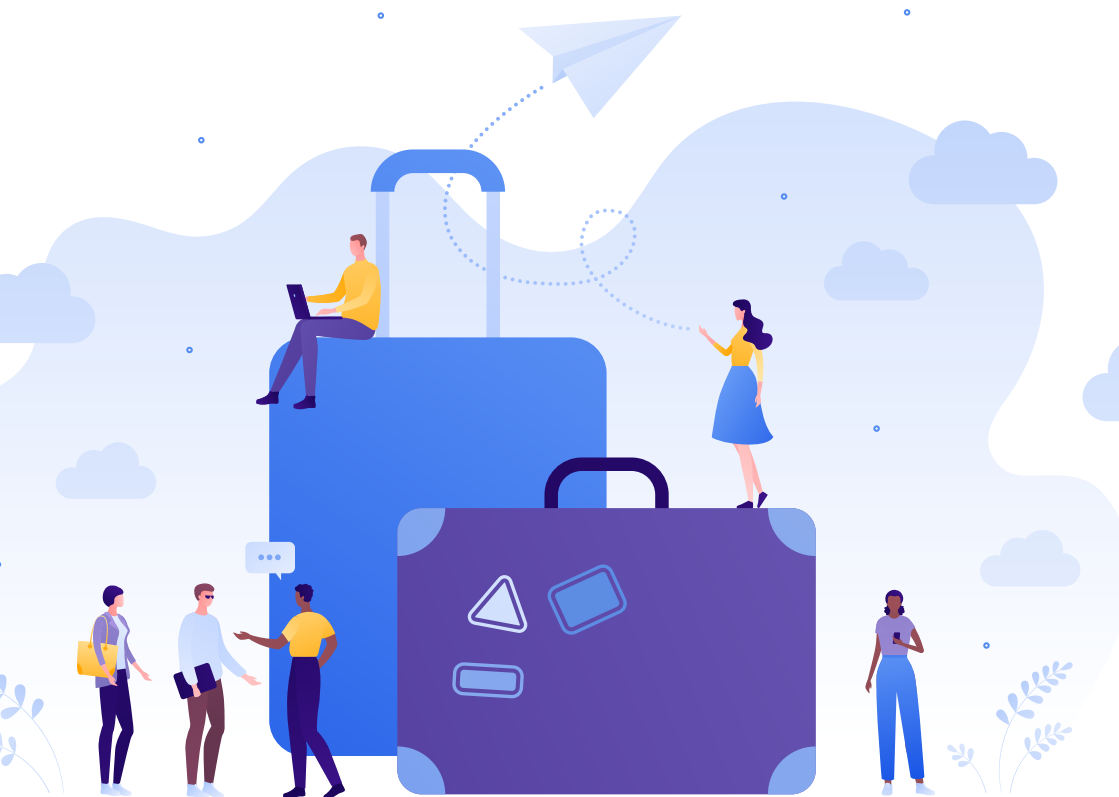


OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION STATISTICS 2015-2019



The overview of migration statistics 2015–2019 provides answers to the following questions:

- What characterises the emigration and return of Estonian citizens?
- How many Estonian citizens returned to their homeland?
- How many visas were issued, and to whom, and how many short-term employment registrations were there?
- Who came to live in Estonia and for which reasons?
- Where did the foreigners settle?
- Who were granted long-term residence permits and the right of permanent residence?
- Who were granted international protection?
- Who became Estonian citizens?
- Who became e-residents?
- How many foreigners participated in the Settle in Estonia programme?

Overview prepared by:

The Ministry of the Interior and the European Migration Network
Estonian Contact Point.

Design: Agentuur La Ecuador



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR



European Union
European Social Fund



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EMN
European Migration Network



ESTONIA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this publication is to provide an overview of the main migration trends in Estonia during the period of 2015–2019, and to explain the different aspects of migration.

Estonian population 2016–2020 (as of January 1st)

Source: Statistics Estonia



An ever-increasing number of people are coming to Estonia to live, work, or study, and a growing number of Estonians are also returning. While net migration was negative up to 2014 (respectively –733), it has been showing a positive trend since 2015. According to Statistics Estonia, the population decreased by 1,302 person in 2019 due to the rate of natural growth (the number of deaths exceeded the number of births), and increased by 5,458 people due to positive net migration (more people came to live in Estonia than left). In total, Estonia's population grew by nearly 0.3% in 2019.

