

COUNTRY FACTSHEET: IRELAND 2014

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in Ireland during 2014, including latest statistics.

2. Common European Asylum System

In November 2014, Ireland signed into law the EU (Dublin System) Regulations 2014¹ for the purpose of supporting the implementation in Ireland of the recast EU Dublin Regulation No. 604/2013. Furthermore, the Immigration Residence and Protection Bill was split into separate Protection, and Immigration, Bills. It was announced that a Protection Bill will provide for a single application procedure for international protection. The aim is to **simplify the existing arrangements and hasten the process** to provide applicants with a final decision on their protection application in a straighter forward and timely procedure. Any other reasons to remain in the State which may be presented by applicants will also be considered. Work is to continue on a separate Immigration Bill.

In response to the Syrian crisis, Ireland introduced the **Syrian Humanitarian Admissions Programme (SHAP)** to assist vulnerable persons in Syria and surrounding countries affected by conflict. Accepting applications between 14 March and 30 April 2014, the SHAP offers temporary residence to vulnerable persons present in Syria, or who have fled from Syria to surrounding countries since the outbreak of the conflict, and who have close family members residing in the State. Persons admitted under the Programme will be entitled to work, establish a business, or invest in the State; however, a key condition is that they should 'not become a burden on the State'.² By the

¹ Statutory Instrument No. 525 of 2014

² Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (12 March 2014). 'Minister Shatter announces Humanitarian Admission Programme to assist vulnerable persons suffering in Syria and surrounding countries.' Available at www.inis.gov.ie

end of 2014, some 308 applications had been received. A total of 111 persons were granted admission and entitlement to work, establish a business or invest in the State. Furthermore, in October 2014, the composition and terms of reference of a **Working Group to examine improvements to the international protection process and system of direct provision** were announced. The aim of the Working Group is to produce recommendations for the Government to improve the processing of protection applications, to show greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system, and to improve the quality of life of applicants for international protection while their applications are under investigation. A report is expected by mid-2015.

Finally, through an amendment to the Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act 2000 in October 2014, the 'on notice' provision in relation to the taking of judicial reviews, which had contributed to the significant backlog of cases before the Courts, was removed. The period of time for making an application for judicial review was extended from 14 to 28 days. The aim of these amendments is to assist the Courts in streamlining the processing of judicial review applications, thereby reducing waiting times and the volumes of cases. The amendment harmonised and, in some cases, reduced the time-limits for certain types of protection and immigration decisions, such as subsidiary protection decisions, which previously could be judicially reviewed within a six-month timeframe.

Regarding **resettlement**, 90 Syrian refugees and 7 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo were resettled in 2014. Two declarations of **statelessness** were issued during 2014.

3. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

The Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014 affirms the importance of **protecting vulnerable migrants**, who often do not have the personal support networks or the familiarity with employment practices to protect their own interests.

The Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum (TUSLA) acted as a project partner during 2014 for the newly-awarded EU funded project "Safeguarding Unaccompanied Migrant Minors from going Missing by Identifying Best Practices and Training Actors on Interagency Cooperation" (**SUMMIT**). The aim of the project is to identify best practices in the area of reception, risk assessment, counselling and cooperation between actors, as well as to develop guidance for improved interagency cooperation in preventing and responding to the issue of missing UAMs.

4. European Policy on Legal migration and Integration

4.1. PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

During 2014 Ireland continued to participate in updates to the EU Immigration Portal. Information campaigns for non-EEA student recruitment under the "Education in Ireland" programme continued during 2014. The '**Study in Ireland Tweetup**' for India took place in June 2014 and was designed to bring prospective students who are considering studying in Ireland together with industry experts. 14 Irish colleges took part.

4.2. ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Several developments took place in Ireland during 2014. The **Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014** amended the previous Employment Permits Act 2006, providing for nine different categories of employment permits for migrant workers. It also contained additional criteria and rules for determining whether or not to grant applications for permits. The 2014 Act aims **to provide flexibility to deal with the changing labour market, work patterns and economic development needs**. One of the new permits introduced is the "**Critical Skills Employment Permit**" to attract highly skilled non-EEA workers in occupations where there are acknowledged skills shortages. It waives a number of the requirements (such as a labour market needs test and requirement for renewal) and provides a route to immediate family reunification, residency without an employment permit upon completion and the availability of employment permits for spouses, dependants or partners where required.

