

COUNTRY FACTSHEET | JULY 2024

Main developments
in migration and
international
protection, including
latest statistics

LITHUANIA 2023



OVERARCHING AND CROSS-CUTTING CHANGES

On 17 March 2023, the Seimas [extended the state of emergency](#) declared in 2022 following Russia's military aggression in Ukraine, and in fear of potential hybrid attacks against Lithuania, until 2 May 2023. Key emergency measures included the use of state reserve funds, strengthening border security (including turning back people attempting irregular border crossings), and tightening the visa regime for Russian and Belarusian nationals, as well as the restrictions on the entry of

Russian nationals into the Lithuanian territory. Following the lifting of the state of emergency, a series of legislative steps were taken to retain most of the emergency measures. Notably, the [Law on Restrictive Measures in the Context of a Military Aggression against Ukraine](#), which entered into force on 3 May 2023, reinforced various measures against Russian and Belarusian nationals, including suspending the acceptance and processing of their national visa applications. The [Law on the State Border and Its Protection](#) was amended on 3 May 2023, introducing the option to deny entry into Lithuania to third-country nationals who breach bordercrossing procedures during a national emergency.

KEY POINTS

The state of emergency in border areas was extended till 2 May 2023, maintaining strengthened border protection and various restrictions on Russian and Belarusian nationals. The measures employed under the state of emergency were subsequently transposed to several laws.

A countrywide extreme situation due to a mass influx of foreigners was in place throughout 2023, thereby enabling the continuation of the legal framework applicable under emergencies.

In January 2023, the Migration Department started issuing temporary residence permits through an external service provider, VFS Global, and shortened the processing times for application by one month.

A countrywide extreme situation was declared in July 2021 due to a mass influx of foreigners, and remained in place throughout 2022 and 2023. In 2023, additional border crossing points with Belarus were closed due to this extreme situation, and all people attempting to cross that border irregularly were redirected to the nearest international border crossing point. The government expanded the criteria under which an extreme situation due to a massive influx of third-country nationals can be declared, making it easier to use this tool in responding to the instrumentalisation of migration.

LEGAL MIGRATION

As of January 2023, the Migration Department started issuing temporary residence permits through an external service provider, VFS Global, which has offices in 34 countries. Third-country nationals can both submit applications for and collect the temporary residence permit from an external provider. The processing times to apply for or renew a temporary residence permit were reduced by one month.

As of July 2023, third-country nationals applying for a national visa from abroad must submit their application online via the Lithuanian Migration Information System (MIGRIS), through the same external service provider, VFS Global. Following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, some categories of third-country nationals can no longer apply for a national visa, but must obtain temporary residence permits instead. Among others, this includes full-time students, foreign lecturers and researchers, third-country nationals whose profession is included in the Shortage Occupations List, and foreign workers with a work permit issued by the Employment Service.

As of April 2023, third-country nationals applying for temporary or permanent residence permits now have the option to collect these documents at any customer service unit of the Migration Department, regardless of where the application was initially submitted. Alternatively, the documents can be delivered by courier to an address in Lithuania.

Following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners in December, the validity period of temporary residence permits issued to third-country nationals who are persecuted by a non-democratic regime has been increased from one year to three years.

The Minister of Social Security and Labour increased the quota for third-country nationals coming to work in shortage occupations and set it at 40 250 for 2023 (62.45% service sector, 24.4% construction, 12.5% industry and 0.7% agriculture).

In August 2023, in response to a formal notice of infringement procedure issued by the European Commission, the Minister of Social Security and Labour amended the procedure for issuing seasonal work permits to transpose Directive 2014/36/EU fully. Besides other amendments, the provisions for issuing and renewing seasonal work permits were adjusted, while the

time limit for issuing a work permit was shortened to four working days in the case of seasonal workers repeatedly entering Lithuania.

In June 2023, the Minister of Finance approved the Action Plan for the Development of the Financial Technology (fintech) Sector in Lithuania for the period 2023-2028, aiming to turn Lithuania into a fintech centre of excellence. Among other things, the action plan provides for expansion of the activities of the [International House Vilnius](#) service centre to facilitate the integration of highly skilled third-country workers.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In 2023, following the [judgment by the Court of Justice of the European Union on 30 June 2022 in case C72/22](#), **the Seimas continued to finetune the provisions of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners** concerning the lodging of applications for international protection during a declared state of emergency, or an extreme situation due to a mass influx of third-country nationals.

During a state of emergency or an extreme situation, the law previously allowed only third-country nationals who had entered Lithuania lawfully to apply for asylum at the Migration Department under the Ministry of Interior. Starting from 3 May 2023, the law no longer allows applicants for international protection to be detained automatically for crossing the border illegally, and allows them to apply for international protection either at the Migration Department or at the State Border Guard Service, irrespective of the lawfulness of entry.

However, applicants for international protection who apply at border checkpoints, in transit zones or within Lithuania's territory after an illegal border crossing are temporarily accommodated in dedicated facilities, without the right to free movement within the country until a decision regarding their admission is made by the Migration Department. This decision can be contested in the relevant district court within 14 days of notification.

Further amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners were made following the [Resolution of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania on 7 June 2023](#). The Constitutional Court found that the detention of applicants for international protection, and the restriction of their freedom of movement against their will during periods of martial law, states of emergency and extreme situations, were in contravention of Article 20 of the Constitution. Consequently, [the law was amended](#) in December 2023 to stipulate that the Migration Department has 48 hours to make an individual decision on both the admission and reception of each third-country national who enters Lithuania illegally during martial law, a state of emergency, or an extreme situation due to a mass influx of third-country nationals. The Migration Department can still decide to restrict the freedom of movement of an applicant for international protection for up to five months, if it is determined that the application requires urgent examination or that it should not be examined, and that there are no personal circumstances

concerning the applicant's age, health, family situation or other individual factors that would preclude restricting their freedom of movement.

In December 2023, the Migrant Multifunctional Centre, comprised of two new buildings, was inaugurated in Pabradė at the State Border Guard Service's Foreigner Registration Centre.

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

On 13 December 2023, the government adopted [Resolution No. 970](#), whereby it extended the provision of temporary protection until 4 March 2025.

In January 2023, the Migration Department started issuing digital temporary residence permits to beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP). Sent through MIGRIS, these permits eliminated the need for in-person visits or physical ID cards. Over 42 000 permits were issued this way.

Also in January 2023, the Minister of Finance initiated the 2023 National Data Governance Programme, which includes planned tasks for managing and exchanging data on lawful migration and international protection beneficiaries, as well as on war refugees from Ukraine. State institutions will be able to access refugee data through the State Data Agency's National Data Governance Information System.

The government extended the period for paying compensation to the owners of housing who provided accommodation to individuals fleeing the war in Ukraine until 31 December 2023.

In January 2023, the Ministry of Health issued [an order](#) under which essential prescription medicines were covered for BoTP who did not have the compulsory health insurance. In March 2023, the government decided that certain categories of BoTP (minors, elderly people, people with disabilities and beneficiaries of disability pensions) would have their healthcare services and medications compensated under the Lithuanian Health Insurance Law. These and related decisions improved beneficiaries' access to essential health services and medications.

As of February 2023, additional funds were made available for integration activities by municipalities, including those aimed at easing access to the labour market and providing psychosocial services.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Following [an investigation of the Ombudsman for the Protection of Children's Rights](#) in August 2023, guidelines were prepared for the structural units of the State Border Guard Service, mandating that whenever an unaccompanied minor who is illegally present in Lithuania

is identified, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must be notified immediately, and the minor accommodated at the Refugee Reception Centre.

INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

In January 2023, the Minister of Finance launched the [2023 National Data Governance Programme](#). This initiative includes a targeted effort to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of managing and distributing relevant information about individuals who benefit from legal migration and international protection. By centralising and improving access to data, the programme will support the development of a system to monitor integration both at national and regional levels.

CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

No significant developments to report in 2023.

BORDERS, VISA AND SCHENGEN

The Seimas [extended the state of emergency](#) until 2 May 2023. During the state of emergency, reinforced state border protection measures applied, including the practice of non-admission of third-country nationals, restrictions on the issuance of visas to third-country nationals, regulation of their transit, and the restriction of travel for Russian nationals across the external border.

In August 2023, the Minister of Defence authorised the Lithuanian military commander to assist the State Border Guard Service until 3 November 2023 or until the extreme situation is declared over in the country. **Troops were deployed to respond to border crossing violations** along the border with Belarus.

Amendments were made to the [Law on the State Border and Its Protection](#) and entered into force on 3 May 2023. According to those amendments, in the event of a state-level extreme situation being declared due to a mass influx of third-country nationals, to safeguard national security and public order, **the government may – on the recommendation of the National Security Commission – decide to refuse entry to third-country nationals** who attempt to cross or have crossed the state border at unauthorised locations, or who have not adhered to the established border crossing procedures while in the border area.

Following these amendments, the government enacted [Resolution No. 315](#) on 3 May 2023. Based on the updated Law on the State Border and Its Protection, this resolution stipulated that **individuals who try to cross or have crossed the external border of the European Union at unauthorised locations**, or at authorised locations but without complying with border crossing rules, and who are found within the Republic of Lithuania's border zone, **would not be permitted entry** into Lithuanian territory.

Amendments to the Law on the State Border and Its Protection on 3 May 2023 also introduced the concept of **'Supporter of the State Border Guard Service'**. 'Supporters' are civilians who voluntarily assist border guards in the performance of their functions. On 15 May 2023, the Head of the State Border Guard Service approved Regulations on Supporters of the State Border Guard Service, detailing their admission, training programme requirements, organisation, conduct, etc.

The State Border Guard Service began installing **fixed border surveillance systems** along the border with Belarus to enhance the detection of illegal state border crossings. More than 100 kilometres of **patrol trails on the border with Belarus** were also either installed or renovated.

Effective from 1 July 2023, **amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners** require that a national visa is issued to a third-country national **only after the responsible authorities verify that the individual poses no threat to national security, public order or society**. The State Security Department is responsible for assessing national security risks, and the police or the State Border Guard Service for evaluating public order or societal threats.

