



# The Future of Migration to and within Europe – Plausible Scenarios

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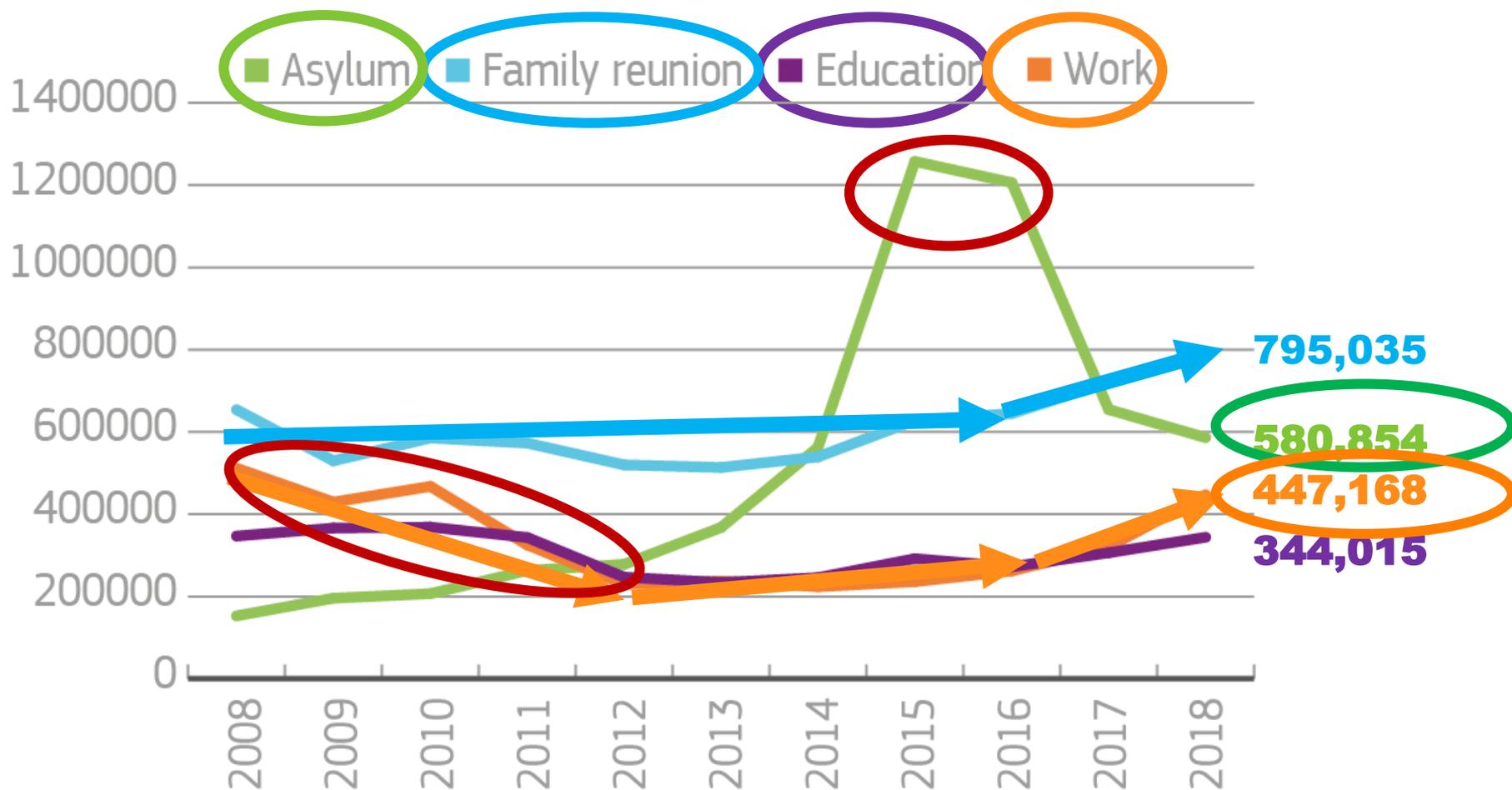




# Status quo

# Labour migration fluctuating, asylum claims peaked in 2015/16, family and marriage migration dominant

First residence permits and first asylum claims in EU28 (incl. UK), 2008-2017, absolute numbers (**flows**)





