

IRELAND

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2017

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The commitment to introduce an **International Education Mark (IEM)** included in the **International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016 - 2020** was progressed during 2017. In May 2017, the Irish Government approved a draft outline of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill, including provisions regarding the introduction of IEM. The Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) (which lists the educational programmes eligible for immigration purposes) continued to operate in 2017. A total of 929 educational programmes were added to the ILEP during the year.

With a view to encouraging the retention of international students after their studies, a revised Third Level Graduate Programme was introduced in June 2017, providing for an extended residence permission for postgraduate students. Under the Programme, postgraduate students can avail of residence permission after graduation of up to 24 months, subject to an overall time limit of 8 years, including time spent as a student. The residence permission is initially granted for 12 months, and can be renewed for a further 12 months.

ECONOMIC MIGRATION

During 2017, 2 781 applications (out of 2 923 applications received) were granted under the **Atypical Working Scheme**, a mechanism for streamlining entry for the purpose of short-term contracts in specialised skills which are not facilitated by the employment

KEY POINTS



2017 was the first year of implementation of the new single application procedure under the International Protection Act 2015.



Following a judgment of the Irish Supreme Court, which found that an absolute ban on access to the labour market for asylum seekers was contrary to the constitutional right to seek employment, the Irish Government decided, in November 2017, to opt into Directive 2013/33/EU on reception conditions.



The Migrant Integration Strategy which provides the framework for Government action on migrant integration for the period 2017 – 2020 was published in February 2017.

permit rules. Permissions were mostly granted to medical applicants, engineers and computer skills specialists. A total of 131 applications for third-country national workers in the Irish fishing fleet were also approved under the scheme in 2017.

As regards **migrant entrepreneurs**, 143 applications were received under the **Start-Up Entrepreneur Scheme** (STEP) – a mechanism set up to facilitate the relocation of international entrepreneurs with potential to fit **Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-up** (HPSU) criteria. In addition, 334 applications were received under the Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP). By the end of 2017, applications for investments to the value of

€ 570.7 million had been processed through the IIP. A limited review of the IIP was undertaken by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service in the third quarter of 2017, which examined the programme up to December 2016.

New employment permits regulations commenced in April 2017¹ with the objective of consolidating all existing employment permits regulations made since 2014. The regulations also made **changes to the Highly Skilled Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL)**, adding academics to the HSEOL and providing for temporary exemptions for heavy goods vehicle drivers and meat de-boners from the ICEL).

In 2017, in light of strong economic and employment growth, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation asked officials to review the policies underpinning the employment permits regime, to ensure that it remains supportive of Ireland's current labour market needs, be they skills or labour shortages in certain sectors. This review is to take place in 2018.

There continued to be a focus **on the employment of non-EEA (European Economic Area) fishermen in the Irish fishing fleet**, following media allegations made in 2015 of **labour exploitation** in this sector. Operational interventions of the national police force (*An Garda Síochána*) led to the identification of 19 potential victims of human trafficking in the fishing industry. The Workplace Relations Commission submitted its 'Report on WRC Enforcement of the Atypical Workers Permission Scheme in the Irish Sea Fishing Fleet' to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2017.² The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) continued its compliance and inspection activities in 2017 and carried out *Operation Trident* in March 2017, which involved unannounced inspections at several fishing ports.

Finally, the former Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) card – a registration certificate that must be obtained by non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals aged 16 and over present in Ireland for longer than 90 days – was replaced by the Irish EU Common Format Residence Permit. This new permit included a new design based on EU colour and layout rules, new information including a brief description of the immigration permission, the permission stamp number, and a microchip containing biometric data.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In November 2017, the **IRPP Humanitarian Admission Programme (IHAP)** was announced by the Ministry of Justice and Equality. The IHAP scheme proposes up to 530 places, from the existing commitment of up to 4 000 persons under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP), for family members of persons from the top ten refugee producing countries as listed in the UNHCR Annual Global Trends Report. It is open for immediate family members falling outside the scope of the International Protection Act 2015 (i.e. family members other than spouses/partners and minor children).

MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY³

In 2017, Ireland received approximately 125 500 entry visa applications for short and long stays. This represents an increase of 1% with respect to 2016, and a cumulative increase of 31% since 2013.

