LATVIA
EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS

OVERARCHING CHANGES

Legislation was introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19 infection, including reducing the number of on-site services, reducing direct contacts between clients and service providers, revoking residence permits or visas in cases of violation of COVID-19 isolation or quarantine rules, and imposing entry restrictions.

KEY POINTS

- **A new State Border Guard Law entered into force on 1 December 2020.**
- **Several regulatory enactments were adopted to limit the spread of COVID-19.**
- **Amendments to the Labour Law governing matters pertaining to posted workers were adopted on 21 December 2020.**

LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 360, Epidemiological Safety Measures for the Containment of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection, allowed the entry of third-country nationals meeting certain criteria, including for the purpose of work, when crossing the external borders of the Schengen States.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 360, Epidemiological Safety Measures for the Containment of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection, provided that in circumstances where the entry of third-country nationals crossing the external border of the Schengen States was suspended, students and researchers could enter if:

- They were engaged in studies in a full-time or exchange programme, if the higher education institution or college had issued written confirmation of their enrolment and on-site organisation of studies;
- They fulfilled the duties of a leading researcher or researcher of a scientific institution and were invited by a public person (scientific institution) listed on the Register of Scientific Institutions, where the invitation was justified by the institution's scientific research obligations.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 360, Epidemiological Safety Measures for the Containment of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection, provided for the entry of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Schengen States only if they were: (1) family members of Latvian nationals whose habitual residence was abroad; (2) citizens of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland and their family members; (3) persons permanently residing in these countries, including the Republic of Latvia.

DG Home & Migration

EMN European Migration Network

INFORMATION ON ROUTES TO AND CONDITIONS OF LEGAL MIGRATION

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed on crossing Schengen external borders, both the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the missions abroad communicated actively with foreigners about entering Latvia.

OTHER MEASURES

The mandatory requirement to prove the existence of sufficient financial resources was temporary abolished for third-country nationals already resident in Latvia until 10 June 2020 (i.e. those who entered and applied for a temporary residence permit until 10 June 2020).

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Following the declaration of the COVID-19 emergency on 12 March 2020, asylum seekers were interviewed remotely, through video conferences.

MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

On 17 December 2020, Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 829, Amendments to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 857 of 15 November 2005, Regulations Regarding Social Guarantees for an Orphan and a Child Left without Parental Care who is in Out-of-Family Care as well as After the Termination of Out-of-Family Care , were adopted. The amendments provided for an increase in benefits in line with the socioeconomic situation in the country, allowing orphans and children left without parental care to start an independent life on reaching adulthood and promoting inclusion in society and education.

INTEGRATION

OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS

Integration courses for asylum seekers took place through distancing or online. Latvian language courses for third-country nationals took place online.

CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

On the Termination of the Granting of the Status of a Non-citizen to Children provided for the automatic granting of Latvian citizenship to children born after 1 January 2020, unless the child's parents sought citizenship of another country for their child. In 2020, 142 children of non-citizens were registered as Latvian citizens.

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

On 1 December 2020, the State Border Guard Law entered into force. It ensured legal and efficient operation of the State Border Guard, lifted the ban on border guards joining trade unions, and included legally correct terminology, in line with the Schengen Borders Code and the State Borders Law.

VISA POLICY

Prior to the entry into force of the amendments to the Visa Code on 2 February 2020, amendments were made to the visa representation agreements with Lithuania, Estonia, and Hungary to reflect the changes to the Visa Code. The amendments stipulated that the representing State would be responsible for the whole visa processing process, without the involvement of the represented State.

SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

Latvia implemented its action plan to address the shortcomings and recommendations identified during the Schengen visa evaluation process.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The report, 'On the Necessary Changes in Attracting Foreign Students and Studies in Latvian Higher Education Institutions' by the Protocol Decision were approved in the session of the Cabinet of Ministers of

18 August 2020. It set out a number of tasks related to the regulatory changes required to streamline the education system and attract third-country students, to develop high-quality higher education exports, and to prevent issues identified as posing significant risks to the reputation of the country, its higher education system and national security.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

On European Union Anti-Trafficking Day in October 2020, an awareness-raising campaign, 'Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings' was launched to reach victims of trafficking in human beings in need of support, assistance and protection.

RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cooperation with the Republic of Belarus on readmission was launched in the second half of 2020, based on the agreement between the EU and the Republic of Belarus on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

No significant developments in 2020.

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 Latvia 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.

Latvia - 2020

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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.

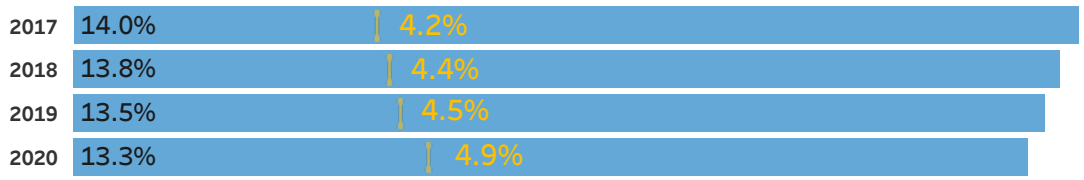
COLOUR LEGEND

Whenever not specified, the following colour legend is adopted.
Colours for multiple nationalities are randomly chosen.

data relative to Latvia | 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)

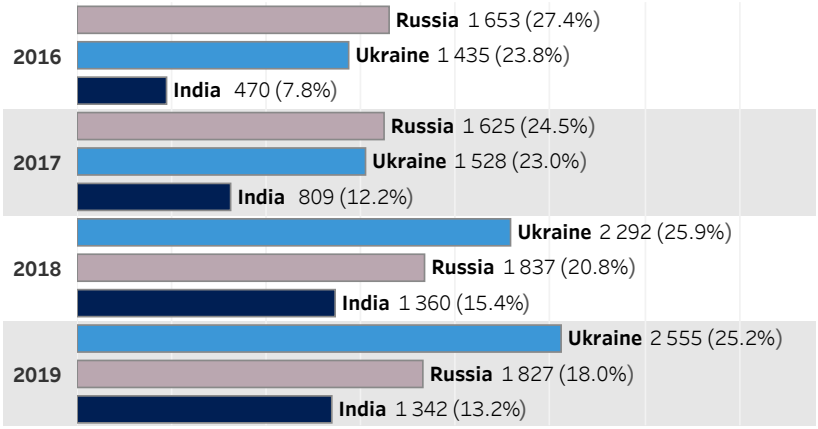


Number of TCNs*

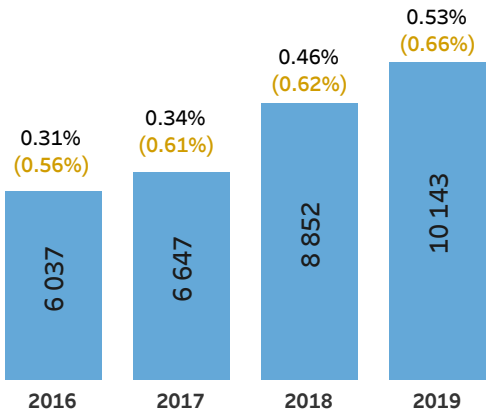
273 333
266 167
260 028
253 658

*including recognised non-citizens

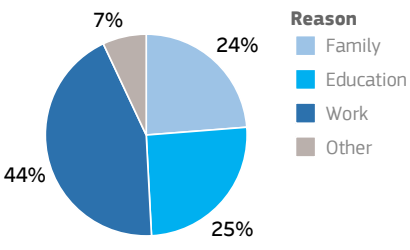
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



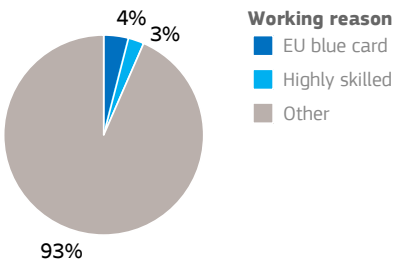
First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