In relation to the needs of start-up companies, **changes to the Start-Up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP)** were announced in March 2014. The STEP provides for residency for business development purposes for approved migrants with a viable proposal for a High Potential Start-up Company. Changes included:

- ★ A **reduction in the required minimum investment** from €75,000 to €50,000;
- ★ A **12 month immigration permission** which will be made available for two categories of persons:
 - 1) Foreign national entrepreneurs attending

'incubators or innovation bootcamps' in Ireland;
2) Non-EEA students who graduate with advanced STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degrees in Ireland.

The **ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-2018** was also released during the year: it indicates a continuing strong demand for high-level ICT skills with 44,500 job openings forecast to arise over the period to 2018. The Action Plan concludes that the attraction of 'experienced international talent, including expatriate talent' will be required as part of a comprehensive strategy.

The 2013 Atypical Working Scheme, providing for short term employment for certain categories, was amended and extended in Q4 2014. The new Scheme includes locum doctors employed and paid by an Agency, and non-EEA nurses on clinical adaptation placements.

Furthermore, the July 2014 **Expert Group on Future Skills and Needs** (EGFSN) identified skills shortages within the ICT sector, the health sector (doctors, nurses, radiographers and sonographers), engineering, science, business/finance, sales and other sectors.

4.3. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

New **comprehensive policy guidelines regarding family reunification applications** were applicable from early 2014. Changes include:

- ★ A consolidated approach to the processing of all family reunification cases, with a proposed centralised unit for referral of applications (and investigations) proposed in a "Family Settlement Unit", as well as a standardised application form and fee;
- ★ Clarification of the concepts of sponsor, family member and dependency;
- ★ Makes it explicit that the onus of proof regarding the genuineness of the family relationship rests with the applicant and the sponsor;
- ★ The introduction of a statutory appeals mechanism in a revised Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill,³ with changes in the interim as to how refusals are presented (with reasons provided) and how appeals are processed; and
- ★ A time limit within which applications are to be ideally dealt.

Moreover, in view of the serious situation pertaining in Syria, the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) has stated that it will make every effort to expedite the investigation and preparation of reports in relation to any **family reunification application from a Syrian applicant** in respect of a Syrian family member.

³ During 2014, the Immigration Residence and Protection Bill 2010 was split into separate Protection and Immigration Bills.

4.4. INTEGRATION

A **review of Ireland's approach to the integration of migrants was announced** in March 2014. A Cross-Departmental Group on Integration was reconstituted to review activities promoting the integration of migrants being taken across government agencies and departments. A Draft Integration Strategy is under preparation, following consultation with key stakeholders and is expected in 2015.

The **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill was enacted during 2014**, with the new Commission formally established as from 1 November 2014. A total of 14 members of the new Commission were formally appointed on 31st October 2014. The Government has made provision in 2014 for a 45% increase in State funding for the Commission, to around 6.3 million euro.

4.5. MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY⁴

The year 2014 was marked by a **6% increase in the number of entry visa applications** year-on-year, with approximately 101,500 entry visa (long and short stay) applications received.

During 2014, Ireland implemented **a number of new IT systems** at its borders, these included:

- ★ The Private Key Infrastructure (PKI, a set of hardware, software, people, policies, and procedures needed to create, manage, distribute, use, store, and revoke digital certificates);
- ★ A Single Point of Contact (SPOC, a person or a department serving as the coordinator or focal point of information normally concerning a time-sensitive activity or programme);
- ★ New e-Document readers for Dublin Airport, other ports of entry and for registration offices.

A **British-Irish Visa Scheme was launched** in October 2014, with a new agreement signed regarding the sharing of immigration data between both countries. It will allow TCNs requiring a short-stay visa to travel freely within the Common Travel Area (between IE and the UK) on a single visa issued by either country. Ireland will incorporate biometric collection as part of the Irish visa application process. New systems will be put in place with the United Kingdom to facilitate the automated and seamless sharing and cross-checking of information.

Finally, **a major programme to civilianise immigration functions**, previously carried out by police at air borders, was announced in September 2014. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) will take over responsibility for border control functions from the Garda National Immigration Bureau (police). This will lead to an expected reduction in costs and improvements in overall efficiency. New Immigration Control Officers will receive classroom

instruction on relevant legislation, fraudulent documentation, and other relevant topics.

4.6. EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EU MIGRATION POLICY

No further developments were reported under this area in 2014.