In June 2017, Ireland added Georgia and Ukraine to the list of countries whose nationals are required to hold a transit visa.⁴



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

2017 was the first year of implementation of the **single application procedure** under the International Protection Act 2015, which entered into operation on 31 December 2016. The International Protection Office (IPO) focussed in 2017 on putting the new procedure in place, including transitional arrangements. In February 2017, the Chief International Protection Officer accorded priority to certain classes of applications under section 73 of the International Protection Act 2015, with advice from UNHCR. A two-stream system was established to prioritise the scheduling of interviews for applications on the basis of the age of applicants, the likelihood that applications are well founded, and health aspects.

Following the judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU in the *Case C-429/15*,⁵ **new regulations relating to the lodging of certain subsidiary protection**

¹ S.I. No. 95 of 2017

² One of the reports ('The situation of non-EEA crew in the Irish Fishing Fleet under the Atypical Worker Permission Scheme') was published by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Business, Enterprise and Innovation in November 2017. The other report ('Report on WRC Enforcement of the Atypical Workers Permission Scheme in the Irish Sea Fishing Fleet') was

submitted to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) by the Workplace Relations Committee (WRC) in May 2017.

³ "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

⁴ Immigration Act 2004 (Visas) (Amendment) Order 2017 (S.I. No. 264 of 2017).

⁵ Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C-429/15 E.D. v Minister for Justice and Equality.

applications came into operation in October 2017.⁶ The 2017 regulations apply to applicants who were invited to make an application for subsidiary protection following a refusal of refugee status in Ireland since the introduction of the European Communities Regulations 2006,⁷ but who had failed to do so within the 15-working day time limit. Under the new regulations, these applicants were granted a 30-working day period from 2nd October 2017 to request to be admitted to the subsidiary protection process.

In terms of **reception conditions of asylum applicants**, the Irish Supreme Court ruled that an absolute ban for asylum seekers to access the labour market, in circumstances where there is no temporal limit on the asylum process, was contrary to the constitutional right to seek employment. Following this ruling, the Government established an Inter-Departmental Taskforce in July 2017 with a mandate to examine the implications of the judgment and to propose solutions. The Government decided for Ireland to exercise its discretion to participate in **Directive 2013/33/EU on reception conditions** under Protocol 21 of the Treaty of Lisbon on 22 November 2017. An Implementation Group to oversee the opt-in procedure was set up by the Government.

Several changes were made in relation to **residents of direct provision centres**. Firstly, the remit of the Offices of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children were extended to include their complaints. Secondly, their allowance was increased to € 21.60 per week per person.

In relation to **appeals**, regulations under the International Protection Act were signed in March 2017,⁸ setting the time periods for appealing recommendations of an International Protection Officer as well as the procedures for making an appeal to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

An Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) was opened in 2017 under the **Irish Refugee Protection Programme**. A number of asylum seekers who had been relocated from designated hotspots were provided with initial accommodation at the centre while their applications for refugee status were being processed.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

In 2017, the International Protection Office (IPO) published an information booklet for unaccompanied minors applying for international protection through Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.⁹

In January 2017, the first mission to meet unaccompanied children in the unofficial migrant camp at Calais was organised, resulting in the relocation to Ireland of 30 unaccompanied minors by the end of 2017.



INTEGRATION

The **Migrant Integration Strategy** which provides the framework for Government action on migrant integration from 2017 – 2020 was published in February 2017. A Monitoring and Coordination Committee was established, and a progress report on the work of the Strategy is to be brought to Government in 2018.

The Communities Integration Fund was launched alongside the Strategy in February 2017, which made available € 500,000 to local community based groups to promote integration, for example local sports clubs, faith-based groups, theatrical and cultural organisations. Other funding announced during the year included € 485,000 to support the labour market integration of female refugees.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In May 2017, the Irish Government approved the establishment, staffing and funding of the **Irish Passenger Information Unit** under the Department of Justice and Equality, as provided by Directive 2016/801/EC on a Passenger Name Record.

A number of changes were introduced at Dublin Airport to **improve the effectiveness of controls at external borders**, namely the introduction of automatic border control e-gates for EU/EEA e-passport holders over the age of 18, and the transfer of border control operations from *An Garda Síochána* to the Irish Naturalisation Immigration Service.

To conclude, the Irish Parliament approved the participation of members of the Irish Permanent Defence Forces in **EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia**

⁶ European Union (Subsidiary Protection) Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 409 of 2017).

⁷ S.I. No. 426 of 2013

⁸ International Protection Act 2015 (Procedures and periods for appeals) Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 116 of 2017).