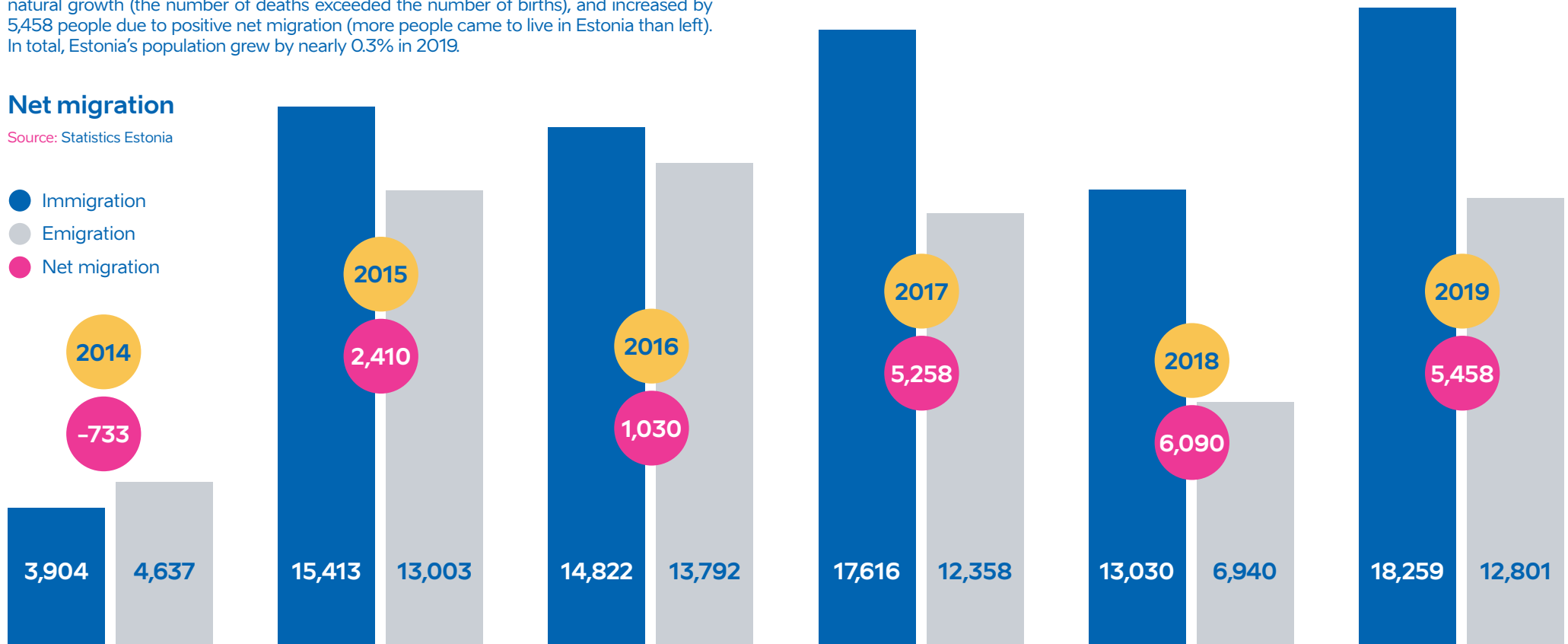
In 2016, Statistics Estonia adopted a new methodology for the calculation of population. Whereas previously, only data from the population register was used, migration is now measured with the aid of the residency index, which assesses people's activity in registers and on the basis thereof, provides an estimate of the likelihood of a person's place of residence being Estonia during the given year.

Statistics Estonia Quarterly Bulletin.
(Statistics Estonia 2017)

Net migration

Source: Statistics Estonia

- Immigration
- Emigration
- Net migration

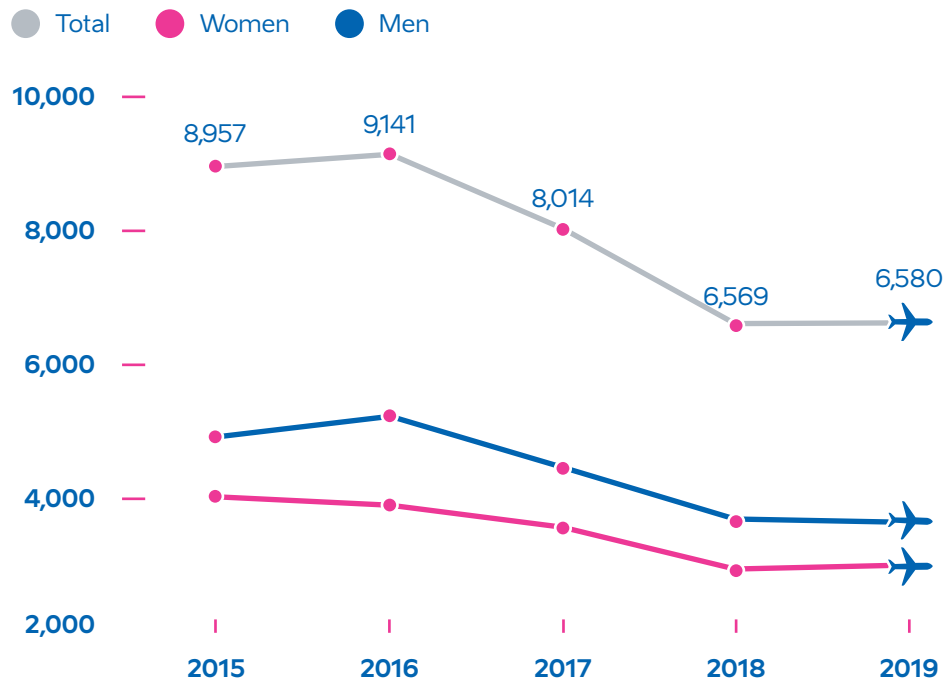


1. Emigration and return migration of Estonian citizens

In 2015–2019, the total number of Estonian emigrants (39,261) exceeded the total number of those who returned (38,822); however, from beginning of 2017, the number of those returning to Estonia has exceeded the number of those emigrating from Estonia. The number of males emigrating and returning exceeds that of women. Estonians have mainly emigrated to Finland, the United Kingdom, and Germany. In recent years, the number of Estonians emigrating to Finland has remained nearly ten times higher than the number emigrating to the United Kingdom. Most people returning to Estonia also came from Finland, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

Emigration of Estonians, 2015–2019

Source: Statistics Estonia



Where do people emigrate?



Emigration of Estonian citizens, 2019

Finland	1,871
United Kingdom	219
Germany	165
Russia	159
Sweden	118

Source: Statistics Estonia

Where do people return from?

