

COUNTRY FACTSHEET | DECEMBER 2025

Main developments
in migration and
international
protection, including
latest statistics

BELGIUM 2024

KEY POINTS

- In 2024, a series of legislative reforms introduced key changes in family reunification, reception, statelessness, and return.
- At regional level, all federated entities revamped their policy and legislative frameworks governing access to the labour market.
- A dedicated monitoring unit was introduced to strengthen data collection, coordination and forecasting across the asylum chain.

OVERARCHING AND CROSS-CUTTING CHANGES

In early 2024, the former Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration presented a project to create a Migration Code.¹ It intended to codify, modernise, and reform primary legislation governing migration and asylum, namely the [Immigration Act](#) and the [Reception Act](#). The Migration Code was developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and was under government review for discussion in ministerial cabinets throughout 2024.

In parallel, a series of key reforms were adopted in asylum and migration, notably family reunification, reception, statelessness, and return. A dedicated chain monitoring unit was established in May 2024 within the Federal Public Service (FPS) Home Affairs. Comprising representatives from the key bodies involved in the asylum chain, the unit aims to inform policy and operational decisions with real-time data and evidence-based insights, covering aspects ranging from workload in asylum services to reception capacity, and enabling the anticipation of future scenarios, such as changes

¹ Full text of Migration Code not publicly available. See: https://www.nicoledm.be/nieuw_wetboek_gecontroleerde_migratie

in applications for international protection in Belgium. Following the June 2024 elections, new governments were formed in the German-speaking Community, Wallonia, and Flanders, each introducing new political commitments on integration and economic migration of third-country nationals.

LEGAL MIGRATION

In 2024, all three regions (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels-Capital) and the German-speaking Community implemented new legislation on labour migration.² The reforms varied in scope but shared the common objectives of addressing labour shortages, contributing to the attractiveness and competitiveness of regional labour markets, introducing new safeguards for foreign employees, lightening the administrative burden, and ensuring greater legal certainty for employers and administrations. Some regions further implemented European Union (EU) directives, such as the [Blue Card Directive](#) (2021/1883/EU) and the [Seasonal Workers Directive](#) (2014/36/EU).

At federal level, a [new law](#) adopted in March 2024 aimed to combat abuse and bring Belgian legislation in line with EU jurisprudence. It introduced a number of important changes to family reunification, including extending the categories of migrants who need to wait at least two years before they can be joined by a new spouse or partner.

Enabel, the Belgian agency for international cooperation, continued to develop legal pathways for labour mobility. Enabel's [THAMM project](#) (with Morocco and Tunisia) and the [GSP Care/Soins project](#) (with Morocco) aimed to promote mutually beneficial labour mobility in key sectors like healthcare. Entrepreneurial mobility was supported through short-term schemes such as [PEM WECCO](#) (Senegal) and [PEM N'Zassa](#) (Côte d'Ivoire), which fostered over 65 business partnerships and encouraged private investment. These initiatives applied the Global Skills Partnership model to align labour market needs with skills development and economic cooperation.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In 2024, Belgium saw continued growth in applications for international protection (39 510 applications)³, increasing the pressure on reception facilities. To manage the influx and backlog, the office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) recruited additional staff, introduced fast-track procedures, and explored new cross-cutting working methods to support

case handling. Several measures were taken to increase reception capacity by creating new places or reducing the length of stay in the reception network.

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

No significant developments in 2024.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Initiatives sought to streamline and expedite the registration and correct identification of unaccompanied minors. The Immigration Office and the Guardianship Service enhanced their cooperation to improve the identification process, focusing on more efficient age assessments and better information-sharing. A 'fast lane' system was introduced for minors with manifest doubts about their status to quickly address questionable claims and ensure more accurate processing. Measures were also taken to resolve the backlog of unaccompanied minors waiting to be appointed a guardian, including recruiting and improving the status of guardians.

INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

The Walloon government revised its integration strategy to prioritise labour market integration, including offering training for in-demand professions. It also extended the time limit for newcomers to complete the integration course from 18 months to three years from the time of requesting a residence permit at their municipality of residence. It expanded exemptions to individuals with medical conditions, primary caretakers, those in professional training, and beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP). Newcomers with an A2 level of French were exempt from language courses, while those with lower proficiency could attend citizenship training in a language they understood. In Flanders, the Agency for Integration and Civic Integration launched a [pilot project](#) allowing future newcomers to start the civic integration programme in their country of origin. The project targeted individuals from Arabic-speaking countries, providing online social orientation courses and a trajectory counsellor to help participants to

² One new legislation per region, in addition to an intra-federal cooperation agreement: [Intra-federal Cooperation Agreement Flanders](#), [Brussels-Capital](#), [Wallonia](#), [German-speaking Community](#)

³ Figure provided by Eurostat. Belgian Immigration Office figure: 39 615.

prepare for integration and complete the programme more quickly upon arrival. The Brussels-Capital Region launched a bilingual civic integration programme for newcomers, allowing them to choose between a Dutch-language programme by the Flemish Agency or a bilingual programme offered by the Common Community Commission (COCOM). It adopted its first [Code for equality, non-discrimination, and diversity](#), which consolidated existing laws and introduced new provisions, including measures and policies supporting families. It paid special attention to single parenthood, stronger penalties for failing to present certificates of registration or complete programmes by the deadline, and recognition of multiple discrimination.



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

From September 2024, stateless persons could request a residence permit on the grounds of statelessness through a new [administrative procedure](#), managed by the Immigration Office, with input from the CGRS. In parallel, from August 2024, stateless persons were granted the same family reunification rights and benefits as beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs).



SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BORDER MANAGEMENT AND VISA POLICIES

In 2024, Belgium made significant legal advancements in immigration and border management. A [Royal Decree](#) was issued to prepare for the entry/exit system (EES), outlining national rules for authority access and reporting procedures. The [European Travel Information and Authorisation System \(ETIAS\) Law](#) created the Belgian ETIAS National Unit, while the [Royal Decree](#) on the Schengen Information System (SIS) clarified the national access list and procedures for SIS alerts. These developments aligned with the European regulations to enhance border security and migration management. [Another law](#) expanded the competence of the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex) within the national territory, allowing Frontex members to be deployed at border controls and to act as escorts during the forced return of foreigners.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In 2024, Belgium launched several online information campaigns and completed an awareness campaign in Guinea, to raise awareness and inform potential migrants on the dangers of irregular migration.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

In 2024, two new laws took effect to reduce opportunities for trafficking in human beings and protect vulnerable workers. The [Law on the Establishment of a Municipal Integrity Investigation](#) empowered municipalities to investigate businesses suspected of covering up organised crime, including trafficking in human beings. The [Law on Sex Work under Employment Contracts](#) required employers to obtain prior authorisation under strict conditions to hire sex workers and subjected non-compliant employers to severe penalties, as well as possible prosecution for offences such as exploitation or trafficking in human beings. A number of measures raised awareness of trafficking in human beings, such as producing brochures for hotel staff in the Brussels-Capital Region and its periphery, and for diplomatic staff in Belgian representations abroad. Belgium also increased its efforts to combat child sexual exploitation, with the launch of a pilot project testing new software to detect suspicious digital exchanges related to prostitution, with a particular focus on minors.



RETURN AND READMISSION

The [new Law of 12 May 2024](#) on a proactive return policy introduced a number of changes to the return framework for foreigners without legal residence in Belgium. It required individuals to cooperate with the competent authorities carrying out return, removal, transfer, or expulsion procedures. The law also mandated that authorities must inform foreigners about the cooperation obligation, the consequences of refusal, and the return or expulsion measure.

The law included a provision prohibiting the detention of families with minor children in closed centres and expanded the range of competent escorts involved in the return process. It also provided a legal basis for individual case management (ICAM) coaching, specifying the consequences for individuals who fail to cooperate. The law formalised the creation of 'open return places' within certain Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) collective reception facilities.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, Belgium strengthened the link between migration and development through several targeted initiatives. Belgium supported a [programme in the Sahel](#), implemented by IOM in Mali, to enhance the resilience of displaced populations through sustainable natural resource management and improved migration data. Belgium partnered with IOM Belgium and Luxembourg to continue the [O-remit project](#), aimed at improving remittance services and fostering diaspora investment in 14 partner countries. Enabel, the Belgian agency for international cooperation, launched the [MIRECAM](#)

[project](#) in Mauritania to support the inclusion of displaced persons through agro-pastoral activities. Enabel also initiated two reintegration projects: [MIGRET](#) in Côte d'Ivoire and [AMIS](#) in Guinea, both focused on strengthening institutional capacity for the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The statistical annex available on the next pages complements the Country Factsheet and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Belgium 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 mostly cover the period from 2021 to 2024. Since 2024 data were not available at the time of publication for certain datasets, in these cases the period 2021-2023 is covered.

Exceptionally, the monthly data on temporary protection covers the period until March 2025. The data were extracted between 6 to 10 June 2025. The manuscript was completed in June 2025. The Eurostat website is constantly being updated. Therefore, it is likely that fresher data will have become available since the data was extracted for the production of this publication. An online data code available under each figure can be used to directly access the most recent 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.

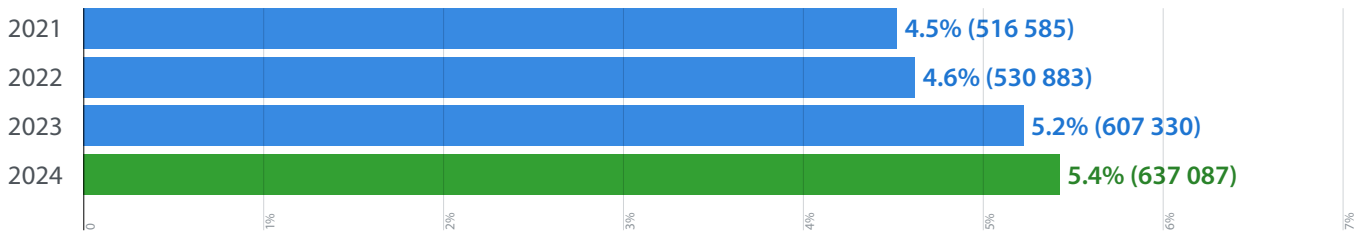
A 'How to read the statistical annex' guide, describing each individual chart and providing links to the data sources, is available [here](#).