⁹ International Protection Office, Information Booklet for Unaccompanied Minors/Separated Children who are applicants for international protection.

in July 2017. Irish naval vessels were deployed to Operation Sophia in October 2017.



RETURN

In 2017, a total of 140 deportation orders were effected, of which 138 were in relation to rejected asylum seekers from China (including Hong Kong), Nigeria and Pakistan.

residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as “N/A”.



ACTIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The main development in 2017 was the enactment of the **Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act in February 2017**,¹⁰ which strengthens existing law against sexual offences.

A number of **training and awareness raising activities** on different aspects of trafficking in human beings were organised by the Department of Justice and Equality Anti-Human Trafficking Unit and *An Garda Síochána* (Human Trafficking Investigation and Coordination Unit).

The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit provided funding of € 360.000 to two NGOs in the field of anti-human trafficking, an increase of 14% on 2016 funding levels.

As regards international cooperation, Ireland participated in the **2017 Joint Action Days on Labour Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation and Child Trafficking** in the framework of the EUROPOL EMPACT Group for Human Trafficking. Ireland also made a contribution of € 28.000 to the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) to support a specific project aimed at combatting human trafficking and assisting its victims in Africa.



MAXIMISING DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

In 2017, Ireland pledged an additional € 3 million to the **EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**, raising its total contribution for the period 2016 – 2020 to € 6 million.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Ireland on aspects of migration and international protection (2014-2017), including

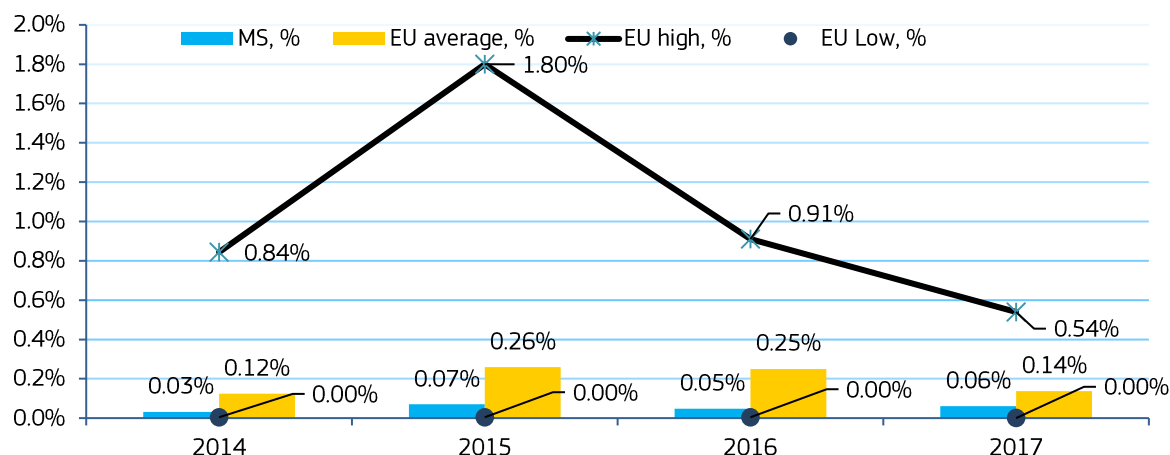
¹⁰ Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017. No. 2 of 2017.

STATISTICAL ANNEX: MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN IRELAND (2014-2017)



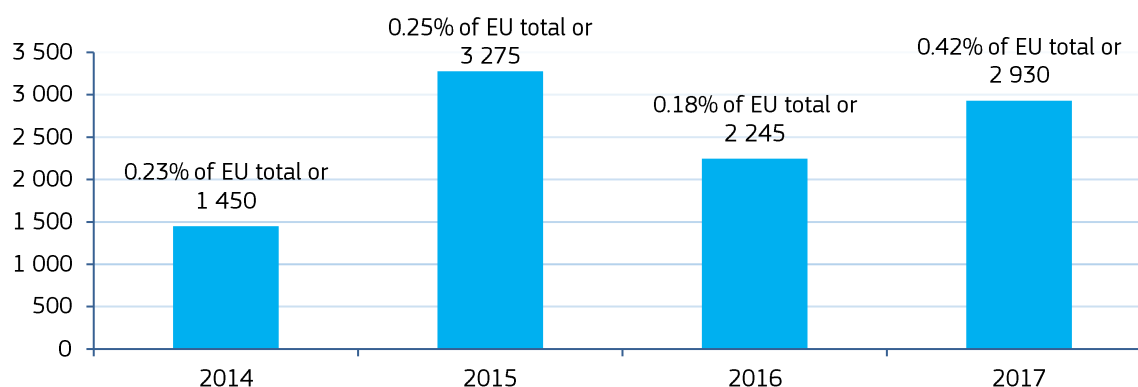
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Ireland, EU average and EU high and low (2014-2017)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 30.03.18

Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2014-2017)



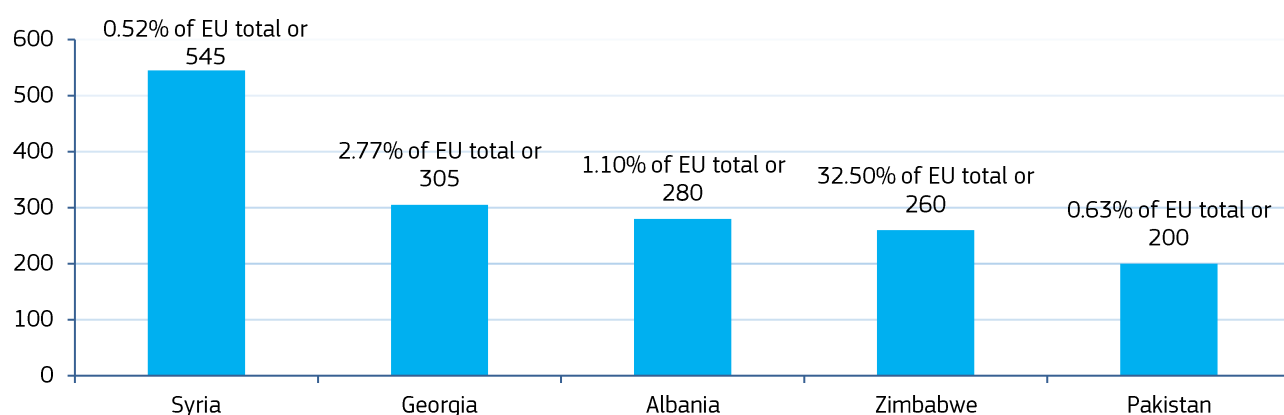
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 30.03.18

Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2014-2017)

2014			2015			2016			2017		
Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total
Pakistan	290	20%	Pakistan	1 355	41%	Syria	245	11%	Syria	545	19%
Nigeria	140	10%	Bangladesh	285	9%	Pakistan	235	10%	Georgia	305	10%
Albania, Bangladesh	100	7%	Albania	215	7%	Albania	220	10%	Albania	280	10%
Zimbabwe	85	6%	Nigeria	185	6%	Zimbabwe	190	8%	Zimbabwe	260	9%
Congo, Algeria	75	5%	India	145	4%	Nigeria	175	8%	Pakistan	200	7%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 30.03.18

Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2017)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 30.03.18

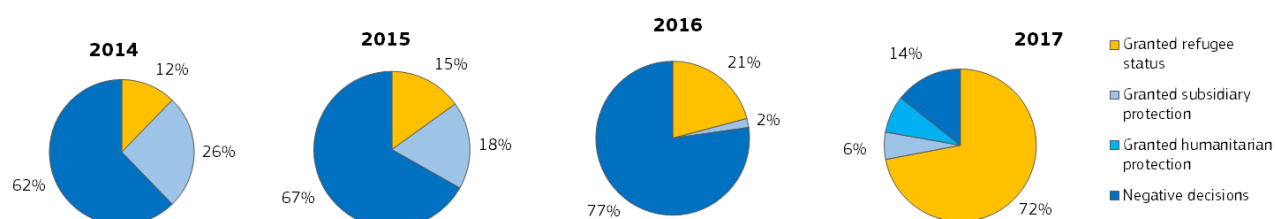
Note: the figure reads as: Ireland received 545 asylum applications from Syria or 0.52% of all asylum applications launched by Syria in EU in 2017.

