

# ESTONIA

## EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

# 2019

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



### LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

#### WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

2019 saw no significant legislative changes in the field of legal migration. Several activities were implemented to promote work-related migration, however.

The [Internal Security Development Plan 2020-2030](#), initiated by the Ministry of the Interior in 2018, was developed in 2019 and is expected to be adopted in early 2020.

The Minister of the Interior established a division of the immigration quota for 2020. Unlike previous years, the quota will be divided between residence permits granted on specific grounds and those granted on the general ground of employment.

There was a substantial increase in registrations for short-term employment, which rose by 40% to 32 245 (compared to 19 858 in 2018). 75% of third-country nationals registering for short-term employment in 2019 were Ukrainian citizens. To facilitate the procedures for short-term employment for the employers, possibility to submit applications for the registration of short-term employment in the [self-service environment](#) was created.

In 2019, 'Work in Estonia' launched a spousal programme, ['Reinvent yourself'](#). The six-week programme aimed to support spouses of foreign specialists recruited in Estonia to upskill professionally.

### KEY POINTS



The number of short-term employment registrations increased substantially in recent years, with 2019 experiencing a 40% increase compared to the previous year.



Several initiatives were implemented to facilitate foreigners' Estonian language study, e.g. language houses, online courses, free language courses for those planning to apply for citizenship.



The new guide to identifying and referring victims of human trafficking to services was finalised.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications extended the conditions of the foreign recruitment grant also to the hiring science and engineering specialists.

#### FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In 2019, the Estonian Supreme Court pointed out that the Aliens Act is unconstitutional and invalid in part that excludes issuing a residence permit for family reasons to the registered same-sex partner of an Estonian citizen.



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Despite no significant legislative changes in the field of international protection, 2019 nevertheless saw some changes.

The Police and Border Guard Board (the PBGB) began to issue 3-in-1 decisions, i.e. a single administrative act simultaneously issues a negative asylum decision, return decision and an entry ban. The return decision and the entry ban are automatically suspended and take effect only after a final decision on international protection has been made.

An institutional change saw the implementation of migration-related services relocated from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Social Insurance Board.

In 2019, Estonia resettled seven Syrian citizens from Turkey. However, a decision was made to discontinue with the resettlement activities.



## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

No significant developments in 2019.



## INTEGRATION

### INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

Several initiatives were launched to support foreigners' integration. The Integration Foundation opened Estonian language houses in Tallinn and Narva, offering various options for foreigners to enhance their language skills.

The Tartu Welcome Centre opened in 2019, with a team of local advisers providing information and guidance to help newcomers to settle in.

### AWARENESS-RAISING ON MIGRATION

As part of its migration and adaptation strategy, the Ministry of the Interior launched a communication service. The focus in 2019 was on preparing the main activities, with the service intended to eventually provide the wider public with objective fact-based information about migration and adaptation.

The Ministry of the Interior also prepared a graphic booklet on migration statistics for 2014-2018, available in both [Estonian](#) and [English](#). The booklet made migration statistics available to the general public and described the main trends and data clearly and simply.



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

From 1 January 2019, persons who have resided legally in Estonia for at least five years, have not participated in government-funded Estonian language courses in the past two years and are interested in applying for Estonian citizenship, can sign a language learning contract with the government. This enables them to participate in free language courses, as well as paid study leave for up to 20 days (compensation based on the Estonian average salary).



## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

The PBGB organised a large-scale training initiative - 'HotSpot 2019' - to rehearse the mass intake of thousands of migrants at the border checkpoint in the south-eastern part of Estonia. The aim of this exercise was to practice the initial procedures for the reception of incoming migrants. Nearly 400 PBGB officials took part of this exercise.

An amendment to the Aliens Act introduced a new digital nomad visa. The amendment is expected to take effect from mid-summer 2020.



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

### MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The PBGB carried out almost 400 migration inspection missions in 2019 (similar to 2018). A key achievement was raising companies' awareness of the importance of registering foreigners' short-term employment.

## MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR STAY

The PBGB, the Estonian Tax and Customs Board and the Labour Inspectorate organised several information days for universities, employers and embassies, on legal entrance and stay/study/work in Estonia. Late 2018, the PBGB published an information leaflet outlining the options for legal employment. These leaflets were distributed in 2019 at airports, embassies and the PBGB offices.



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

A new [guide to identifying and referring victims of human trafficking](#) to services was finalized by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2019.

Estonia participated in an EU campaign to draw attention to the rights of victims of human trafficking, with campaign [materials](#) used by victim support services.

The Labour Inspectorate and the non-profit organization 'Living for Tomorrow', noted that exploitation by employers had become more common.

Several government institutions decided to strengthen control of third-country nationals working in Estonia as a rented workforce. For example, the Minister of Finance asked the Tax and Customs Board to focus its inspection resources on rental labour checks, while the Ministry of the Interior prepared an amendment to the Aliens Act to prevent violation of the rules on working in Estonia.



## RETURN AND READMISSION

### RETURN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

2019 saw the entry into force of a new amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Act on Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry. The new provisions allowed agreements to be made with suspect, accused or sentenced third-country nationals on the obligation to depart from Estonia to a host country. At the request of the Prosecutor's Office (or prison), the PBGB can assess the possibility of returning a third-country national who wishes to leave Estonia and return to their receiving state.

The Act on Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry introduced the new ground of 'absconding', covering the risk of escape where a third-country national's obligation to leave is enforced by a court judgment.

## COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

The PBGB and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Estonian office compiled information on legal entrance and stay, and departure from Estonia in case of unlawful stay. The material gathered key information on the most common types of migration and legal bases for third-country nationals to arrive and stay in Estonia. It was translated into English and Russian.



## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Estonia cooperates on a bilateral basis with those countries to which it can offer added value based on its own experience. Like previous years, its primary partners in 2019 were Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Afghanistan. Estonia provided €4.4 million support for cooperation projects with these countries.

Estonian development cooperation prioritized support for, and development of, education, healthcare, peace and stability, democracy and economy, and environmentally friendly development. Using its own experience, Estonia particularly supported e-governance issues and digital solutions in these areas.

## STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex was prepared by the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD). It provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Estonia on aspects of migration and international protection (2016-2019), 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 nine thematic sections. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators.

Whenever data is 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.

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 Estonia

■ data relative to EU

## LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

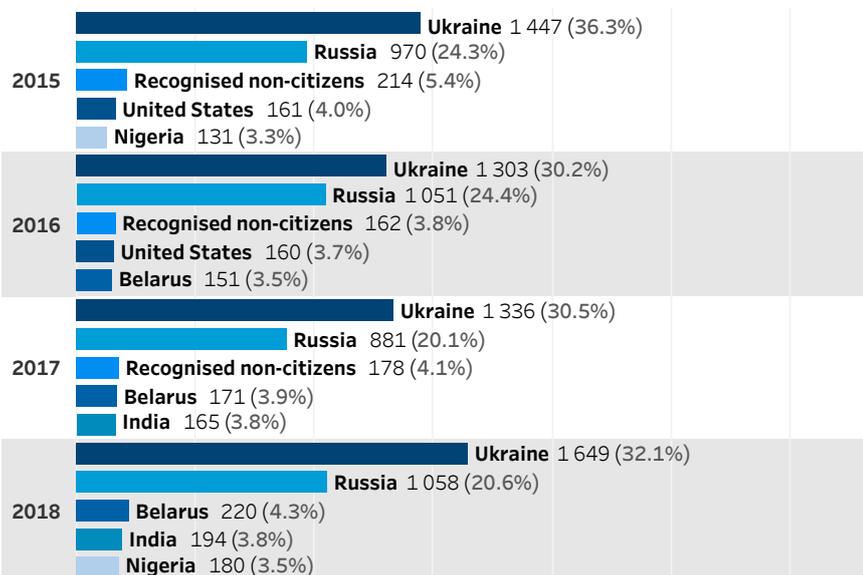
### Third-Country Nationals (TCNs)\* as % of total population (in the country and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctz)