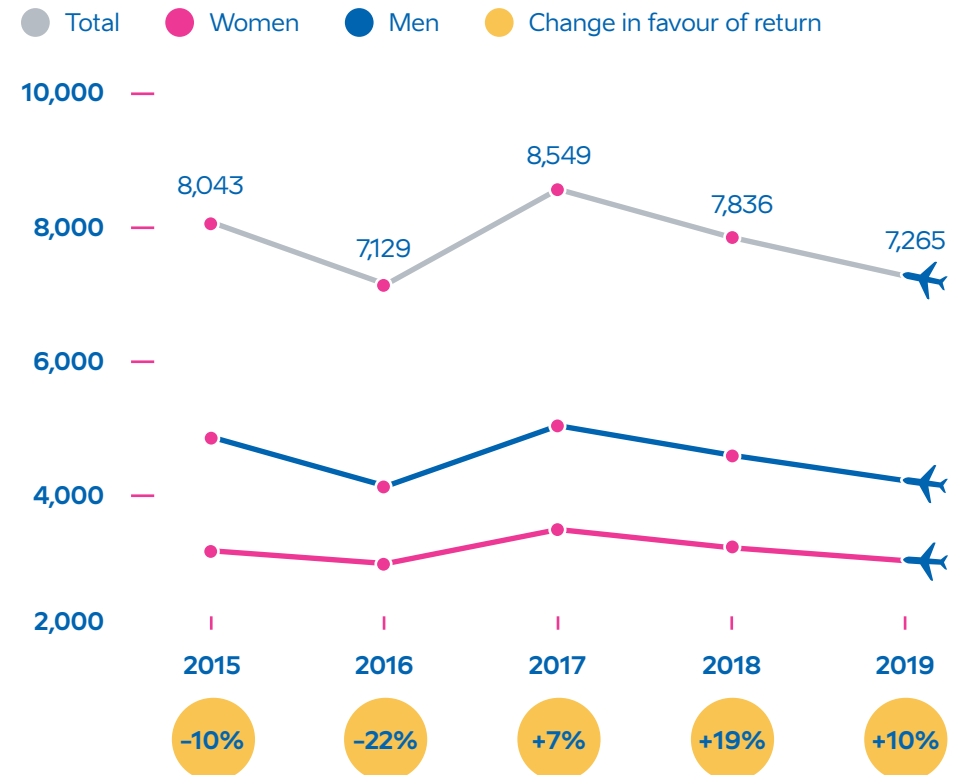


Return migration of Estonian citizens, 2019

Finland	2,198
Russia	417
Germany	340
Sweden	114
Germany	104

The return of Estonians in 2015–2019

Source: Statistics Estonia



2. Visas

The **Uniform Schengen Visa (type C visa)** allows one to move throughout the Schengen Area for up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

A **long-stay (type D visa)** visa is issued for staying in Estonia for up to 12 consecutive months, for a maximum period of up to 365 days. The long-stay visa is a domestic visa, which grants the right to move throughout the Schengen Area for up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

Visas issued by Estonia in 2015–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



TOP 5 citizenships, 2019



Issuing of short and long-term visas TOP 5 reasons for travel, 2019:



* Purpose of a type D visa trip — short-term employment was added in 2019.

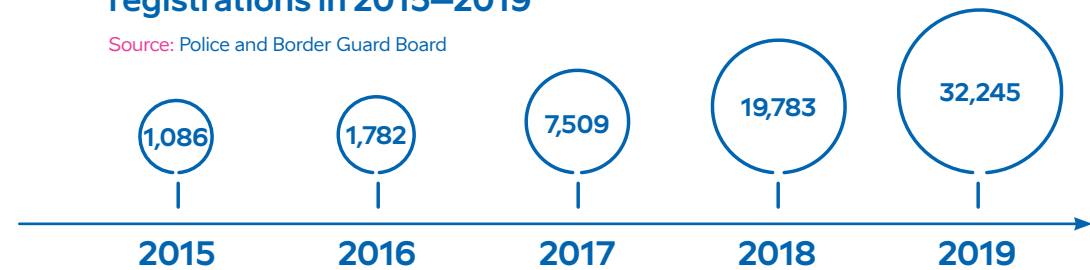
Short-term employment

Foreigners who are staying in Estonia temporarily (for example, on the basis of a visa or a visa waiver) are permitted to work in Estonia if their right to work arises directly from the law, international agreement, or their short-term employment has been registered by their employer with the Police and Border Guard Board prior to their beginning work. Short-term employment registration alone does not give a foreigner the basis to stay in Estonia.

Generally, short-term employment can be registered for up to 365 days over a 455-day period. Short-term employment for participation in seasonal work can be registered for up to 270 days per year. Since 2014, the number of those registering for short-term employment has steadily increased, exceeding the 30,000 level in 2019, which is a 30-fold increase in comparison with 2014, when employers were first able to begin registering an employee's short-term employment. A total of 83% of those registered were men and 17% were women.

Number of short-term employment registrations in 2015–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



TOP 5 citizenships, 2019



Fields in which short-term employment was registered, TOP 5, 2019

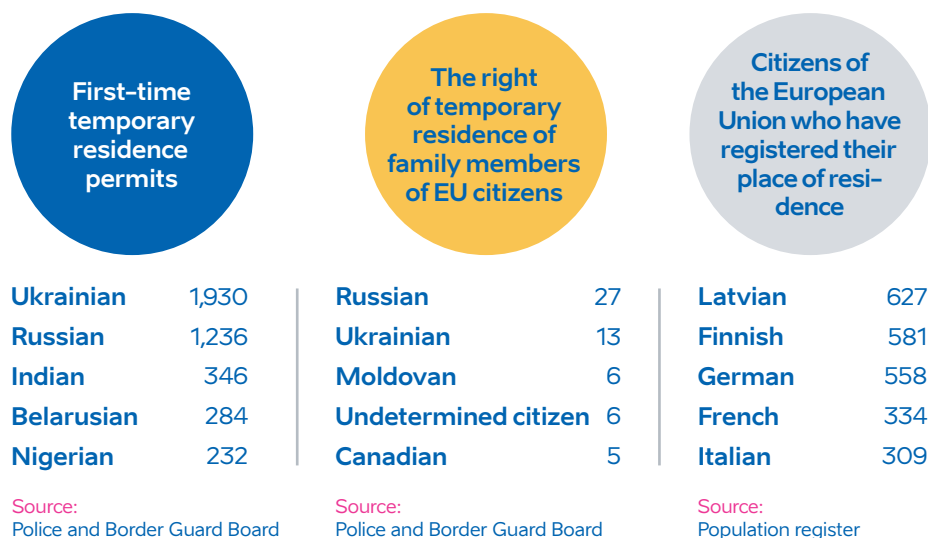


Source: Police and Border Guard Board

3. Who came to live in Estonia?

Temporary residence permit: a temporary residence permit is a permit issued to a foreigner to live in Estonia. A temporary residence permit may be issued to a foreigner to settle with a spouse or close relative for the purpose of studying, working, entrepreneurship, participation in criminal proceedings, in the case of overriding national interest, or under an international agreement. In addition, a permit to settle permanently in Estonia may be issued to a foreigner who has been living in Estonia for at least three years. A temporary residence permit will be valid for a period of up to 5 years and may be extended up to 10 years.