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2021–2024

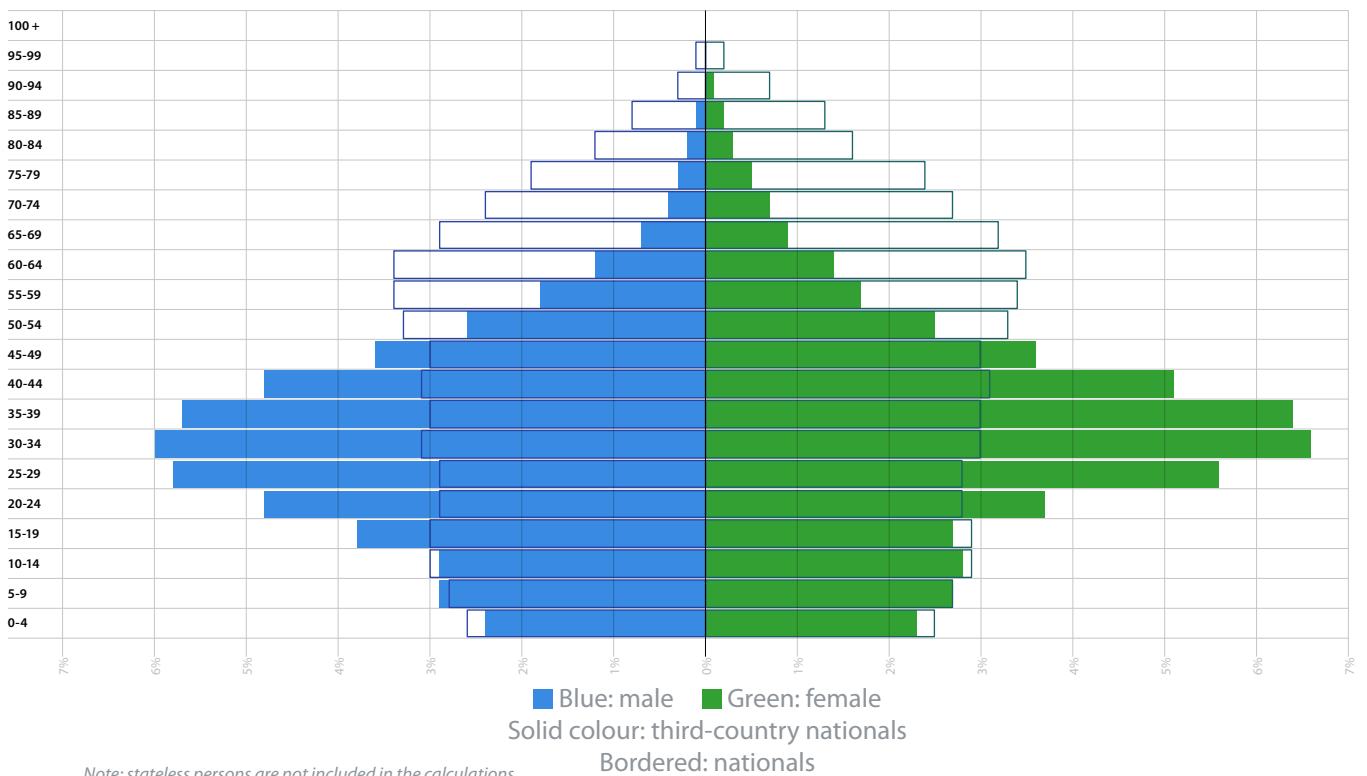
Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_pop1ctz](#))

Age structure of nationals and third-country nationals, 1 January 2024

%

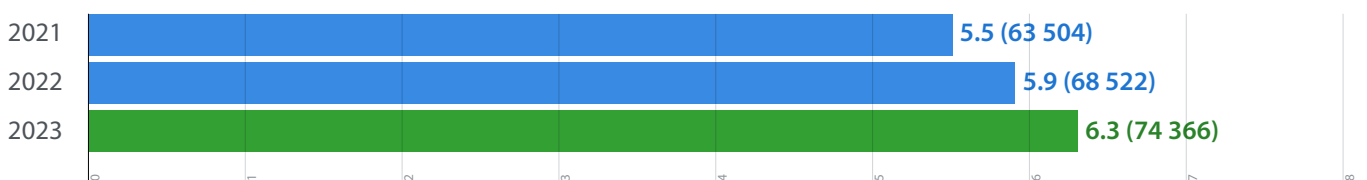


Note: stateless persons are not included in the calculations.

Source: Eurostat ([demo_poppctz](#))

First residence permits issued to third-country nationals, 2021–2023

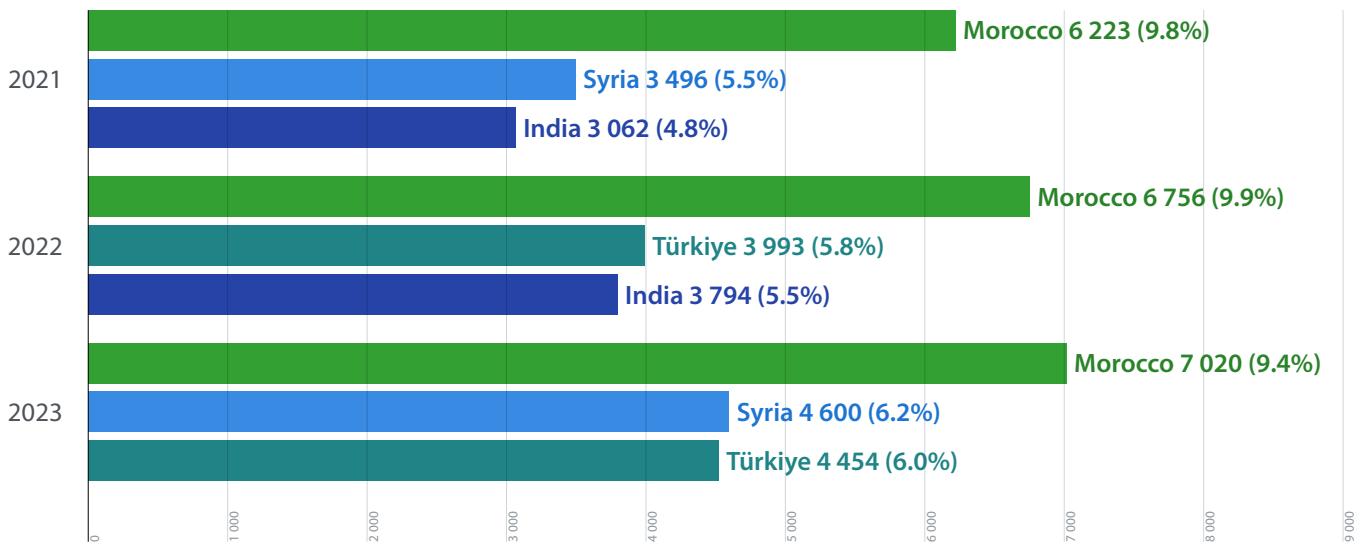
Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_resfirst](#), [demo_gind](#) and [migr_respov](#))

Top 3 countries whose citizens received first residence permits, 2021–2023

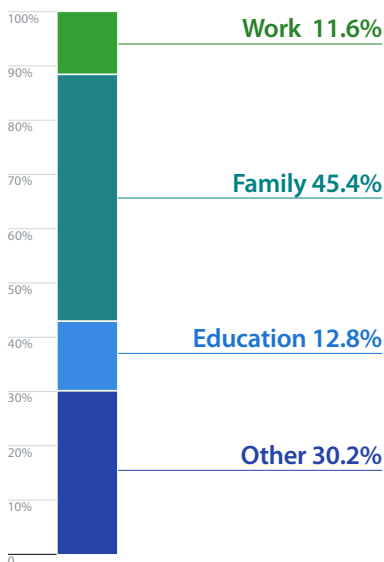
Absolute number (and the share in total number)



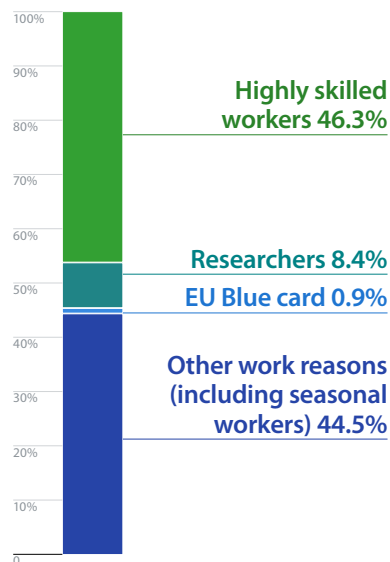
Source: Eurostat ([migr_resfirst](#))

First residence permits issued, distribution by reason or type, 2023

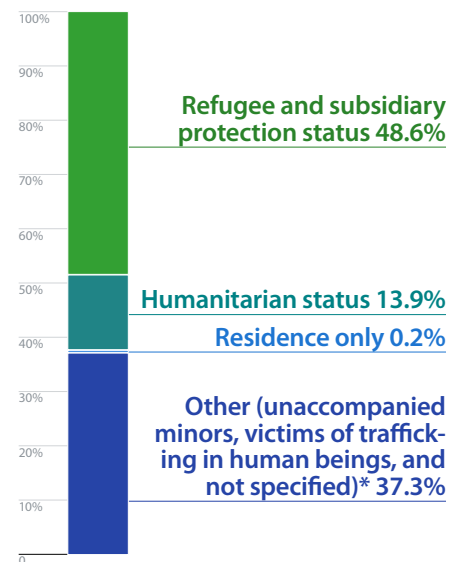
All permits, by reason



Work reason, by type



Other reason, by detailed reason



* The list of categories covered may differ from country to country.