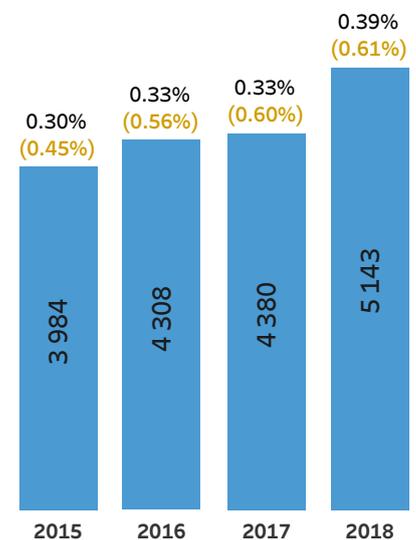
### Top 5 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



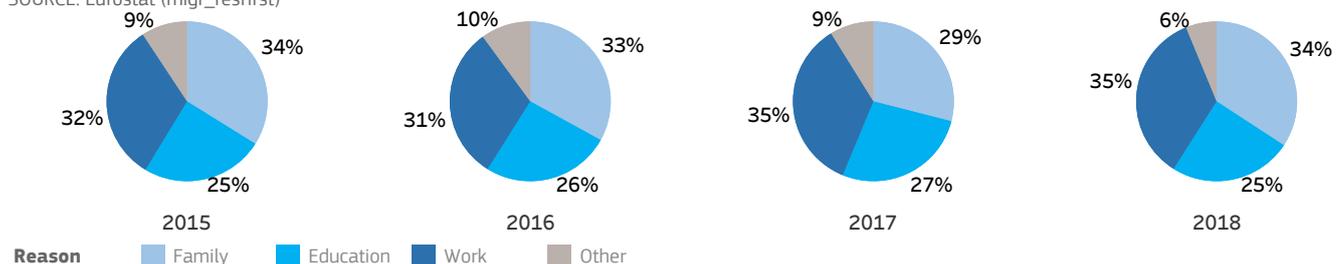
### First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



### First residence permits annually issued by reason

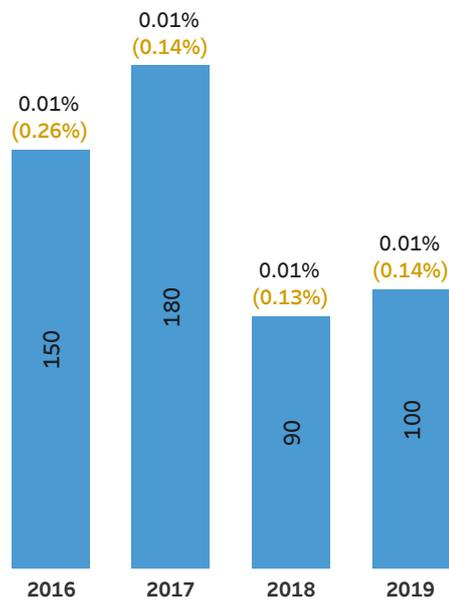
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

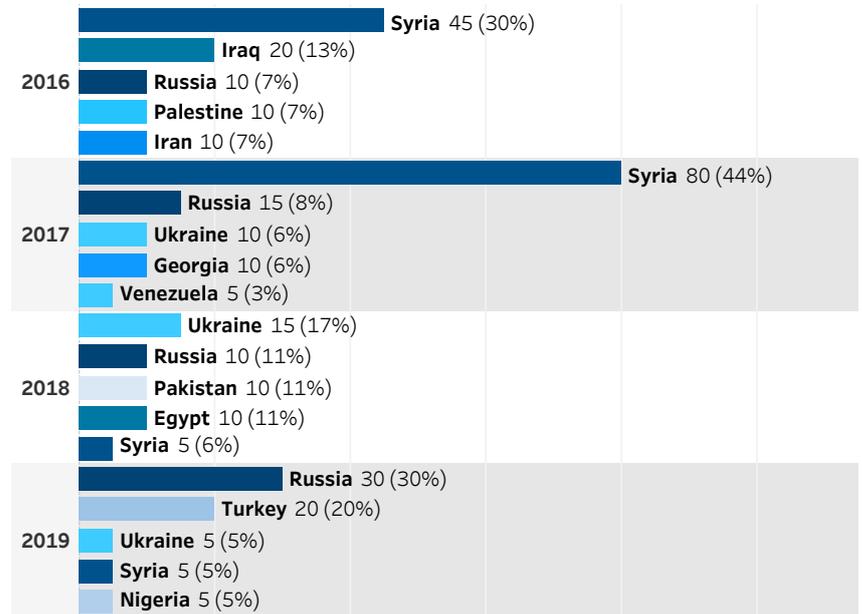
### First-time asylum applications: total num. and as % of population in the country (and in EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza, migr\_pop1ctz)