TOP 5 citizenships in 2019



Temporary right of residence: citizens of the European Union acquire a temporary right of residence for a period of up to 5 years upon registering their place of residence in the population register. The temporary right of residence shall be extended automatically by 5 years if the place of residence of the EU citizen is still registered in Estonia.

Family members of EU citizens who are citizens of a third country¹ and wish to live in Estonia must apply for a temporary right of residence and the extension thereof.

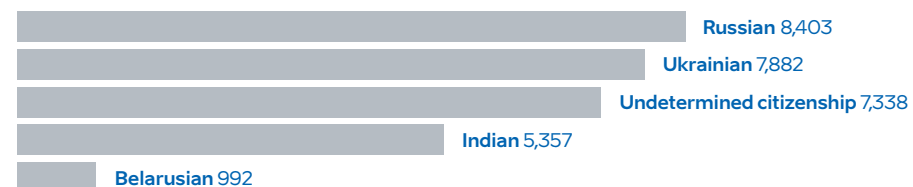
An EU citizen and a family member accompanying them have the right to reside in Estonia on the basis of a valid personal identification document for a period of up to 3 months without registering or applying for a right of residence.

¹ A citizen of a third country is a foreigner who is a citizen of a country other than a Member State of the European Union, a member of the European Economic Area, or the Swiss Confederation.

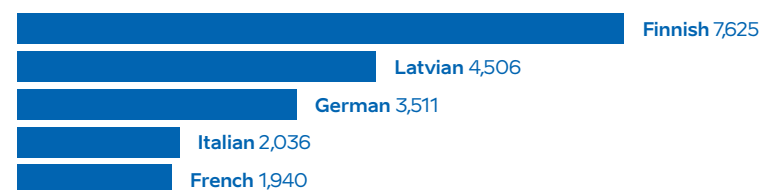
Number of individuals with a valid residence permit / right of residence, TOP 5 (as of 1 January 2020)

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

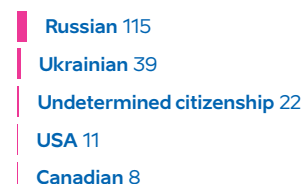
The number of individuals with a temporary residence permit by citizenship



The number of EU citizens with a valid temporary residence permit by citizenship



The number of family members of EU citizens with a valid temporary residence permit by citizenship



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
The number of individuals with a valid temporary residence permit Source: Police and Border Guard Board	24,438	24,660	25,487	27,737	30,917
The number of family members of EU citizens with a valid temporary residence permit Source: Police and Border Guard Board	206	235	241	259	299
The number of EU citizens with a valid residence permit Source: Population register	19,938	22,425	25,244	28,058	31,980

4. Why did they come to Estonia?

Statistics on temporary residence permits² issued for the first time shows that most foreigners come to Estonia to work, study, or on the basis of family migration. Settling in Estonia on the basis of family migration is permitted if the foreigner is joining a spouse or close relative who is already living in Estonia or they are settling in Estonia together.

In 2019, men accounted for 59% and women 41% of first-time temporary residence permit recipients. A total of 85% of those who came on the basis of labour migration were men and 15% women; while 90% of those coming for business purposes were men and 10% were women. However, more women than men came based on family migration, with 70% being women and 30% men. A total of 64% of those coming to study were men, and 36% were women.

First-time temporary residence permits and residence rights for family members of EU citizens 2015–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total first-time residence permits	3,513	3,780	3,995	4,912	5,984
Family migration (joining a spouse and close relatives, total)	1,195	1,233	1,184	1,661	2,272
Residence permit for studying	1,009	1,160	1,211	1,267	1,330
For working	1,216	1,325	1,501	1,851	2,218
Residence permit for entrepreneurship	23	16	53	87	134
Family members of EU citizens	36	35	42	57	82
Other reason*	70	46	46	46	30

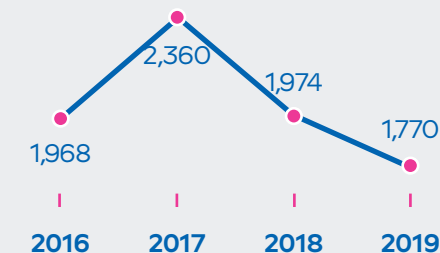
*Other reason – participation in criminal proceedings, in the case of overriding national interest, and under an international agreement

As of 2016, it is possible to apply for a residence permit to settle permanently in Estonia. On the basis thereof, a foreigner who has lived in Estonia for at least three years within a period of five consecutive years, and who has adapted well to life in Estonia, can apply for a residence permit (see reverse).

² A first-time temporary residence permit is issued to an individual who is applying for an Estonian residence permit for the first time.

Temporary residence permits issued for settling permanently in Estonia in 2016–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



The number of temporary residence permits issued for settling permanently in Estonia has dropped somewhat in the last two years. In 2019, 69% of residence permit recipients were men and 31% were women.

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

Work migration: The number of applicants for a residence permit for the purpose of entrepreneurship and the share of foreigners working in Estonian start-ups is growing significantly year-on-year. One of the reasons is that a number of incentives have been provided for start-ups since 2017. In the interests of Estonian economic development, these changes will enable promising start-ups to come to Estonia and Estonian start-ups to recruit foreign labour on more favourable terms.

