

# IRELAND

## EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

# 2019

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



## LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

### ECONOMIC MIGRATION

A draft General Scheme for the Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill was published in October 2019, with a public consultation phase launched in December 2019. The draft legislative provisions include the introduction of a seasonal employment permit, in line with the 2018 review of economic migration policy undertaken by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. The draft scheme also includes a provision to introduce a special circumstances employment permit to cover occasional needs which fall outside of the standard criteria but would nevertheless benefit the social or economic development of the State.

The Employment Permits Regulations 2019<sup>1</sup> provided for amendments to the Critical Skills and Ineligible Occupations Lists to address skills and labour needs. A number of professional occupations in the construction sector were added to the critical skills list, as well as sports directors and coaches. Certain medium and low-skilled occupations in the construction and logistics sectors were removed from the ineligible occupations list. Some of these were subject to quota. Quotas that were established in 2018 for certain occupations in the agri-food area were increased, while the restriction to quota and cap on the number of chef permits available was removed. The regulations also provided for

<sup>1</sup> S.I. No. 318 of 2019, S.I. No. 333 of 2019, S.I. No. 633 of 2019.

## KEY POINTS



Community Sponsorship Ireland was launched in 2019 as an alternative resettlement stream involving community groups providing supports to arriving refugees.



An expert group was established to advise on a long-term approach to providing reception supports to international protection applicants.



2019 saw the publication of a draft scheme for legislation to revise the employment permits system, including provision for a seasonal employment permit.

increases to the remuneration thresholds for a Critical Skills Employment Permit.<sup>2</sup>

On 6 March 2019, changes were announced to immigration arrangements to allow immediate access to the labour market - without an employment permit requirement - for spouses/*de facto* partners of Critical Skills Employment Permit holders or researchers on hosting agreements.

Immigration preclearance arrangements were extended to third-country national *de facto* partners of Irish citizens from both visa-required and non-visa required countries from 1 November 2019. Under the new

<sup>2</sup> S.I. No. 333 of 2019.

arrangements, third-country national *de facto* partners of Irish citizens can apply for permission to reside in Ireland prior to their arrival in the State, register with the immigration authorities and access the labour market immediately on arrival.

A total of 396 applications were received in 2019 under the Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP). Some 294 applications were approved in 2019, with an investment value of over €250 million. A total of 26 applications were received under the Start-Up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP), 10 of which were approved. The external review of the IIP, terms of reference for which had been published in 2018, was progressed in 2019, with the Department of Justice and Equality also commencing an internal review of the STEP.

The Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2019 was signed into law by the President of Ireland on 17 March 2019. Part 14 of the Act, which was commenced in July 2019<sup>3</sup> includes certain immigration-related provisions. UK nationals will not require employment permits to work in Ireland following Brexit.



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

A total of 4 781 applications for international protection were made in 2019, an increase of 30.2% compared to the 3,673 applications received in 2018.

National Quality Standards for Accommodation Centres were drawn up in accordance with the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) and European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Guidance on Operational Standards and Indicators following consultation with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They were published in August 2019.

The establishment of an Expert Group on the Provision of Support, including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process (asylum seekers) was announced in December 2019. The group will advise on the development of a long-term approach to such supports, including identifying good practices in other

<sup>3</sup> S.I. No. 346 of 2019.

<sup>4</sup> The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 is intended to create a more parent-friendly, equitable and consistent approach to how school admissions

European countries, particularly dealing with variations in demand. It is due to report by the end of 2020.

## RELOCATION AND RESETTLEMENT

A total of 783 refugees were resettled under the resettlement strand of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) in 2019.

In December 2019, the Department of Justice and Equality announced plans to resettle up to 2 900 refugees between 2020 and 2023, through a combination of resettlement and community sponsorship under a new phase of the IRPP.

Community Sponsorship Ireland was launched as a national programme in November 2019 as an alternative resettlement stream to the traditional state-centred model. The programme allows interested groups in the community to come together as a Community Sponsorship Group (CSG) to provide supports to arriving refugees. Refugees arrive in Ireland following selection by the UNHCR and a vetting process overseen by the IRPP.



## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Ireland committed to accepting up to 36 unaccompanied minors from Greece on a bilateral basis in December 2018. In September 2019, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency led a mission to Athens in which eight minors were assessed, screened and approved for relocation to Ireland. These minors had not arrived in Ireland by the end of 2019.



## INTEGRATION

### INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

Ireland published its mid-term review of the Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-2020 in 2019. The report identified a number of significant achievements, at the mid-term stage including the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018,<sup>4</sup> the adoption of Ireland's Second National Intercultural Health Strategy, and the establishment of the Communities Integration Fund. The

policies operate for all primary and post-primary schools. This will help to ensure that all children, regardless of nationality or religion, are able to access education. (*Progress Report to Government*, p. 7). Available at: [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

Fund provided grants for local integration projects, totalling €526 000 in 2019.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

An Anti-racism Committee was established in December 2019, comprising both State and non-State actors.

The Department of Justice and Equality launched a consultation on hate speech in October 2019, as part of a review of relevant law in the area.



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

### ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

In a case examining the concept of continuous residence in relation to conditions for naturalisation the Irish High Court<sup>5</sup> found that 'continuous residence' in the context of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended) meant unbroken and uninterrupted residence, thus no absence from the State was allowed. However, the Court of Appeal<sup>6</sup> subsequently held that continuous residence does not require uninterrupted presence in the State nor impose a complete prohibition on travel outside the State.



## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

### BORDER MANAGEMENT

E-gates for passport control at Dublin airport were officially opened by the Minister for Justice and Equality in June 2019. In May 2019, all of the e-gates were upgraded to feature flatbed readers compatible with the Irish passport card. E-gates were deployed at Dublin Airport since December 2017 and used by over 3.3 million passengers in 2019.

### VISA POLICY

Ireland abolished its re-entry visa system for travel to and from Ireland for third-country nationals from visa-required countries who are registered with the immigration authorities and hold the Irish Residence

Permit card or the former Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) card, with effect from 13 May 2019.

Approximately 155 760 entry visa applications (both long and short stay) were received in 2019, an increase of 10.77% on 2018. Top nationalities included India, China and Russia. The approval rate for entry visa applications was 89.5%. A total of 137 207 visas were granted in 2019, of which 108 595 were short stay<sup>7</sup> and 28 612 were long stay.

A new five-year multi-entry tourist visa became available for Chinese nationals from 1 July 2019. Previously 1-year, 2-year or 3-year tourist options had been available. The 5-year option was already available to Chinese business visitors.



## IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

### MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

Operation Vantage was established in 2015 to investigate illegal immigration and identify marriages of convenience under the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014 and continued during 2019.

A multi-agency day of action took place in March 2019 to target abuses of immigration legislation and process around Public Service Licence Vehicles.



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Ireland ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Protocol in February 2019.

Funding was secured for research into the experiences of women in the commercial sex trade,<sup>8</sup> and to explore the current levels of awareness of the criminalisation of purchasing sex among survival sex workers.<sup>9</sup> NGOs active in the areas of sexual exploitation of women and labour exploitation continued to be supported with funding.

<sup>5</sup> Jones v Minister for Justice and Equality [2019] IEHC 519.

<sup>6</sup> Jones v Minister for Justice and Equality [2019] IECA 285

<sup>7</sup> Ireland is not part of the Schengen area. Short stay visas are national visas.

<sup>8</sup> Sexual Exploitation Research Project (SERP).

<sup>9</sup> Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health and HIV (GOSHH) project.

Together with 23 other European states, Ireland participated in the EU Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and EUROPOL awareness-raising campaign against trafficking in human beings.

Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) partnered in an initiative with the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to produce a booklet for the worldwide community of nurses advising on human trafficking, including how to recognise the signs of human trafficking, medical indicators that should raise concern, and appropriate further action.

## 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 Ireland 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'.

How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available [here](#).



## RETURN AND READMISSION

### RETURN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

In December 2019, Ireland led a Frontex Joint Return Operation,<sup>10</sup> in cooperation with Belgium and Iceland. A total of 23 people of Albanian and Georgian nationality were deported from Ireland as part of this operation.

A total of 298 deportation orders were effected in 2019. Some 255 third-country nationals returned voluntarily, 106 under the assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality.



## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ireland's new international development strategy 'A Better World – Ireland's Policy for International Development' was published in February 2019. The strategy provides a framework for the achievement of Ireland's commitment to reach the international target for overseas development aid of 0.7% gross national income (GNI) by 2030 as economic circumstances permit, in accordance with the principle of reaching the 'furthest behind first'. Global Ireland – Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025 was published in November 2019. These strategies include commitments to follow through on the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and continued participation in multilateral efforts to protect refugees and people on the move.

<sup>10</sup> As the Frontex Regulation (2019/1896) constitutes a development of the Schengen acquis in which Ireland does not participate, Ireland is not bound

by the Regulation. However, in accordance with Article 70, Frontex may facilitate cooperation with Ireland and the United Kingdom in specific Frontex activities.



## 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 Ireland

■ data relative to EU

## LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

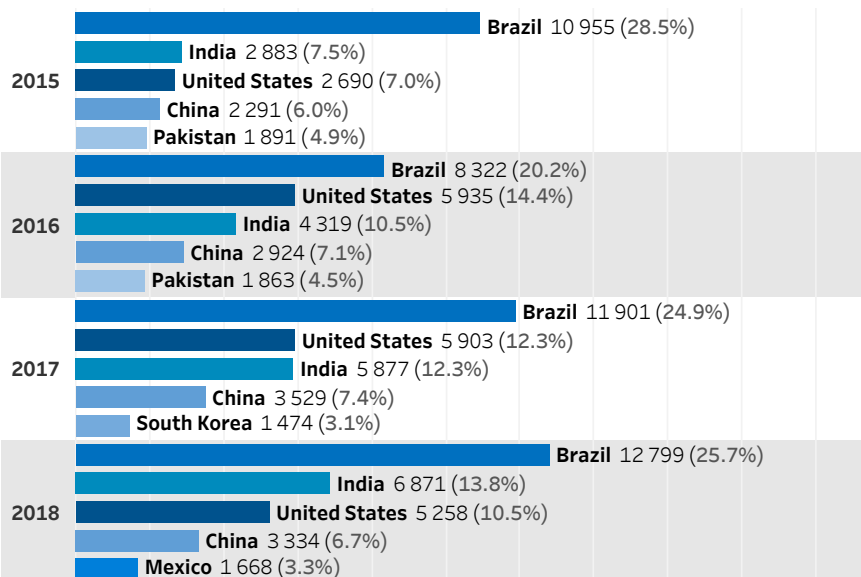
### Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) as % of total population (in the country and in the EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctz)



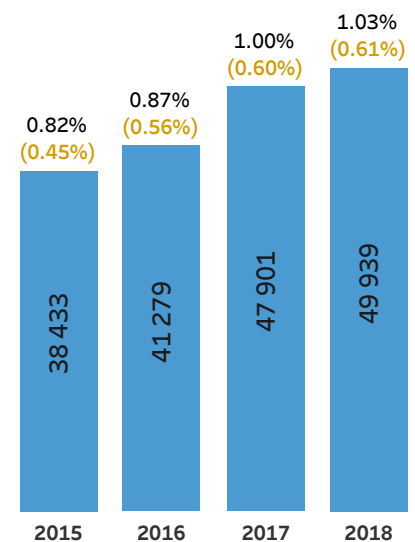
### Top 5 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



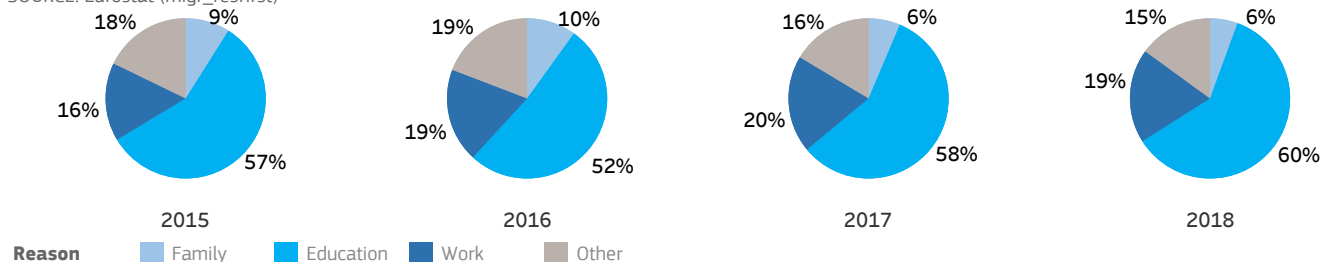
### First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)