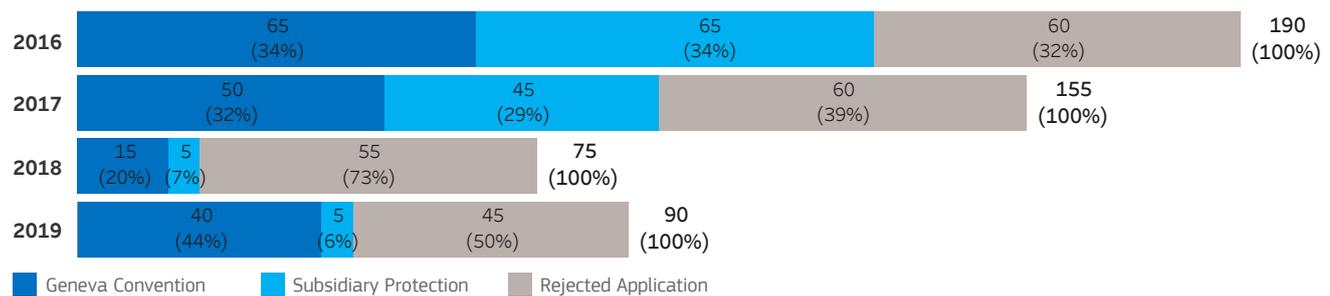
### Top 5 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza)



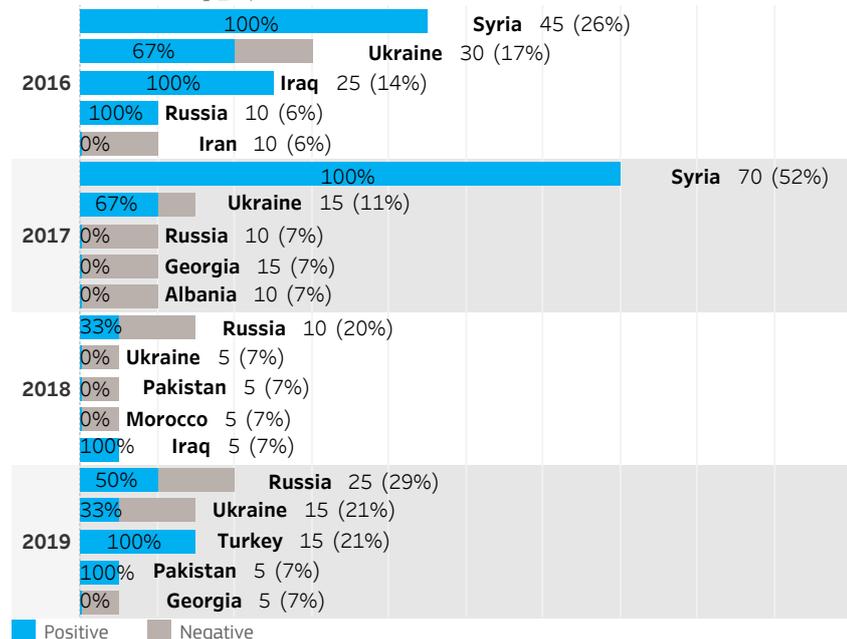
### Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