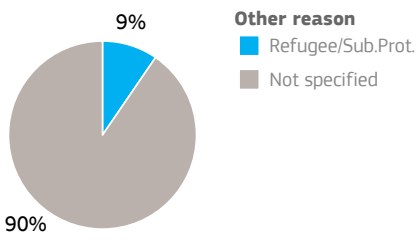
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)



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)

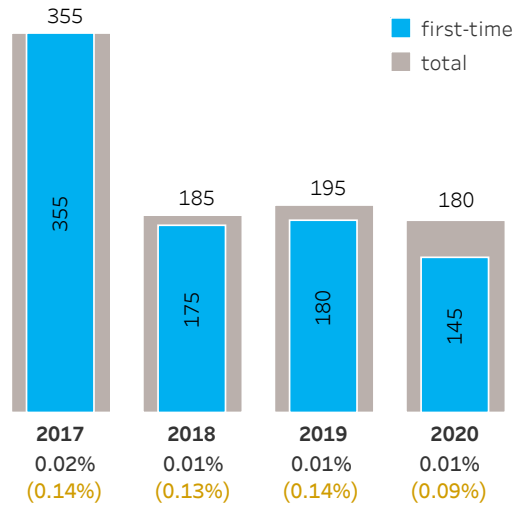


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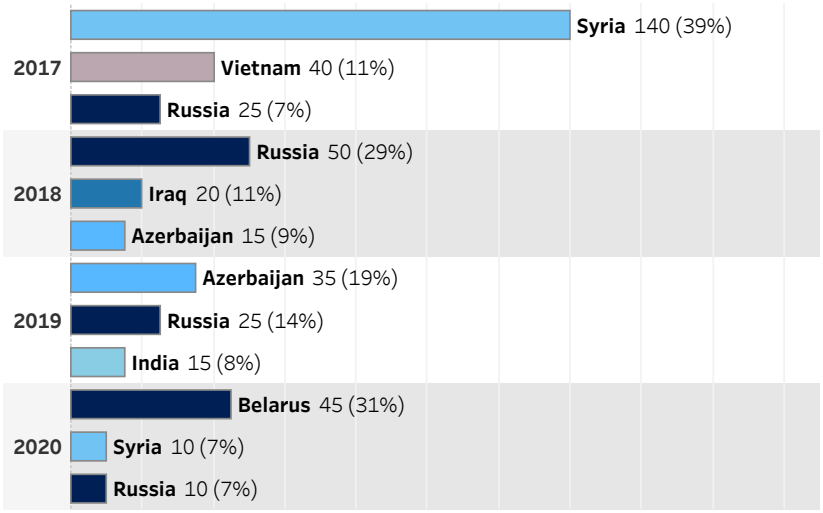
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

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



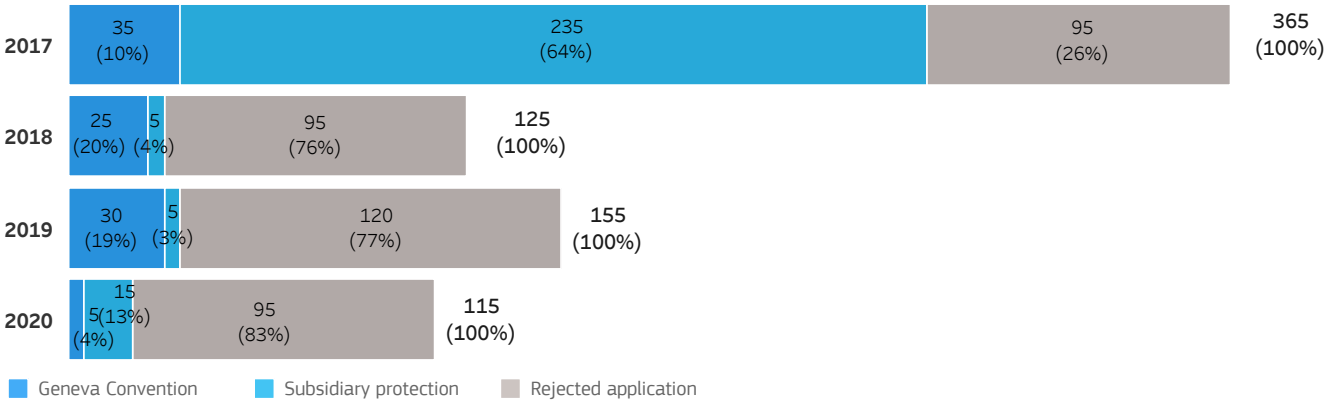
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)



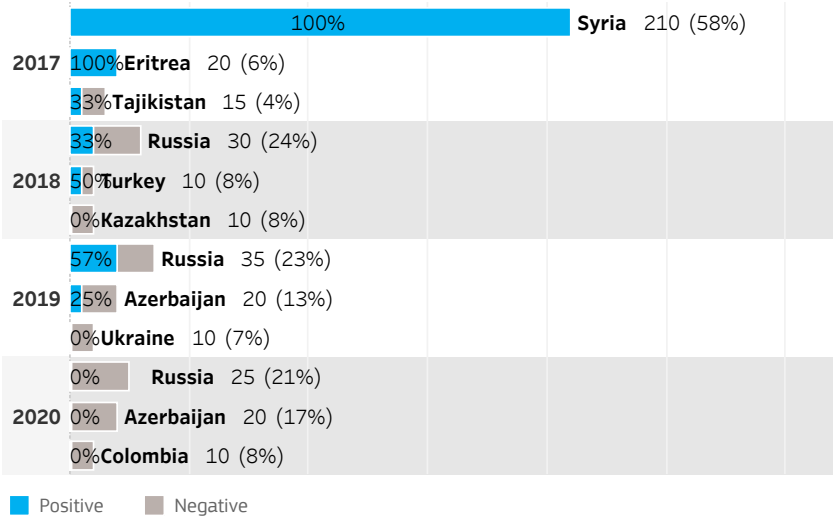
Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



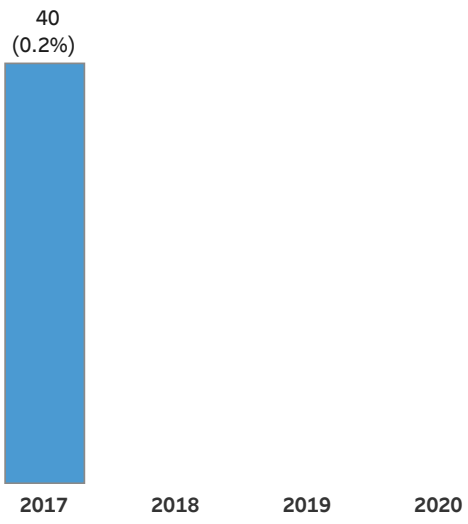
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

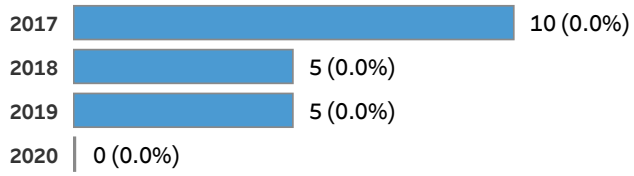


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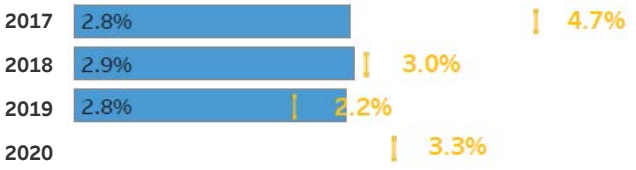
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UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