### First residence permits annually issued by reason

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_resfirst)

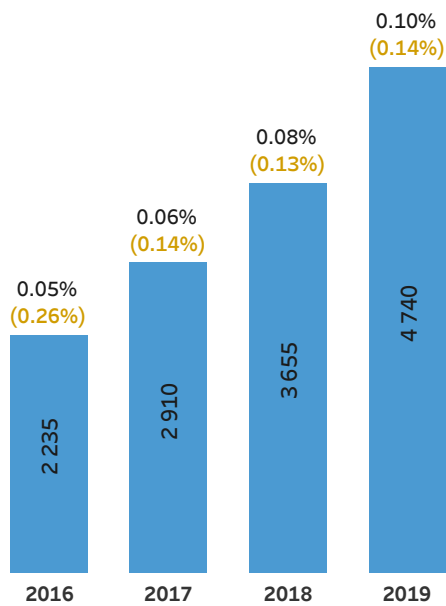


Reason: ■ Family ■ Education ■ Work ■ Other

## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

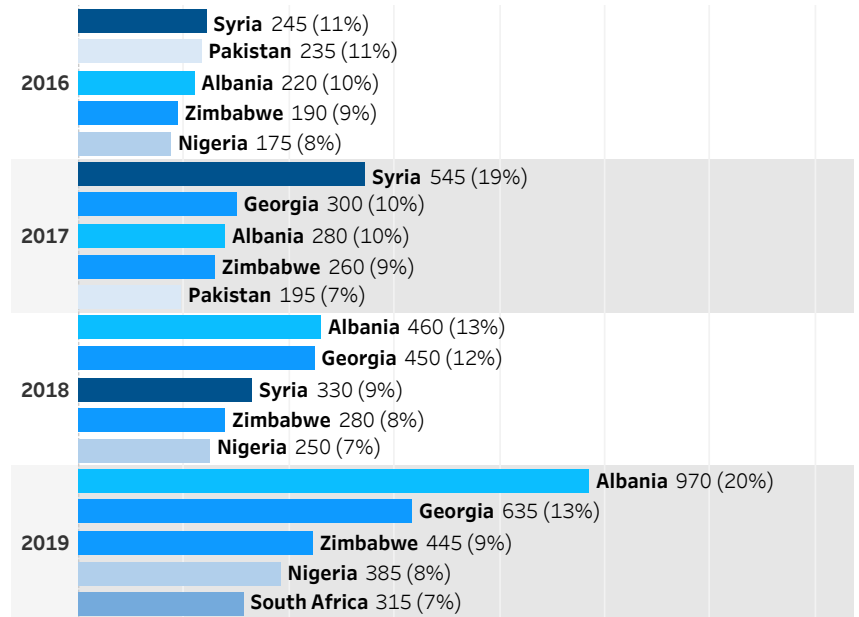
### First-time asylum applications: total num. and as % of population in the country (and in EU)

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



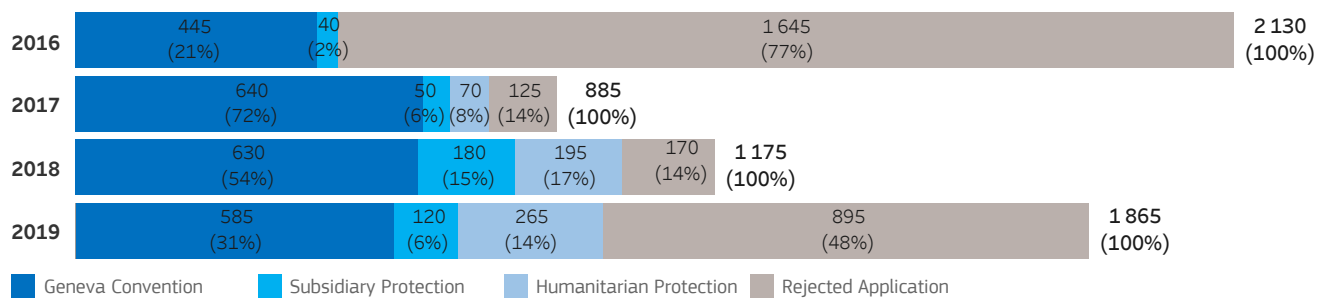
### Top 5 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyappctza)