5. Irregular Migration and Return

5.1. THE FIGHT AGAINST FACILITATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Efforts have been made to reduce the number of cases of misuse of family reunification. In particular, the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act, enacted in December 2014, defines **marriages and civil partnerships of convenience** and contains procedures and guidelines for registrars in determining such an opinion. These provisions entered into force on the 18 August 2015. In addition, Part 2 of the Employment Amendment Act 2014 is designed to amend the Employment Permits Act 2003, by providing for a defence to a charge of having been employed without an employment permit, where it can be proved that the foreign national took all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the law, and to seek compensation against the employer. The Act also provides a definition of "remuneration" and how it is to be provided, as well as clarity to employers and safeguards to prevent abuse of the regime.

5.2. RETURN

During 2014, **IOM Ireland developed a psychosocial support booklet** which will be used within the voluntary return and reintegration counselling process from early 2015 onwards. The booklet aims to be a self-reference guide, supporting returning migrants in their preparations for return and also during the reintegration process following return.

6. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

A few developments took place during 2014 in Ireland. First of all, a **new Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings** continued to be developed during 2014. Furthermore, a **handbook outlining the rights of victims of trafficking** under EU law in a simple language was published in 2014. The Office of Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) revised its internal guidance and training paper for ORAC staff on human trafficking and related refugee status determination and subsidiary protection issues.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

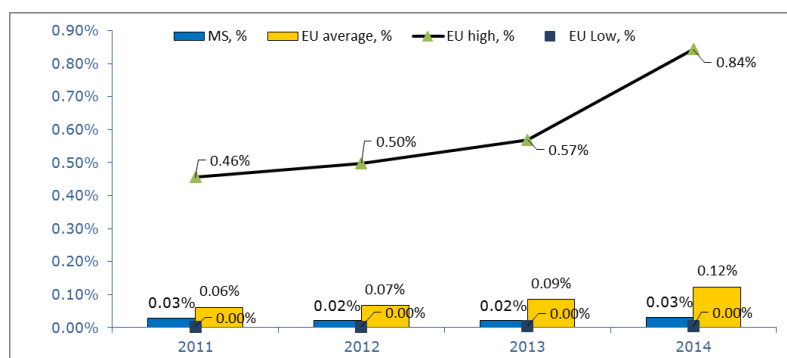
The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Ireland on aspects of migration and asylum (2011-2014), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as "**N/I**" and when statistics are not applicable, this is indicated as "**N/A**".

⁴ "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

Statistical Annex: Immigration and Asylum in Ireland (2011-2014)

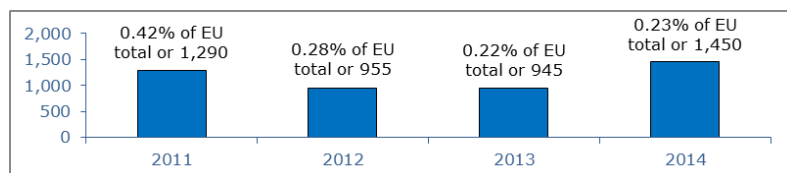
1. COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Ireland, EU average and EU high and low (2011-2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 20/07/2015

Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2011-2014)



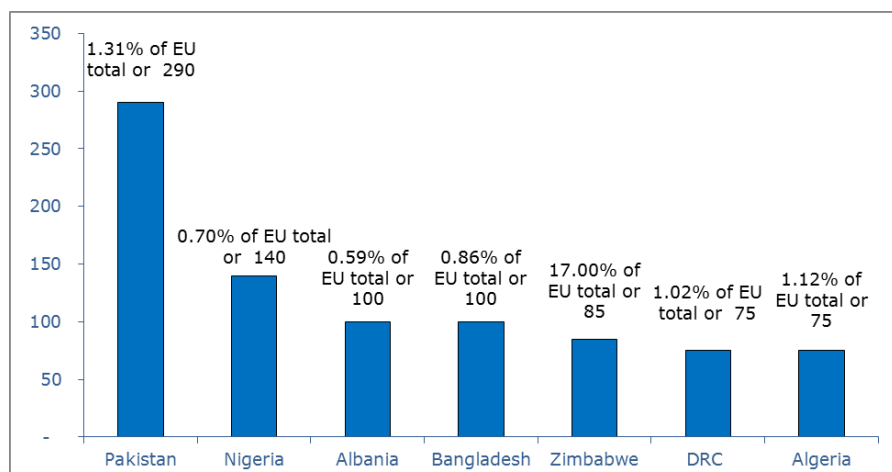
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015

Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2011-2014)