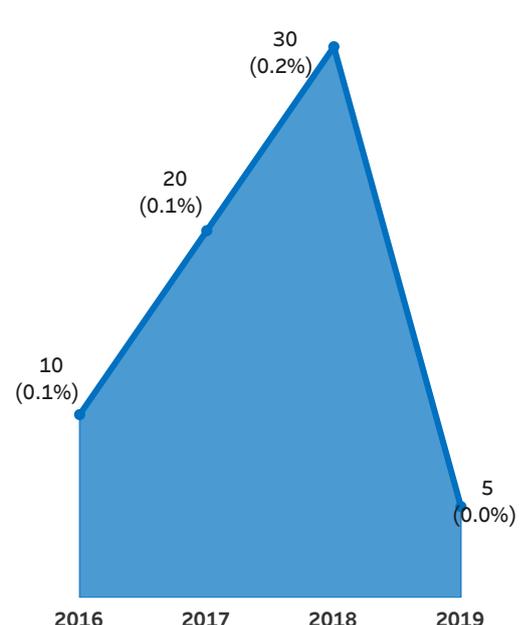
### Top 5 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyresa)



## 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)

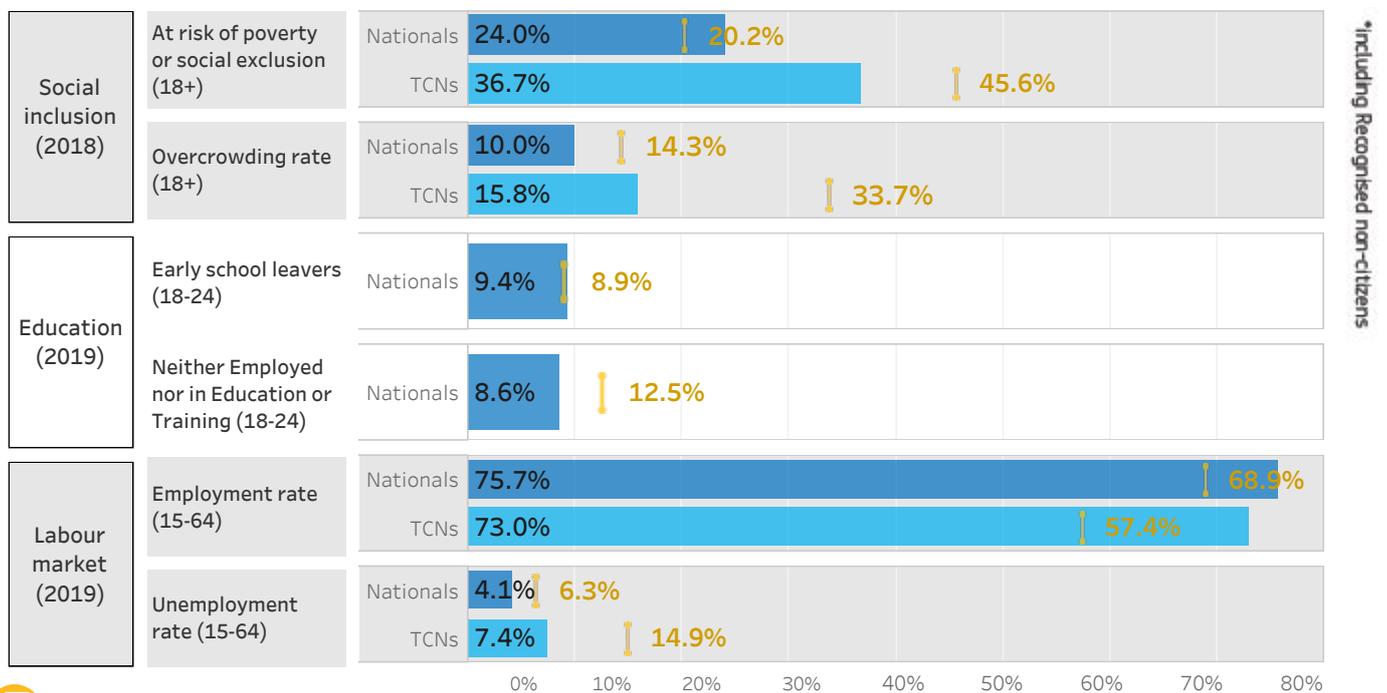
0 or not available

0 or not available

## 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 year available.

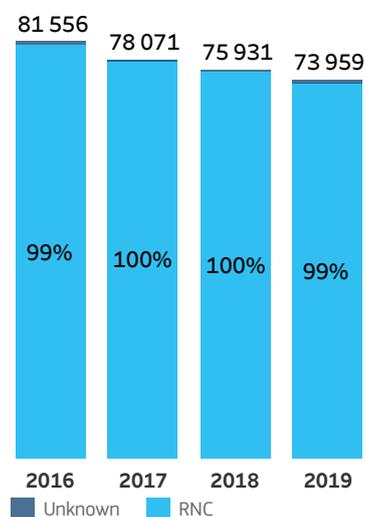
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc\_peps05, ilc\_lvho15, edat\_lfse\_01, edat\_lfse\_23, lfsa\_ergan, lfsa\_urgan)