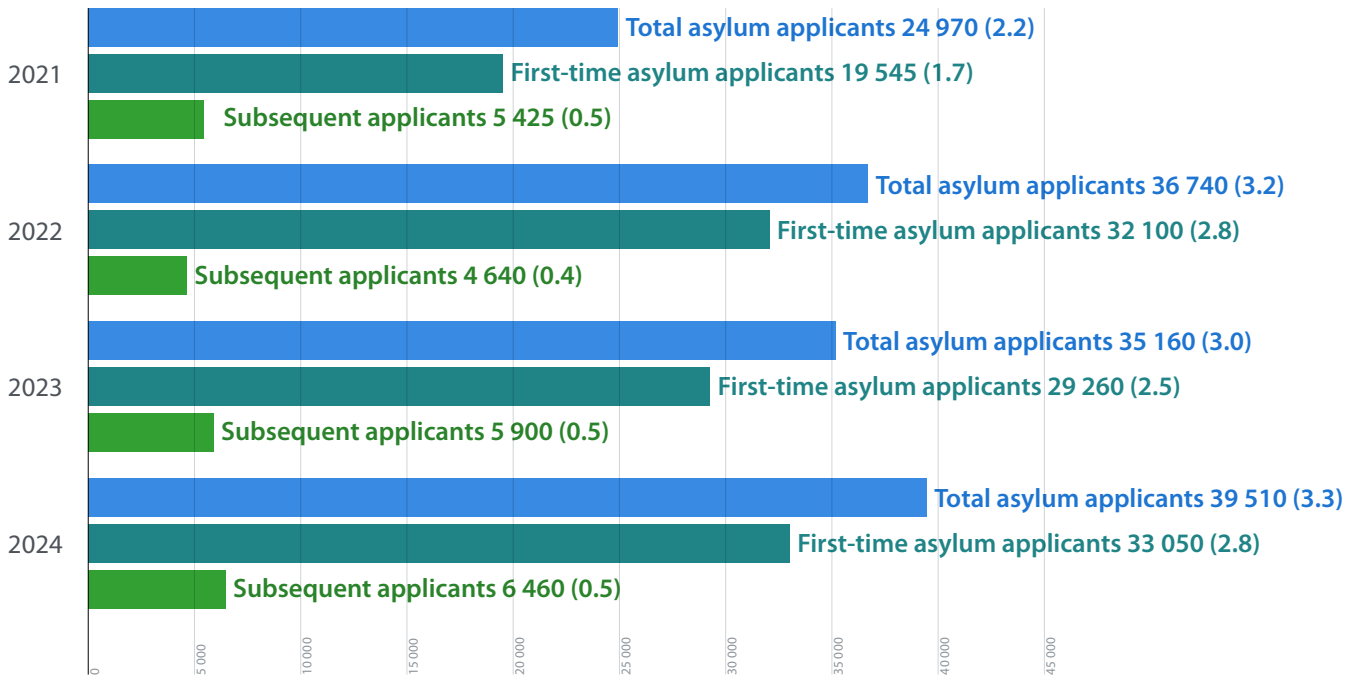
Source: Eurostat ([migr_resfirst](#), [migr_resfpc](#), [migr_resocc](#) and [migr_resoth](#))



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Asylum applicants by type of application, 2021–2024

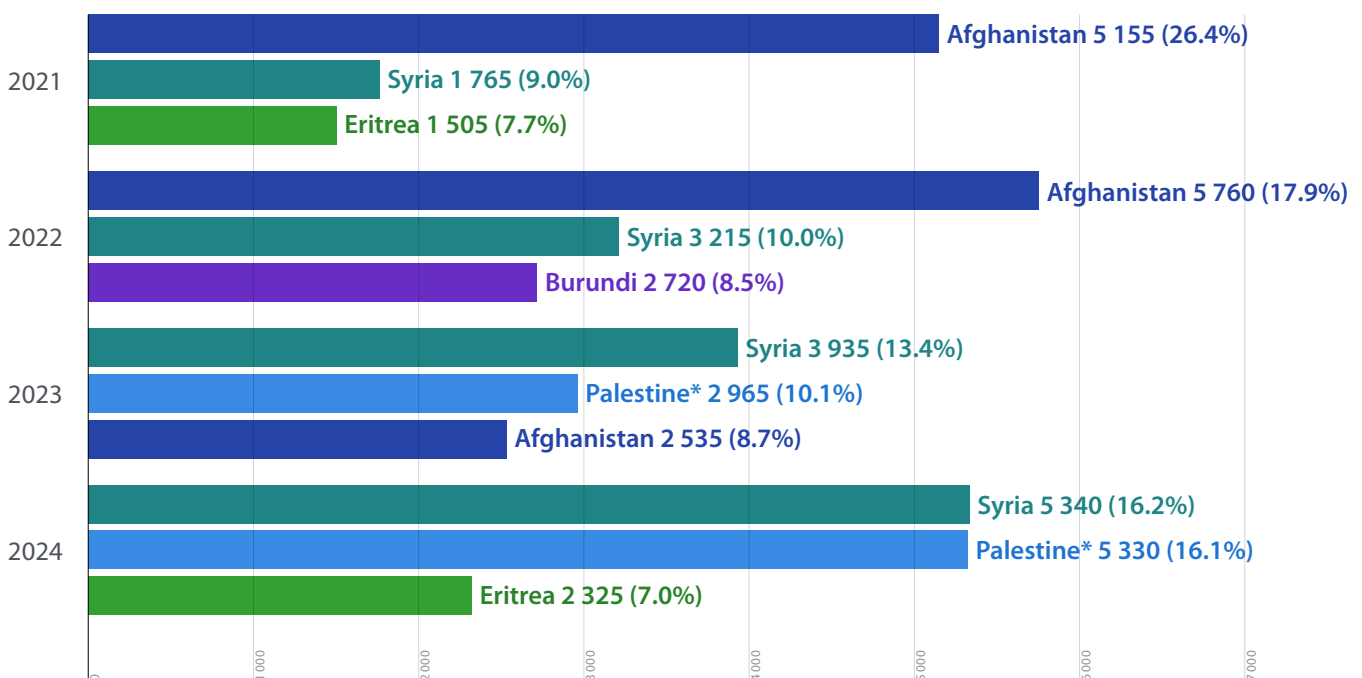
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](#), [demo_gind](#) and [migr_asyapp1mp](#))

Top 3 countries of citizenship – first-time asylum applicants, 2021–2024

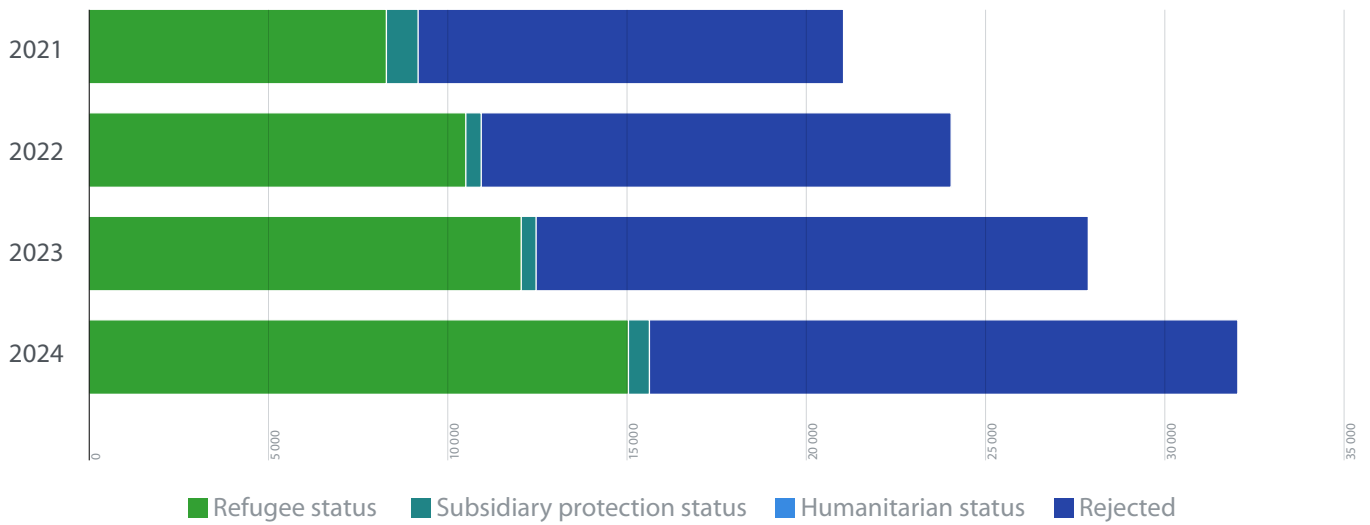
Absolute number (and the share in total number of first-time applicants)



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

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyappctza](#))

First instance asylum decisions by outcome, 2021-2024

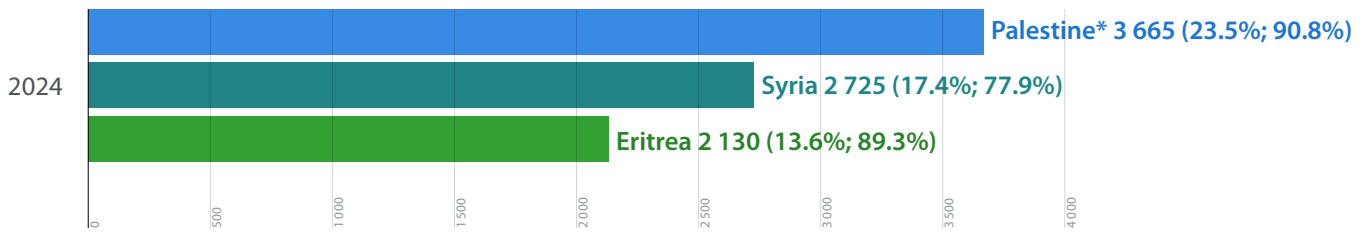


Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2021	8 280 (39.4%)	885 (4.2%)	-	11 865 (56.4%)
2022	10 495 (43.7%)	430 (1.8%)	-	13 105 (54.5%)
2023	12 040 (43.2%)	415 (1.5%)	-	15 400 (55.3%)
2024	15 030 (46.9%)	585 (1.8%)	-	16 410 (51.2%)

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asydcfsta](#) and [migr_asydec1pc](#))

Top 3 countries of citizenship granted positive asylum decisions at first instance by outcome, 2024