In July 2023, the description of **the procedure for issuing Schengen visas was updated** to take into account that, from 1 July 2023, national visas would no longer be issued at the representative offices of the Republic of Lithuania and would be issued exclusively by the Migration Department.

As a result of the NATO Summit in Vilnius on 11-12 July 2023, **border control at the internal borders** was temporarily resumed from 08:00 on 7 July until 08:00 on 13 July.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In 2023, due to the installation of a physical barrier and border surveillance systems in Lithuania, third-country

nationals trying to enter the EU irregularly from Belarus increasingly chose Latvia over Lithuania. This resulted in a significant **increase in secondary movement** from Latvia, and State Border Guard Service officials therefore stepped up random checks inside the country.

The Law on the State Border and its Protection was amended, allowing **the non-admission of irregular migrants who violate the procedure for crossing the state border** during a state-level extreme situation due to a mass influx of third-country nationals, or a state of emergency. The non-admission of irregular migrants is only possible in the border area, up to five kilometres inland from the border. On 3 May 2023, the Head of the State Border Guard Service issued **guidelines for implementing the decision on non-admission**, detailing the actions of officers and the algorithm for assessing the individual need for assistance.

Following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners in December 2023, a third-country national who is unable to leave Lithuania **due to humanitarian reasons may be issued a temporary residence permit**. A residence permit issued on this basis is valid for one year and gives the holder the right to work.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

No significant developments to report in 2023.



RETURN AND READMISSION

No significant developments to report in 2023.



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 Lithuania 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.

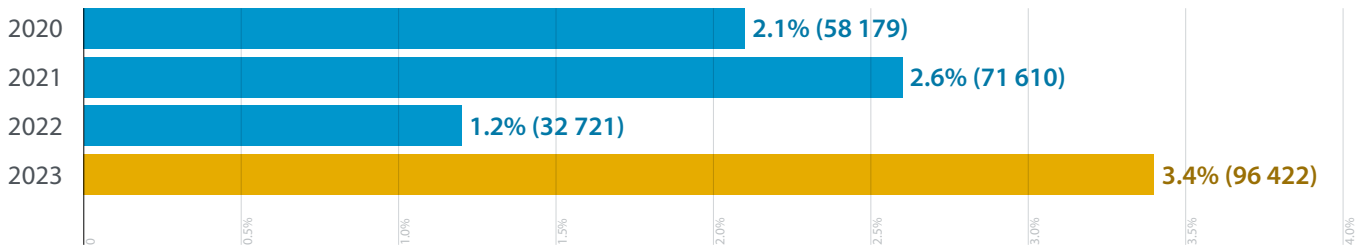
A 'How to read the statistical annex' guide, describing each individual chart and providing links to the data sources, is available [here](#).



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Third-country nationals, 1 January 2020–2023

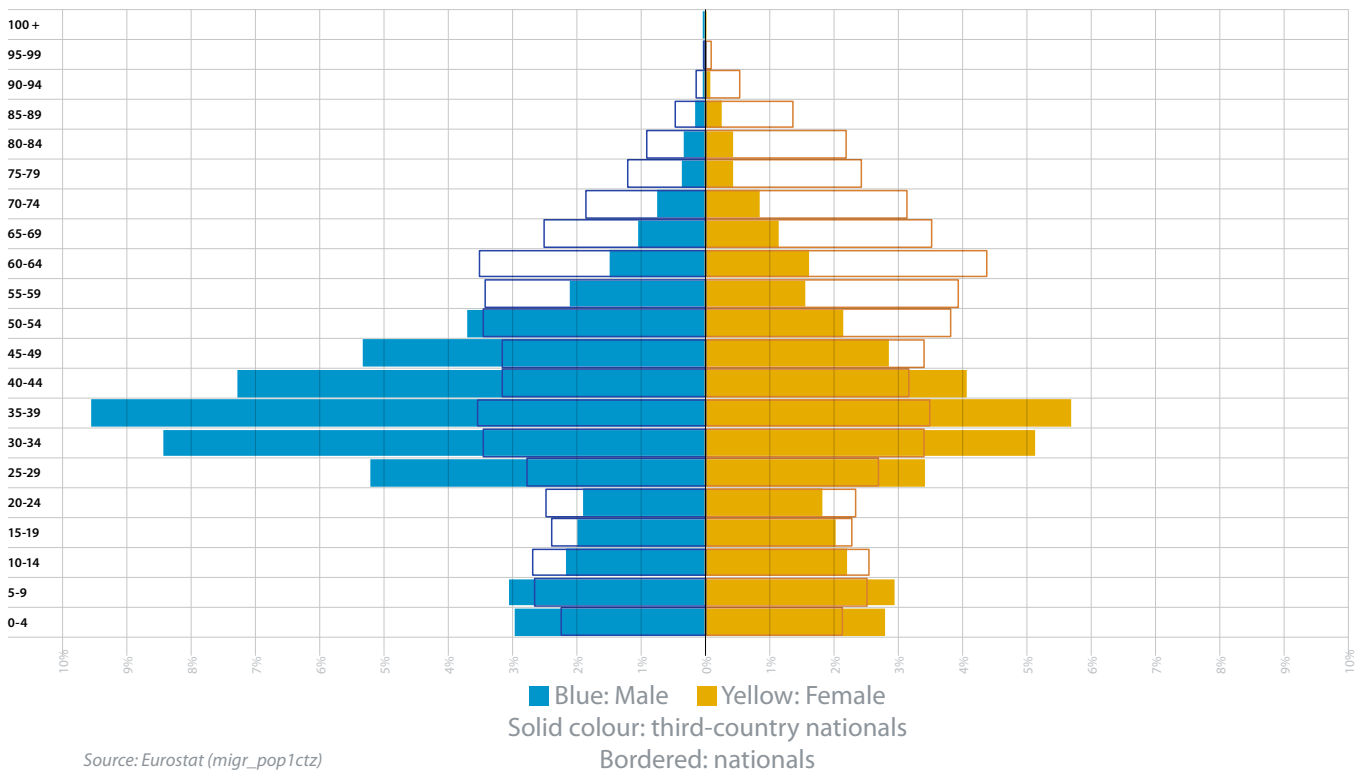
Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

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

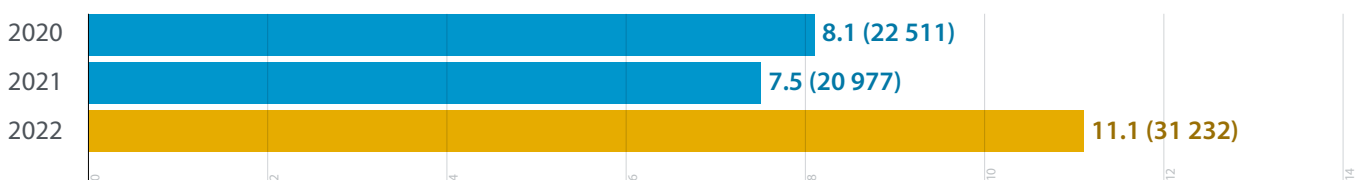
%



Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

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

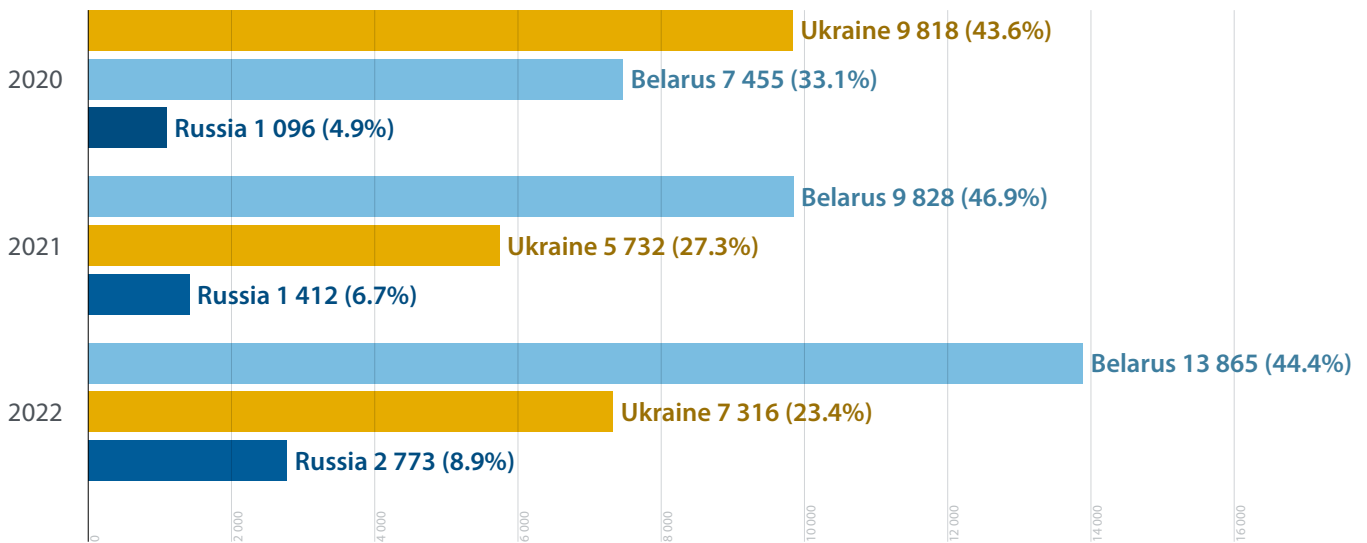
Number per 1 000 people (and the absolute number)



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_pop1ctz and migr_resp)

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

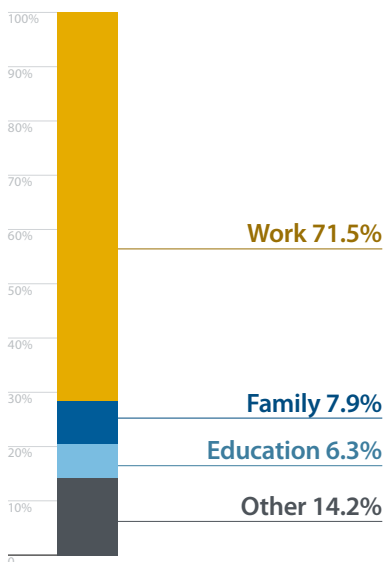
Absolute number (and the share in total number)



