

# ESTONIA

## EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



### OVERARCHING CHANGES

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decrease in immigration of third-country nationals to Estonia, across all migration categories.



### LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

#### WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

The Aliens Act was amended several times in 2020. Amendments related to:

- (1) Assessment of reliability of a sponsor within the procedural acts of the PBGB.
- (2) Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer (2014/66/EU), specifying that remuneration may be paid by a company located outside the European Union (EU) (i.e. not solely the Estonian branch) and that an intra-corporate transferee residence permit may be issued without the permission of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.
- (3) Temporary residence permits for enterprise, specifying the requirements for business activity and for issuing temporary residence permits to large investors.

### KEY POINTS



**The new digital nomad visa allows remote workers to live in Estonia and work legally for an employer or their own company registered abroad.**



**The Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) established a separate border guard component, responsible for border surveillance and protection, air and water rescue, and detection of marine pollution.**



**Estonia transposed Article 18 of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) into national legislation, specifying the conditions in which applicants for international protection and irregular migrants can be accommodated/detained in emergency situations.**

COVID-19 restrictions saw several changes implemented, such as prolonging the legal basis to stay in Estonia.

Amendments were made to the Aliens Act, Income Tax Act and Taxation Act to ensure adherence to employment regulations and to prevent enterprises engaging in tax avoidance or paying foreigners below the required average monthly wage.

## STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

In June, the Aliens Act was amended, allowing a student or researcher staying temporarily in Estonia on a short-term visa to apply for a long-stay visa (on the basis of Directive 2016/801/EU).

## INFORMATION ON ROUTES TO AND CONDITIONS OF LEGAL MIGRATION

In view of the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a weekly overview on travel restrictions for foreigners and exceptions for specific professions. The government also designated a specific website ([www.kriis.ee](http://www.kriis.ee)) to provide up-to-date COVID-19 information, while a free information phone line (1247) could be used to obtain information in Estonian, Russian or English.

## OTHER MEASURES

The PBGB worked to create a new information database, ABIS, containing biometric data for those aged six years and up. The database will be launched in 2021.



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In June, Estonia transposed Article 18 of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) into national legislation. Amendments were then made to the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act (OLPEA) and Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens (AGIPA). The amendments specified where applicants for international protection and irregular migrants can be accommodated or detained, the conditions and timeframes, and the duration of procedural acts in emergency situations (e.g. entry of large numbers of third-country nationals). Amendments were also made to the AGIPA, specifying that the PBGB should review and update the list of safe countries of origin at least annually.



## MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The reception system for unaccompanied minors changed at the beginning of the year, under new regulations. The Social Insurance Board adopted a case-based approach, with the minor temporarily placed in a safe home or accommodation centre for applicants for international protection while the Board seeks a long-term solution. The Social Insurance Board is working towards replacing institutional care with family-based substitute care services (foster home, care home) for unaccompanied minors.

In August, the PBGB started to use an additional tool to assess vulnerability and inform the reception centre. The tool consists of a checklist of the basic aspects necessary to identify whether a person ~~minor~~ is vulnerable.



## INTEGRATION

### OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS

In November 2020, the government approved the proposal for the preparation of the 'Cohesive Estonia Development Plan 2021-2030'. Replacing the previous development plan ('Integrating Estonia 2020'), this document set out the vision, aims and indicators for the adaptation and integration policy for the next 10 years. The Plan is expected to be approved in Autumn 2021.

COVID-19 restrictions meant that integration activities for adults were carried out online, as were the modules and language classes of the 'Settle in Estonia' programme.



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

### ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

In December, the Citizenship Act was amended such that a person may be deprived of Estonian citizenship by an order of the government if they have been convicted of treason, spying against the Republic of Estonia and support thereof, acts of terrorism, membership of a terrorist organisation, preparation of and incitement to acts of terrorism, financing and support of acts of terrorism and activities directed at it, and travel for terrorist purposes. The amendment applies to those who have acquired Estonian citizenship by naturalisation.

### STATELESSNESS

From February, amendments to the Citizenship Act meant that a minor whose parent or grandparent with undetermined citizenship lived in Estonia before 20 August 1991, and whose other parent is a national of another country, can avail of a simplified application procedure for Estonia citizenship.



## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

### BORDER MANAGEMENT

In August 2020, amendments to the State Border Act defined both the border strip and the frontier zone.

The PBGB established a separate border guard component with responsibility for border surveillance, protection and control, preventing illegal immigration and transit, sea and inland water rescue, air rescue searches over land, detection and elimination of marine pollution, and further development of the sector.

