

AUSTRIA

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



OVERARCHING CHANGES

A new federal government was sworn in on 7 January 2020, comprising delegates of the Austrian People's Party and the Austrian Green Party. The [Government Programme 2020–2024](#) envisages a balanced approach to migration and asylum that builds on multilateral cooperation. A comprehensive migration strategy is being prepared that will apply at all levels of State and be based on clear separation of migration and asylum. The [Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services](#), in the legal form of a limited company (*GmbH*), took on the administration of material reception conditions for applicants for international protection under federal care.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

Three regulations entered into force on 1 January 2020 detailing certain types of labour migration: (1) [quotas for short-term employment in tourism, agriculture and forestry](#), (2) [Regulation for Skilled Workers 2020, containing the annual list of shortage occupations](#), and (3) [Regulation on the admission of very highly qualified workers in specific shortage occupations](#). An [amendment to the Settlement and Residence Act](#) entered into force on 24 December 2020, with applicants for a Red-White-Red (RWR) Card no longer required to provide evidence of accommodation to local standards.

KEY POINTS



A new federal government was sworn in on 7 January 2020, ushering in changes in migration and asylum policy, as outlined in the Government Programme 2020–2024.



On 1 December 2020, the recently established Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services took charge of the administration of material reception conditions for applicants for international protection under federal care.



Overall, developments in 2020 were driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and related mobility restrictions. For example, special arrangements were made for key workers in agriculture, medical and care services in order to ensure continuing food supply and to meet the demand for nursing services.

The mobility restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic required special arrangements to be made for certain categories of workers to ensure continued food supply and to meet the demand for care services. [Key agricultural workers](#) and [24/7 home care workers](#) were allowed to enter Austria under defined conditions, while [renewal of work permits for seasonal workers](#) was also allowed. The conditions regulating the [recognition of qualifications acquired in foreign countries](#) were temporarily eased for previously trained workers providing health and nursing care or those in medico-technical professions.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

In September 2020, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research presented a new [National Strategy for Mobility and Internationalisation in Tertiary Education](#). The Strategy aims to promote mobility and international exchange among students and researchers.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

As part of the amendment to the [Settlement and Residence Act](#), an abbreviated application procedure was introduced on 24 December 2020 for the residence permit ('Settlement Permit') for certain family members of citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. Changing to an RWR Card Plus after two years was simplified for this group, and the requirement for evidence of accommodation to local standards was dropped.

OTHER MEASURES

Applications for renewal or change of purpose of residence permits could be submitted [by regular or electronic mail](#) while COVID-19 measures limited mobility and interpersonal contact. [Where certain conditions were met](#), the requirement to submit originals of documents/evidence and document fingerprints could be waived.

Austria adopted a [Brexit Implementing Regulation](#), specifying detailed rules for the (continued) right of residence of UK citizens and their family members who stayed in Austria beyond 31 December 2020.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

As of 1 December 2020, the recently established [Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services](#) is responsible for administering material reception conditions for applicants for international protection under federal care.

COVID-19 measures saw procedures temporarily modified to permit [online appointments with authorities, digital administration](#), and the introduction of special rules relating to [competent authorities](#) and [periods allotted for legal remedies](#). Other steps included [raising awareness of the public health measures among asylum seekers](#) and [reducing occupancy levels at federal care facilities](#). Austria's enforcement of the [Dublin III Regulation](#) was similarly limited. After a *de facto* suspension of transfer activities in the second quarter of 2020, Austria worked

with other Member States to define transfer procedures and safe conditions.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The [Government Programme 2020–2024](#) envisages improved protection for unaccompanied minor refugees, including better legal status that emphasises guardianship. An [amendment to the Asylum Act 2005](#) expanded the legal definition of family members: from 24 December 2020, asylum seekers and individuals entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection who are unmarried minors are considered family members of the persons who represent them legally but are not their parents. A minor can thus obtain the protection status accorded to their legal representative through the family asylum procedure.