2011			2012			2013			2014		
Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total
Nigeria	180	14%	Nigeria	160	17%	Nigeria	130	14%	Pakistan	290	20%
Pakistan	175	14%	Pakistan	105	11%	Pakistan	90	10%	Nigeria	140	10%
China	140	11%	DRC	60	6%	DRC	70	7%	Albania	100	7%
DRC*	70	5%	Zimbabwe	50	5%	Zimbabwe	70	7%	Bangladesh	100	7%
Afghanistan	65	5%	Albania	45	5%	Malawi	55	6%	Zimbabwe	85	6%
Zimbabwe	65	5%				Albania	50	5%	Algeria	75	5%
						Algeria	50	5%	DRC	75	5%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015; * Democratic Republic of Congo

Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2014)



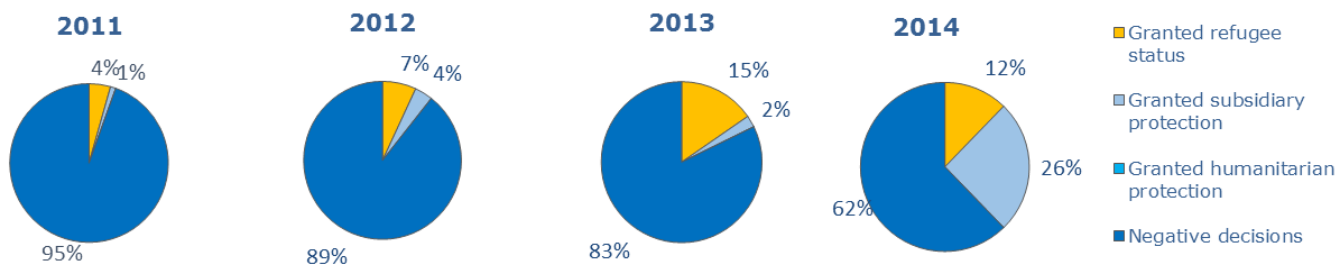
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015; *DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2011-2014)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2011	1,365	75	60	15	N/A	1,295
2012	940	100	65	35	N/A	840
2013	840	150	130	20	N/A	695
2014	1,060	400	130	270	N/A	660

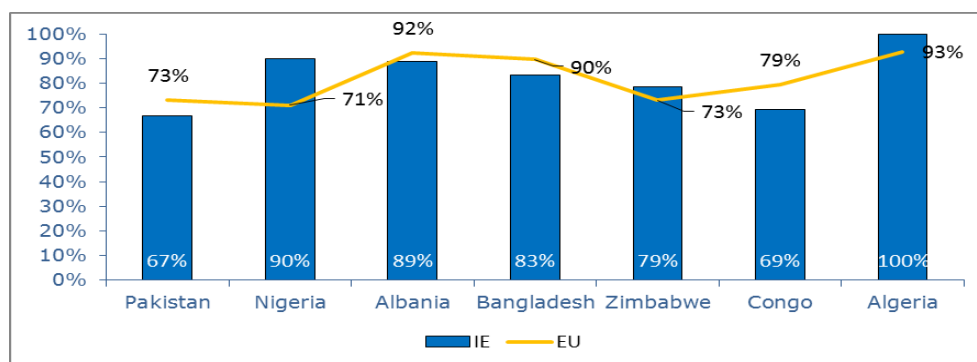
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 22/07/2015.

Figures 4-7: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2011-2014)



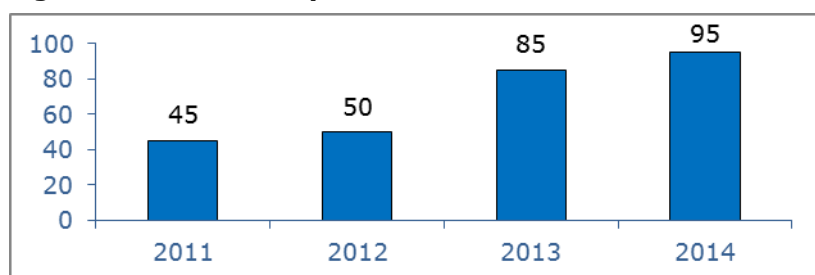
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 22/07/2015

Figure 8: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 23/07/2015

Figure 9: Third-country nationals resettled



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyresa), data extracted 23/07/2015

2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 10: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2011-2014)