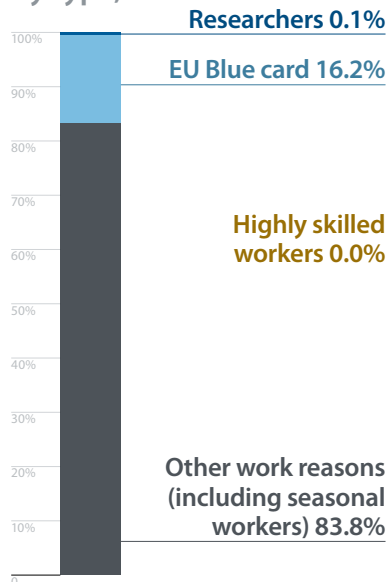
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

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

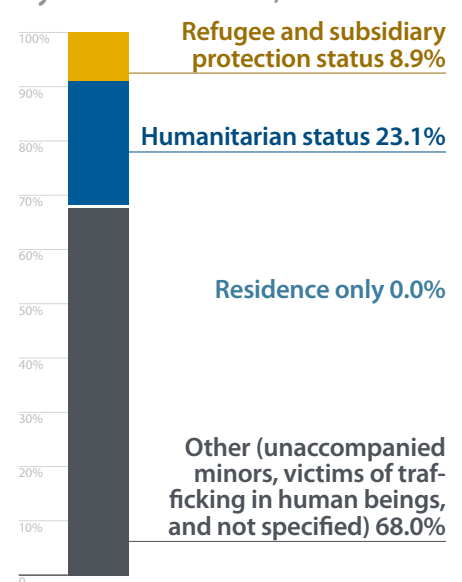
All permits, by reason, %



Work reason, by type, %



Other reason, by detailed reason, %



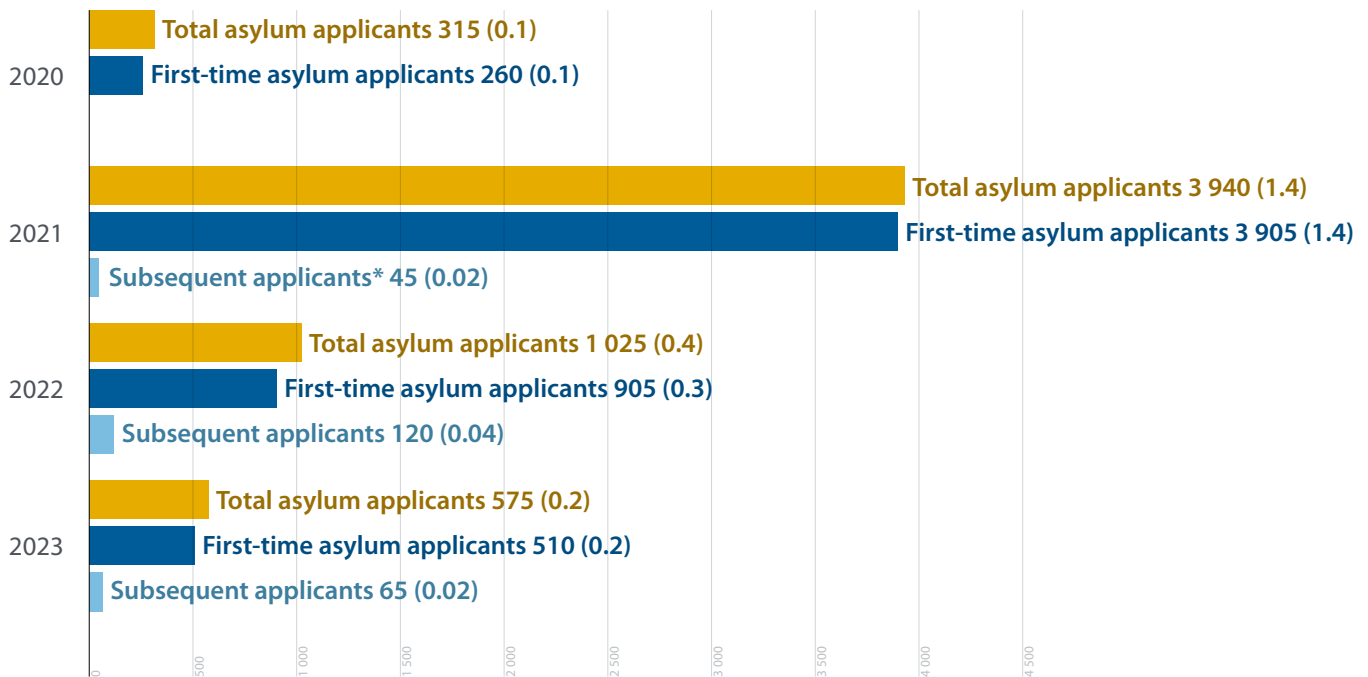
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, migr_resfpc, migr_resocc and migr_resoth)



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Asylum applicants by type of application, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

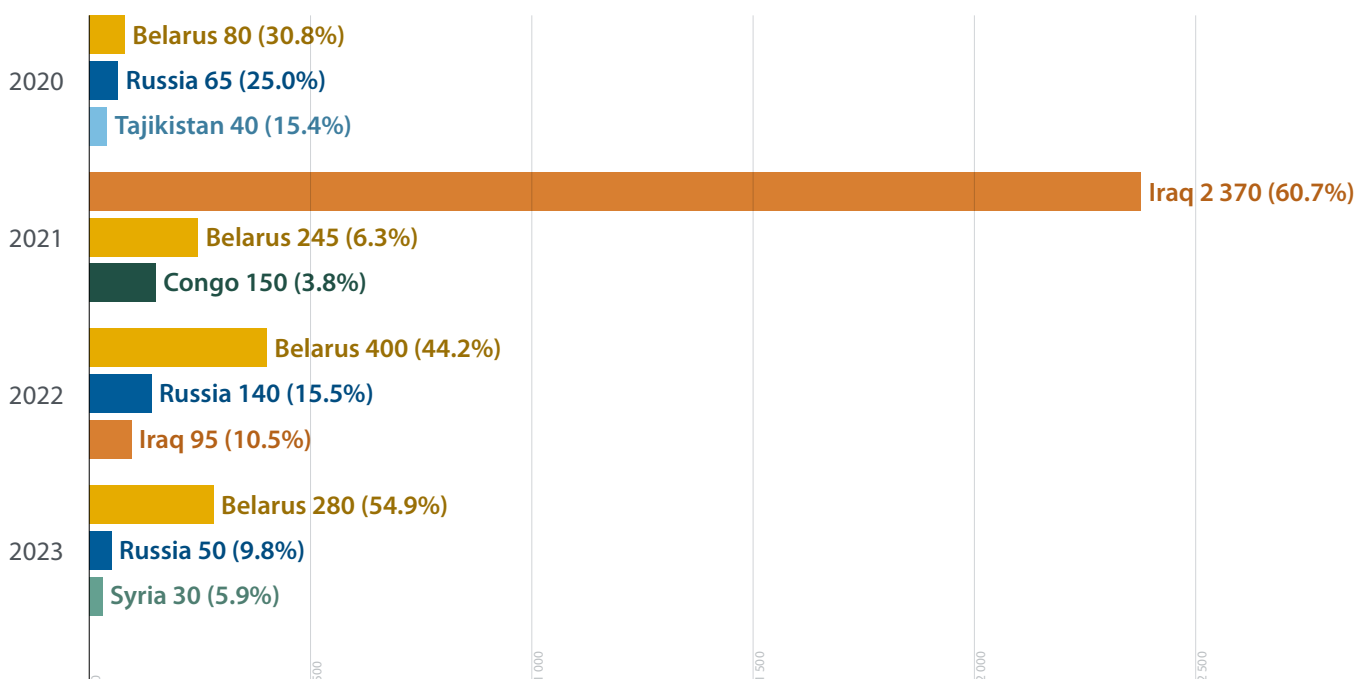


* Data collection from 2021.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz and migr_asyapp1mp)

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

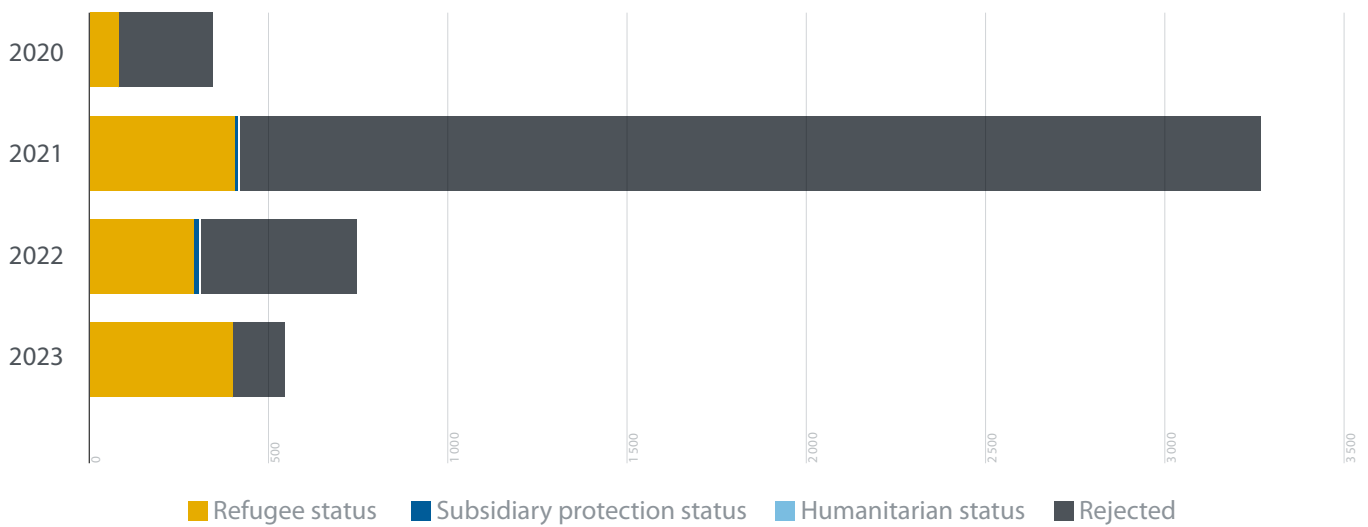
Absolute number (and the share in total number of first-time applicants)