In a [resolution passed on 9 July 2020](#), the National Council petitioned the federal government to ensure fair asylum procedures conforming to high standards, notably for particularly vulnerable groups, such as individuals threatened with persecution due to religious conversion, sexual orientation or gender identity.



INTEGRATION

OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS

[Key focuses in integration](#) in 2020 were: (1) strengthening the role of women as 'integration drivers', (2) strengthening identification with Austria, (3) encouraging voluntary work as a new pillar for integration, (4) ascribing more responsibility to the parents of school-age children with a migration background, and (5) increasing efforts to avoid the formation of parallel societies.

INTEGRATION OF ADULTS

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the [period allotted for completing module 1 of the Integration Agreement](#) (demonstrating A2 level German language skills, knowledge of the basic values of Austria's legal and social order) was temporarily extended. Online consultations and free online German courses were made available.

FIGHTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The [Government Programme 2020–2024](#) envisages the first national action plan against racism and discrimination. Steps were taken towards a draft federal act with measures to [prevent online hate speech](#).



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

From 1 September 2020, [amendments to the Citizenship Act 1985](#) made it easier for direct descendants of victims of National Socialism to acquire Austrian citizenship. On 15 September 2020, the [Citizenship Regulation was modified accordingly](#), setting out the necessary evidence to be submitted.

COVID-19 restrictions also saw [citizenship candidates temporarily allowed to take the oath in writing](#).



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

Temporary controls at the EU internal borders with Slovenia and Hungary were [maintained](#) or [extended](#) in 2020. COVID-19 mobility restriction measures saw [borders closed or controls introduced](#).



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR STAY

In July 2020, the Ministers' Conference on effectively combating irregular migration reached an [agreement](#) to set up a platform in Vienna to address irregular migration along the eastern Mediterranean route. Austria also tested the [use of technical options such as drones](#) to prevent irregular border crossings.

The awareness-raising campaign 'Strengthening the delivery of information provision and counselling within the scope of AVRR in the Western Balkans' (July 2019 – December 2020) encouraged voluntary return of irregular migrants in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina to their countries of origin.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The [Government Programme 2020–2024](#) commits to measures to improve prevention and victim protection, prosecution of accessories to trafficking under criminal law, international cooperation, and a foreign policy campaign. Work on the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2021–2023 began in 2020, encompassing among others the [recommendations by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(GRETA\)](#).

Anti-trafficking efforts in 2020 sought to [raise awareness](#) of the [impacts of COVID-19 restrictions](#). While in some instances a surge in precarious working conditions could be traced to the pandemic, a clear connection was also seen between situations of economic pressure and the risk of exploitation and human trafficking. The Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking discussed the topic at its [conference, 'Human Trafficking in Times of Corona'](#).



RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

From 1 January 2021, an [amendment to the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act](#) requires mandatory return counselling sessions to be held at an advanced stage of the procedures. Previously, return counselling was obligatory either when the first-instance return decision was issued, or upon notice of the intended rejection/dismissal of an application or intended revocation of *de facto* protection against removal. The amendment made counselling mandatory (with exemptions, e.g. unlawfully staying third-country nationals), only after a final or enforceable return decision is issued against an asylum applicant or third-country national lawfully residing in Austria.

Another change is the shift of responsibility for return counselling and return assistance to the [Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services](#), as of 1 January 2021.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The [Government Programme 2020–2024](#) focuses on migration-related goals in development cooperation. The main emphasis is on providing assistance in migrants' countries of origin, including creating incentives for businesses to invest in third countries to create local livelihood opportunities and thus mitigate the causes of forced and irregular migration.