First-time temporary residence permits for working, by type of work, 2018–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

Work migration	2018	2019
General	1,224	1,283
Top specialist	228	390
Working in a start-up	186	315
Expert / advisor / consultant	58	78
Research activity / lecturer	40	42
Member of the governing body of a legal person governed by private law	37	26
Athlete / coach / referee	21	10
EU Blue Card	19	19
Minister of religion / monk / nun	18	16
Person engaged in creative activities	11	7
Teacher	7	15
Other	2	17
TOTAL	1,851	2,218

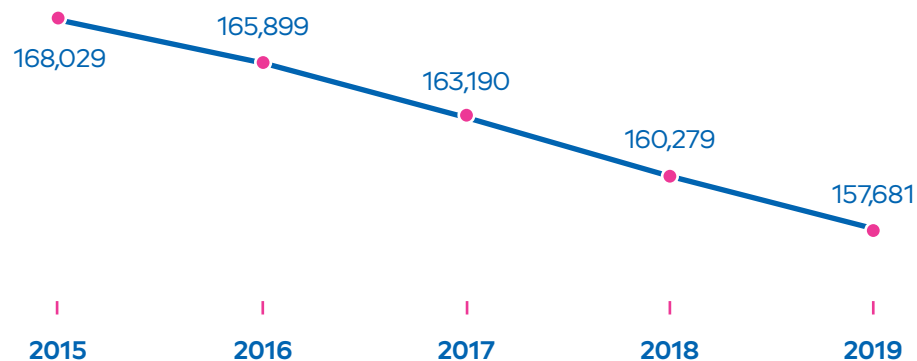
5. Long-term residence permit

A long-term residence permit is a residence permit with an indefinite term, which can be applied for by citizens of third countries if they have lived in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit for at least five years, have a valid temporary residence permit and a stable, legal source of income, are insured, have registered their place of residence, and possess knowledge of Estonian at least at the B1 level.

The statistics also include persons with undetermined citizenship (so-called grey passport holders), who settled in Estonia before 1 July 1990 and have continued to live in Estonia. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship who have a long-term residence permit in Estonia has decreased year-on-year (from 71,785 persons in 2018 to 70,196 persons in 2019), the main reason being the acquisition of Estonian or another state's citizenship.





Valid long-term residence permits 2015–2019 (as of 31 December 2019)

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



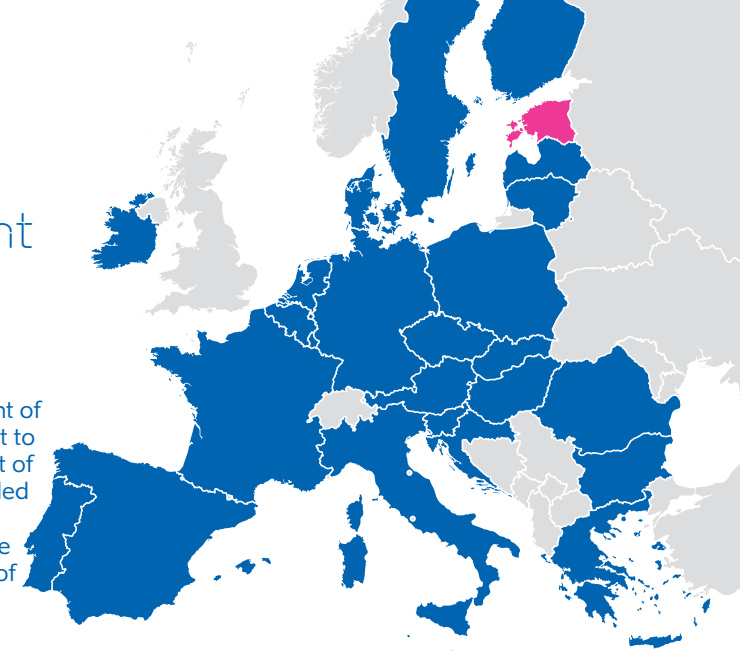
Long-term residence permit holders, TOP 5 citizenships, 2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

 Russian	80,972
Undetermined citizens	70,196
 Ukrainian	4,183
 Belarusian	1,243
 USA	221

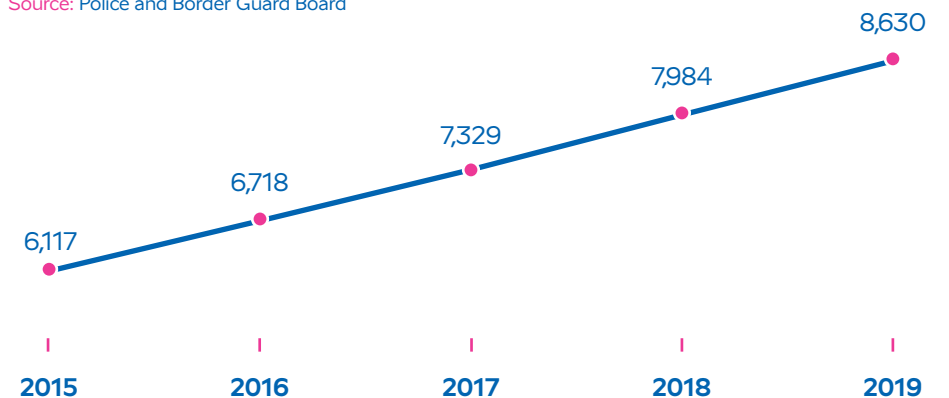
EU citizens with a right of permanent residence

A citizen of the European Union and his / her family member who is the resident of a third country has the right to apply for a permanent right of residence if they have resided continuously in Estonia for a period of five years on the basis of a temporary right of residence.



Permanent right of residence for EU citizens and the family members of EU citizens 2015–2019 (as of 31 December 2019)

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



Individuals with a permanent right of residence, TOP 5 citizenships and their number (as of 31 December 2019)