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)

First instance asylum decisions by outcome, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the share of the total)

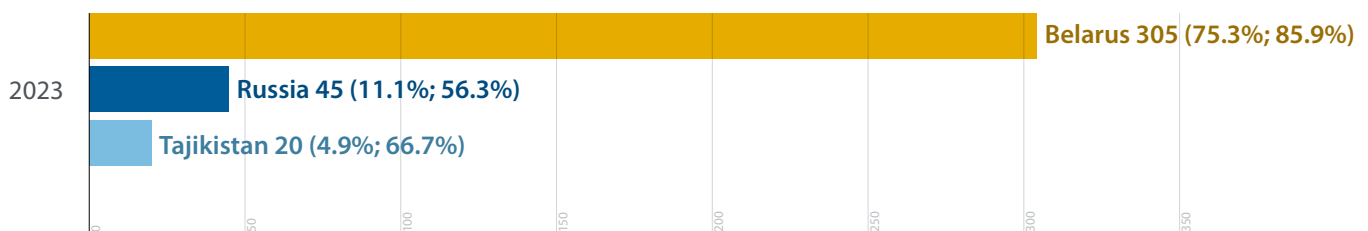


Year	Refugee status number (share of total)	Subsidiary protection status number (share of total)	Humanitarian status number (share of total)	Rejected number (share of total)
2020	80 (23.0%)	0 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	265 (76.7%)
2021	405 (12.4%)	10 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 860 (87.2%)
2022	290 (39.0%)	15 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	435 (58.9%)
2023	400 (73.6%)	0 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	145 (26.2%)

The shares are calculated using unrounded figures.
Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta and migr_asydec1pc)

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

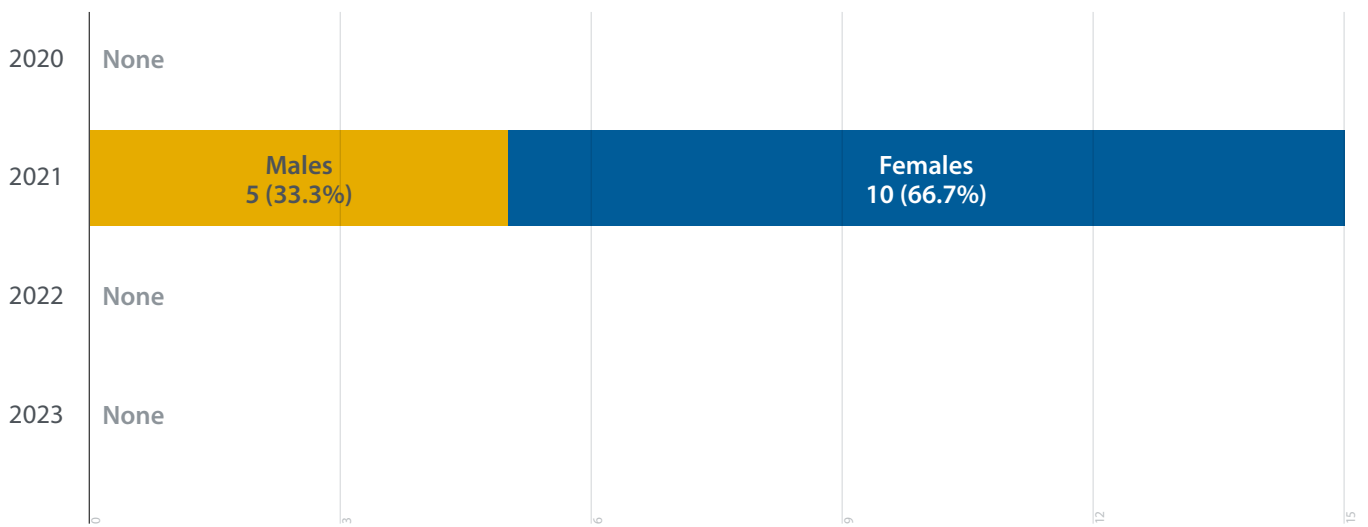
Absolute number (and the share in total positive decisions; and the recognition rate)



Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

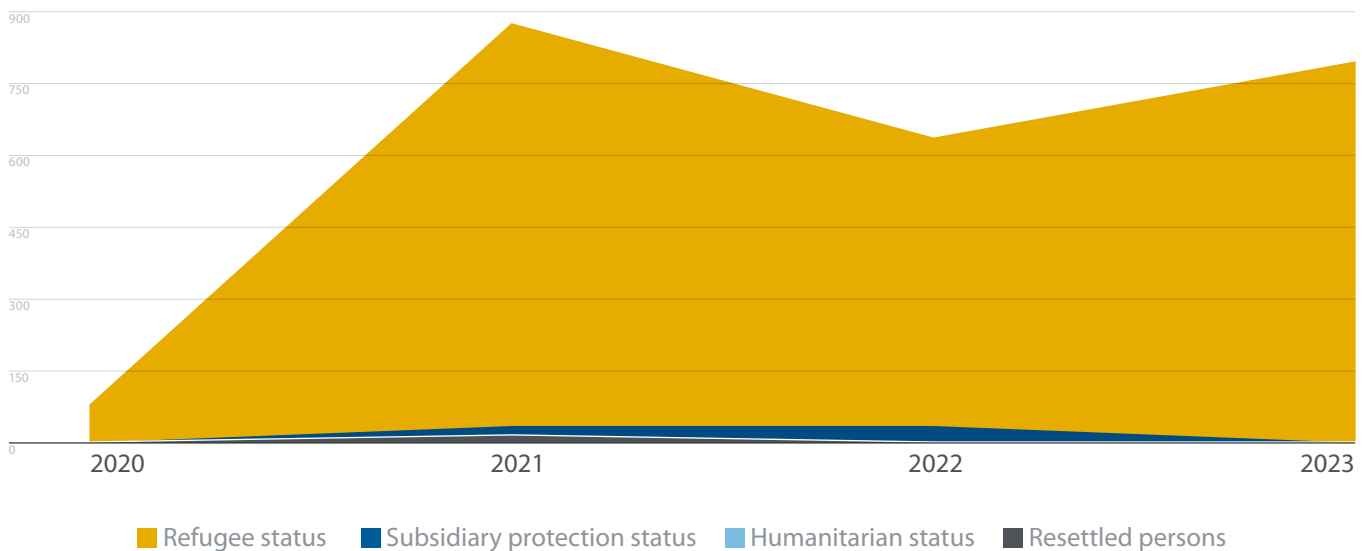
Resettled third-country nationals by sex, 2020–2023

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



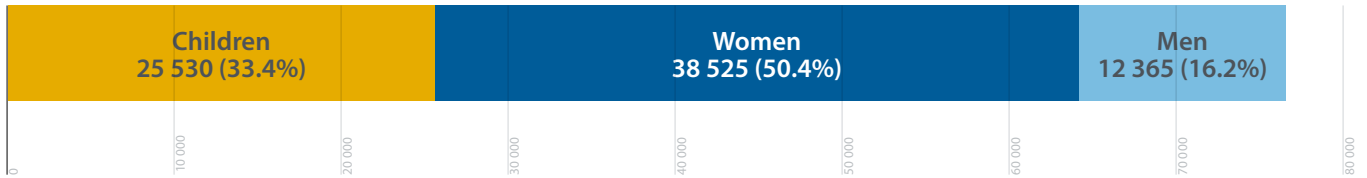
Year	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection status	Humanitarian status	Resettled persons
2020	80	0	0	0
2021	845	20	0	15
2022	605	35	0	0
2023	800	0	0	0

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyresa)

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

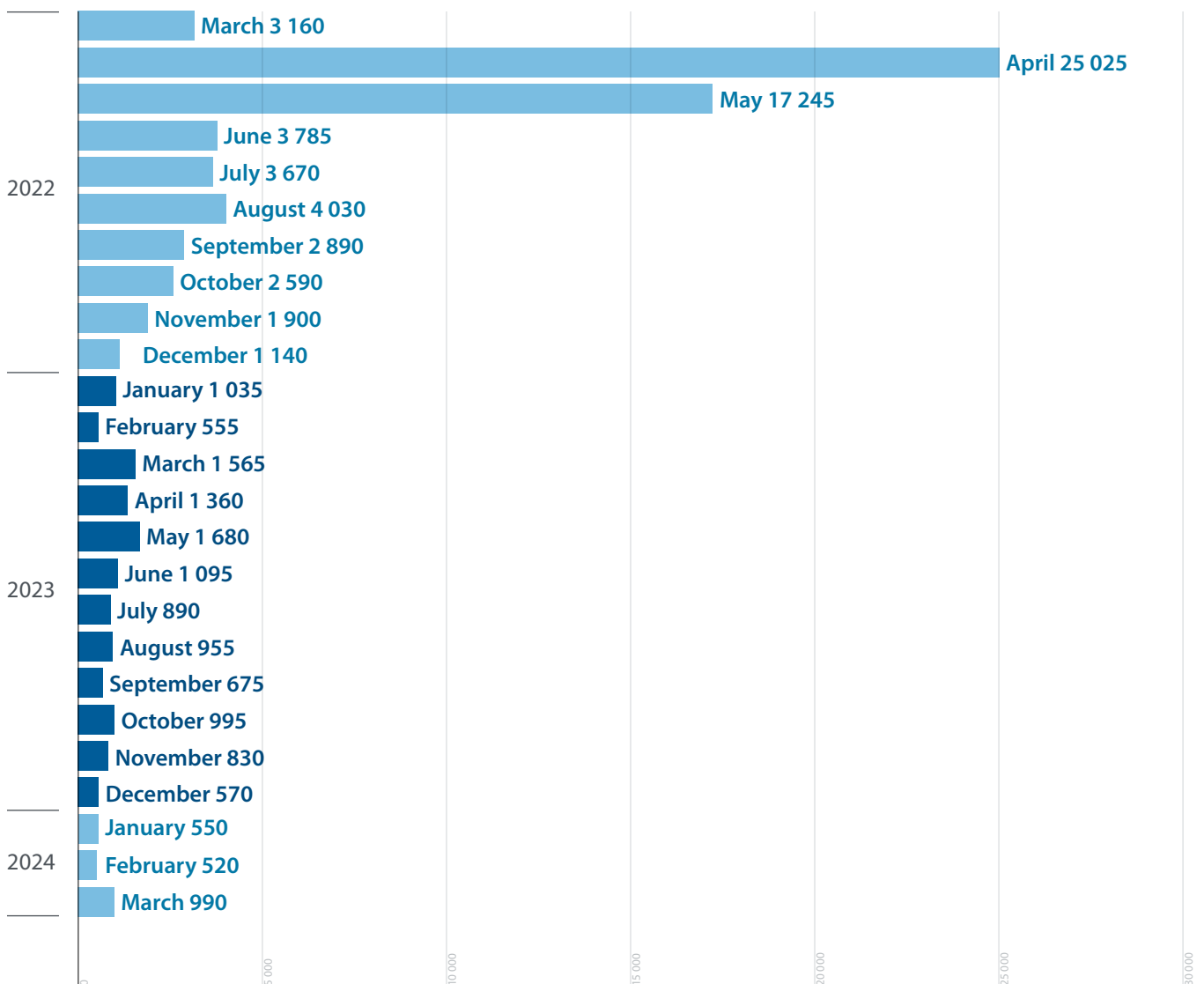
Beneficiaries of temporary protection by age and sex at the end of March 2024