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

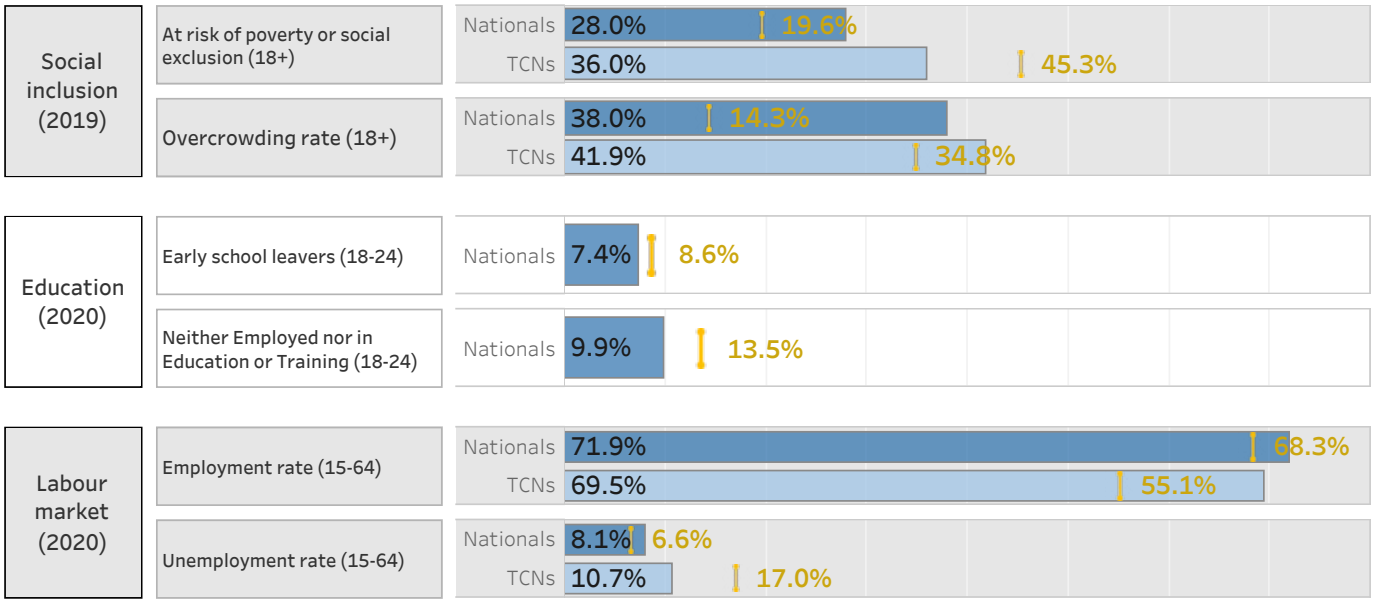


Unaccompanied minors as % of first asylum applications (in the country and in EU)
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)



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, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_urgan)



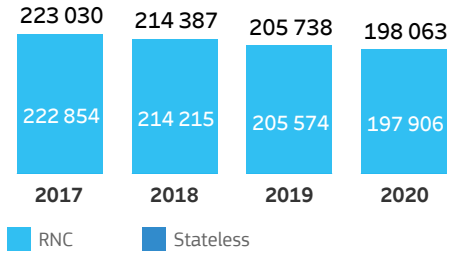
*including recognised non-citizens

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_pop1ctza)



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)