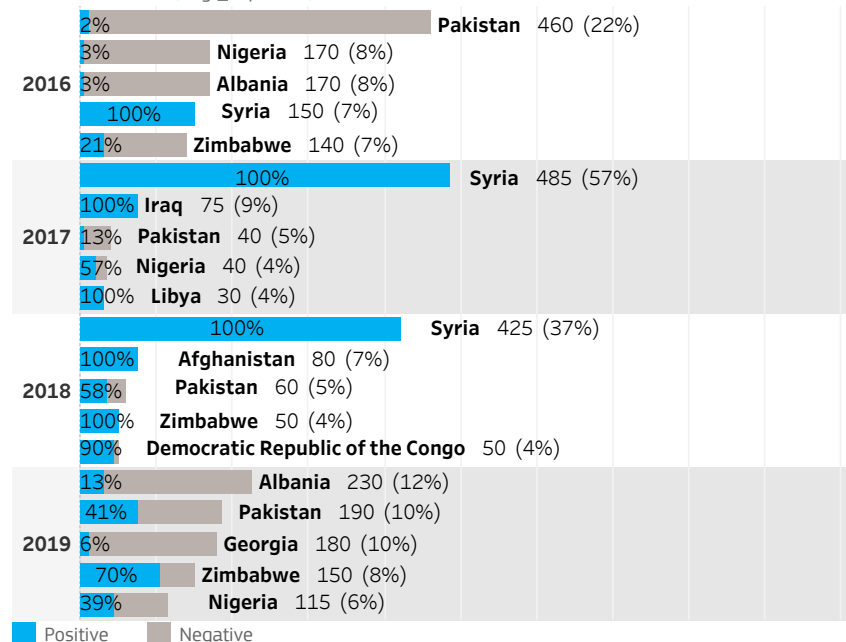
### Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



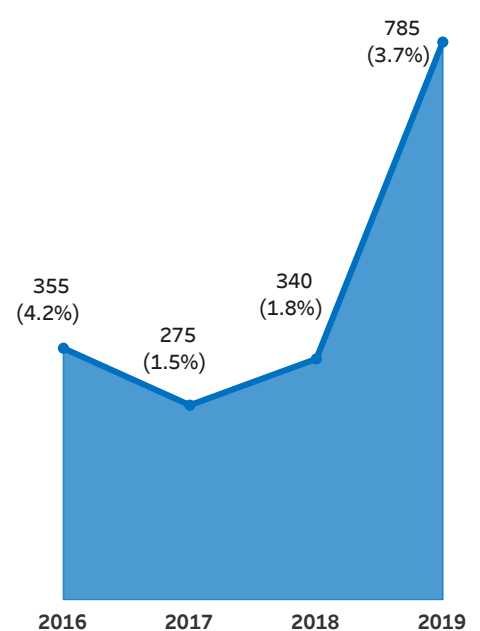
### Top 5 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asydcfsta)



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

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyresa)

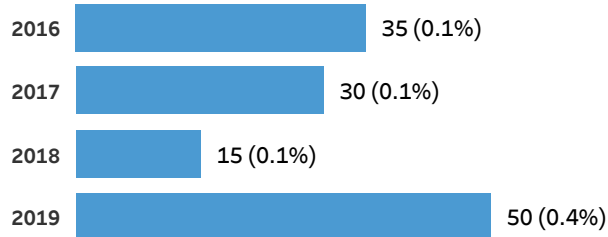




## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

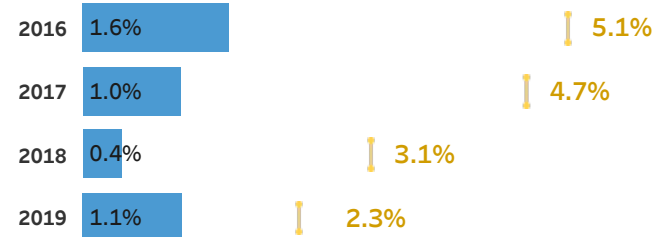
### Unaccompanied Minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from Unaccompanied Minors in EU)