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

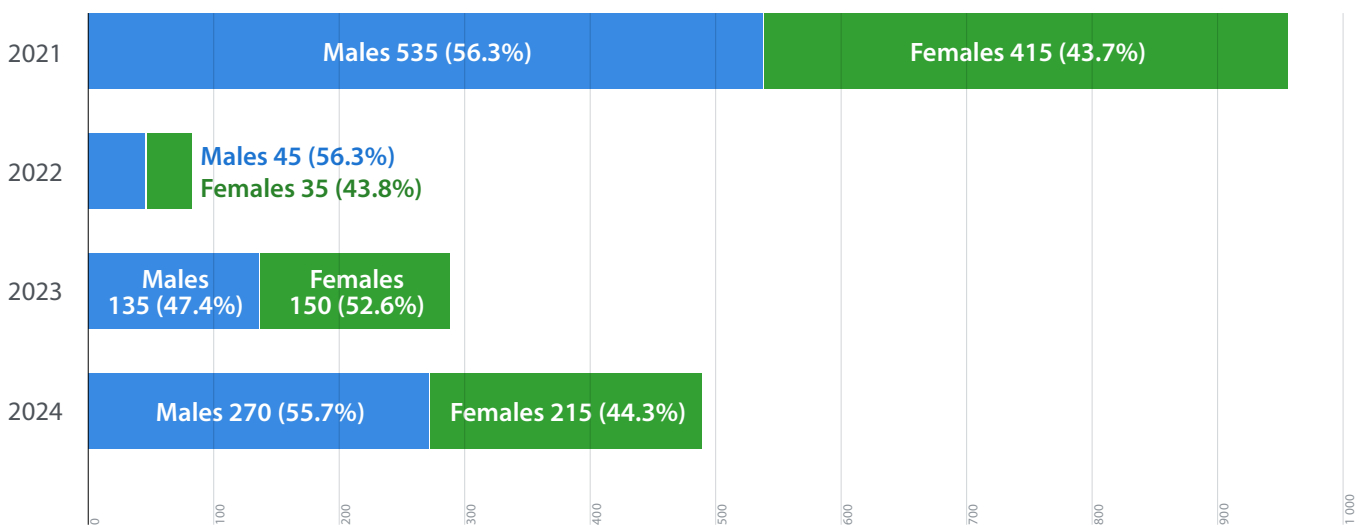


*This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the EU countries on this issue.

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asydcfsta](#))

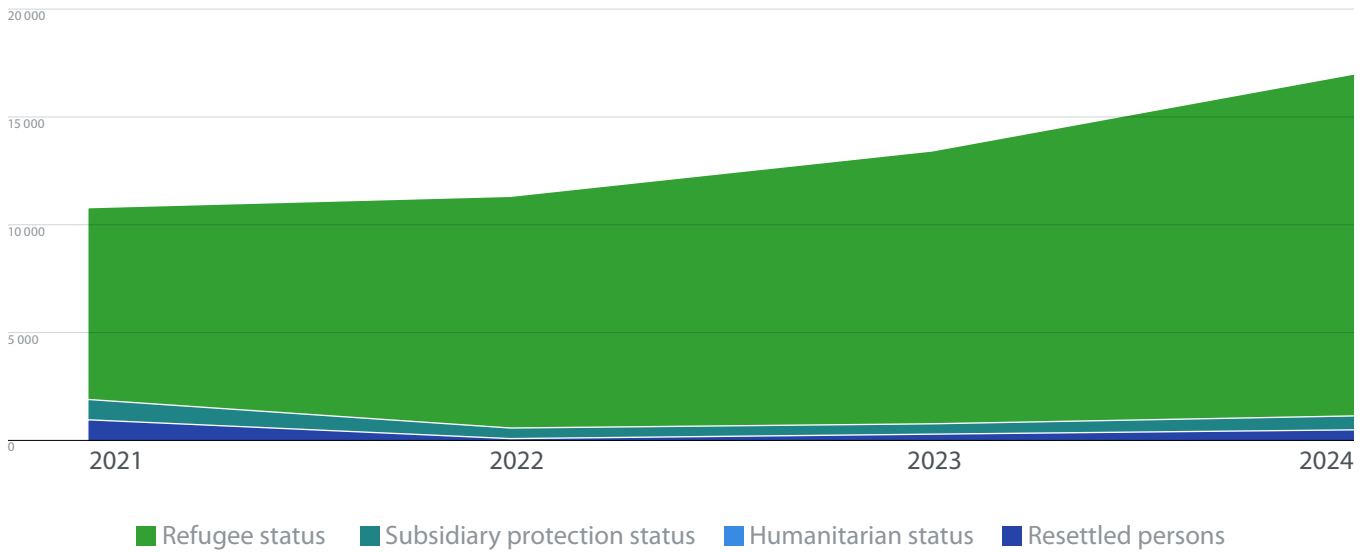
Resettled third-country nationals by sex, 2021–2024

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyresa](#))

Number of positive decisions for third-country nationals, by outcome, 2021–2024



Year	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection status	Humanitarian status	Resettled persons
2021	8 875	940	-	950
2022	10 720	490	-	80
2023	12 625	480	-	285
2024	15 820	645	-	485

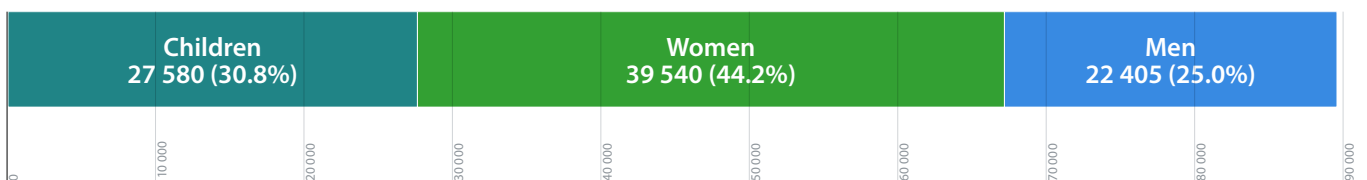
Source: Eurostat ([migr_asydcfst](#), [migr_asydcfna](#) and [migr_asyresa](#))



TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Beneficiaries of temporary protection by age and sex at the end of March 2025

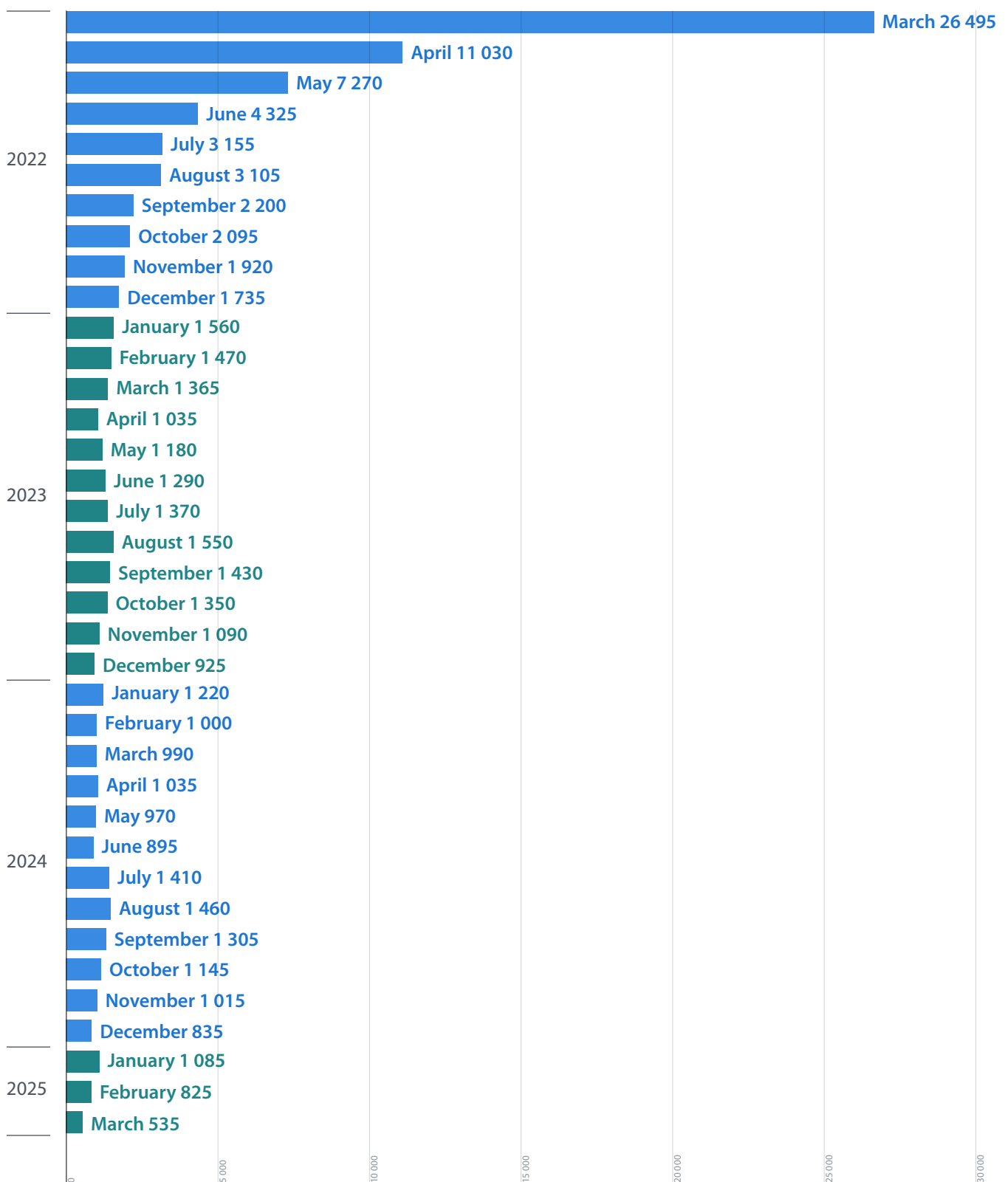
Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Note: In addition, 25 adults reported with unknown sex.