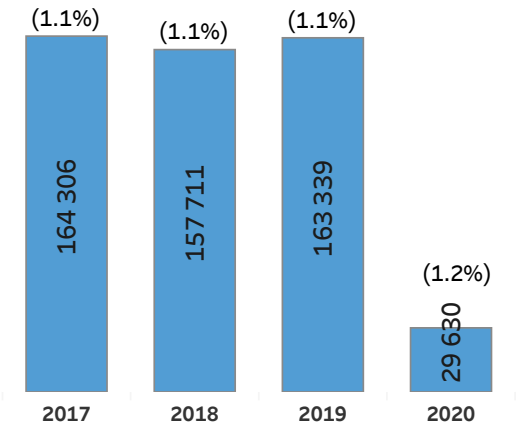


Latvia - 2020

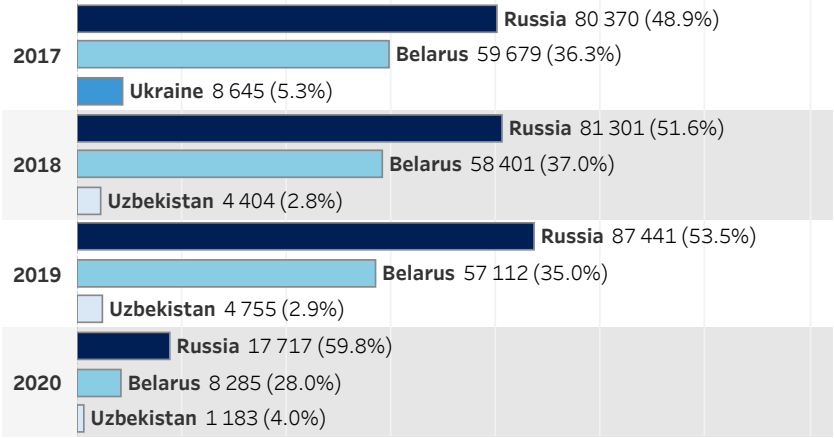
Publication date: June 2021

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs

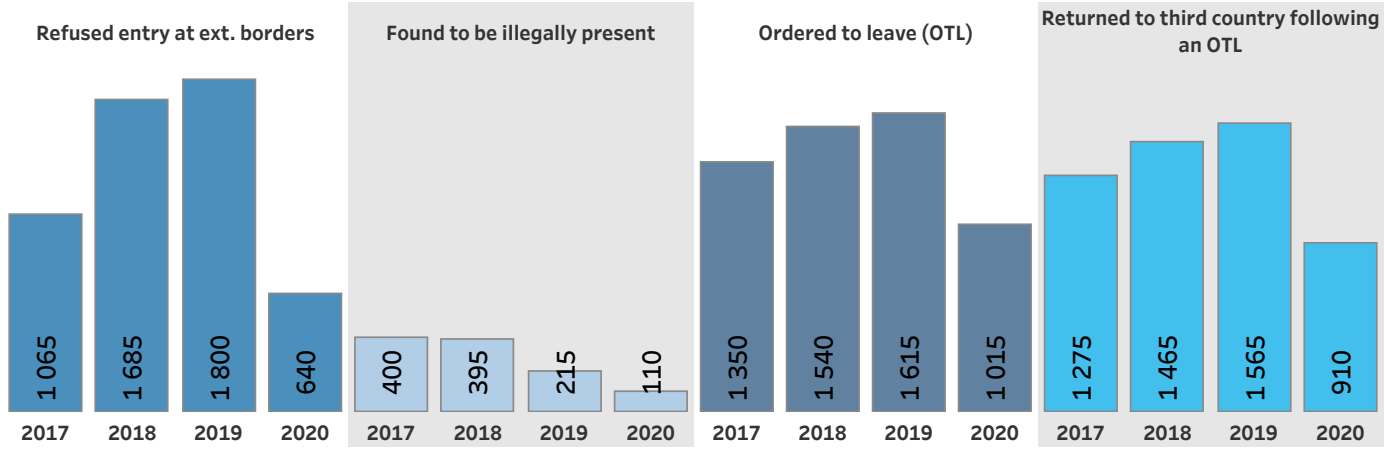


Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs

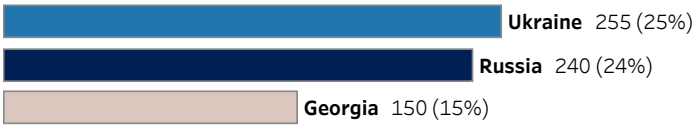


IRREGULAR MIGRATION

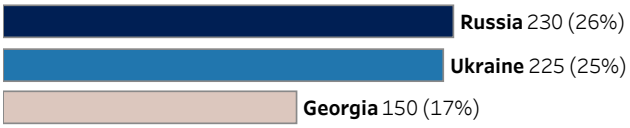
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn)



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)