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa)



### Unaccompanied Minors as % of first asylum applications (in the country and in EU)

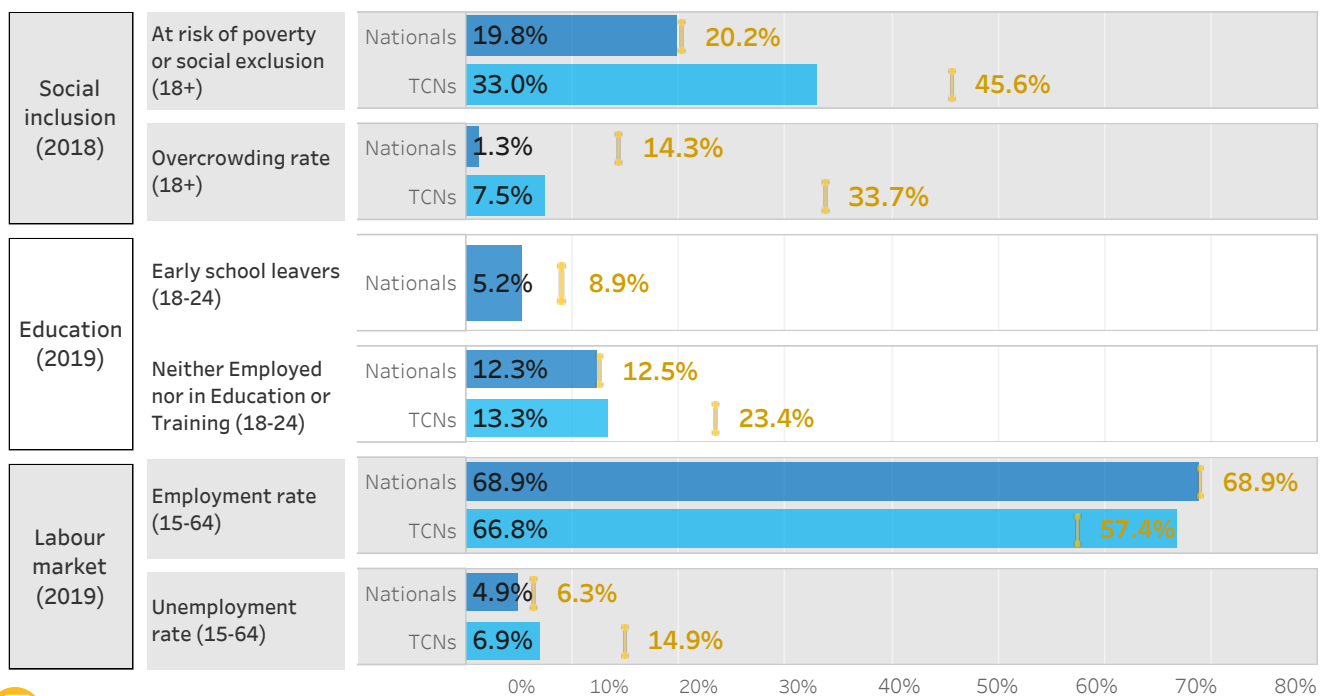
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_asyunaa)



## 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.

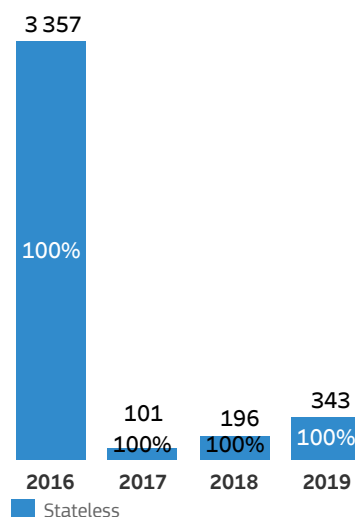
SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc\_peps05, ilc\_lvho15, edat\_lfse\_01, edat\_lfse\_23, lfsa\_ergan, lfsa\_urgan)