Absolute number (and the share of the total)



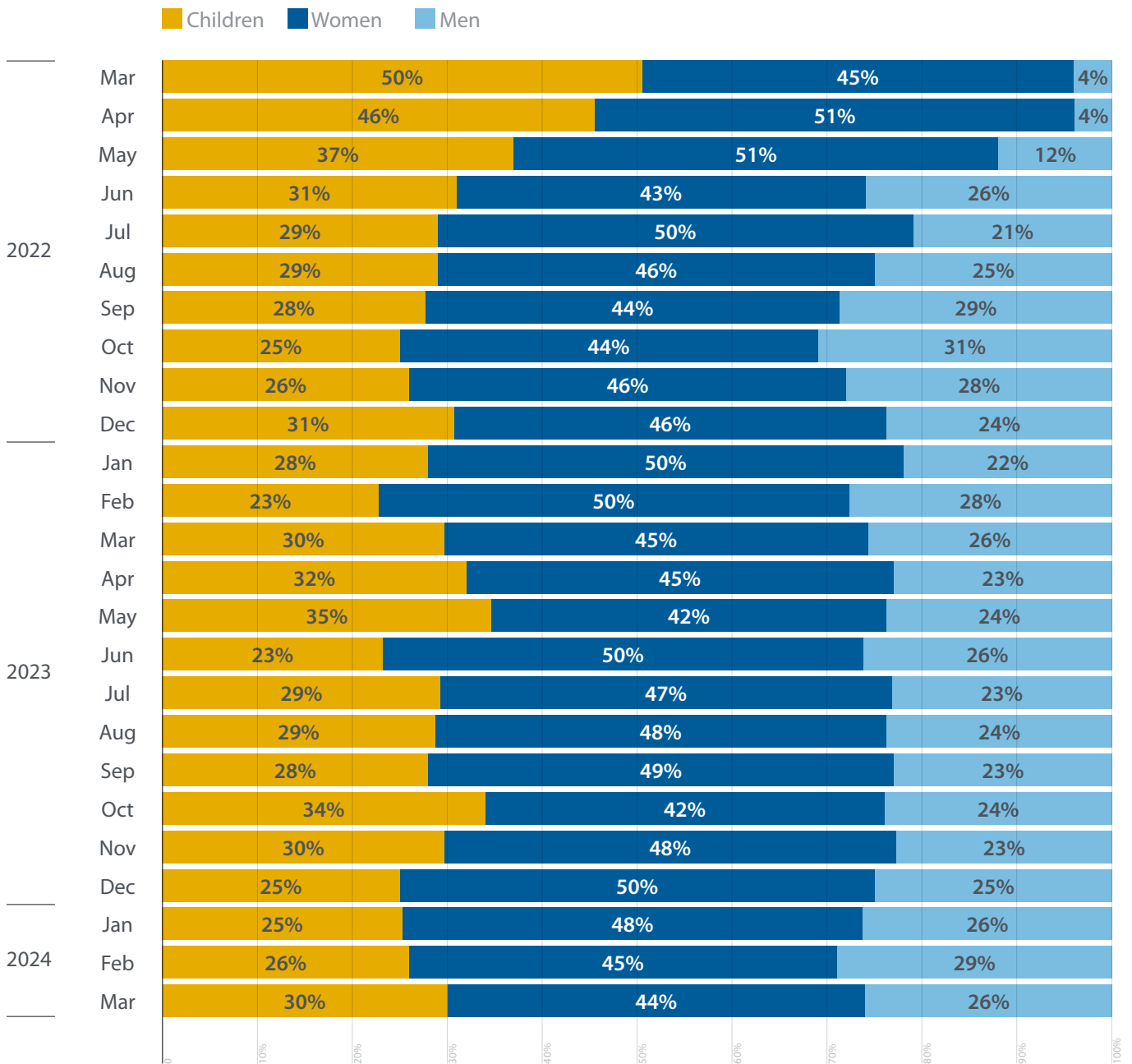
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpsm)

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



Source: Eurostat (migr_asytpfm)

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



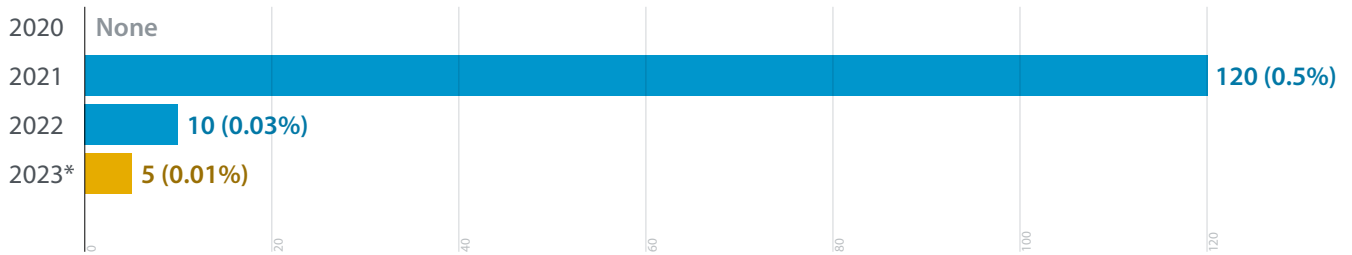
Source: Eurostat (migr_asytprm)



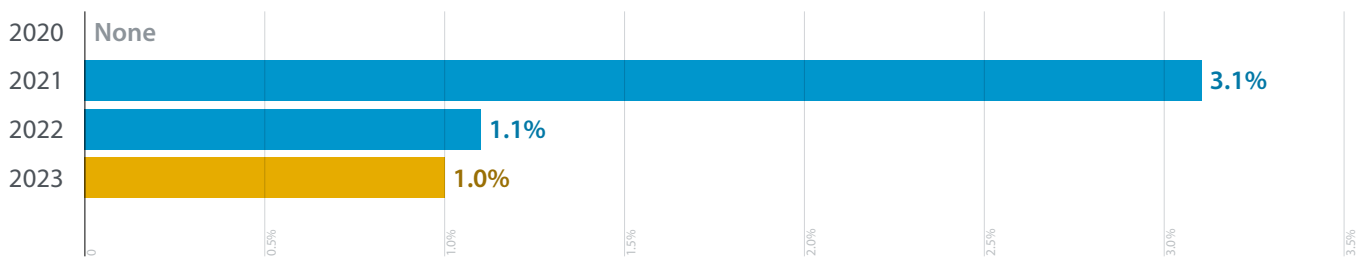
UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum, 2020–2023

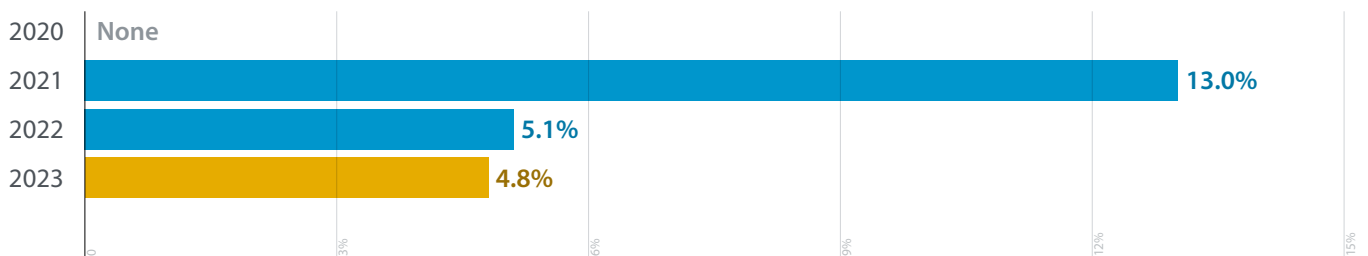
Number (and the share in total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU)