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 Austria 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 Austria



data relative to EU

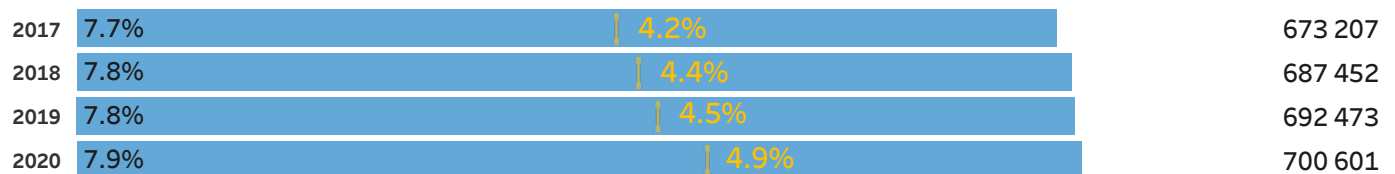


LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

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

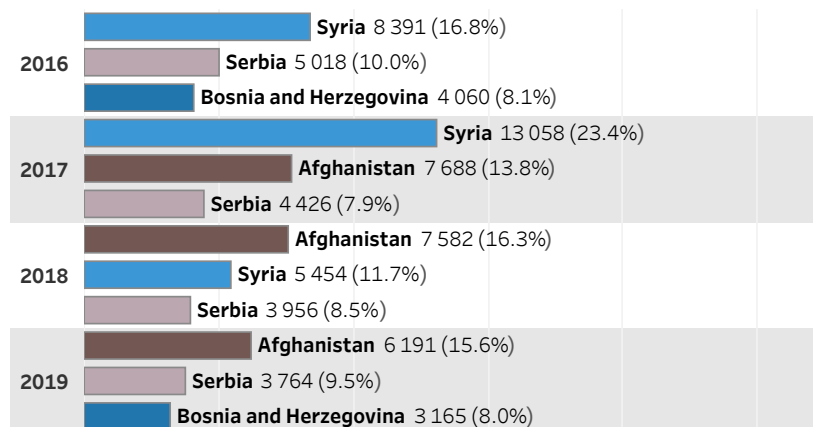
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Number of TCNs



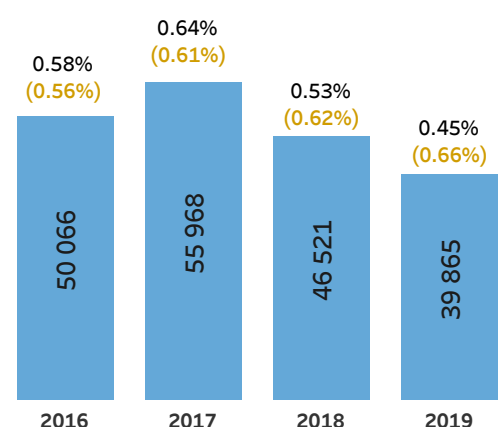
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



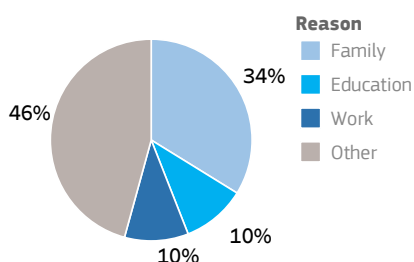
First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



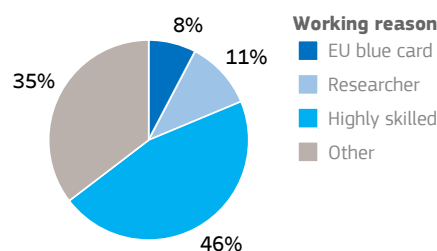
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



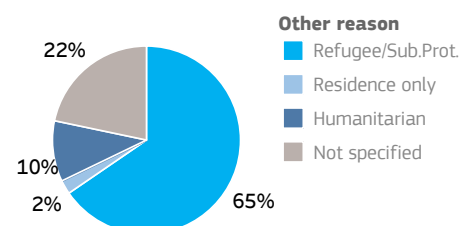
First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resocc)