## VISA POLICY

Amendments to the Aliens Act in July introduced visas for teleworking, the so-called digital nomad visa. It may be issued to a person whose purpose of temporary stay in Estonia is to perform work duties as a location-independent employee. The issuance of digital nomad visas was limited by COVID-19 travel restrictions, with 37 such visas issued in 2020.

## SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

The government regulation on Temporary Restoration of Border Checks and Border Control at the Internal Border entered into force on 17 March 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19. With some exceptions, only Estonian citizens and holders of an Estonian residency permit or right of residence (including those with undetermined citizenship) were allowed to enter Estonia, along with foreign citizens whose family members were living in Estonia. An emergency situation was declared from 12 March until 18 May 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19.



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

### MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR STAY

Amendments were made to the Aliens Act to combat irregular work and ensure adherence to the working conditions provided by national legislation.

The PBGB may assess the unreliability of an employer, educational institution, internship provider or other person, where the obligations of a sponsor will be applicable. The PBGB may refuse to review applications for registration for short-term employment or applications for a residence permit deemed to be clearly unfounded. An application for a temporary residence permit may be rejected if the PBGB assessed the sponsor of a foreigner as unreliable.



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Work began to prepare a new strategy for preventing violence.



## RETURN AND READMISSION

### MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In June 2020, a new surveillance measure was adopted in legislation – appearing for counselling. The measure is applied by PBGB to applicants for international protection and to irregular migrants.

### COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

In June 2020, the database of third-country nationals staying/having stayed in Estonia without a legal basis went live. The new database (Illegaal 2) is more user-friendly and efficient than its predecessor.



## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs updated its programme of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The programme sets the priority areas for development cooperation (supporting good governance, transforming economy, improving education, raising awareness, etc.). Priority areas related to migration issues, with more focus due to be placed on development cooperation with African countries.

## 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 Estonia 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](#).



## 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 Estonia



data relative to EU



## LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

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

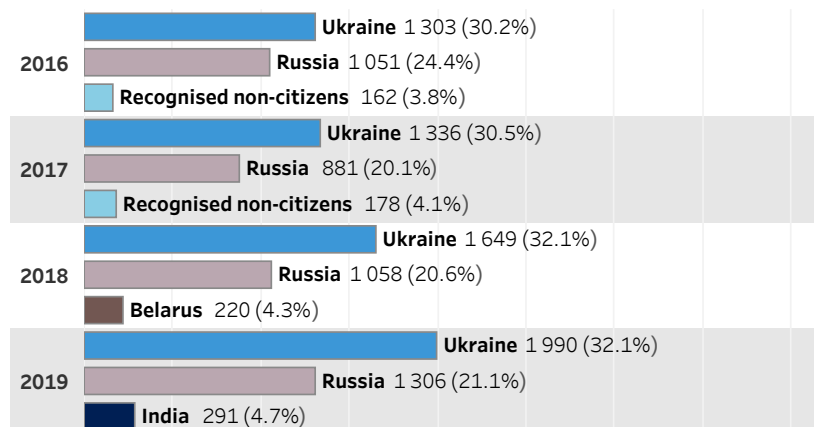
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctz)



\*including recognised non-citizens

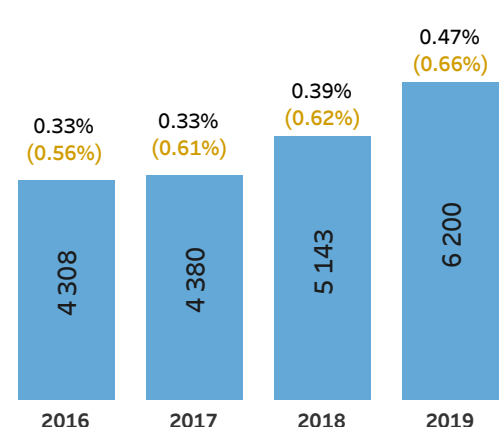
### Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



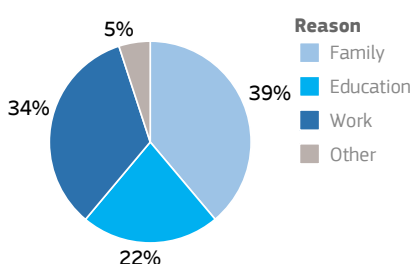
### First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