Share of all first-time asylum applicants



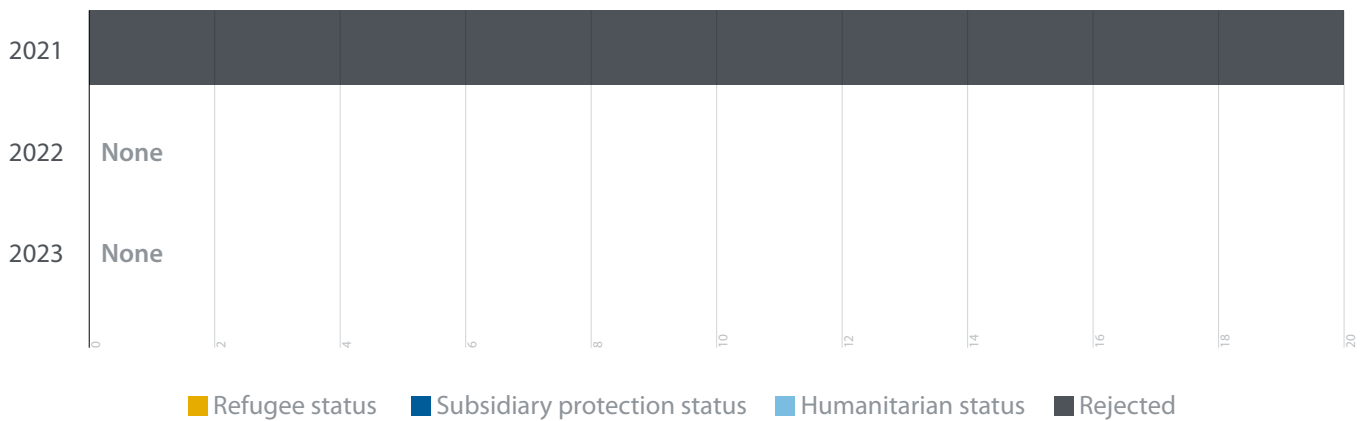
Share of all first-time asylum applicants aged less than 18 years



* The total number of unaccompanied minors in the EU used to calculate the share includes 2022 data for Cyprus.
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	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (100.0%)
2022	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2023	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

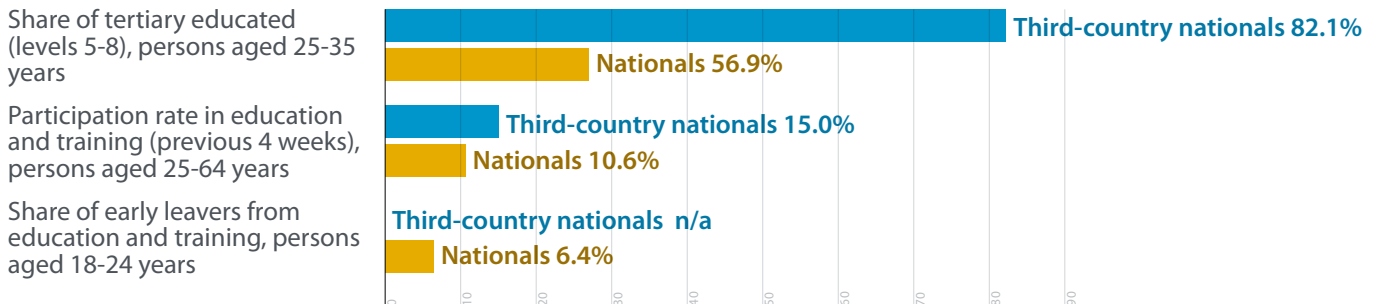
Source: Eurostat (migr_asyumdca)



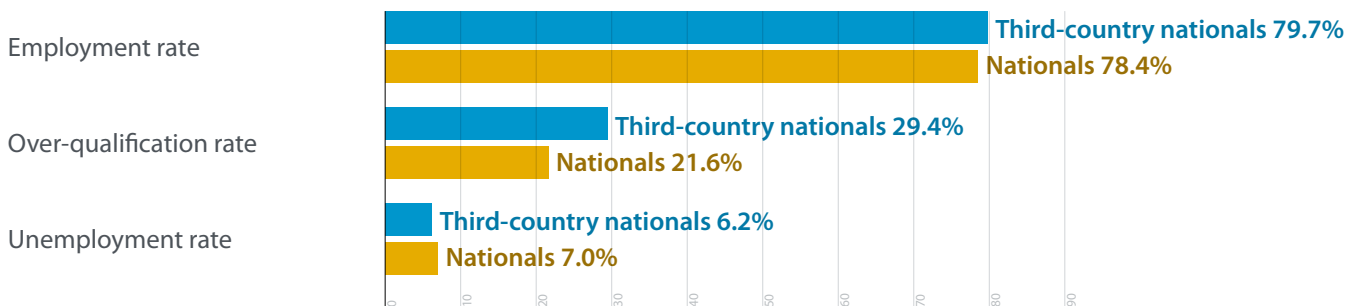
INTEGRATION

Integration indicators, 2022 or 2023

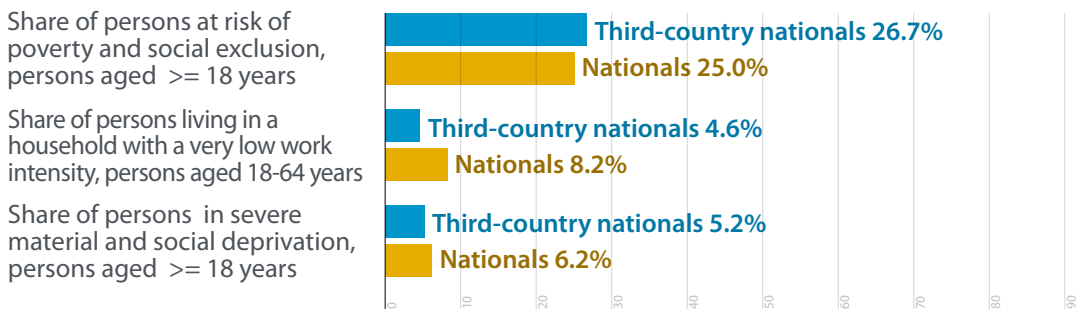
Education, 2023



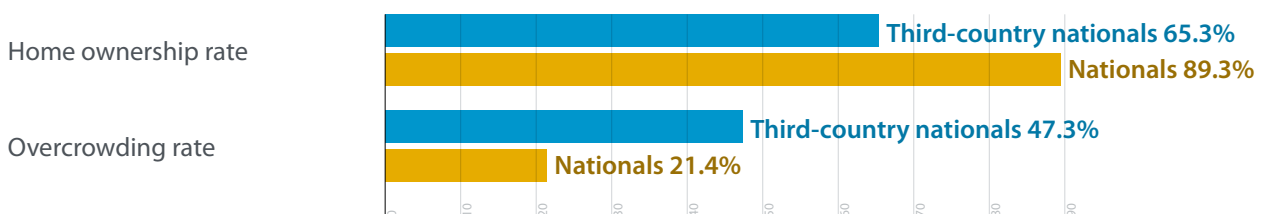
Labour market, persons aged 20-64 years, 2023



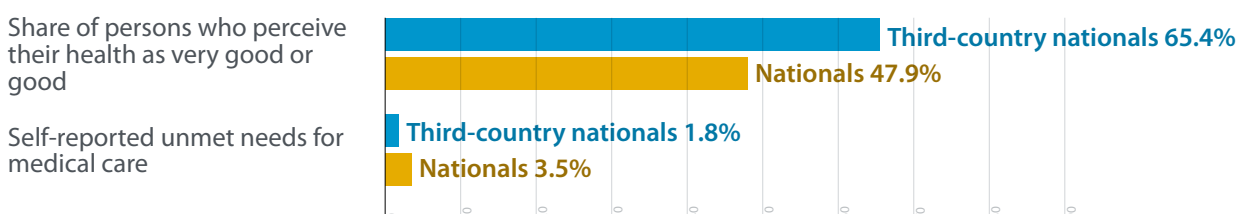
Social inclusion, 2022



Housing, persons aged ≥ 18 years, 2022



Health, persons aged ≥ 16 years, 2022





CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-country nationals who acquired citizenship, 2020–2022

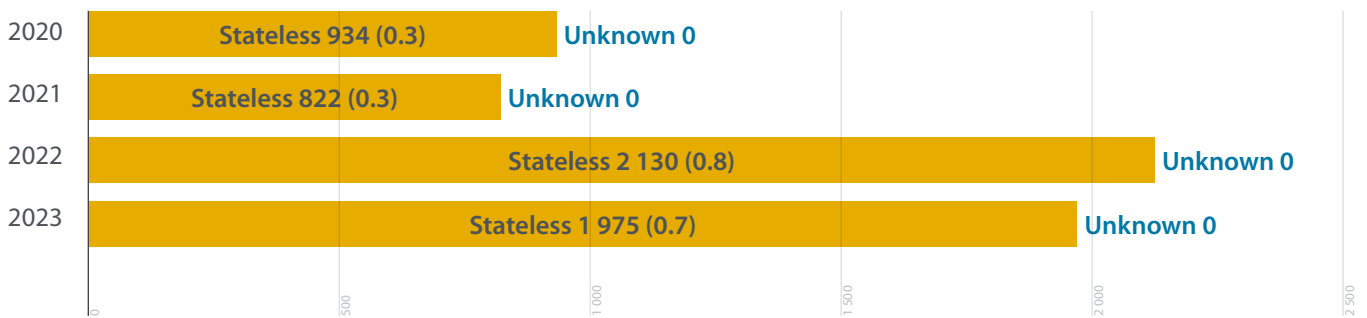
Absolute number (and share of total third-country nationals in the country)



Source: Eurostat (migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz)