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

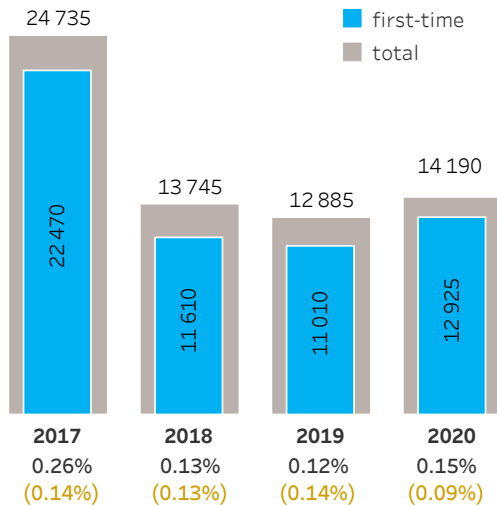
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)



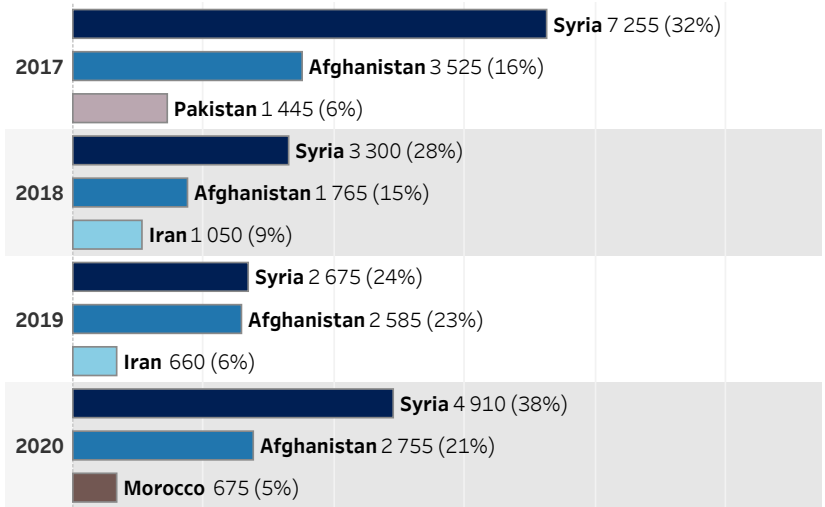


INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

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

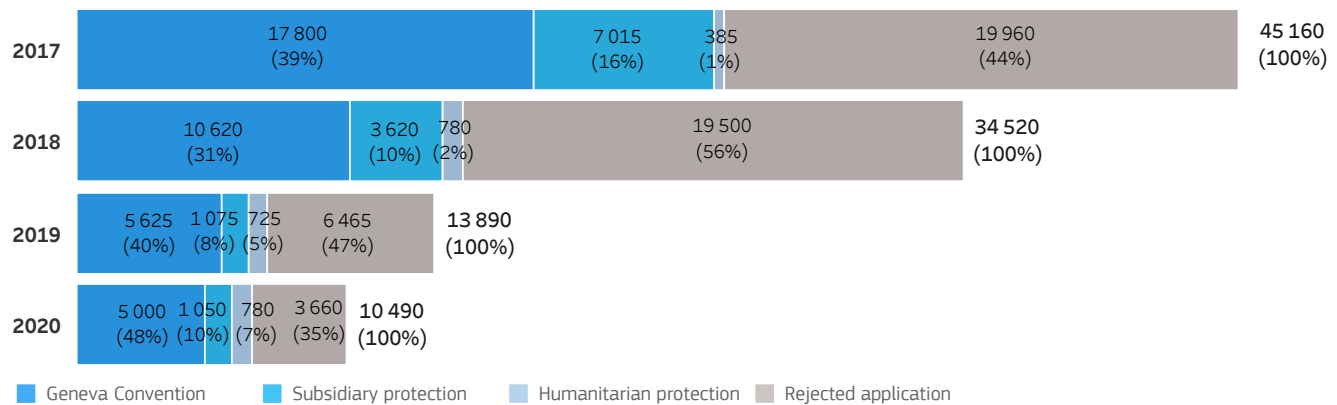


Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)