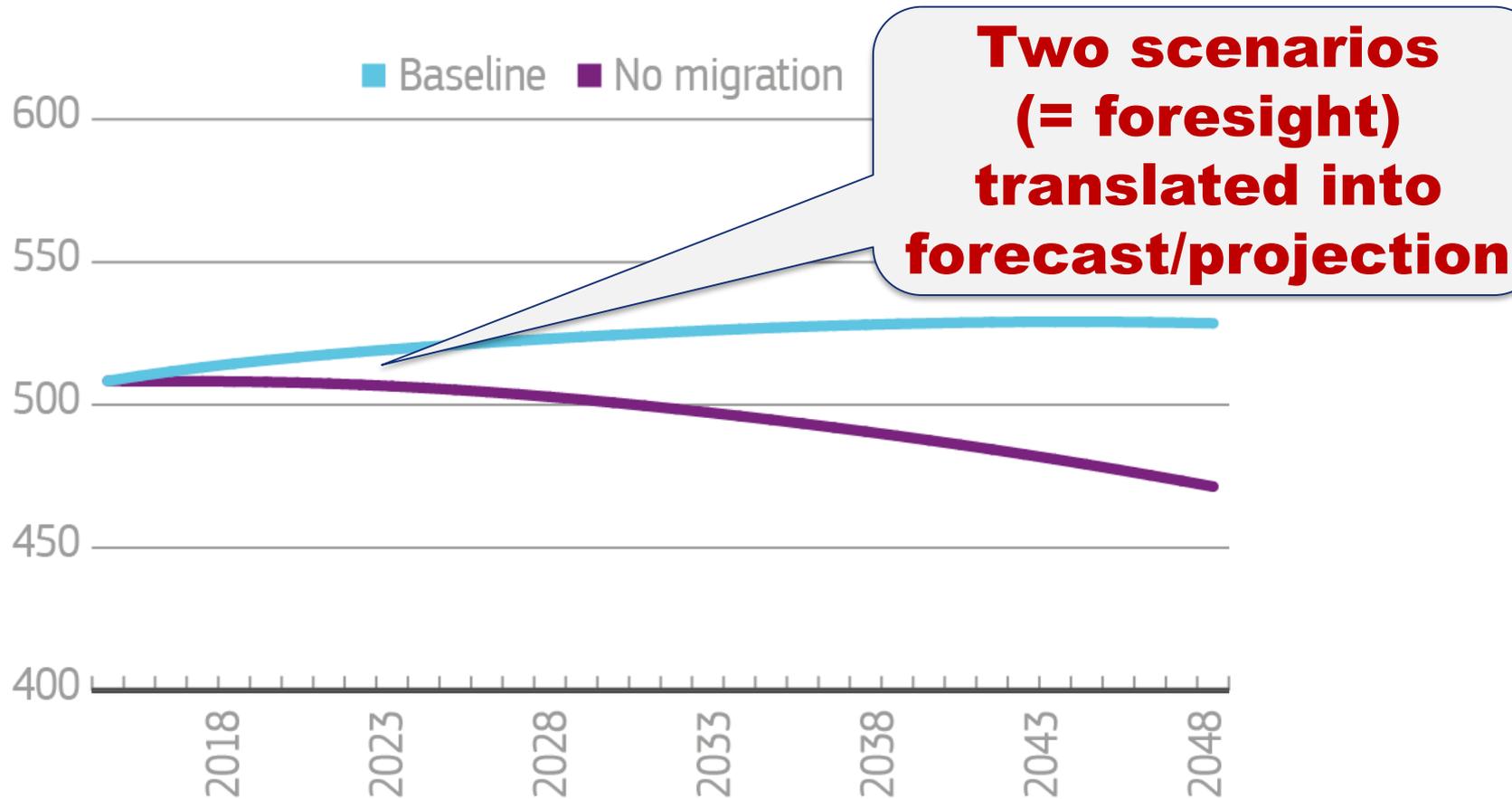
**Look into the  
future**



# Difference between forecast/projection and foresight

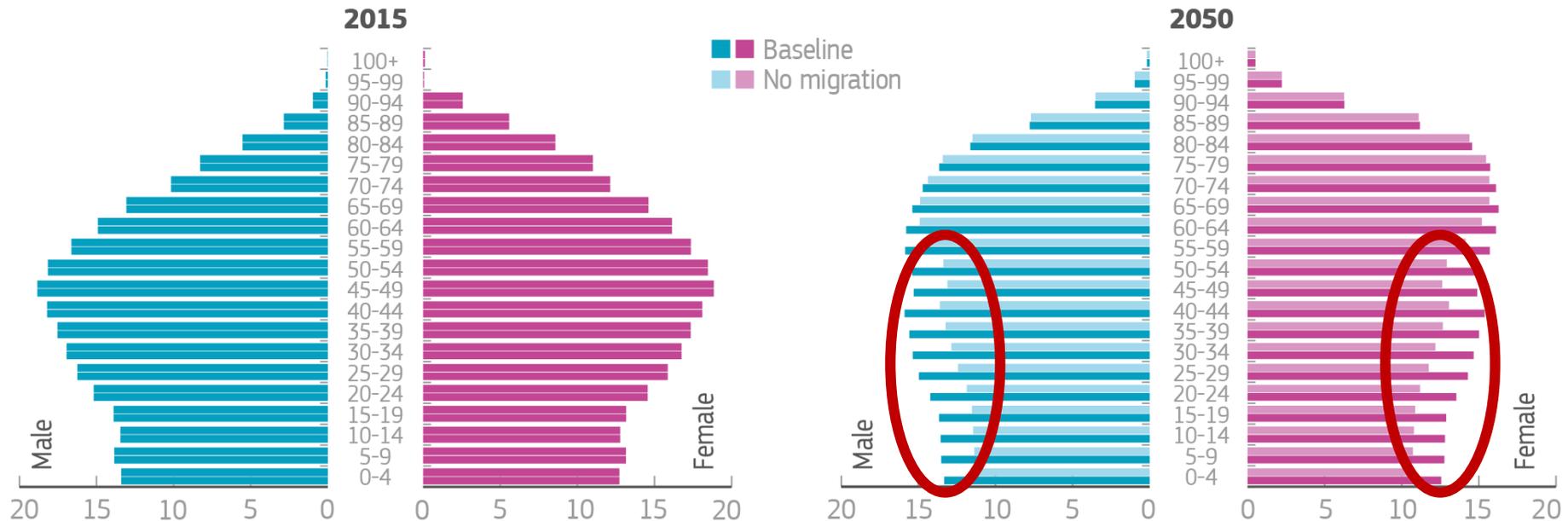
# EU 27 + UK population and labour force to shrink without migration