Stateless persons and persons with unknown citizenship, 2020–2023

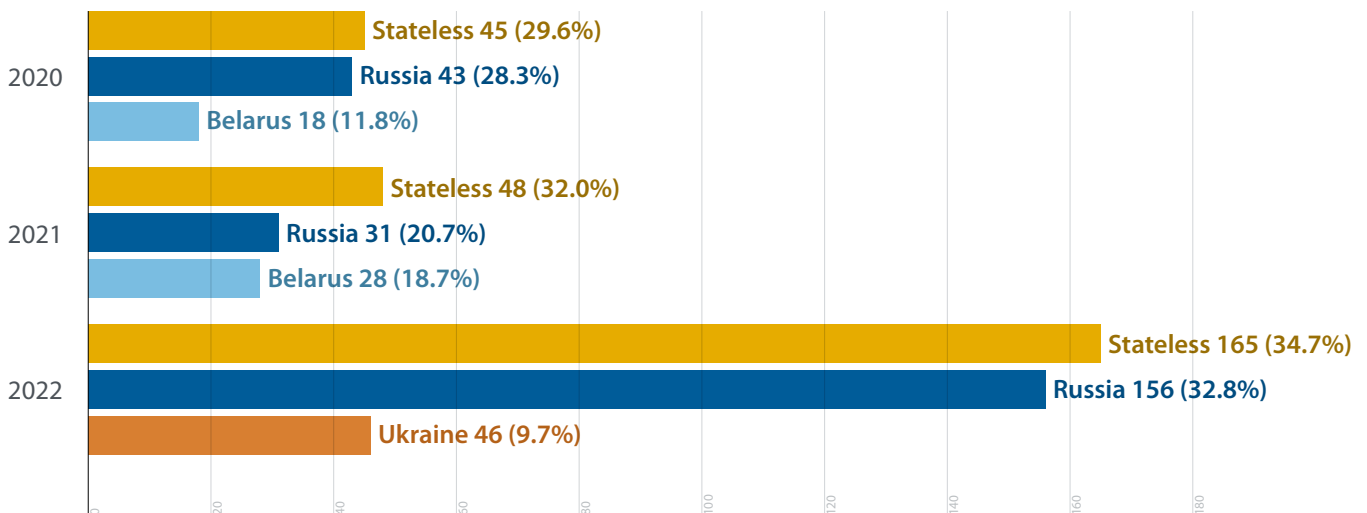
Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)



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)

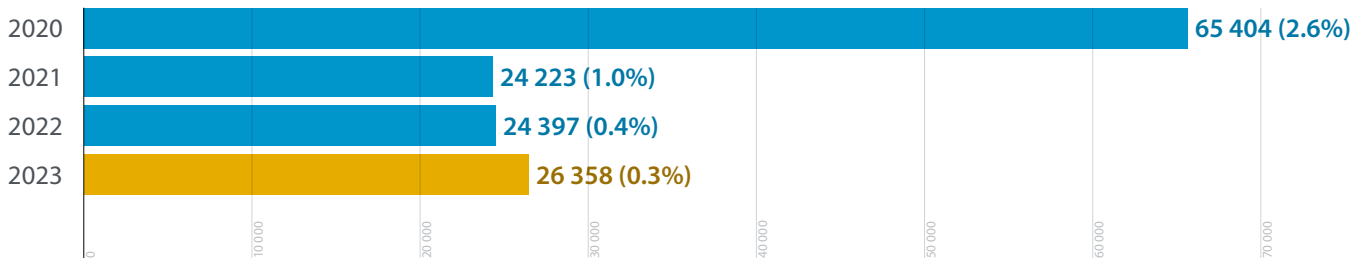


Source: Eurostat (migr_acq)

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Schengen uniform short-stay visas issued, 2020–2023

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

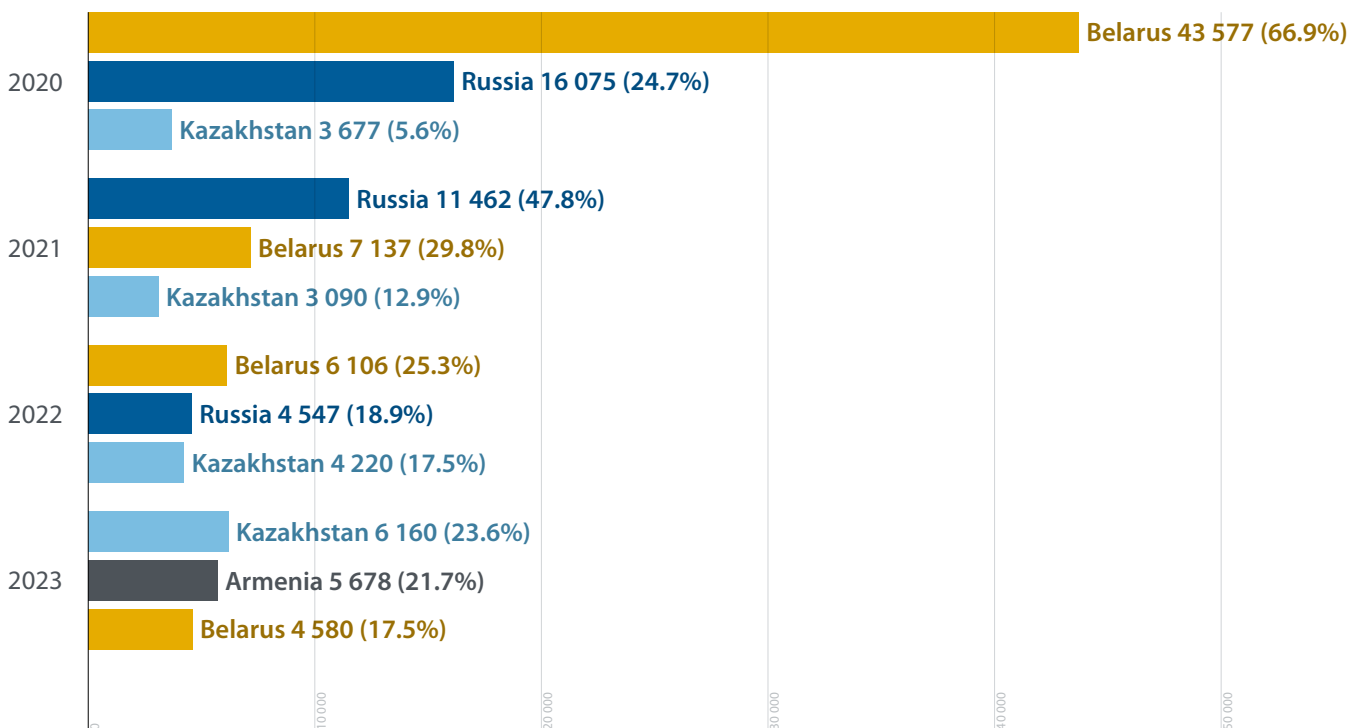


Note: Uniform short-stay visas (C visas) entitle the holder to stay in the territories of all Schengen States for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Such visas may be issued for the purpose of a single entry or multiple entries.

Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

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

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.

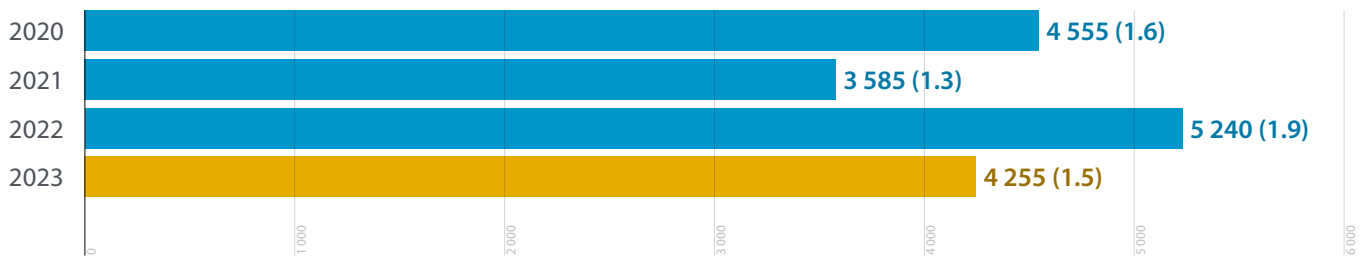
Source: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

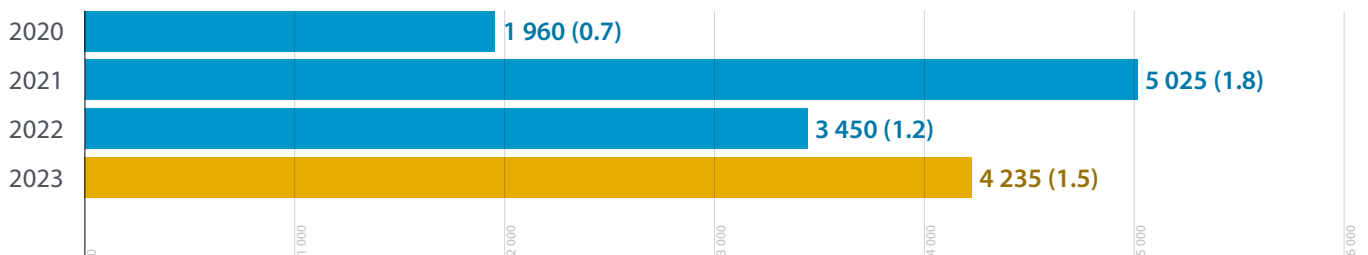
Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2020–2023

Absolute number (and the number per 1 000 people)

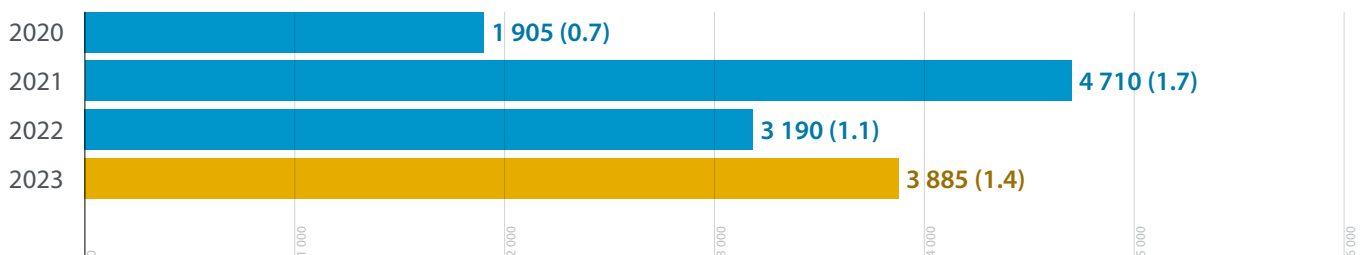
Persons refused entry



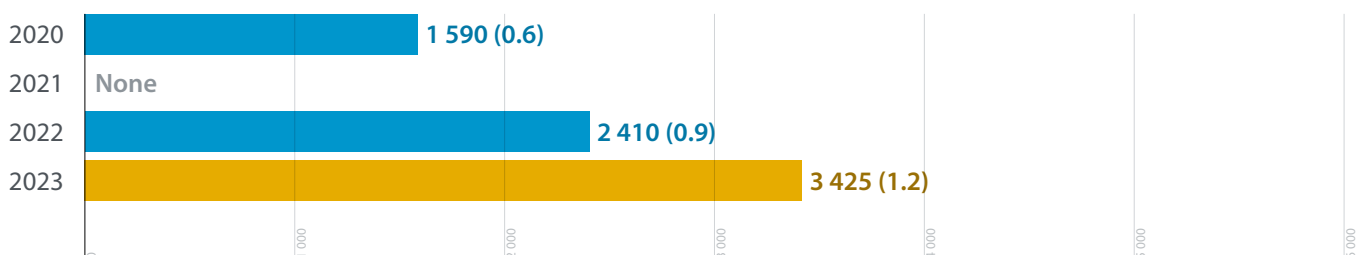
Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