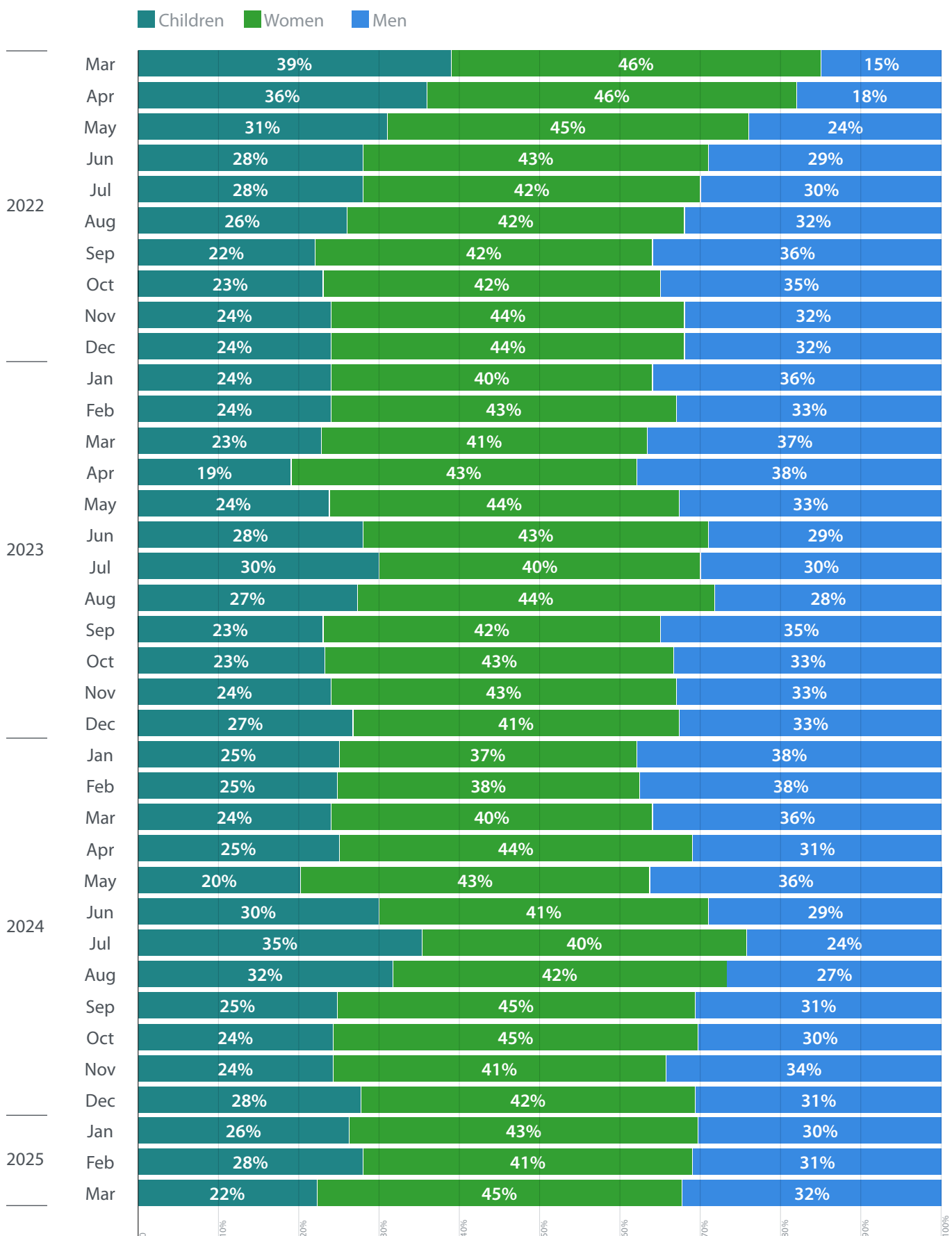
Source: Eurostat ([migr_asytpsm](#))

Number of decisions providing temporary protection to people displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, March 2022–March 2025



Source: Eurostat ([migr_asypfm](#))

Decisions providing temporary protection to people displaced from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion by main population groups, March 2022-March 2025

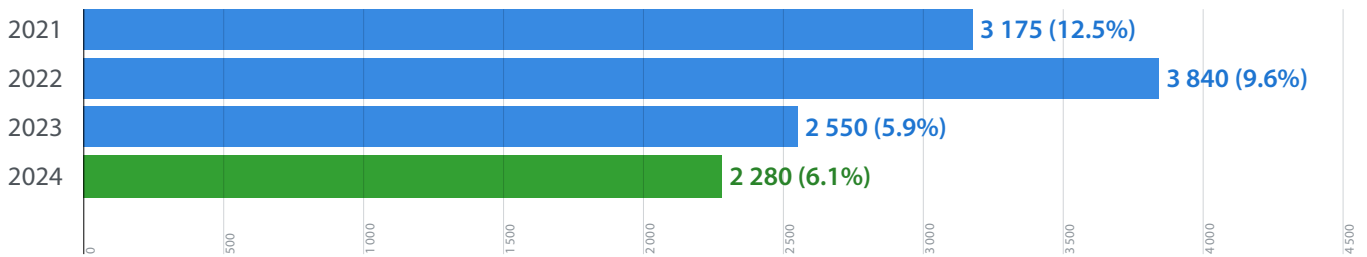




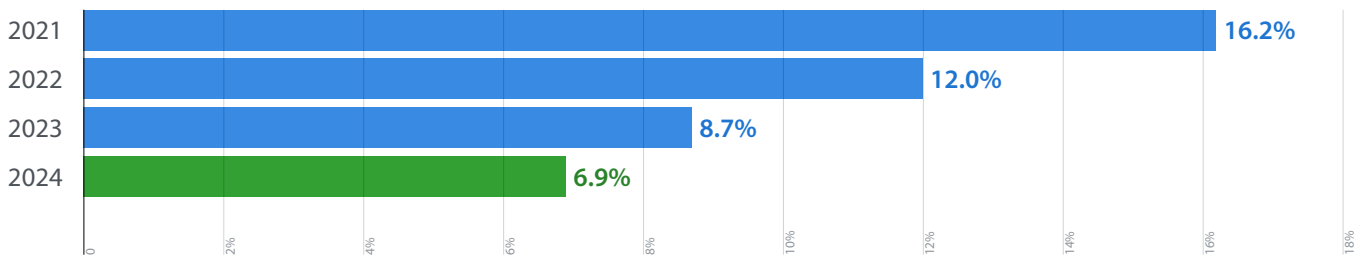
UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum, 2021–2024

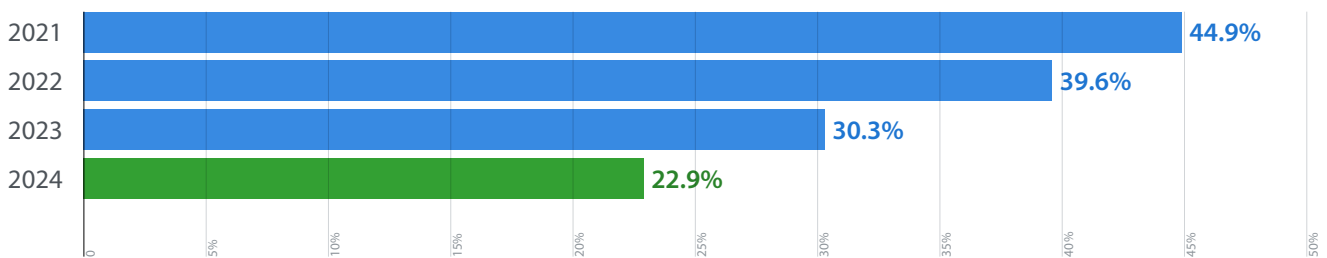
Number of first-time asylum applicants (and the share in total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU)



Share of all first-time asylum applicants



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

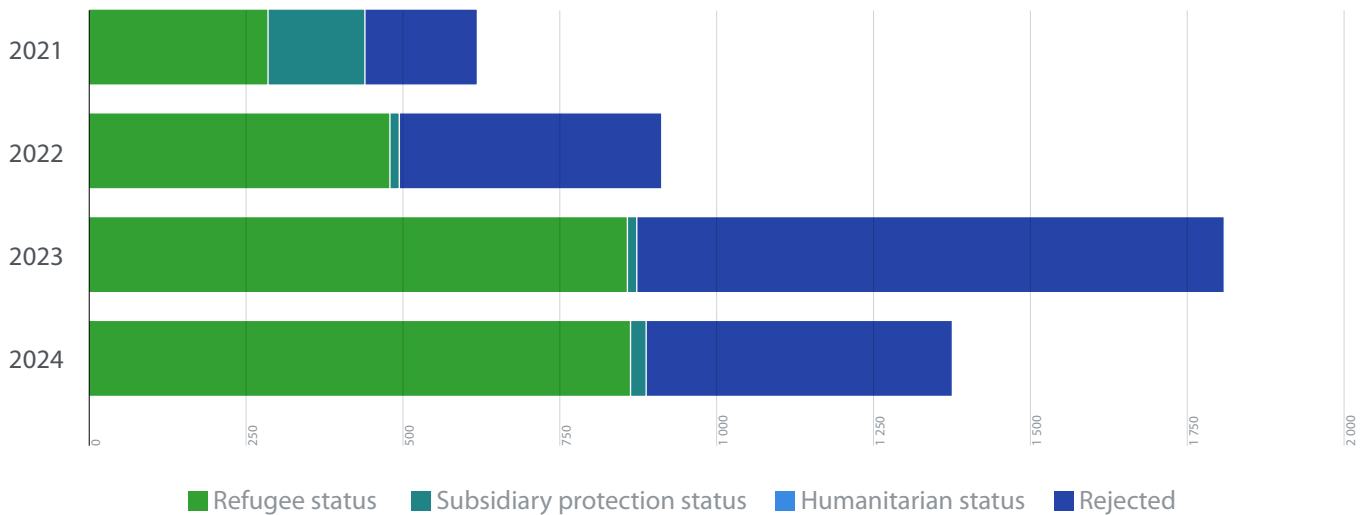


Note: The total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU used to calculate the share includes estimated 2024 data for Poland.

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asymacta](#) and [migr_asyappctza](#))

First instance asylum decisions on applications lodged by unaccompanied minors by outcome, 2021-2024

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



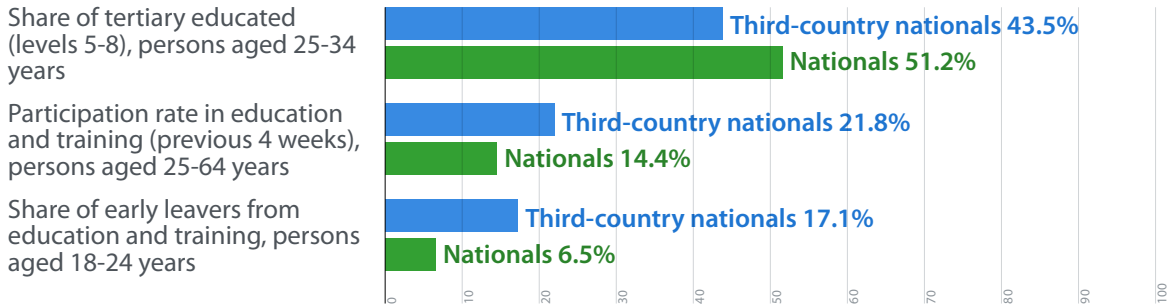
Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2021	285 (46.0%)	155 (25.0%)	-	180 (29.0%)
2022	480 (52.5%)	15 (1.6%)	-	420 (45.9%)
2023	860 (47.4%)	15 (0.8%)	-	940 (51.8%)
2024	865 (62.7%)	25 (1.8%)	-	490 (35.5%)

Source: Eurostat ([migr_asyumdca](#))

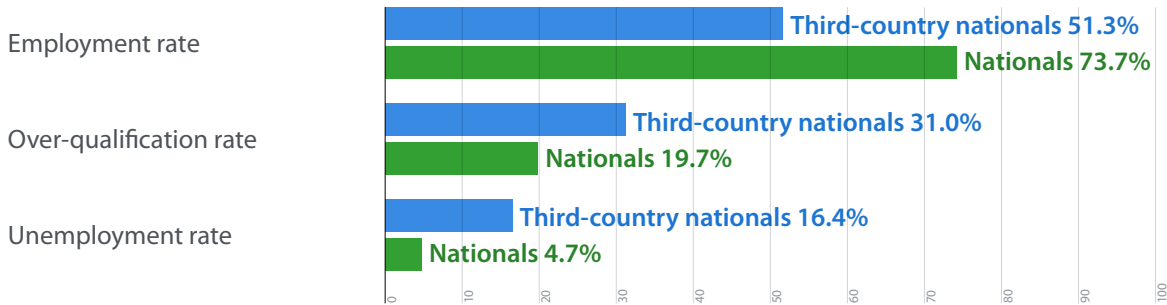
INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2024

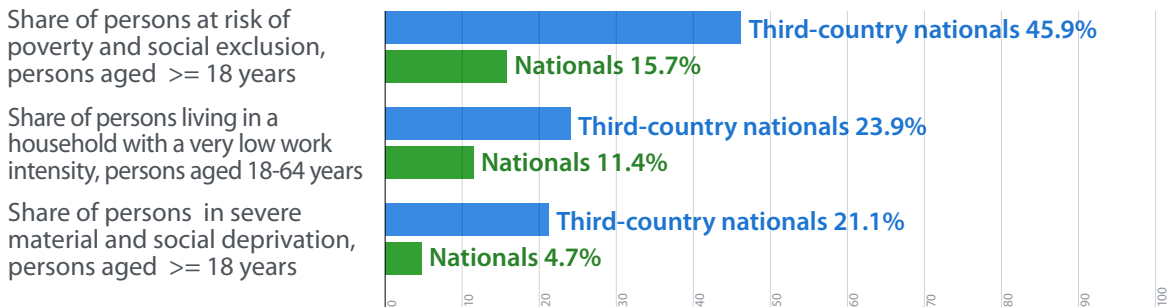
Education



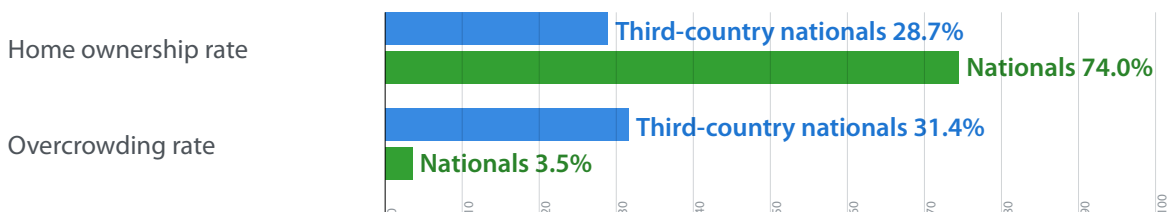
Labour market, persons aged 20-64 years



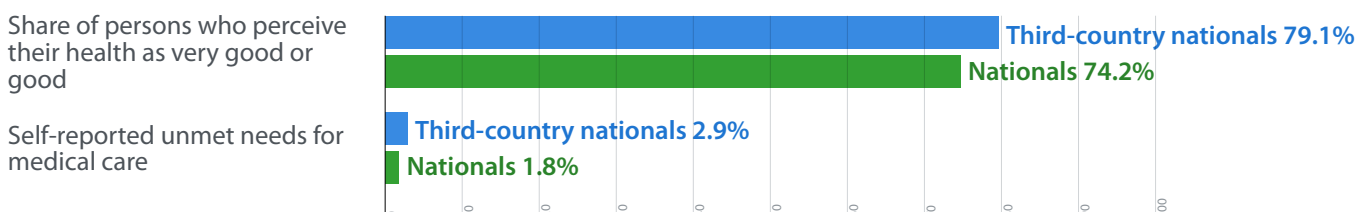
Social inclusion



Housing, persons aged >= 18 years



Health, persons aged >= 16 years

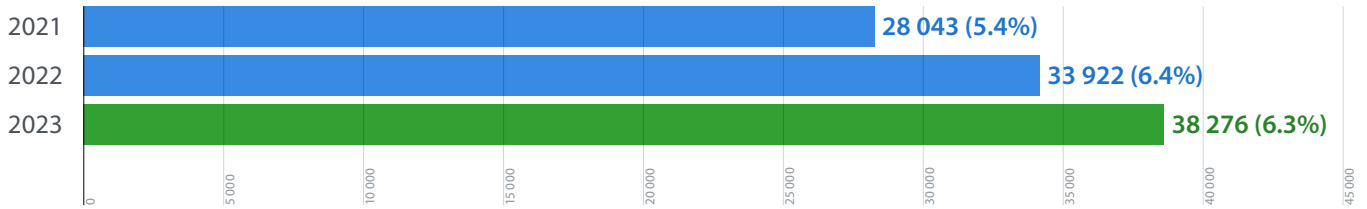




CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2021–2023

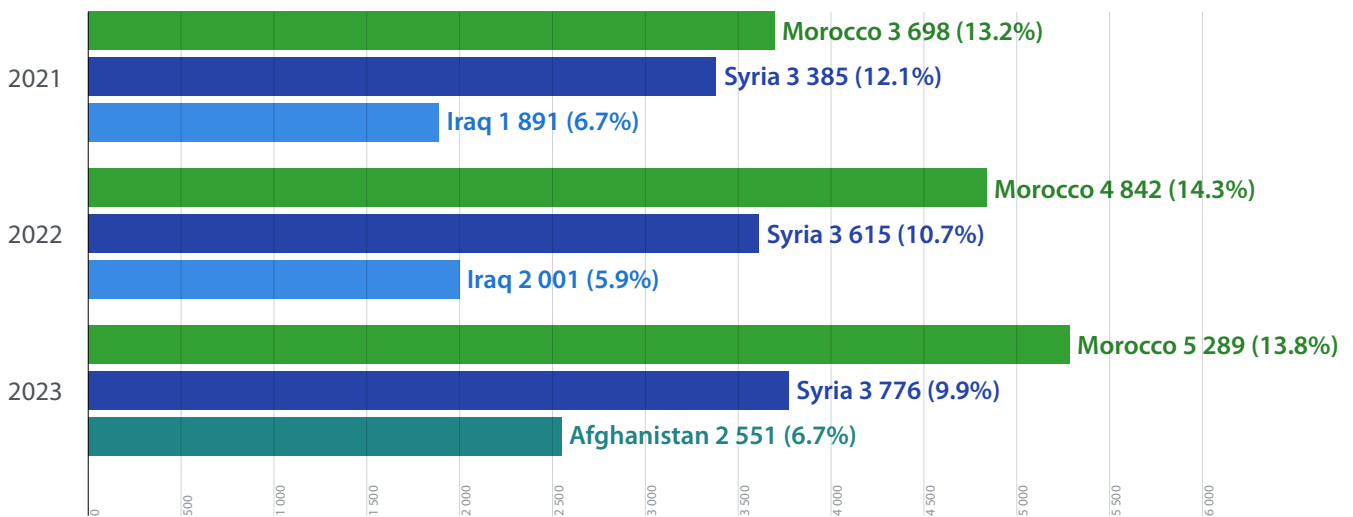
Absolute number (and share of total third-country nationals in the country)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_acq](#) and [migr_pop1ctz](#))

Top 3 countries of non-EU citizens acquiring citizenship, 2021-2023

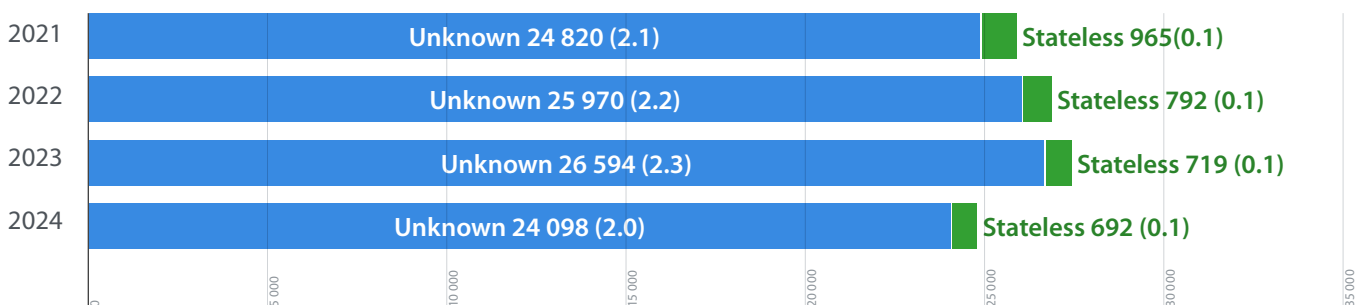
Absolute number (and the share of all acquisitions by third-country nationals)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_acq](#))

Stateless persons and persons with unknown citizenship, 2021–2024

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

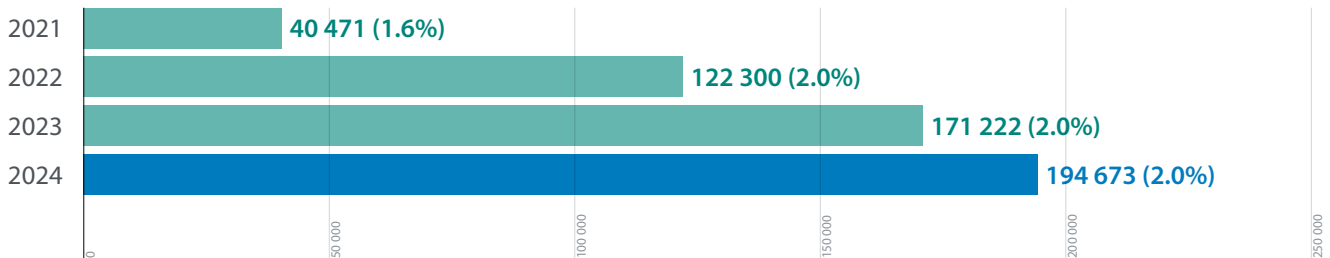


Source: Eurostat ([migr_pop1ctz](#))

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Schengen uniform short-stay visas issued, 2021–2024

Absolute number (and the share of all uniform short-stay visas issued within the Schengen Area)

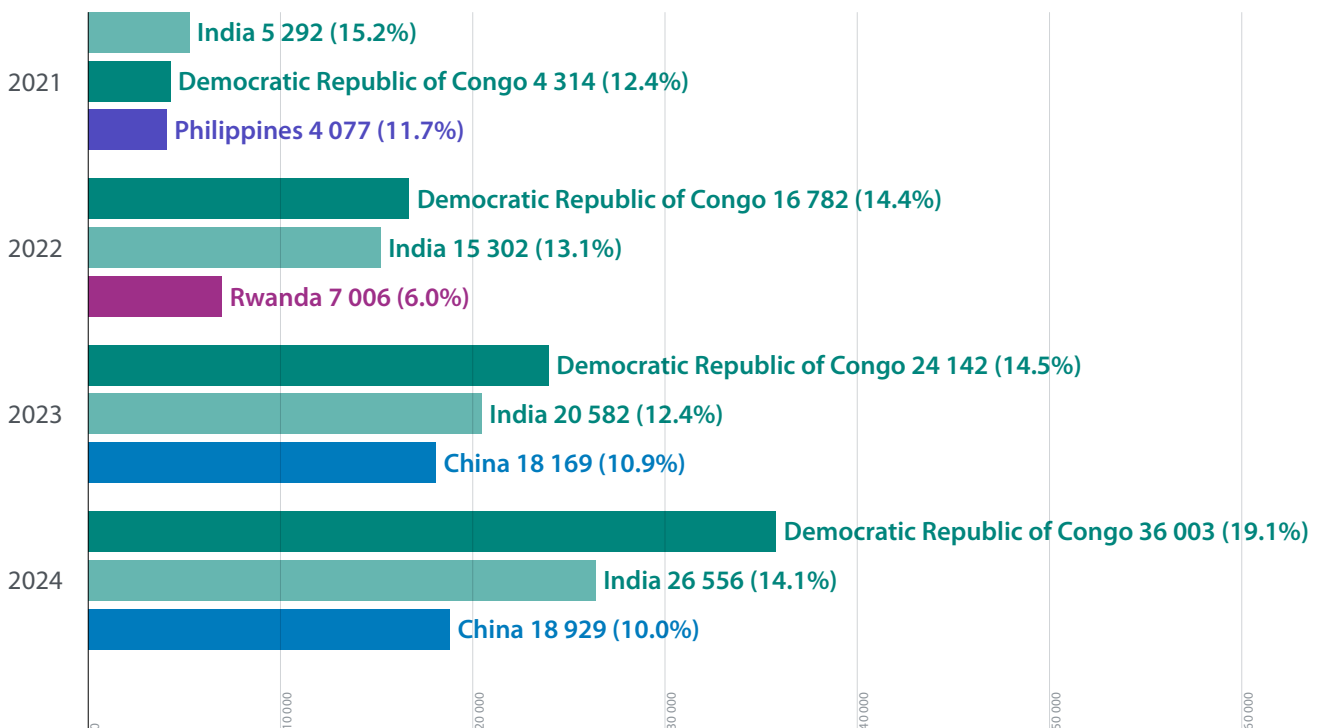


Note: Uniform short-stay visas (C visas) entitle the holder to stay in the territories of all Schengen States for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Such visas may be issued for the purpose of a single entry or multiple entries.

Source: [Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs](#)

Top 3 consulate countries where the most Schengen uniform short-stay visas were issued, 2021–2024

Number of uniform short-stay visas issued (and the share of all uniform 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.

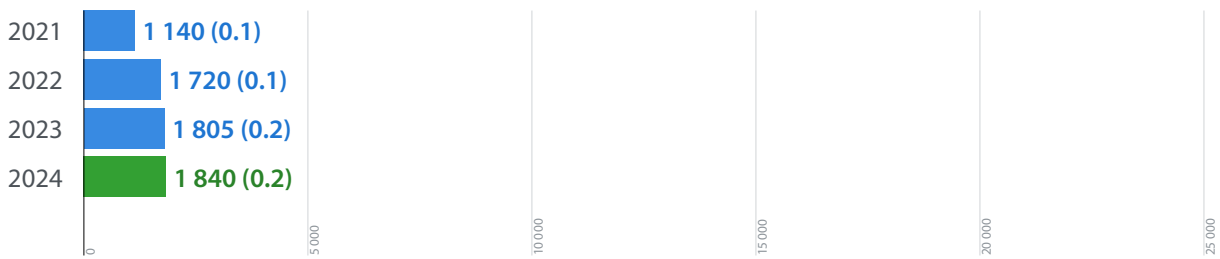
Source: [Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs](#)

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

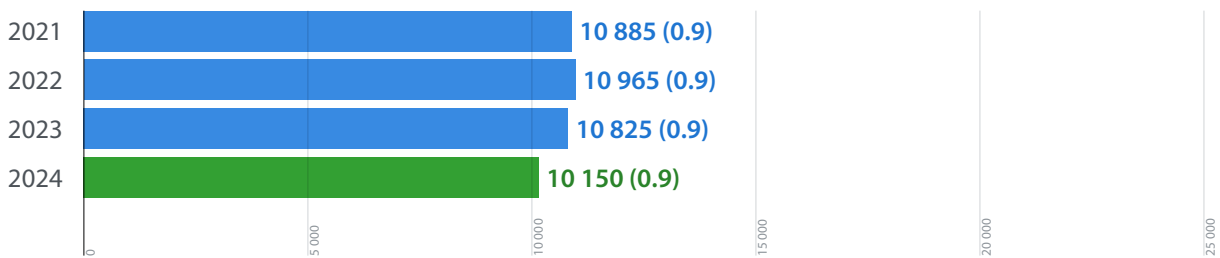
Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2021–2024

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

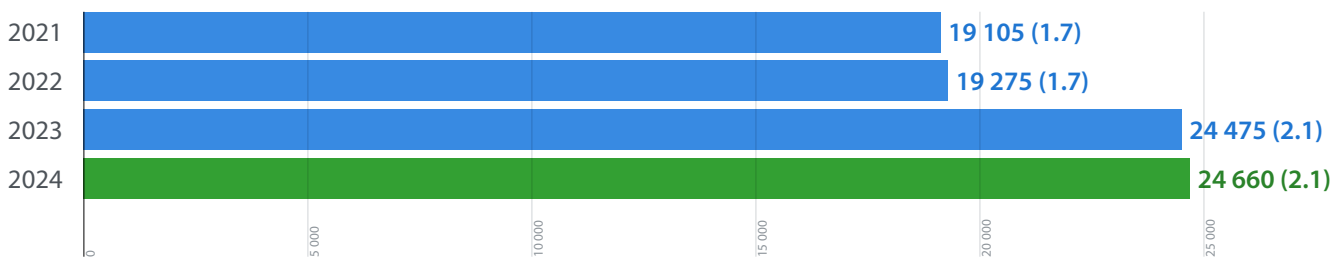
Persons refused entry



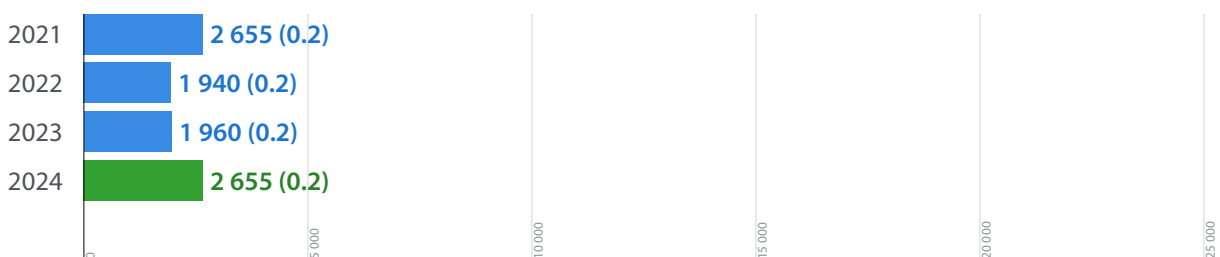
Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

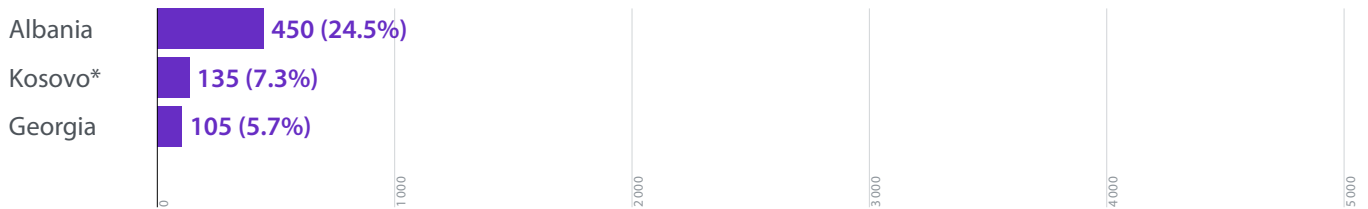


Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirfs](#), [migr_eipre](#), [migr_eiord](#), [migr_eirtn](#), [migr_eilpop](#) and [demo_qind](#))

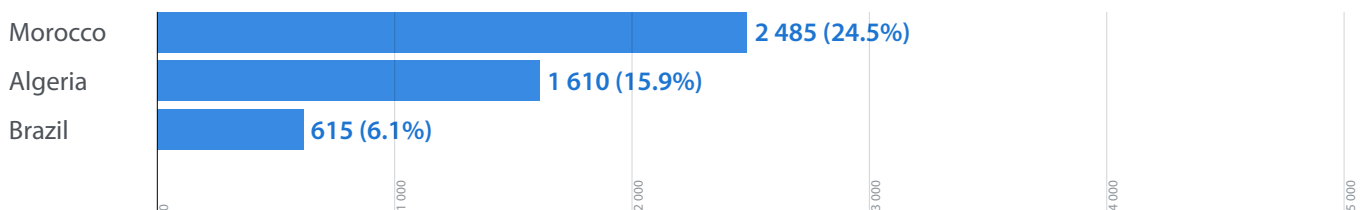
Top 3 countries of citizenship of third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2024

Absolute number (and the share in the respective total)

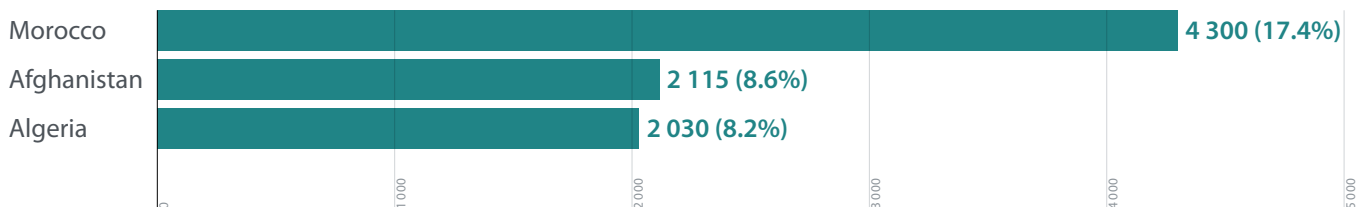
Persons refused entry



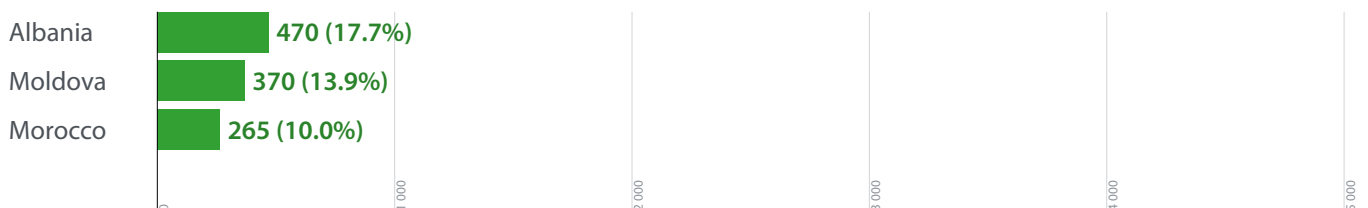
Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country



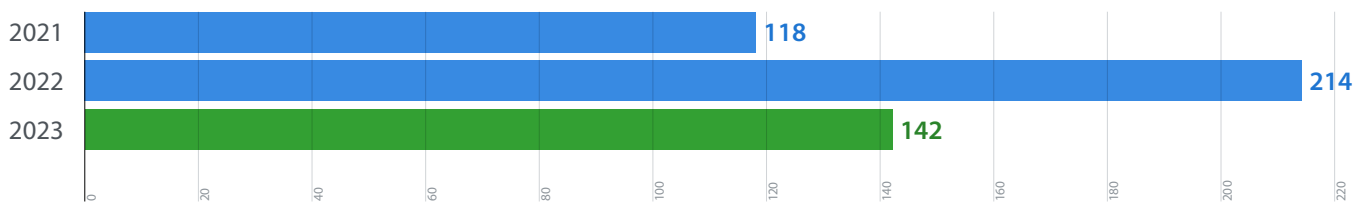
* Kosovo designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirfs](#), [migr_eipre](#), [migr_eiord](#) and [migr_eirtn](#))



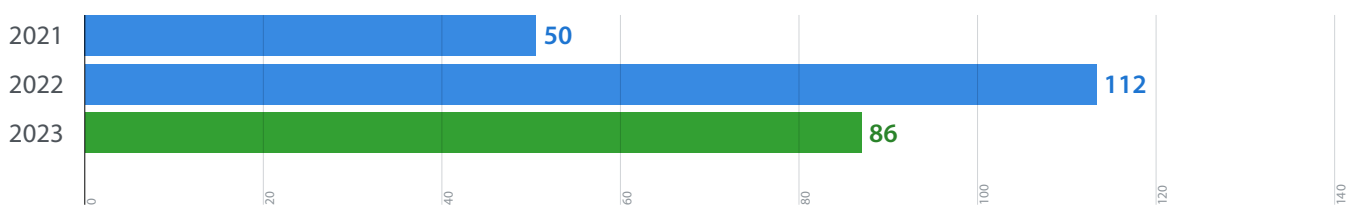
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of third-country nationals victims of trafficking in human beings, 2021-2023



Source: Eurostat ([crim_thb_vctz](#))

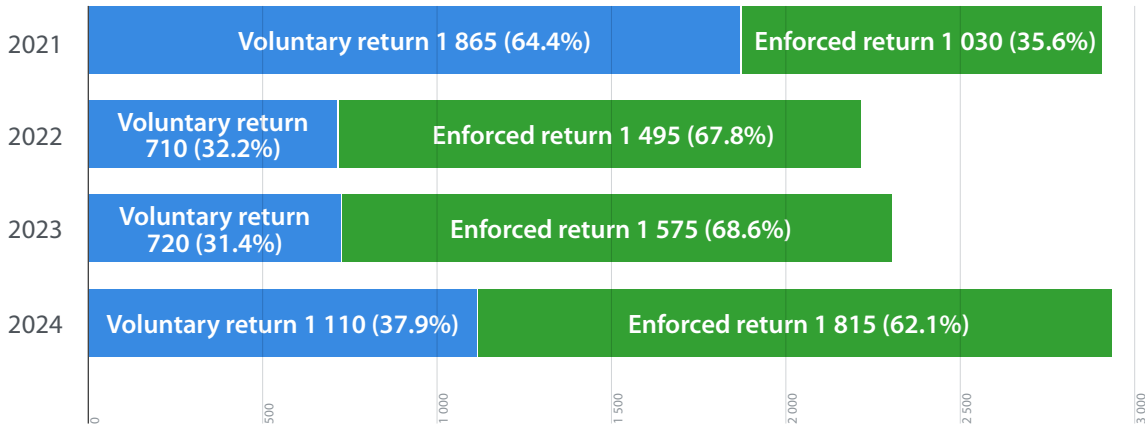
Number of first residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings, 2021-2023



Source: Eurostat ([migr_resoth](#))

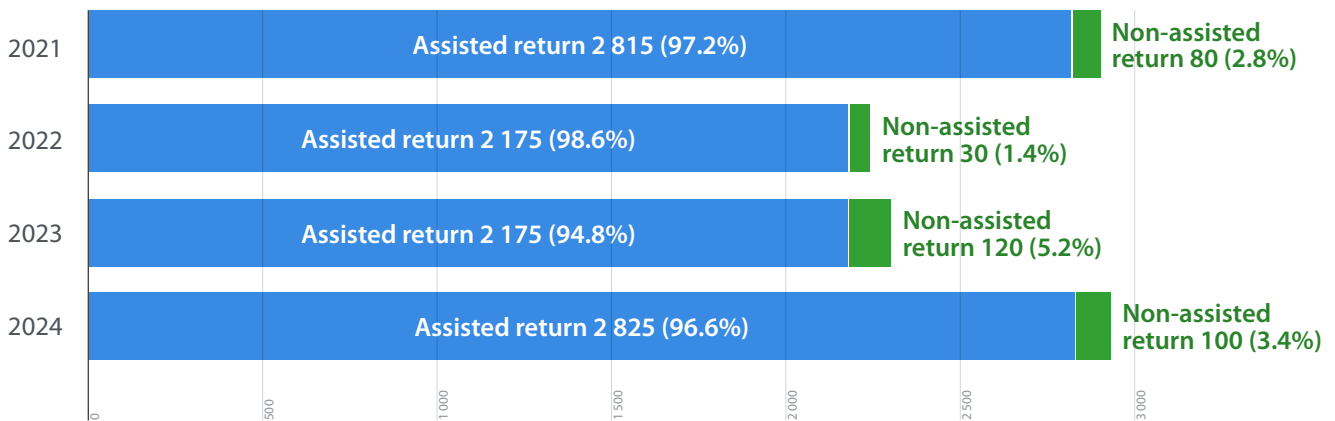
RETURN AND READMISSION

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of return, 2021–2024 Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirtn1](#))

Third-country nationals who left the territory, by type of assistance received, 2021–2024 Absolute number (and the share of the total)



Source: Eurostat ([migr_eirtn1](#))