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

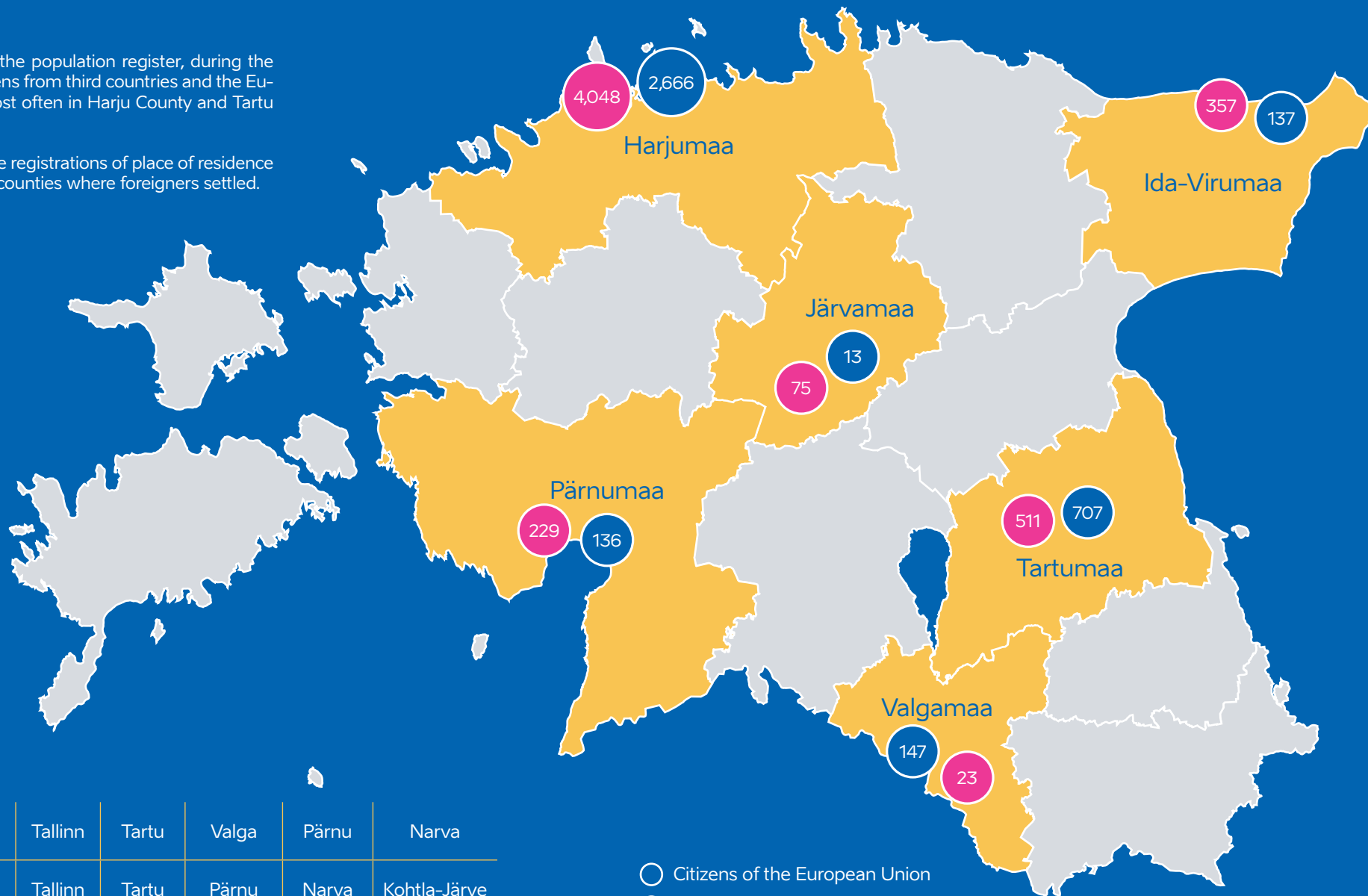
 Latvian	2,188
 Finnish	2,067
 Lithuanian	1,367
 German	527
 United Kingdom	403

6. Where did the foreigners settle?

According to data from the population register, during the period 2015–2019, citizens from third countries and the European Union settled most often in Harju County and Tartu County.

The map shows first-time registrations of place of residence in 2019, in the five main counties where foreigners settled.

Source: Population register



TOP 5 cities, 2019

Citizens of the European Union	Tallinn	Tartu	Valga	Pärnu	Narva
Citizens of third countries	Tallinn	Tartu	Pärnu	Narva	Kohtla-Järve

- Citizens of the European Union
- Citizens of third countries

Source: Population register

7. International protection

Applying for international protection is a basic human right. Estonia has made an international commitment to protect those foreigners who cannot live in their homeland safely. A beneficiary of international protection is a foreigner who has been recognized as a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection and who has been granted an Estonian residence permit.

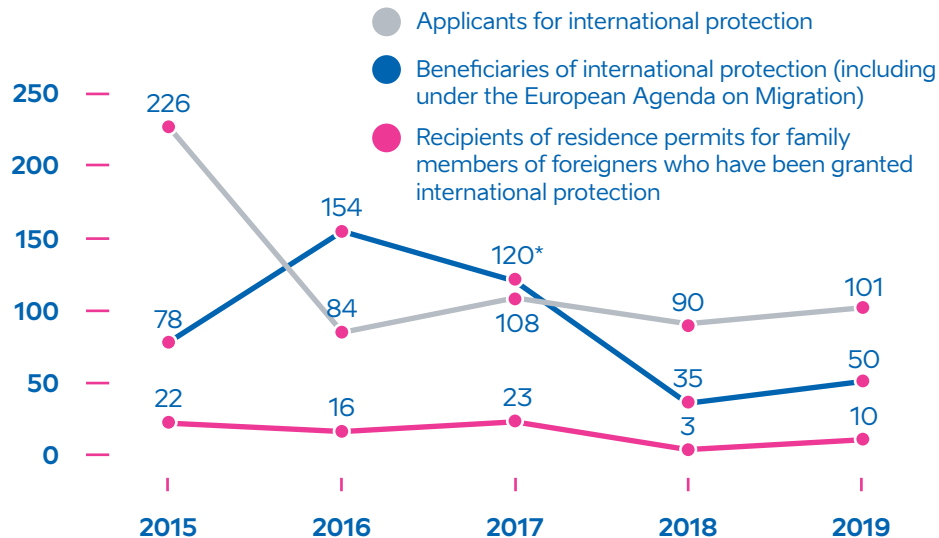
In recent years, the number of applicants for international protection has remained stable and relatively low, rising only in 2015, when a war broke out in Ukraine.

The number of beneficiaries of international protection has also remained low, to which people in need of international protection were added on the basis of the European Agenda on Migration from 2016 to 2019.

Since 1997, 1,202 foreigners have requested international protection from Estonia and international protection has been granted (refugee status + subsidiary protection status) to 531 foreigners, including 213 people who have arrived and received protection under the European Agenda on Migration (with 86 people being granted refugee status and 127 people subsidiary protection status). Residence permits for family members of foreigners who have been granted international protection have been issued to 96 people.

Number of applicants for international protection and the number of beneficiaries, 2015–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



*5 applicants for international protection waived coming to Estonia under the European Agenda on Migration

Refugee status is granted to a person who has been identified as having a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, citizenship, membership in a social group or political orientation and who have been granted protection under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Subsidiary protection is granted to a foreigner who does not qualify as a refugee, but whose return or repatriation may pose a serious risk (e.g. death penalty, torture, other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, international or domestic armed conflict).

The main countries of origin of applicants have been

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



The main countries of origin of beneficiaries of protection (including persons that arrived through relocation and resettlement under the European Agenda on Migration) have been

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



Applying for international protection



At a border checkpoint

International protection can be applied for prior to entering the country at any border checkpoint on the border of the Republic of Estonia. In the majority of instances, this is done if the foreigner does not have a valid visa, travel documents, or an Estonian residence permit required to enter the country.



Police and Border Guard Board service point

If the foreigner is already in Estonia, the application will be submitted at a Police and Border Guard Board service point.

8. Who became Estonian citizens?

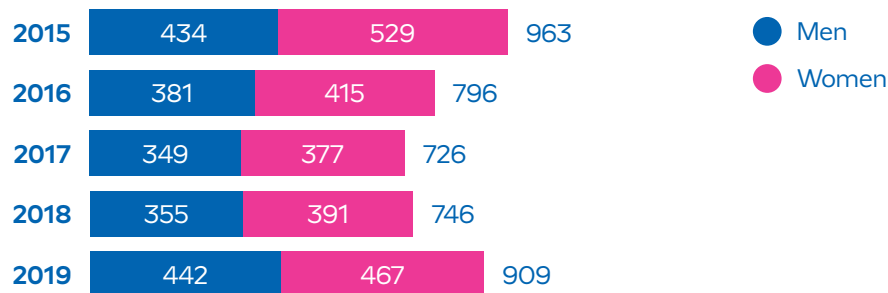
In 2015–2019, Estonian citizenship was granted to 5,086 people through naturalisation³, of whom 2,728 were women and 2,364 were men. In 2019, citizenship through the process of naturalisation was awarded most to individuals with undetermined citizenship, and citizens of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Turkey, and Georgia.

Naturalisation is the granting of non-birth citizenship under the conditions provided for in the Citizenship Act.

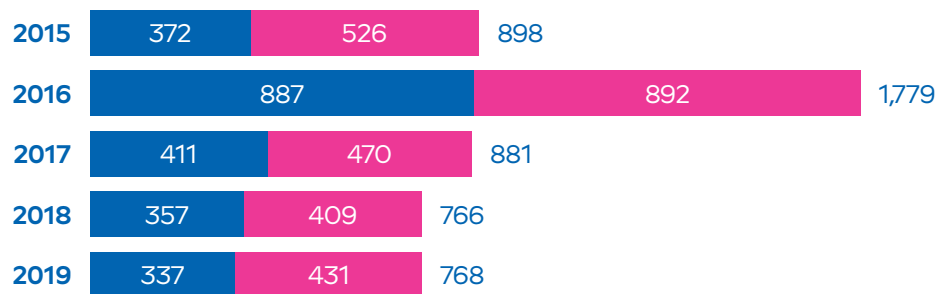
Applying for and acquiring citizenship via the process of naturalization, 2015–2019

Source: Ministry of the Interior

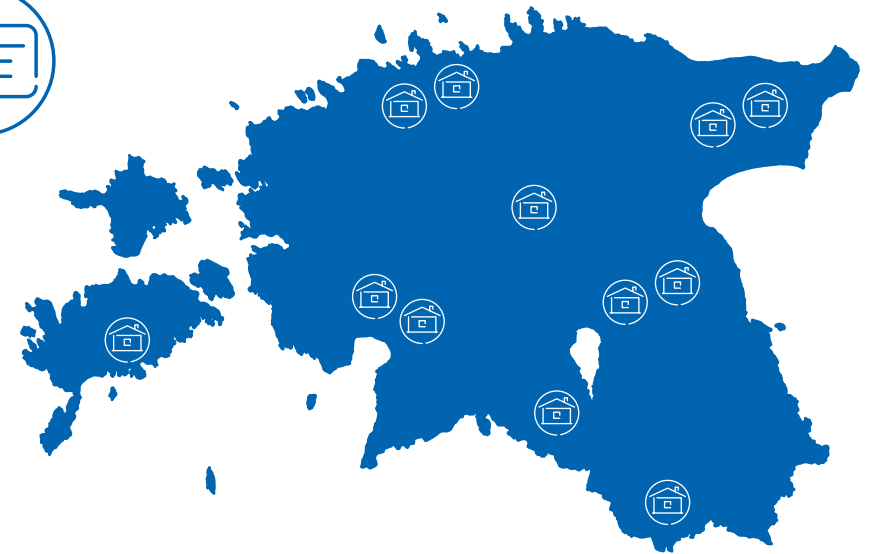
Applications



Granting of citizenship via naturalization



³ Naturalisation is the non-birth granting of citizenship under the conditions provided for in the Citizenship Act.



How to obtain Estonian citizenship?

Source: Ministry of the Interior

The acquisition and resumption of Estonian citizenship:

- Estonian citizenship is granted to a child upon the moment of their birth, if at the time of their birth at least one of his or her parents is an Estonian citizen.
- Estonian citizenship is acquired through naturalisation and restored to a person who lost their Estonian citizenship as a minor.
- As of 2016, Estonian citizenship shall automatically be granted to a child born in Estonia from the moment of his or her birth, if his or her parents are not citizens of any country and have legally resided in Estonia for at least five years at the time of the child's birth.

In 2019, the citizenship agreements system, the aim of which is to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship, was launched. Foreigners who have lived in Estonia for at least five years will now be able to conclude a one-time language learning contract with the state which, on the one hand, provides people with free language training and, on the other hand, obliges them to pass an Estonian language exam at least at the B1 level, and to apply for Estonian citizenship within one year. Participants in language training are compensated by the state for up to 20 days of study leave in the amount of the average salary.

9. E-residents

Estonia was the first country in the world to begin offering an e-residency or digital identity service to citizens of foreign countries. At present, several other countries in the world have created and are in the process of creating similar programmes based on the example set by Estonia.

As of December 2014, non-residents have been able to apply for Estonian e-resident status together with an e-resident digital ID-card, which is a state-guaranteed secure means of personal identification and gives foreigners the opportunity to use Estonia's e-state services based on need and regardless of location. However, the e-resident's digital ID is not a physical identity or travel document (it does not have a photo), nor does it award citizenship, tax residence, a residence permit, or a permit to enter Estonia or the European Union.

In addition to founding and managing a company in Estonia, Estonia's e-residents may use their digital document to perform e-banking transactions, access international payment services, file an income tax return electronically, and sign documents and agreements digitally.

Source: Enterprise Estonia

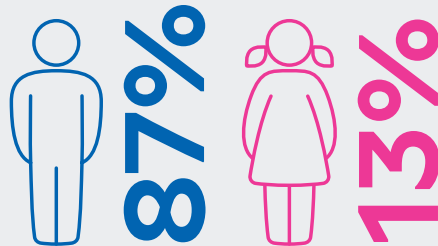


The total number of e-residents and their distribution by gender (as of 1 December 2019)

Source: Police and Border Guard Board

Total number of e-residents:

64,110



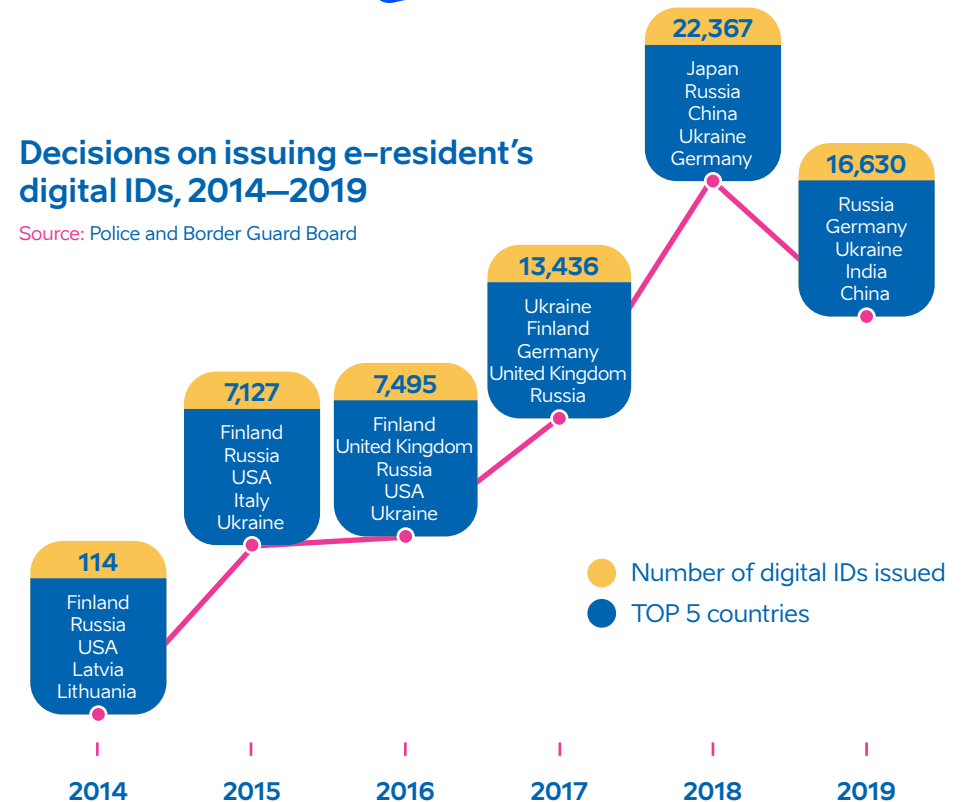
TOP 5 citizenships, 2019*

- Finnish
- Russian
- Ukrainian
- German
- United Kingdom

*Based on the total number of e-residents

Decisions on issuing e-resident's digital IDs, 2014–2019

Source: Police and Border Guard Board



10. Supporting the adapting of new immigrants

The Settle in Estonia programme is a training programme offered by the Estonian state, which helps foreigners who have arrived in Estonia to settle in more easily and adapt to life here. During the course of various trainings, an overview is provided of the functioning of the Estonian state and society, and the everyday organisation of life. Within the framework of the programme, it is possible to study Estonian, and topics related to work, studies, and family are introduced. Trainings take place in English and Russian, mainly in Tallinn, Tartu, and Narva.

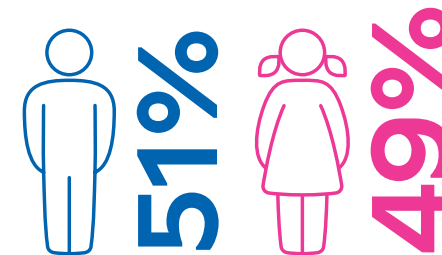
All foreigners who have lived in Estonia for less than 5 years may participate in the welcoming programme. In 2019, 1,327 third-country nationals with a temporary residence permit, 326 citizens of the European Union who have registered their residence in Estonia and acquired the right of temporary residence with it, as well as 60 beneficiaries of international protection participated in the programme.

The Settle in Estonia programme was first offered in August 2015, and by the end of 2019, a total of 6,276 participants had participated in the trainings.



Participants

In the last two years, men have participated in the Settle in Estonia programme slightly more actively than women – in 2019, 51% of the participants were men and 49% were women. Participation is highest in basic level Estonian language studies, followed by the work and entrepreneurship module, and the base module.



The Settle in Estonia programme participants, 2015–2019

Source: Ministry of the Interior

Year	Total number of participants ⁴	TOP 5 countries
2015 (from 1.08)	298	Ukraine Russia Nigeria Belarus Iran
2016	1,210	Russia Ukraine Syria Finland Latvia
2017	1,215	Russia Ukraine Belarus Syria Latvia
2018	1,480	Russia Ukraine India Nigeria Belarus
2019	2,073	Russia Ukraine India Nigeria Turkey

⁴ One person can participate in several modules of the Settle in Estonia programme.