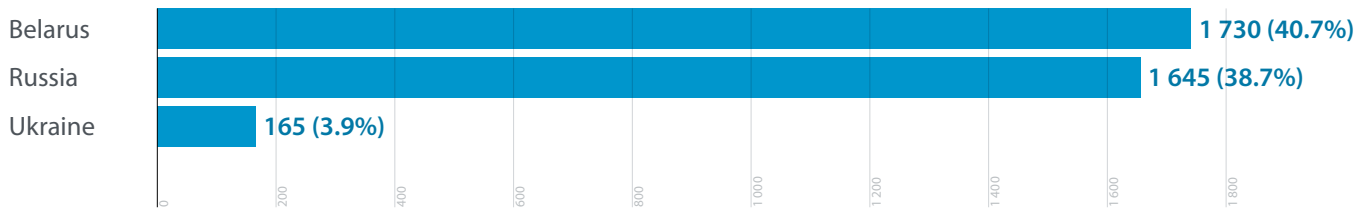


Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn, demo_gind and migr_eilpop)

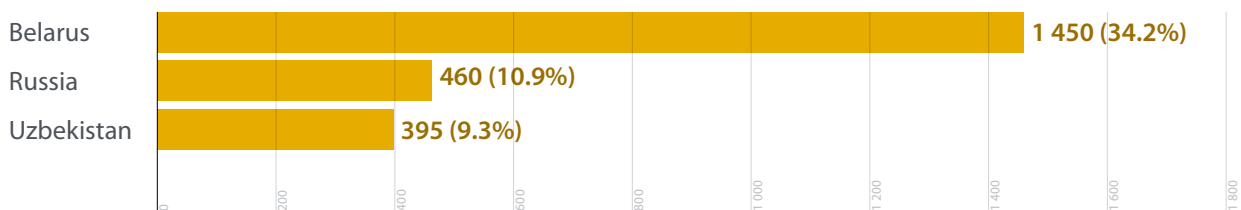
Top 3 countries of citizenship of third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement, 2023

Absolute numbers (and the shares in the respective totals)

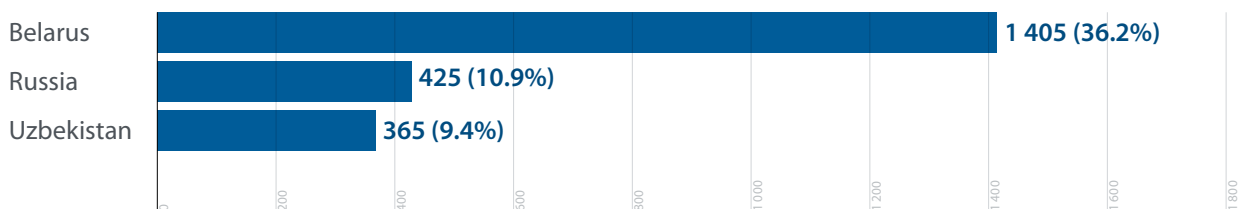
Persons refused entry



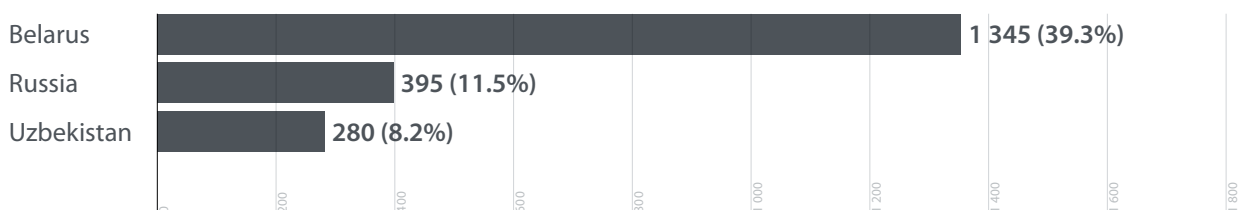
Persons found to be illegally present



Persons ordered to leave



Persons returned to a third country

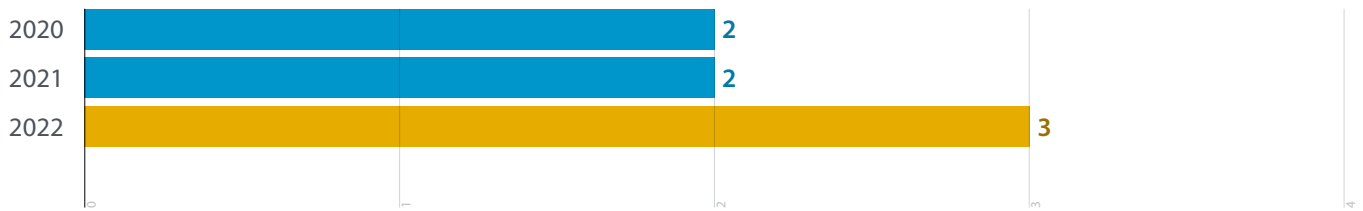


* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord and migr_eirtn)



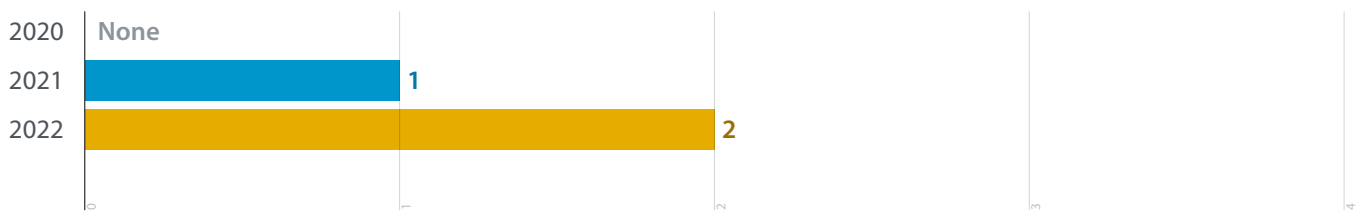
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

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



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_vctz)

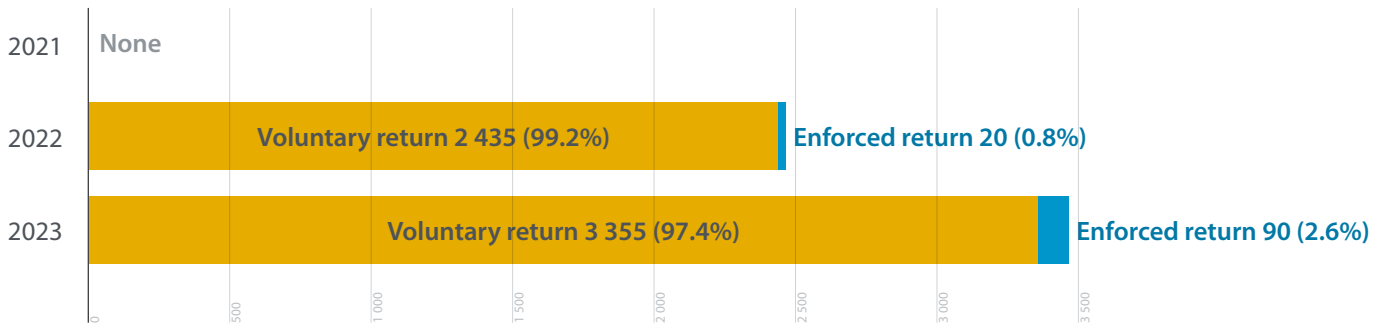
Number of first residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings, 2020–2022



Source: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

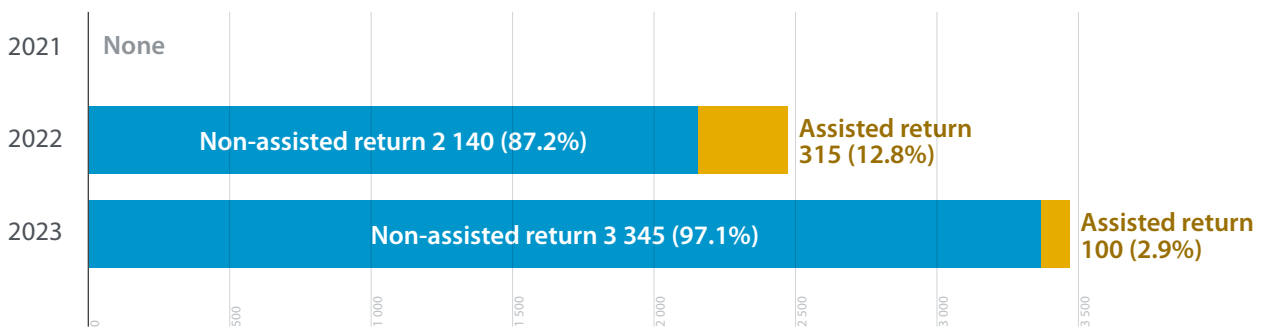
RETURN AND READMISSION

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)