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

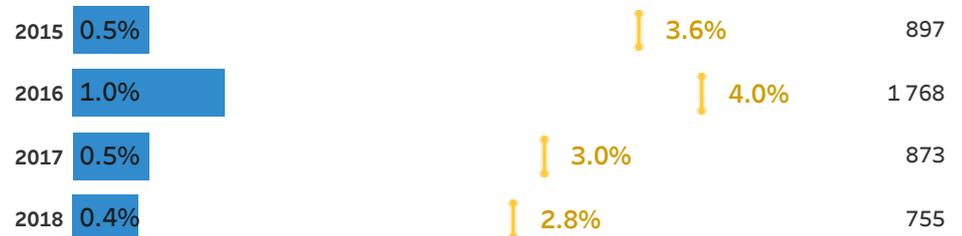
Stateless, Recogn. Non-Citizens (RNC) and Unknown Citizens

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctza)



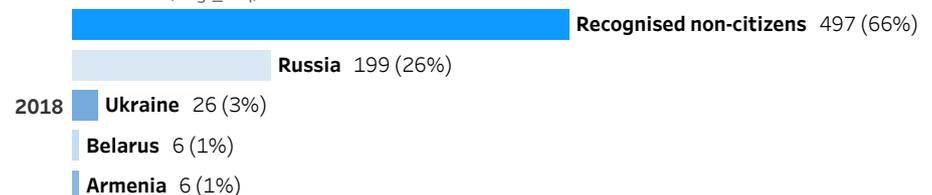
Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_acqs, migr\_acq)



Top 5 nationalities by number of citizenship acquisition in 2018: absolute number and % of total acquisitions in the country by Third-Country Nationals

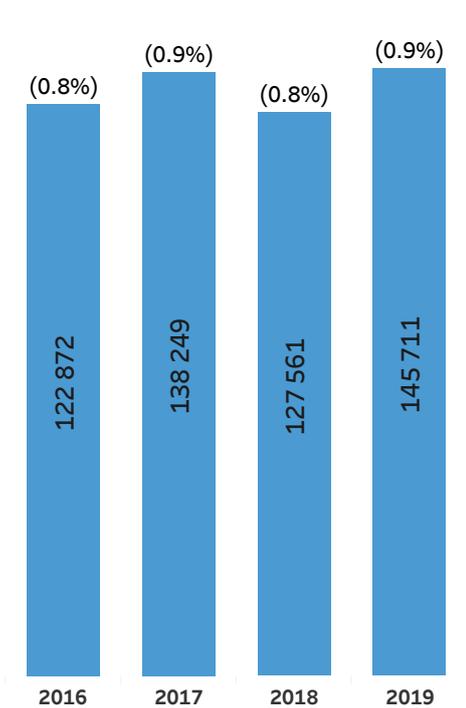
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_acq)



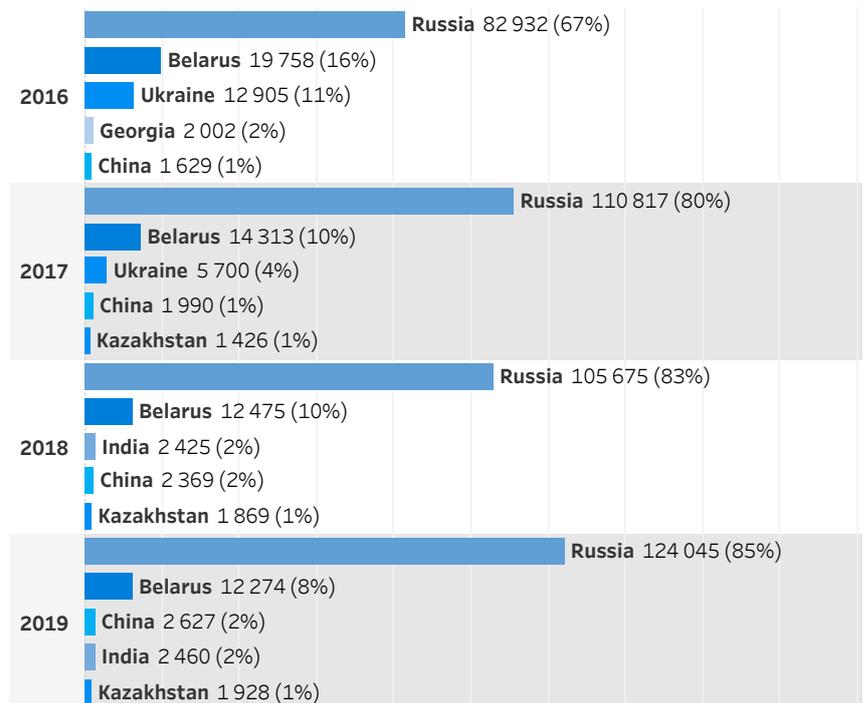
## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs (complete statistics on short-stay visas applications to Schengen States)

Lodged short-term Visa app. (% of Schengen)

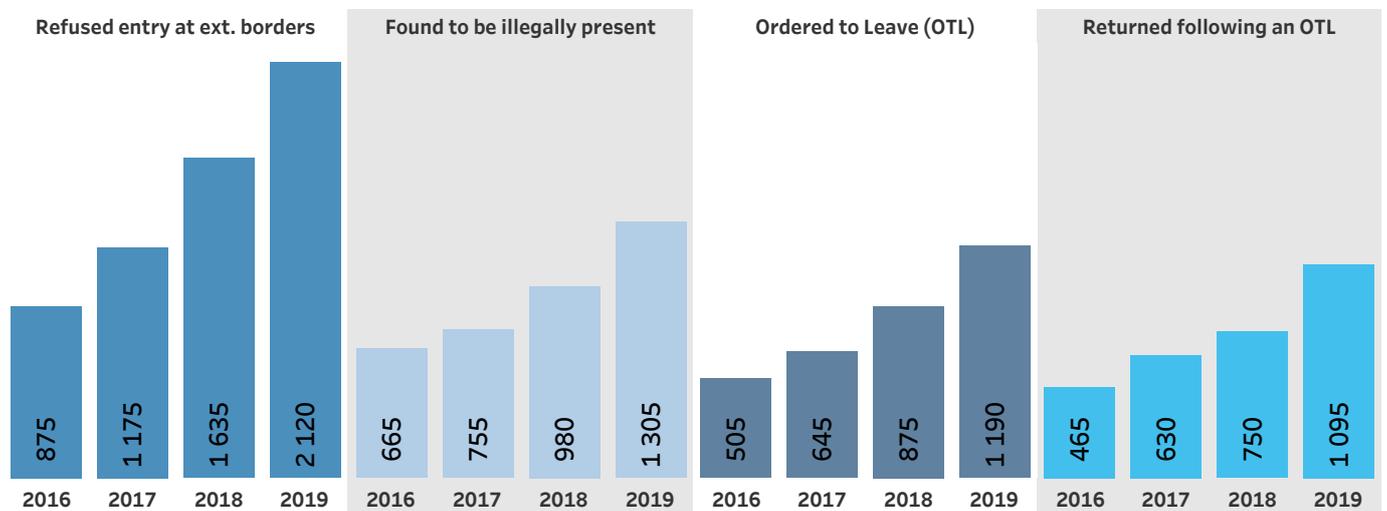


Lodged short-term Visa applications in top 5 consulate countries (% of total app.s)



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_eirfs, migr\_eipre, migr\_eiord, migr\_eirtn)



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of residence permits issued to victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resoth)

0 or not available

## RETURN AND READMISSION

Number of Third-Country Nationals who left the territory by type of return

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_eirt\_vol)