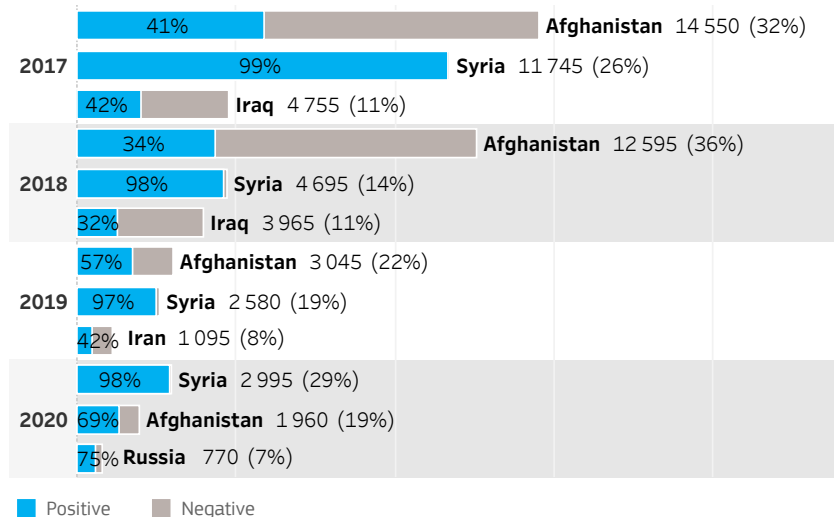
Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfst)



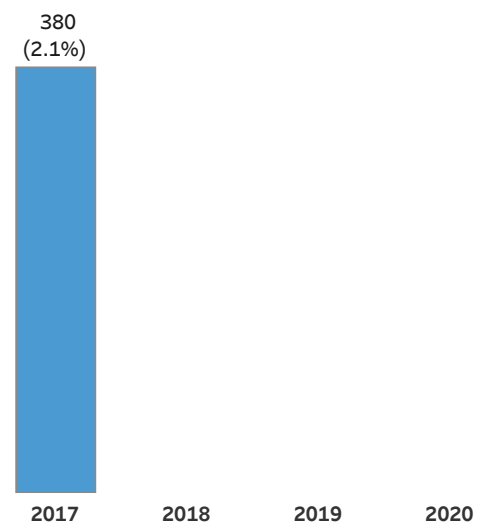
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfst)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

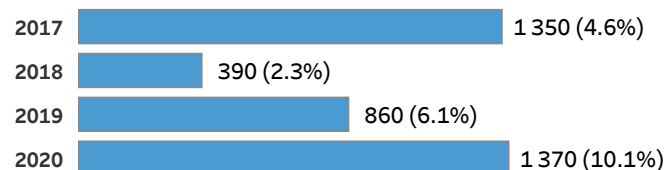




UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

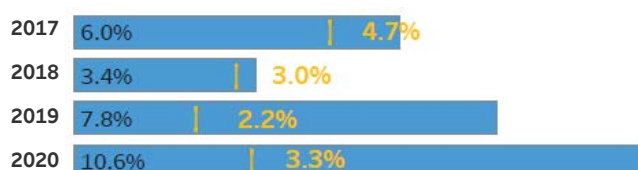
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



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

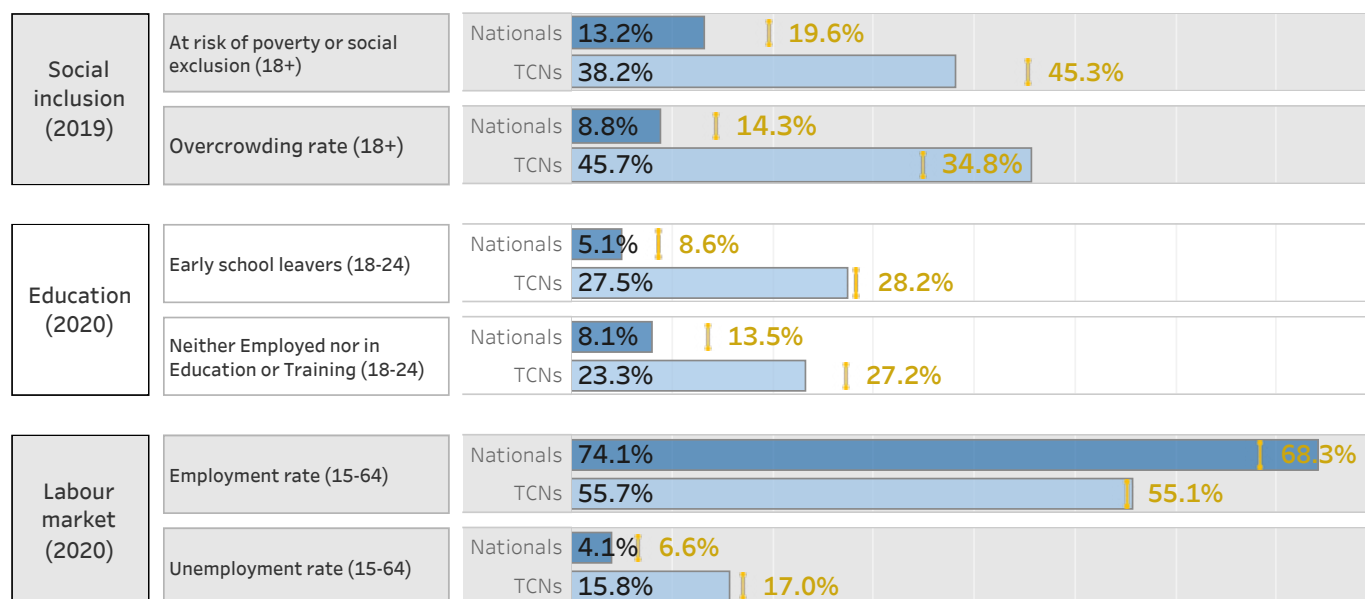
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



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, lfisa_ergan, lfisa_urgan)



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

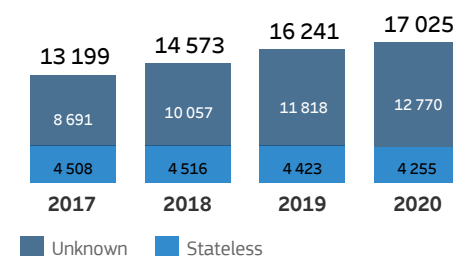
Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acqs, migr_acq)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1cta)



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)

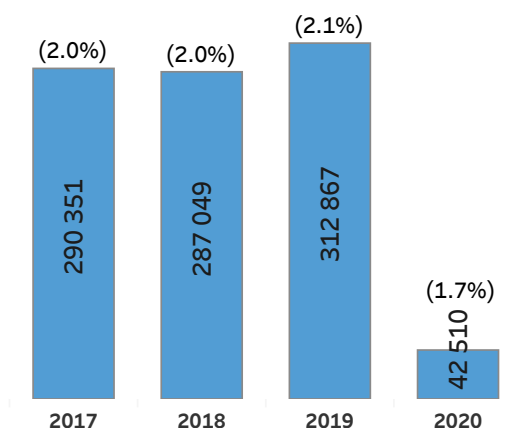




BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

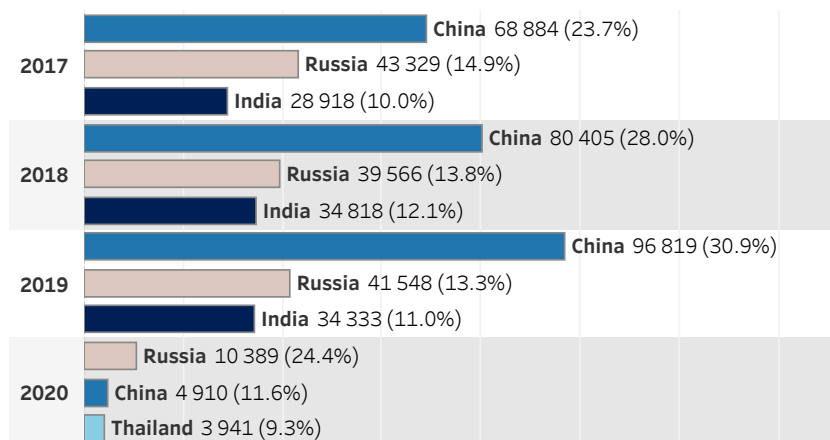
Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



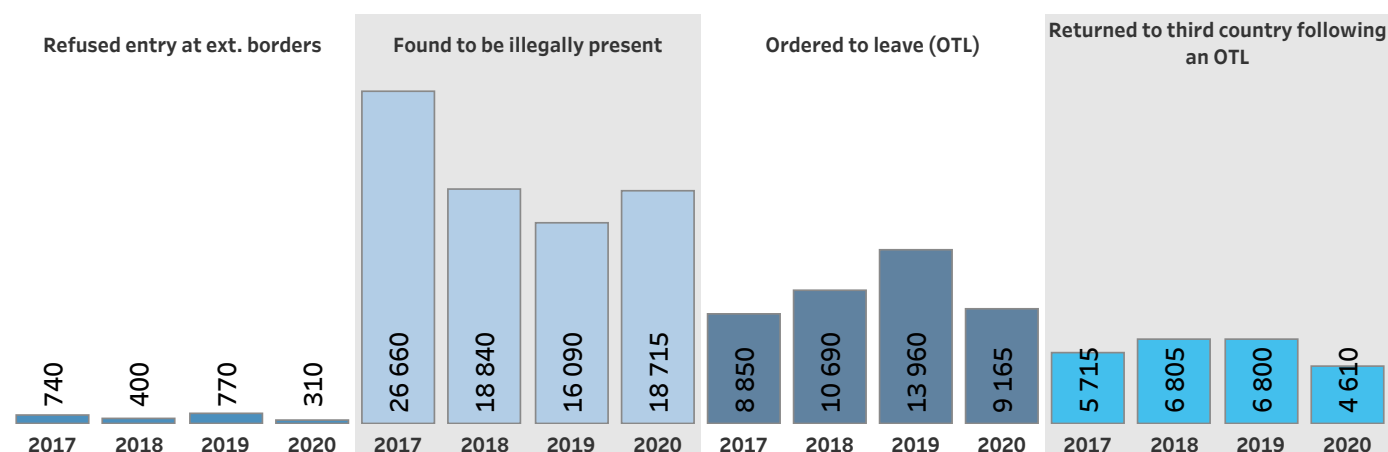
Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



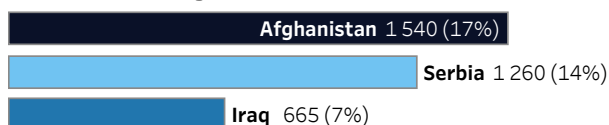
IRREGULAR MIGRATION

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



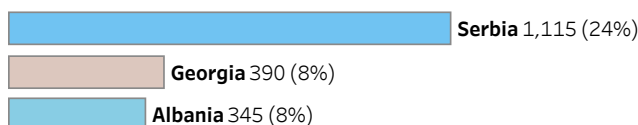
Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country, 2020

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)