Table 2: Asylum applications – First instance decisions by outcome (2014-2017)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:			Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian reasons	
2014	1 060	400	130	270	:	660
2015	1 000	330	150	180	:	665
2016	2 130	485	445	40	:	1 645
2017	886	759	638	51	70	127

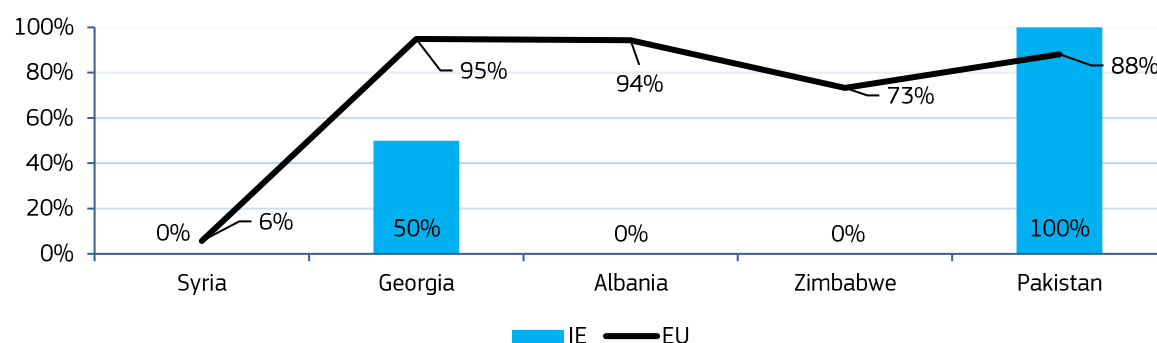
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfstz](#)), data extracted 13.08.18

Figure 4: Asylum applications – First instance decisions by outcome (2014-2017)



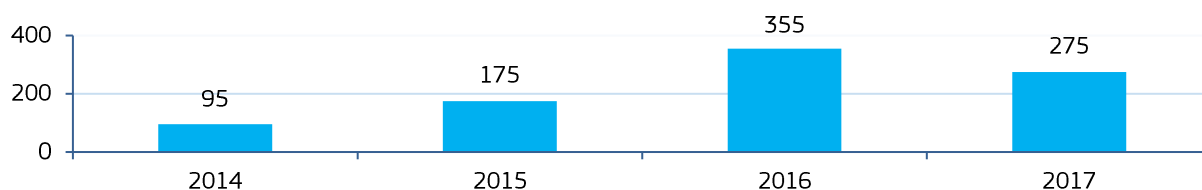
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfstz](#)), data extracted 13.08.18

Figure 5: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2017)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfstz](#)), data extracted 30.03.18

Figure 6: Third-country nationals resettled (2014-2017)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyresa](#)), data extracted 02.05.18



2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 7: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2014-2017)

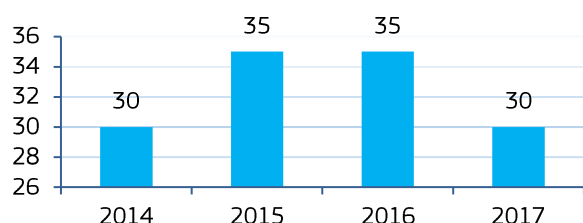


Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2014-2017)

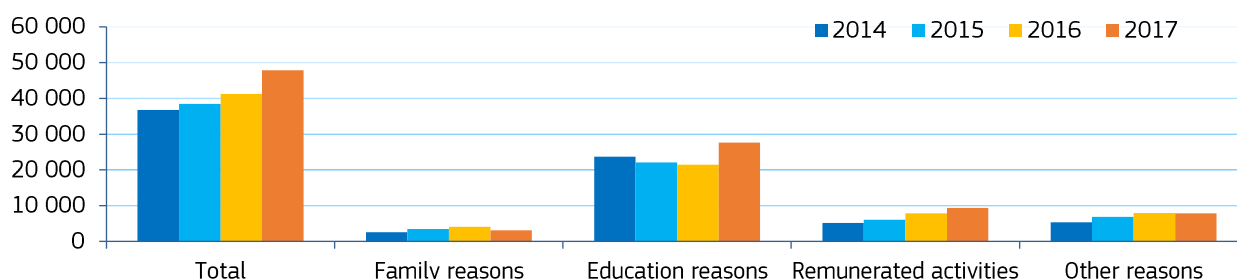
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Unaccompanied minors (total)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	30	33	34	30

Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) ([migr_asyunaa](#)), data extracted 04.04.18; EMN NCPs



3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Figure 8: First residence permits, by reason (2014-2017)



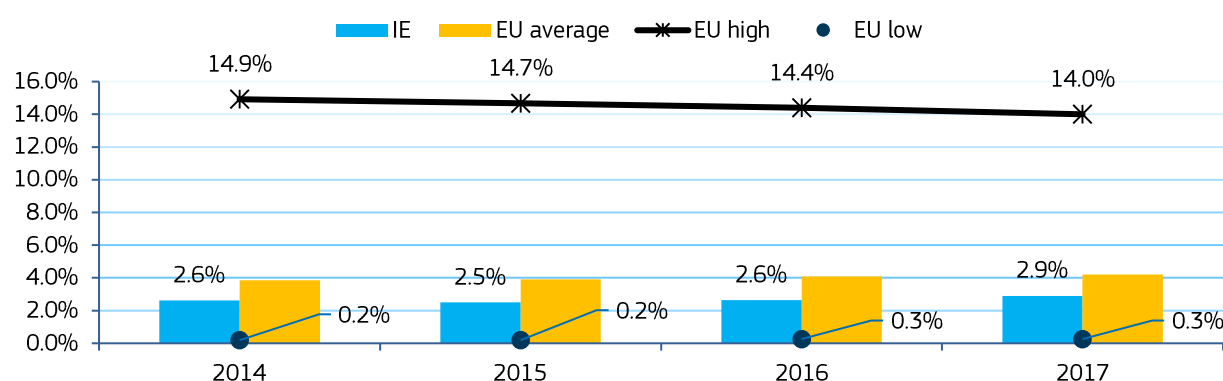
Source: Eurostat ([migr_resfirst](#)), data extracted 25.07.2018.

Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2014-2017)

2014		2015		2016		2017	
Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number
Brazil	8 883	Brazil	10 955	Brazil	8 322	Brazil	11 901
United States	4 737	India	2 883	United States	5 935	United States	5 903
India	2 897	United States	2 690	India	4 319	India	5 877
China (incl. Hong Kong)	1 956	China (incl. Hong Kong)	2 291	China (incl. Hong Kong)	2 924	China (incl. Hong Kong)	3 529
South Korea	1 931	Pakistan	1 891	Pakistan	1 863	South Korea	1 474

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_resfirst](#)), data extracted 25.07.18

Figure 9: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Ireland, EU average, EU high and low (2014-2017)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_pop1ctz](#)), data extracted 30.03.18



4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2014–2017)

Third country nationals:	2014	2015	2016	2017
Refused entry at external borders	2 475	3 450	3 950	3 745
Found to be illegally present	900	2 315	2 315	2 780
Ordered to leave	970	875	1 355	1 105
Returned following an order to leave	345	365	585	315

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_eirfs](#))([migr_eipre](#))([migr_eiord](#))([migr_eirtn](#)) data extracted 04.04.18

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2014–2017)

Year	Returned as part of forced return measure	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2014	114	242	192
2015	251	115	93
2016	428	187	143
2017	140	175	91

Source: EMN NCPs



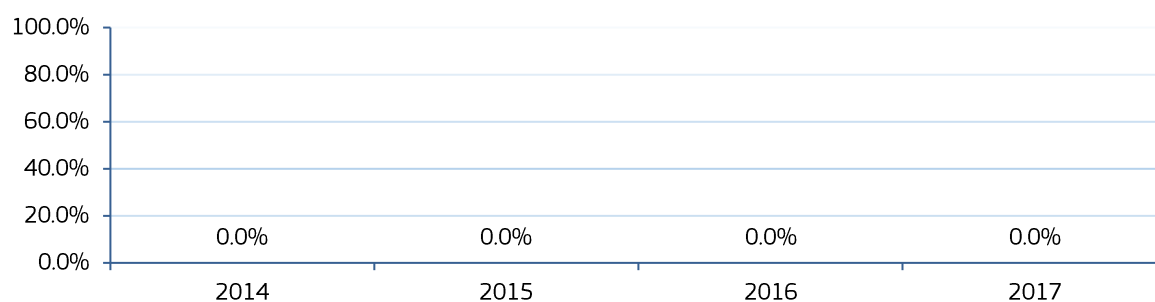
5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of Schengen visas applications (2014–2017)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Figure 10: Uniform visa applications received in Ireland as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2014-2017)



NB: Ireland does not issue Schengen visas. 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 (2014-2017)

2014		2015		2016		2017	
Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number
Russia	12 900	India	14 635	India	17 699	India	20 157
India	11 800	China	10 905	China	12 476	China	13 732
China	8 358	Russia	10 304	Russia	10 774	Russia	12 646
United Kingdom	8 094	United Kingdom	8 739	United Kingdom	8 704	United Kingdom	8 037
Saudi Arabia	6 121	Saudi Arabia	6 150	Pakistan	8 042	Saudi Arabia	5 222

Source: National data. Ireland does not issue Schengen visas.