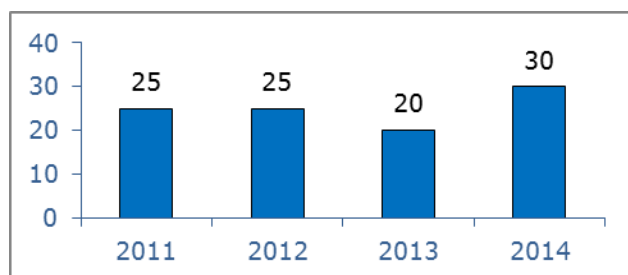


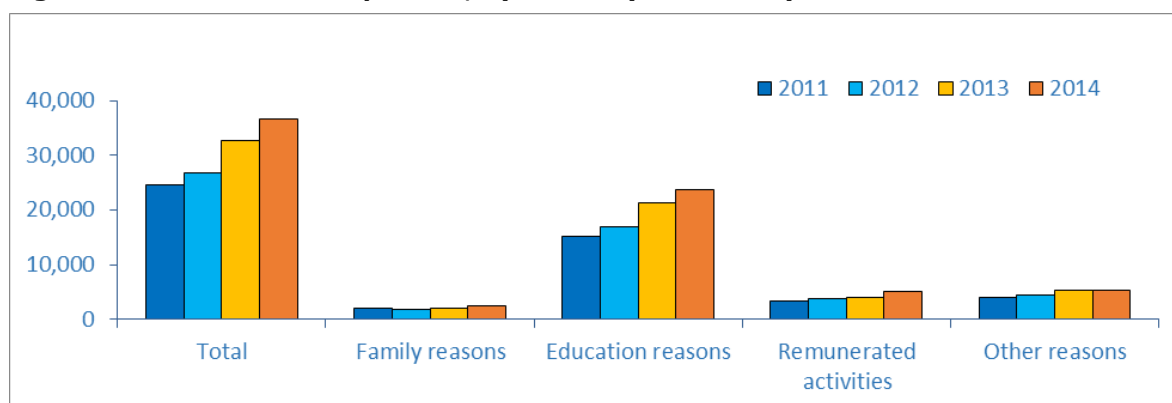
Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2011-2014)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unaccompanied minors (total)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	25	25	20	30

Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) [migr_asyunaa], data extracted 23/07/2015

3. EUROPEAN POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Figure 11: First residence permits, by reason (2011-2014)



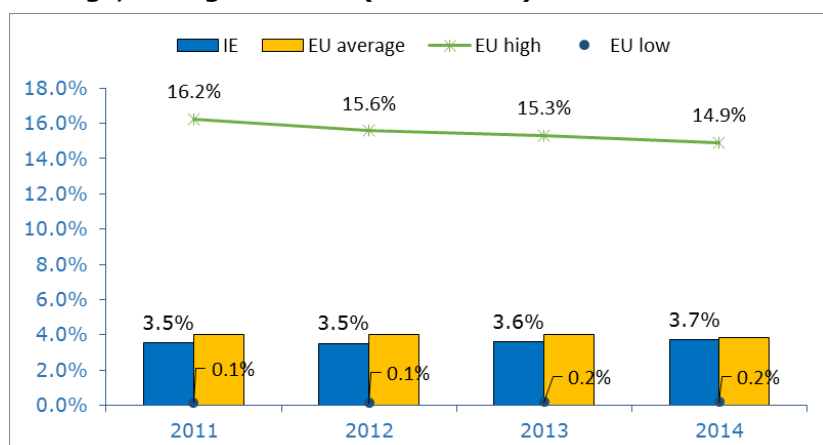
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst), data extracted 24/08/2015

Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2011 – 2014)

2011	2012	2013	2014
1. Brazil – 5,151	1. Brazil – 5,712	1. Brazil – 7,263	1. Brazil – 8,883
2. USA – 3,984	2. USA – 4,206	2. USA – 4,177	2. USA – 4,737
3. China – 1,549	3. India – 1,872	3. India – 2,506	3. India – 2,897
4. India – 1,380	4. China – 1,793	4. Venezuela – 2,034	4. China – 1,956
5. Nigeria – 1,052	5. South Korea – 1,094	5. China – 1,813	5. South Korea – 1,931

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_resfirst), data extracted 24/08/2015

Figure 12: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Ireland, EU average, EU high and low (2011-2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_pop1ctz), data extracted 23/07/2015

4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2011 – 2014)

Third country nationals:	2011	2012	2013	2014
Refused entry at external borders	2,545	2,205	1,935	2,475
Found to be illegally present	2,470	2,035	1,465	900
Ordered to leave	1,805	2,065	2,145	970
Returned following an order to leave	755	745	635	345

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eirfs)(migr_eipre)(migr_eiord)(migr_eirtn), data extracted 24/07/2015

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2011-2014)

	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2011	280 ⁵	475	402 ⁶
2012	302 ⁷	449 ⁸	359
2013	209*	426*	340
2014	114	242	192

Source: EMN Country Factsheet 2013 and *EMN Annual Policy Report on Immigration and Asylum 2014, Statistic Annex; * Data provided by IE EMN NCP.

