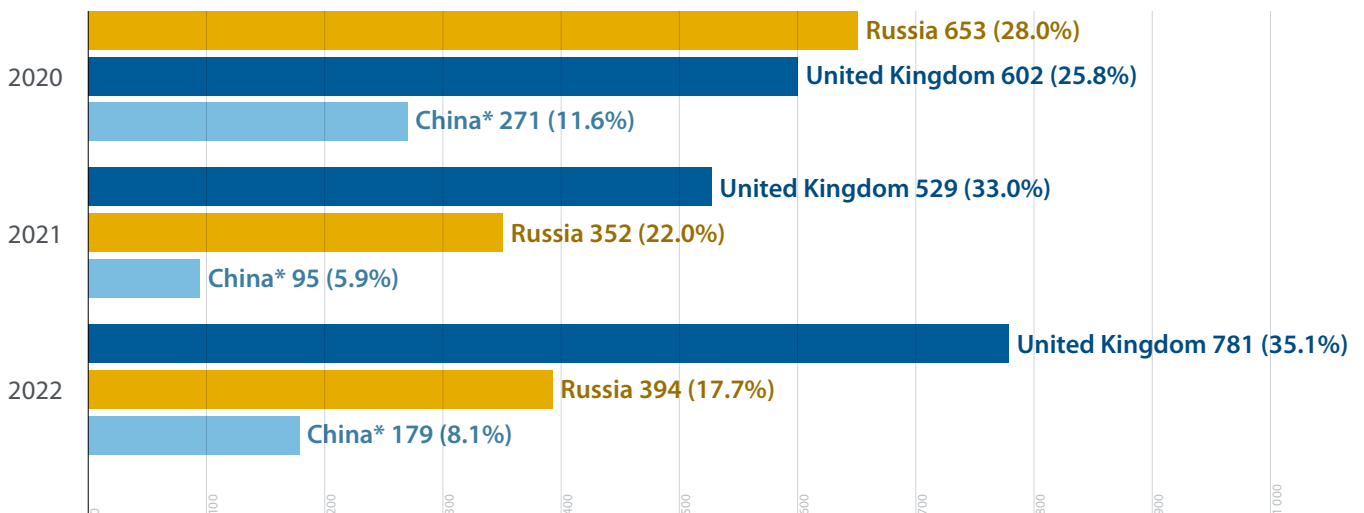
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Top 3 countries of previous non-EU citizenships of persons acquiring citizenship, 2020–2022

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



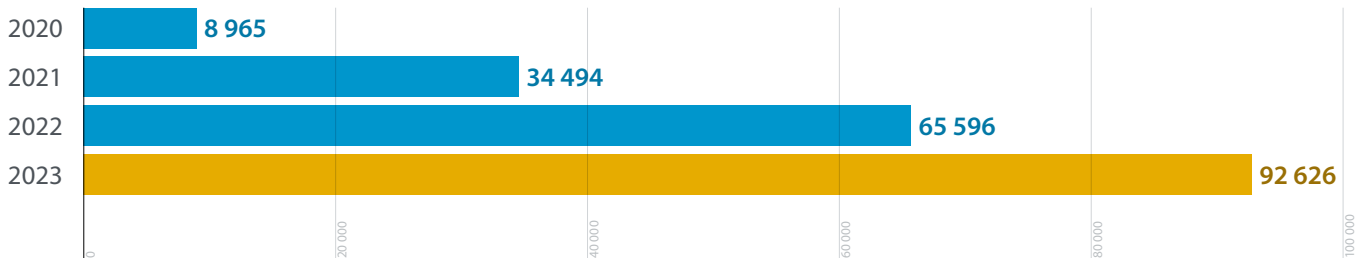
* Including Hong Kong.

Source: Eurostat (migr_acq)

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Short-stay visas issued, 2020–2023

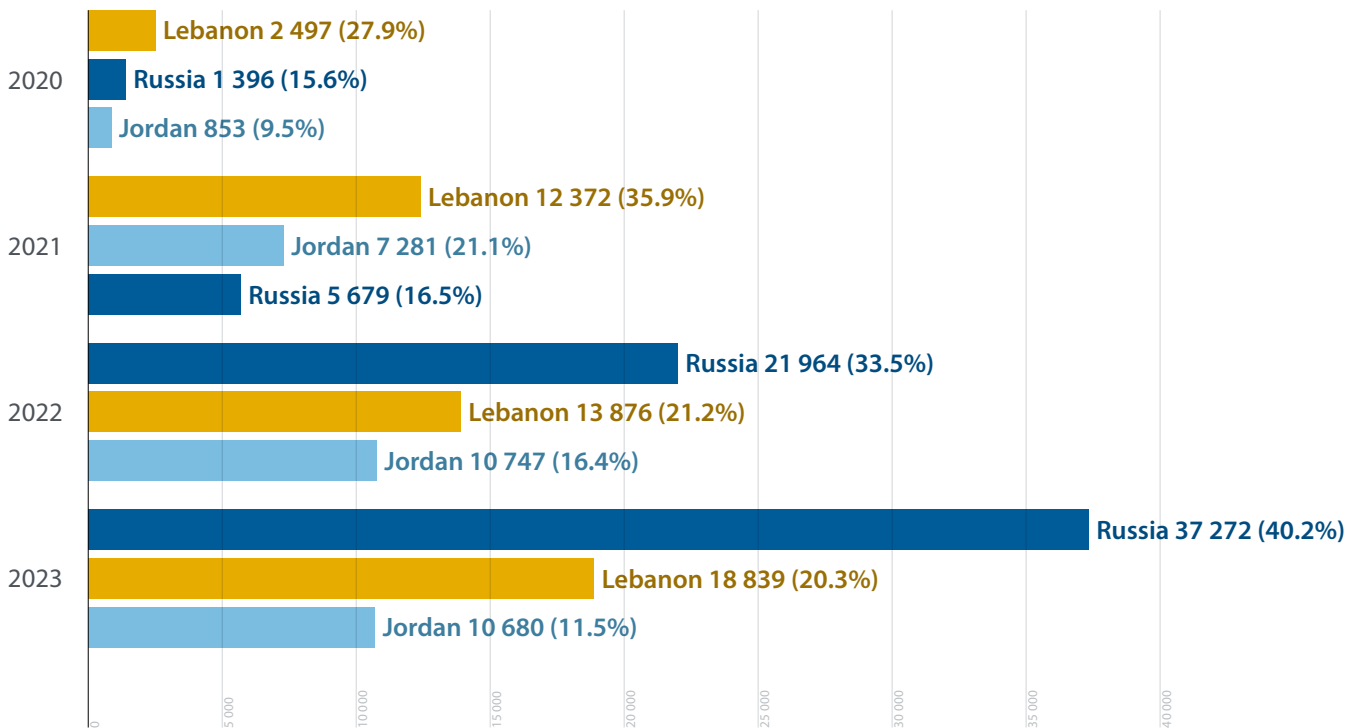
Absolute number



Note: Cyprus was not part of the Schengen Area. 2020–2023, excluding visas issued at border crossings.
Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

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

Number of short-stay visas issued (and the share of all short-stay visas issued in consulate countries)



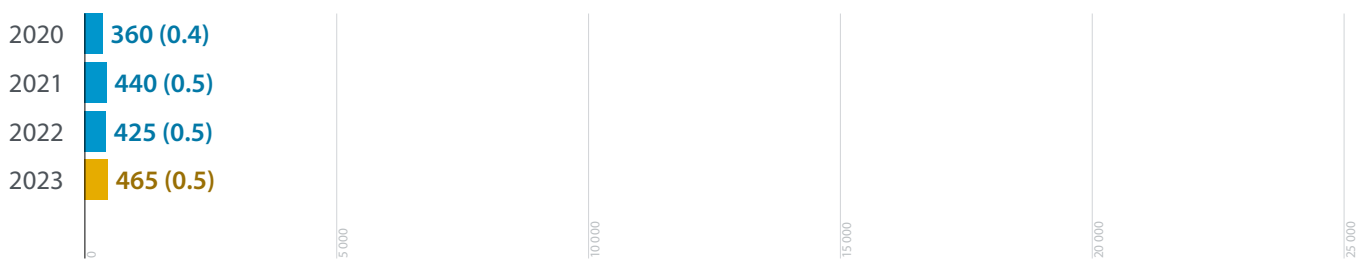
Note: the consulate country might not be the same as the country of citizenship of the visa applicant.
Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

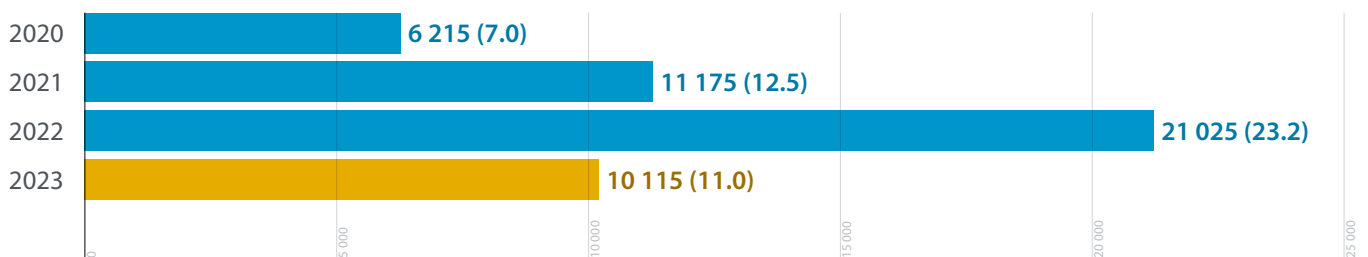
Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

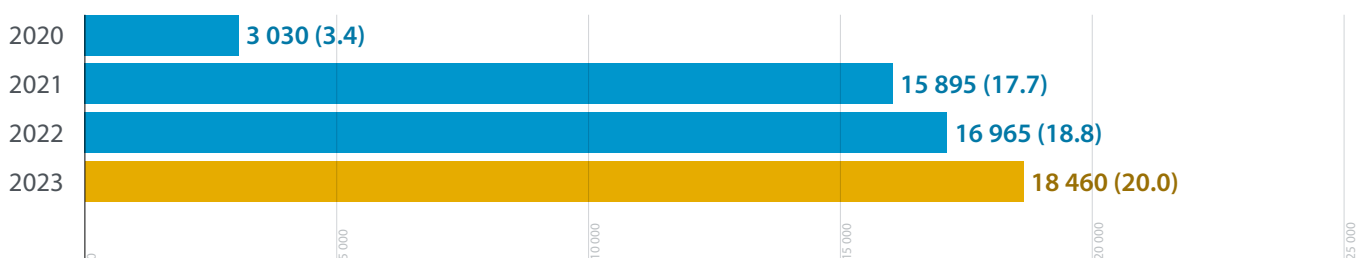
Persons refused entry



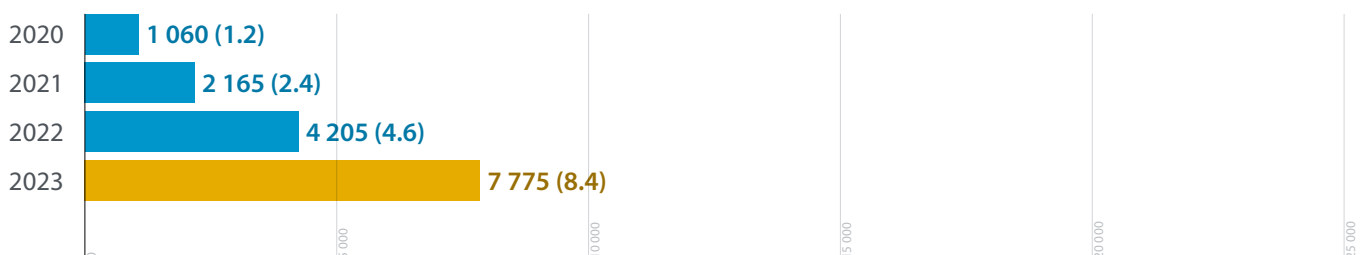
Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country



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

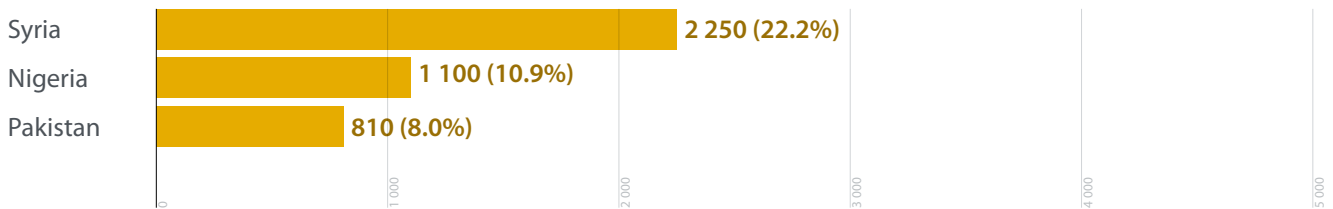
Top 3 countries of citizenship of third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2023

Absolute numbers (and the shares in the respective totals)

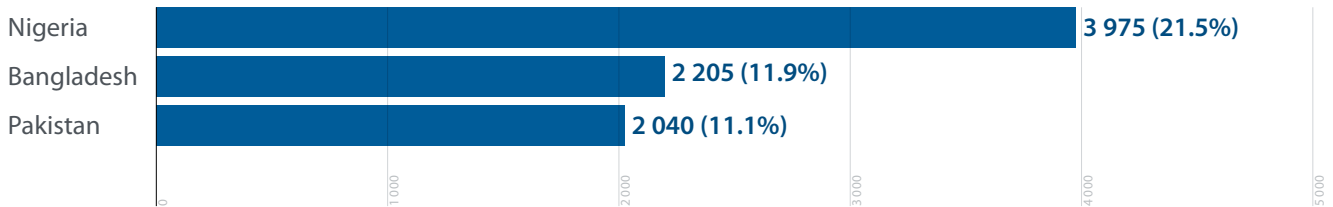
Persons refused entry



Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

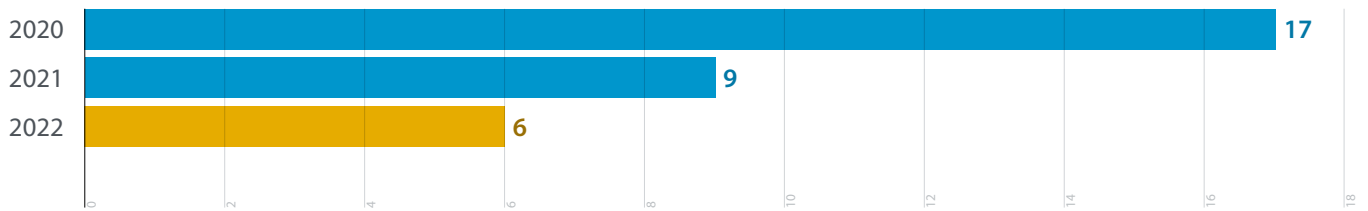


Source: Eurostat (*migr_eirfs*, *migr_eipre*, *migr_eiord* and *migr_eirtn*)



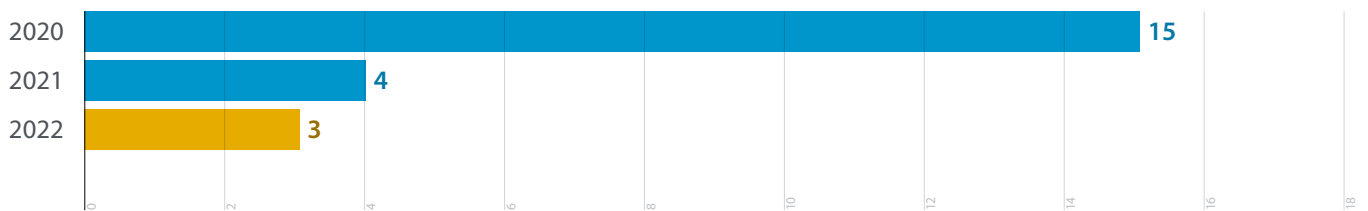
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

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



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_vctz)

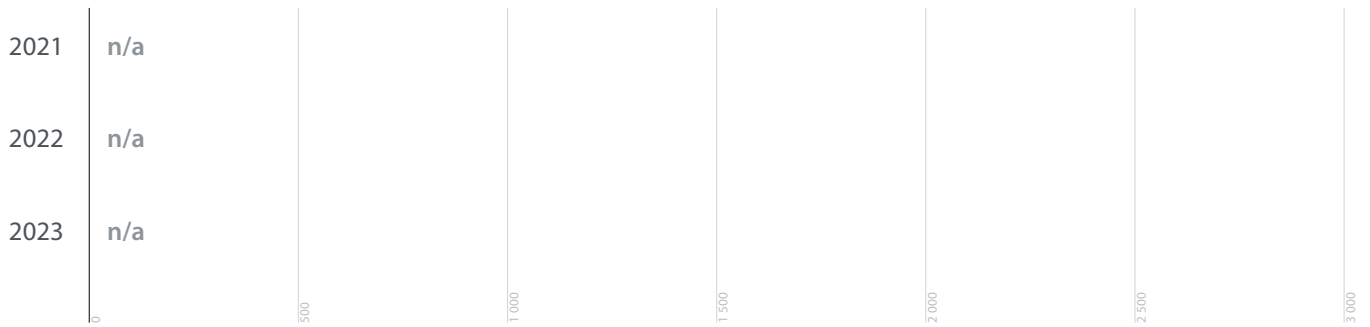
Number of first residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings, 2020-2022



Source: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

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

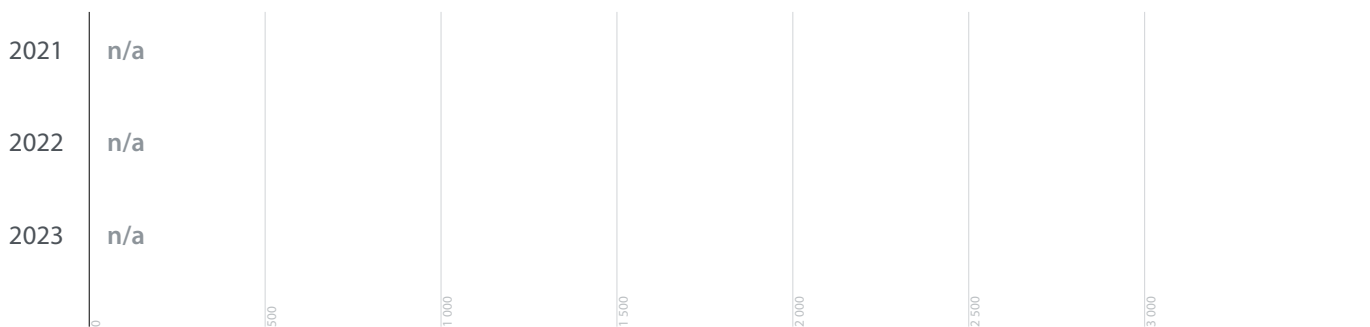
Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat (migr_eirtn1)

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

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat (migr_eirtn1)