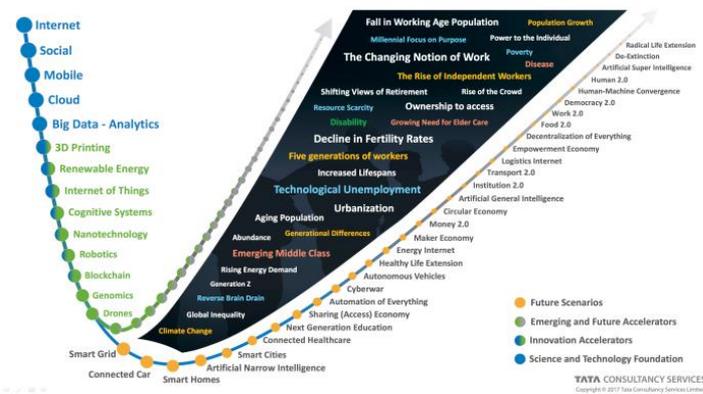
EU28 population, 2015-2050, in millions



# EU population and labour force to shrink without migration

EU28 population by age and gender, 2015, 2050, in %





## The way forward

**Net migrants do not exist as persons:  
We need to get away from looking at net migration as this is easy to model, but hard to predict**

**Technically speaking:  
We need scenarios and assumptions both on gross immigration and on emigration**



# Five scenarios

**mandated by and developed for ESPAS, the joint foresight process of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council**

# Scenario 1: Back to the early 2000s



- **External borders more or less under control**
- **Mixed flows continue**
- **Family reunion, marriage migration and humanitarian admission remain dominant**
- **But labour migration plays an important role**
- **Ageing native work forces require recruitment of labour and skills from 3rd countries**
- **No additional barriers to labour mobility within the EU**
- **Existing integration deficits likely to persist**

# Scenario 2: Protracted Corona crisis



- **External borders more or less under control**
- **Mixed flows continue**
- **Family reunion, marriage migration and humanitarian admission dominant, but reduced**
- **Labour migration is drastically reduced due to high unemployment in EU countries**
- **Travel warnings and selective border closures create barriers to mobility within the EU**
- **Integration deficits grow as people with migrant background more likely to be unemployed**
- **Emigration rises**

# **Scenario 3: Instability in the neighbourhood**

- **Violent conflicts and/or extreme weather conditions producing large flows of people seeking protection in the EU**
- **Flows adding to existing integration challenges**
- **Negative sentiment towards migrants growing leading to greater electoral scores for political parties advocating restrictive asylum and migration policies**
- **Large numbers of migrants could spending years in limbo**



# **Scenario 4: More selective admission of migrants**

- **Shift from present admission criteria (with strong humanitarian elements) to a stricter skills-based selection of labour migrants (Australia and Canada)**
- **Or shift to a more demand and employer-driven selection (New Zealand and Sweden)**
- **More restrictive handling of humanitarian admission**
- **Economic gains from migration larger**
- **Reduced integration challenge**



# Scenario 5: Going native

- **Public opinion growing more sceptical or even hostile to the admission of foreigners**
- **General political consensus effectively leading to much lower immigration, higher return rates of already established migrants**
- **General “climate” reduces intra-EU mobility and incentivises emigration at a larger scale**
- **Main challenge: managing demographic ageing, gradual population decline and a shortage of labour and skills**
- **In the absence of immigration of labour**





**The five scenarios are not mutually exclusive**

**EU Member States can and will have different migration policies and trajectories**

**Scenarios could materialise consecutively**



European  
Commission



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HARNESSING MIGRATION AND POPULATION DATA  
FOR EU POLICYMAKING



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Main population projection by Eurostat

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography-migration-projections/population-projections-data>

Selected KCMD research linked to the topic:

Projecting the net fiscal impact of immigration in the EU. JRC Science for Policy report. Luxembourg 2020 (forthcoming)

Estimating net migration at high spatial resolution. JRC technical report. Luxembourg 2020

Demographic Scenarios for the EU: Migration, population and education. Publications Office of the European Union , Luxembourg 2019

More information can be found at:

<https://bluehub.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

and

[https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/migration-demography\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/migration-demography_en)