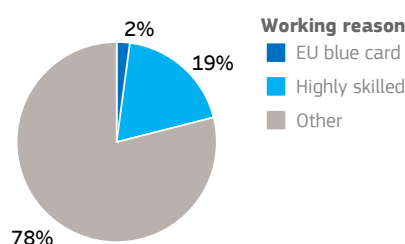
### First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



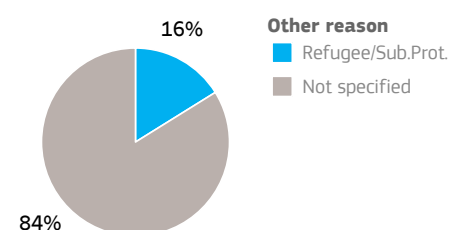
### First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2019

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resocc)



### First residence permits annually issued for 'other reasons' in 2019

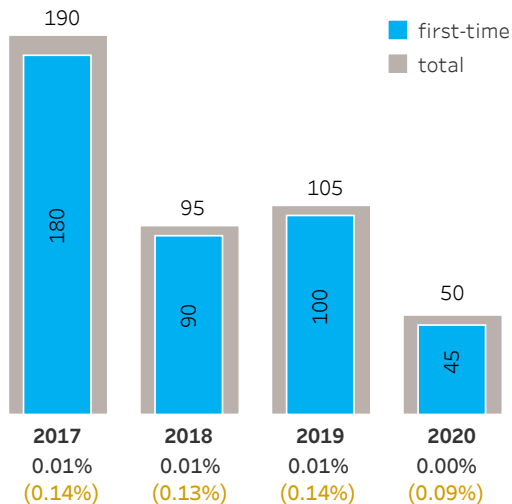
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resoth)



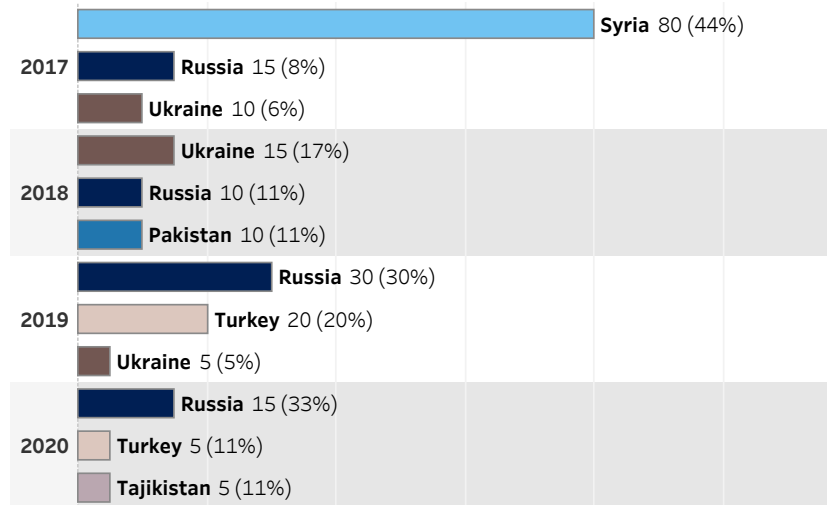


## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

**Total/first-time asylum applications; first-time asy app as % of population in the country (and in EU)** SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza, migr\_pop1ctz)

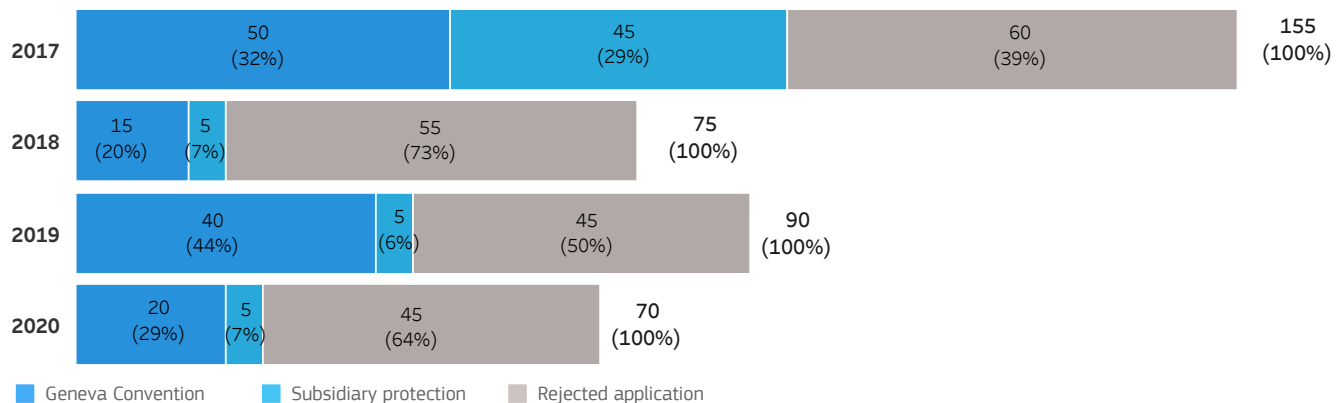


**Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications** SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza)



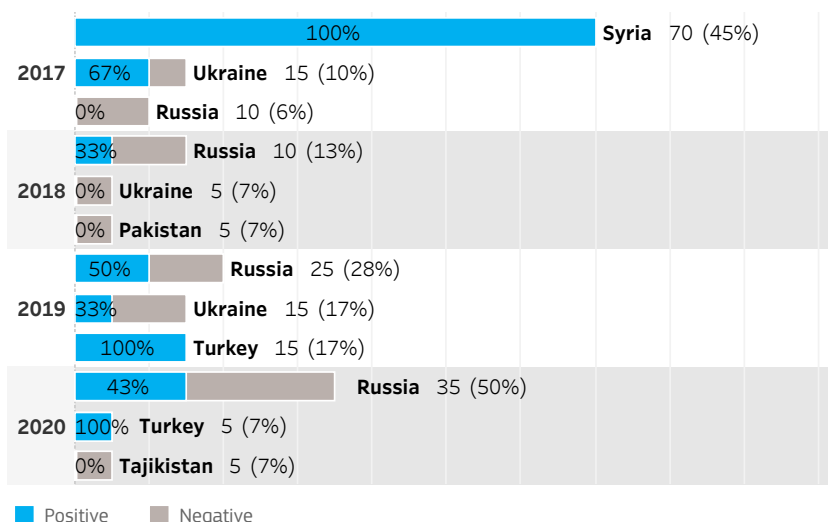
**Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)**

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



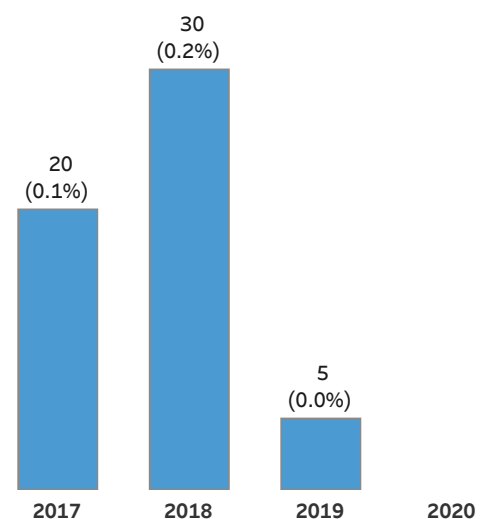
**Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome**

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyresa)





## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

**Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in EU)**

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa)

2017	0 (0.0%)
2018	0 (0.0%)
2019	0 (0.0%)
2020	0 (0.0%)

**Unaccompanied minors as % of first asylum applications (in the country and in EU)**

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa)

2017	4.7%
2018	3.0%
2019	2.2%
2020	3.3%



## 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)

Indicator	Nationals	TCNs	EU	
Social inclusion (2019)	At risk of poverty or social exclusion (18+)	23.4%	19.6%	45.3%
	Overcrowding rate (18+)	11.3%	14.3%	34.8%
Education (2020)	Early school leavers (18-24)	7.1%	8.6%	
	Neither Employed nor in Education or Training (18-24)	11.5%	13.5%	
Labour market (2020)	Employment rate (15-64)	73.9%	63.3%	55.1%
	Unemployment rate (15-64)	6.5%	6.6%	17.0%

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)

2016	1.0%	4.0%	1 768
2017	0.5%	3.0%	873
2018	0.4%	2.8%	755
2019	0.4%	2.7%	775

**Stateless, unknown citizens and recognised non-citizens (RNC) - where present**

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctza)

2017	2018	2019	2020
78 071	75 931	73 959	72 104
77 926	75 628	73 587	71 361
Unknown	RNC		

**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)

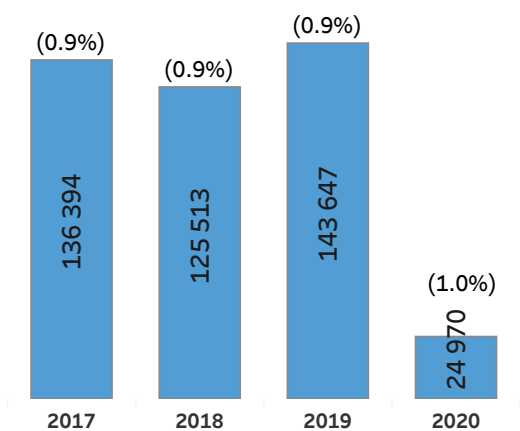
2019	Recognised non-citizens	483 (62%)
	Russia	230 (30%)
	Ukraine	33 (4%)



## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

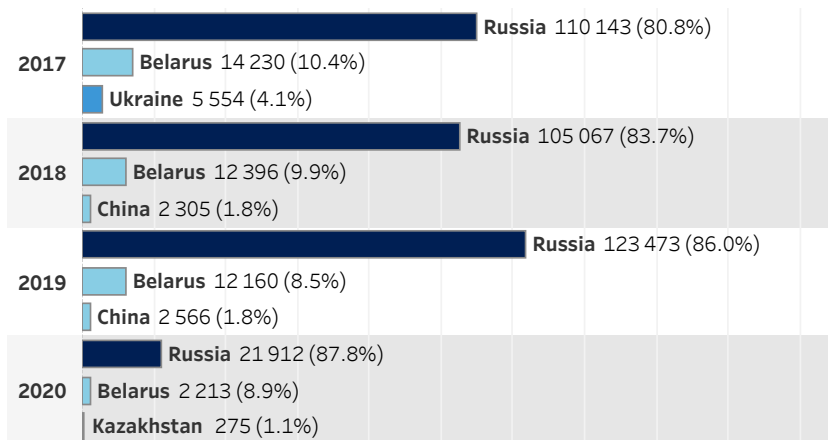
### Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



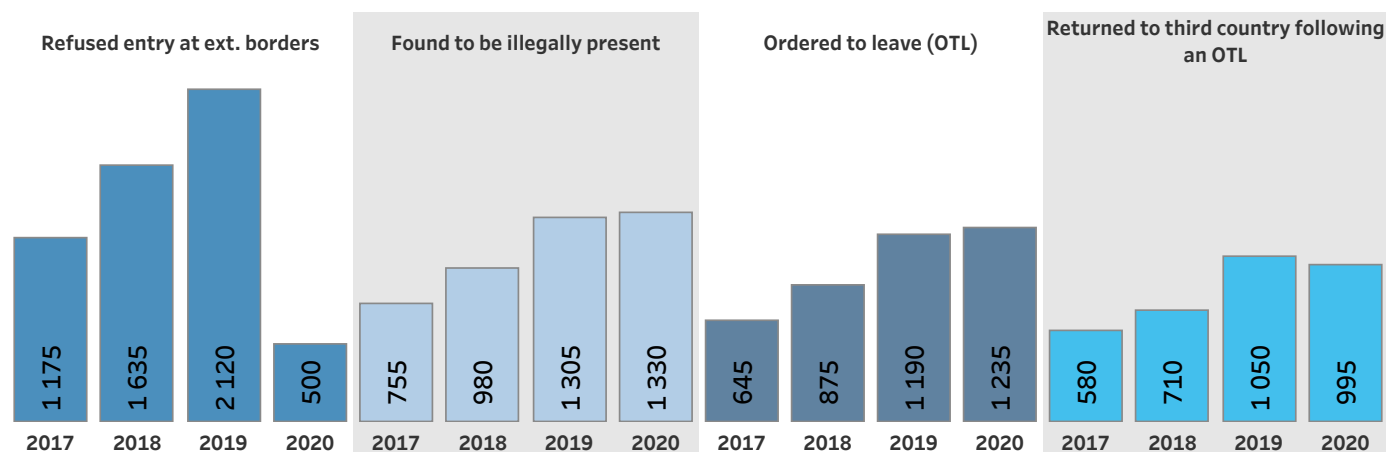
### Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)

SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs



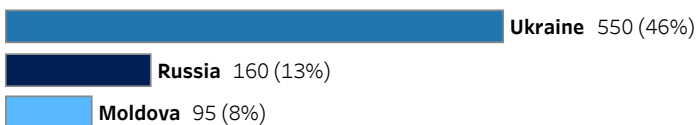
## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

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



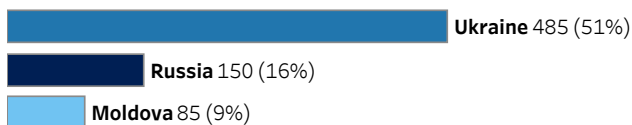
### Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country, 2020

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)