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

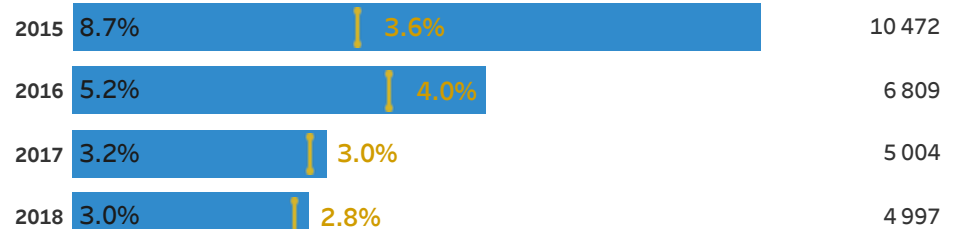
### Stateless, Recogn. Non-Citizens (RNC) and Unknown Citizens

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr\_pop1ctza)



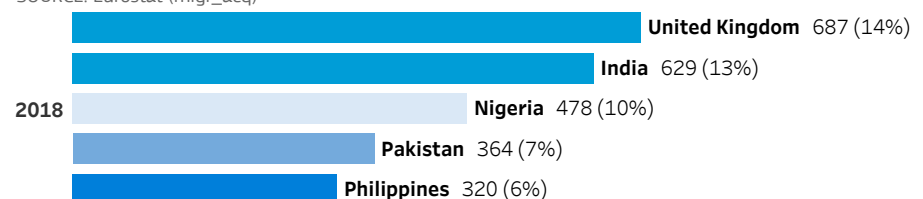
### Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number

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)



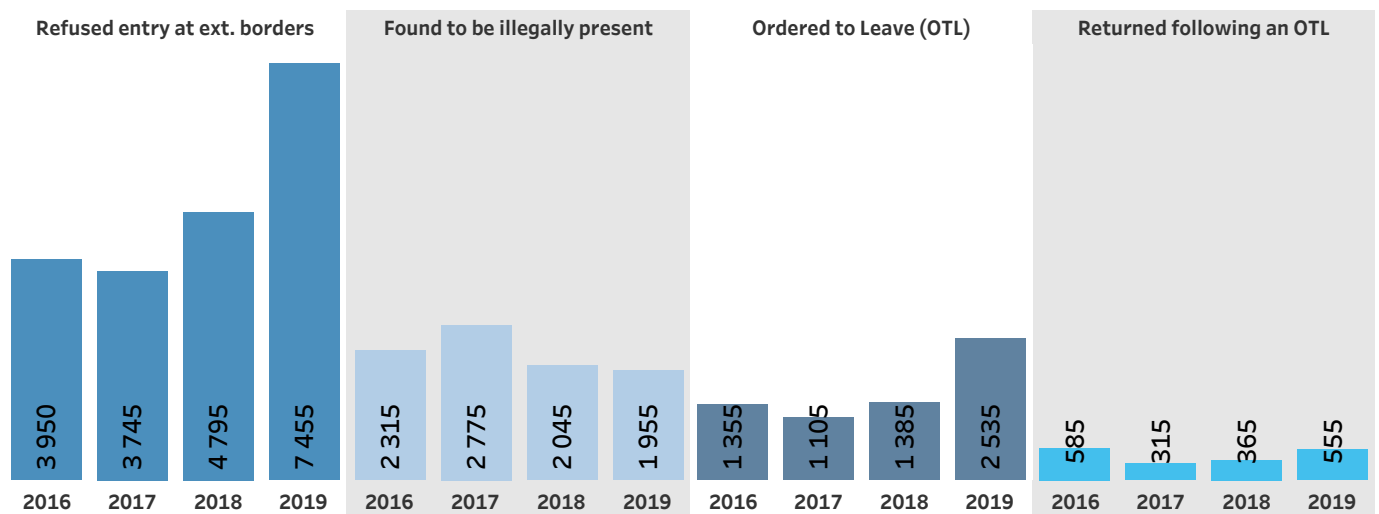
## BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

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

Ireland is not part of the Schengen area and does not issue Schengen visas, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC.

## 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)