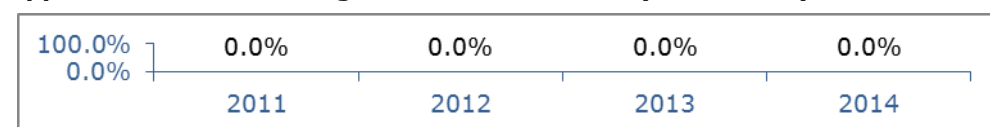
5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of visas issued by type (2011-2014)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total visas	N/A	73,319	86,683	90,382
Schengen visa (short-stay visas)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
National visa	N/A	73,319	86,683	90,382

Source: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)

Figure 13: Uniform visa applications received in Ireland as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2011-2014)



Source: DG Migration and Home affairs – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

Table 8: Top five countries in which the highest number of visa applications for Ireland was lodged

2011		2012		2013		2014	
Country	Nr	Country	Nr	Country	Nr	Country	Nr
N/I	N/A	Russia	11,245	Russia	12,792	Russia	12,900
N/I	N/I	India	9,670	India	11,113	India	11,800
N/I	N/I	China	7,922	China	8,252	China	8,358
N/I	N/I	UK	7,513	UK	7,574	UK	8,094
N/I	N/I	Nigeria	4,981	Saudi Arabia	5,387	Saudi Arabia	6,121

Source: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)

⁵ The number refers to deportation orders under Section 3 of Immigration Act 1999 only.

⁶ In addition, 73 people benefited from administrative assistance from the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS).

⁷ The number refers to deportation orders under Section 3 of Immigration Act 1999 only.

⁸ From that number a total of 359 were returned through voluntary return and reintegration assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office in Dublin and 90 benefited from administrative assistance from the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS).

6. ACTIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Table 9: Number of traffickers arrested as suspects and traffickers convicted

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Convictions	N/I	N/I	N/I	9*
Arrested / otherwise involved in a criminal proceeding	N/I	N/I	N/I	14*

Source: EMN Annual Policy Report on Immigration and Asylum 2014, Statistic Annex; * Preliminary and may be subject to change.

7. ASYLUM AND MIGRATION EU FUNDING SOURCES (2007-2013 AND 2014-2020)

Table 10: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) allocation to Ireland in euro per area

Areas	AMIF 2014-2020
Asylum	5,903,815
Legal Migration and Integration	5,941,712
Return	5,400,000
Technical Assistance	2,073,549
Special cases (resettlement/transfer)	1,900,000
TOTAL	21,419,077

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 11: Internal Security Fund (ISF) allocation to Ireland in euro per area

Areas	ISF 2014-2020
ISF Borders	N/A
ISF SA Frontex	N/A
ISF SA Consular cooperation	N/A
ISF Borders Emergency Assistance	N/A
ISF Police	9,243,080
TOTAL	9,243,080

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 12: SOLID funds allocation in euro and share of total funds allocated to Ireland (2007-2013)

SOLID FUNDS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
European Refugee Fund (ERF)	N/A	1,329,831 (1.8%)	1,992,889 (2%)	1,533,197 (1.6%)	2,100,661 (2.1%)	1,328,519 (1.3%)	1,071,639 (0.9%)	9,356,737 (1.6%)
European Return Fund (RF)	N/A	619,855 (1.1%)	578,351 (0.9%)	628,780 (0.8%)	719,785 (0.7%)	740,222 (0.5%)	886,381 (0.5%)	4,173,373 (0.7%)
European Fund for the Integration of TCN (EIF)	837,558 (1.3%)	847,418 (1.1%)	1,240,469 (1.3%)	1,181,479 (1.1%)	1,344,054 (1%)	1,597,042 (1%)	1,474,789 (0.8%)	8,522,809 (1%)
External Borders Fund (EBF)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs