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Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany

Annual Report 2021

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Summary

KEY TRENDS

- According to the Central Register of Foreigners, about 470,000 non-German EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2021. At 4.7%, the decline compared to the previous year was less than in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this period, it was above all the border closures during the first half of the year that led to a greater decline (-17.2%). At the same time, a general downward trend in immigration figures was already evident before the pandemic started.
- The emigration of EU nationals from Germany stabilised at the previous year's level of about 340,000 persons. In 2020, however, total emigration numbers had declined for the first time in the last decade.
- The pandemic-related developments did not lead to any significant change in the structure of migration movements with regard to the most relevant nationalities. As in previous years, nationals from Romania, Poland and Bulgaria were the quantitative most significant groups in terms of both immigration and emigration.
- Due to the stabilisation of emigration figures and a further decline in immigration, the migration gain of non-German EU nationals in 2021 once again fell somewhat more sharply than in the previous year (-14.4% compared to -4.8%). As a result, total net migration amounted to only slightly more than 130,000 persons.
- At the end of December 2021, almost 5 million non-German EU nationals lived in Germany, marking a slight increase of 1.8% compared to December 2020.

1. Introduction and Database

As part of its "Series of Reports on Migration and Integration", the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees reports on the current development of immigration and emigration of non-German EU citizens to and from Germany in its biannual "Freedom of Movement Monitoring". For this purpose, corresponding evaluations are drawn from the nationwide Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister; AZR). The Freedom of Movement Monitoring thus complements the parallel publication "Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring" (Series 1 of the Reports on Migration and Integration; formerly "Migration Monitoring"), which focuses on third-country nationals. The publication also uses the AZR as a data basis. However, the focus does not lie on immigration, but on the granting of residence titles to third-country nationals for the purpose of (further) education or employment in Germany (Graf 2022).

The AZR migration figures presented in the Freedom of Movement Monitoring differ from the figures of the case-related immigration and emigration statistics of the Federal Statistical Office, which are based on registrations and de-registrations. The data of the AZR are person-related and persons are only registered in it if they stay in the Federal territory not only temporarily, but for longer than 90 days (Central Register of Foreigners Act (AZRG), Section 2 (1)). Births or deaths of foreign nationals in Germany are not included in the migration statistics. Since the AZR only records data on persons without a German citizenship, the migration figures do not refer to German immigrants and emigrants, even if they have an additional foreign citizenship.

The data presented in this report are subject to a three-month follow-on registration period, i.e. values for the year 2021 result from a retrieval on 31 March 2022. This increases the reliability of the data as subsequent registrations in the AZR are taken into account as well, which, although they did not take place until the first quarter of 2022, still relate to migration processes of the previous year.

The central part of this report comprises the presentation of the migration figures since 2013, broken down by the individual EU nationalities (chapters 2 and 3), as well as the resulting migration balances (chapter 4). In the appendix, a breakdown of the migration figures by federal state and the ten most common nationalities is additionally displayed. Furthermore, the annual report pays special attention to the net migration development of nationals

- from the so-called **EU 8 states** (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary), for which full EU freedom of movement for workers has applied since 1 May 2011;
- from the so-called **EU 2 states** (Romania and Bulgaria), for which full EU freedom of movement for workers has applied since 1 January 2014, and
- from **Croatia**, which joined the EU on 1 July 2013 and for whose nationals full EU freedom of movement for workers has applied since 1 July 2015.

The Freedom of Movement Monitoring concludes with an overview of the number of non-German EU nationals residing in Germany as of 31 December 2021 (Chapter 5) as well as an analysis on the participation of this group in the German labour market (Chapter 6). Since approximately 90% of new immigrants from the EU are of working age between 16 and 64 years, a high rate of employment can be assumed. Yet, no statements can be made about the actual extent of employment on the basis of AZR data, as such information is not recorded for EU nationals. For an analysis of the labour market, it is therefore necessary to refer to the employment statistics published by the Federal Employment Agency, as is also done in the "Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring" for third-country nationals employed in Germany.

As in 2020, the reporting year of 2021 was significantly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although, there were no direct closures of the EU internal borders, as it was the case in the previous year, it can be assumed that the pandemic also had an effect on the mobility of EU nationals. As of June 2020, nationals of other EU member states again have in general been able to immigrate to Germany without restrictions. At the same time, temporary entry restrictions for certain risk areas have been in force also within the EU, constantly adapted to the current pandemic situation. Actual entry bans currently only exist for entries from so-called virus variant areas. Classification as a so-called high-risk area only led to extended registration and testing obligations as well as quarantine regulations.¹

¹ At the date of preparation of this report, no country had been classified as a virus variant or high-risk area. For more information on current entry regulations, see Federal Foreign Office (2022).

On 31 December 2020, the transitional period agreed between the EU and the UK as part of the withdrawal agreement ended, during which the UK remained part of the EU's internal market and customs union.² As of 1 January 2021, British nationals planning to immigrate to Germany will be treated the same as other third-country nationals. Therefore, for the first time, nationals of the United Kingdom will no longer be included in this annual report. Furthermore, in order to ensure comparability of intra-European migration across past reporting periods, British nationals are excluded from the existing time series as well.

² In accordance with the Post-Brexit Transition Period Act (BrexitÜG) of 27 March 2019 (BGBl. I p. 402).

2. Immigration of EU Nationals to Germany

According to the AZR, a total of around 470,000 non-German EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2021. Compared to the previous year, this corresponds to a decrease of about 23,000 persons or 4.7%. In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decrease compared to the previ-

ous year was significantly higher at around 17%. However, immigration was already slightly declining in 2019. This already existing development was presumably intensified by the pandemic.

Table 1: Number of non-German EU nationals immigrated since 2013, by nationality

Nationality	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference 2020/21
Austria	7,351	7,925	8,792	8,740	8,860	8,321	7,730	8,490	6,971	-17.9%
Belgium	1,883	2,149	2,382	2,406	2,474	2,345	2,285	1,984	2,199	+10.8%
Bulgaria	45,177	63,140	71,709	66,790	66,872	67,883	68,815	63,345	60,091	-5.1%
Croatia	18,633	37,060	50,646	51,163	50,283	48,618	40,151	28,563	23,760	-16.8%
Cyprus	412	445	439	419	406	320	281	265	310	+17.0%
Czech Republic	7,904	8,971	9,476	7,966	8,163	7,905	7,536	6,298	6,004	-4.7%
Denmark	1,431	1,484	1,613	1,733	1,777	1,720	1,738	1,660	1,603	-3.4%
Estonia	928	819	807	740	679	701	683	558	515	-7.7%
Finland	1,500	1,692	1,963	1,905	1,913	1,717	1,486	1,038	1,059	+2.0%
France	10,411	11,058	12,505	12,916	13,111	12,214	11,741	10,058	10,453	+3.9%
Greece	24,921	23,361	23,910	22,330	22,227	20,967	18,884	15,650	14,675	-6.2%
Hungary	47,023	48,063	48,099	42,302	40,014	36,293	30,382	24,228	22,959	-5.2%
Ireland	1,129	1,312	1,660	1,792	1,936	1,987	2,070	1,679	2,060	+22.7%
Italy	34,416	43,676	47,457	42,698	43,431	43,351	39,947	30,643	28,543	-6.9%
Latvia	6,174	5,810	5,400	5,289	6,062	5,968	5,820	4,782	4,248	-11.2%
Lithuania	7,114	6,832	8,220	7,790	8,721	10,203	9,381	7,060	5,687	-19.4%
Luxembourg	1,920	2,066	2,420	2,375	2,306	2,310	2,354	3,091	2,191	-29.1%
Malta	72	65	89	71	88	84	95	115	110	-4.3%
Netherlands	7,907	8,350	9,174	8,791	8,580	7,929	7,612	6,469	6,654	+2.9%
Poland	136,682	143,760	147,910	123,134	118,024	113,408	101,467	83,590	75,401	-9.8%
Portugal	10,426	9,175	8,653	8,025	7,383	6,604	6,368	5,546	5,813	+4.8%
Romania	102,753	156,440	174,779	171,380	179,838	194,615	188,091	161,405	157,780	-2.2%
Slovakia	11,475	12,567	12,000	10,019	10,118	9,813	10,071	7,490	8,076	+7.8%
Slovenia	3,194	3,477	3,852	2,839	2,720	2,294	1,990	1,618	1,452	-10.3%
Spain	21,552	21,375	20,144	18,668	16,238	15,621	15,170	14,265	17,608	+23.4%
Sweden	1,629	1,770	2,271	2,092	2,279	2,313	2,162	1,976	2,321	+17.5%
Total EU nationals*	514,017	622,842	676,370	624,373	624,503	625,504	584,310	491,866	468,543	-4.7%

* For reasons of comparison, the immigration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series. In addition, the figures of Croatian nationals are displayed for the entire year of 2013, although Croatia has only been a member of the EU since 01/07/2013.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

The changes in relation to the individual nationalities were significantly more heterogeneous in 2021 than it was the case in 2020, in which large decreases were recorded for almost all nationalities. Table 1 displays the number of EU nationals, who immigrated annually since 2013 as well as the percentage change between 2020 and 2021 - differentiated by nationality.

Compared to 2020, the immigration figures have increased for nationals from a total of ten states. From 2019 to 2020, this was the case for only three states. The largest increase has been recorded for nationals from Spain with over 3,000 persons or 23.4%. The largest absolute decrease could be identified for Polish nationals, with over 8,000 persons. In percentage terms, immigration in 2021 fell most sharply for nationals from Luxembourg (-29.1%). This is in stark contrast to the developments from 2020, in which nationals from Luxembourg represented the highest increase of 30%.

Overall, however, the pandemic-related travel restrictions continue to have no impact on the shares of the most relevant nationalities regarding immigration (see Figure 1). In summary, as in the previous periods, almost four out of five EU nationals who moved to Germany held the nationality of an EU 8, EU 2 country or Croatia, with persons from Romania, Poland and Bulgaria forming by far the most significant individual groups, with a share in total immigration of almost two-thirds.

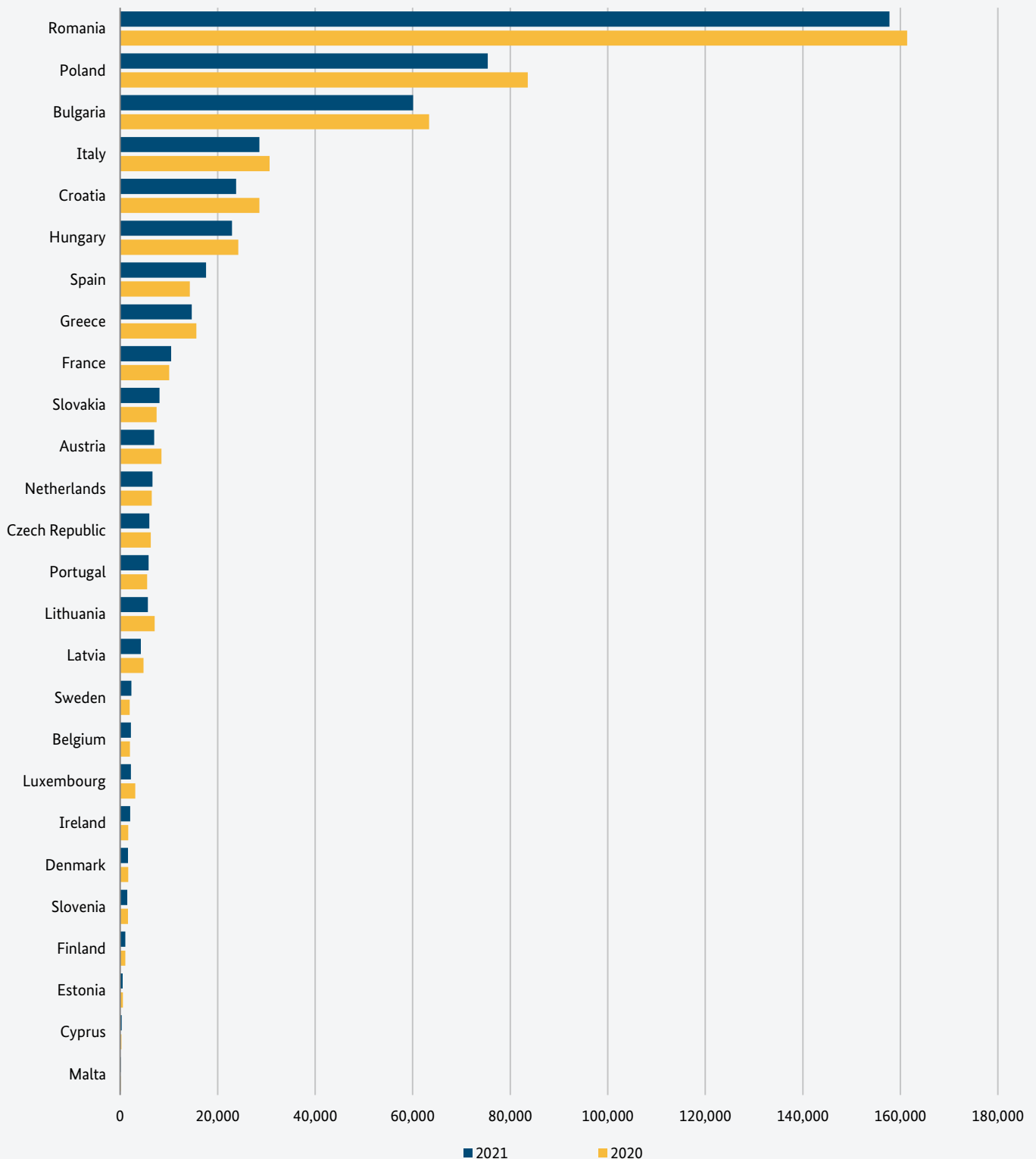
The so-called EU 8 states, for which complete freedom of movement within the EU has applied since 1 May 2011, were responsible for about one quarter of total immigration in 2021. Since the peak in immigration was reached in 2015 with around 235,000 people, the immigration figures for this group have fallen every year. After the decline in 2020 was particularly high at almost 20%, it is again below the 2019 figure (-10.3%) at around 8% in 2021. Change is also much more heterogeneous between the individual nationalities. While last year there were still significant declines for all individual groups of the EU 8, the immigration of Slovak nationals for instance increased again in 2021. Overall, Polish nationals are responsible for around 60% of immigration from the EU 8 states (see Chapter 4).

The number of immigrants with a nationality of one of the EU 2 states Bulgaria and Romania has also increased at an above-average rate since the introduction of the unrestricted freedom of movement for workers on 1 January 2014 and reached its highest level for Bulgarian citizens in 2015. Afterwards, it largely stabilised before declining with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in both 2020 (-7.9%) and 2021 (-5.1%). For the quantitatively particularly important group of Romanian nationals, the highest level of immigration occurred in 2018, before declining both in

2019 (-3.4%) and with particular severity in 2020 (-14.2%). In 2021, it was only slightly below the level of the previous year, with a decline of around 2%.

Since Croatia's EU accession in 2013, an increased annual immigration of nationals from this country could be observed, which peaked in 2016. The downward trend since then increased significantly in 2020 as well (-28.9%). In 2021, the change was again slightly less, at around 17%, but represented the fourth highest percentage decline among all countries.

Overall, it can be seen that despite the absence of strict border closures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, immigration from within the EU in 2021 has not been able to return to pre-pandemic levels. For most nationalities, a further decrease in immigration can be observed. The extent to which this can be traced back to the impact of the pandemic on international mobility or whether it has merely reinforced the already existing trend of declining intra-EU migration cannot be analysed in more detail here. It will be important to observe in future research whether the changed demographic structures in the most important countries of origin and the associated changes in their labour markets will lead to a further decrease in immigration to Germany - as was already predicted before the pandemic - or whether the effects of the pandemic on the countries of origin could possibly lead to a change in this development. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine could also have an additional impact on intra-European migration of EU nationals.

Figure 1: Number of non-German EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2020 and 2021, by nationality

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Age and gender of immigrant EU nationals

Similar to previous years, around 90% of the non-German EU nationals who immigrated in 2021 were of working age (16-64 years; see Table 2). The age group of 25 to under

35-year olds, accounts for the largest share, with more than one quarter. For most countries of origin, the highest figures are to be found in this group, which suggests a high labour force participation of EU immigrants. However, since the purpose of residence is not recorded in the AZR for

Table 2: Age and gender structure of non-German EU nationals immigrated in 2021, by nationality*

Nationality	Age group in years							Total	Proportion of women
	0 to under 16	16 to under 25	25 to under 35	35 to under 45	45 to under 55	55 to under 65	65 years and older		
Austria	466	1,881	2,356	945	646	403	274	6,971	50.1%
Belgium	172	633	696	343	177	110	68	2,199	42.4%
Bulgaria	8,182	11,490	13,918	12,491	9,576	3,578	854	60,089	39.0%
Croatia	2,551	5,296	6,015	4,249	3,298	1,898	453	23,760	36.7%
Cyprus	29	100	116	39	16	5	5	310	49.7%
Czech Republic	687	1,157	1,661	1,228	853	301	117	6,004	40.1%
Denmark	130	532	535	146	111	110	39	1,603	46.5%
Estonia	52	111	153	104	53	31	11	515	45.8%
Finland	90	293	395	151	66	46	18	1,059	56.9%
France	634	4,537	3,221	1,069	558	250	184	10,453	50.1%
Greece	1,777	3,057	4,238	2,373	1,791	940	499	14,675	39.5%
Hungary	1,233	5,118	6,434	4,298	4,042	1,432	402	22,959	34.8%
Ireland	67	800	687	260	127	83	36	2,060	39.8%
Italy	2,376	7,789	9,708	3,891	2,716	1,316	747	28,543	42.5%
Latvia	295	1,010	1,117	815	672	278	61	4,248	34.1%
Lithuania	232	1,581	1,514	1,035	814	413	98	5,687	38.0%
Luxembourg	200	805	573	207	152	169	85	2,191	50.7%
Malta	6	21	43	24	10	4	2	110	43.6%
Netherlands	598	1,299	1,926	978	867	635	351	6,654	39.8%
Poland	3,361	16,783	20,881	14,721	12,423	5,691	1,540	75,400	33.9%
Portugal	465	1,235	1,813	1,046	766	346	142	5,813	37.5%
Romania	12,368	38,463	41,435	31,756	26,228	5,954	1,575	157,779	34.6%
Slovakia	953	1,944	2,104	1,520	1,083	399	73	8,076	38.8%
Slovenia	131	339	461	261	166	79	15	1,452	38.3%
Spain	2,217	5,579	5,099	2,308	1,653	533	219	17,608	45.6%
Sweden	364	522	741	365	199	78	52	2,321	45.6%
Total EU nationals	39,636	112,375	127,840	86,623	69,063	25,082	7,920	468,539	37.4%

Note: The coloured backgrounds represent the age group with the highest number of cases per country.

* For four persons, no age information is registered in the Central Register of Foreigners.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

EU nationals, this can only be assumed. For five countries, the maximum value is in the even younger age group of 16 to under 25-year-olds, which in the case of France, for example, can be attributed to a larger number of persons studying in Germany (cf. Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community/Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2022).

The proportion of women among all immigrated EU nationals was below 40%. The gender ratio between the individual nationalities varies considerably in some cases. With Finland, France, Luxembourg and Austria, only four EU states had more female than male immigrants to Germany in 2021. The quantitatively most significant immigration groups from the EU 2 and EU 8 states, on the other hand, have a relatively low proportion of women (36% and 35% respectively). Poland ranks in last place with only 34%.

3. Emigration of EU Nationals from Germany

According to the AZR, a total of about 340,000 non-German EU nationals moved out of Germany in 2021. Compared to the previous year, emigration remained largely stable (-0.4%). In 2020, it had declined by almost 22%.

In contrast to immigration, the general development of emigration has reversed compared to the time before the COVID-19 pandemic. Emigration had previously risen constantly in the period under consideration of this report. The subsequent decline in 2020 can thus most likely be traced back to the travel restrictions implemented in context of

Table 3: Number of non-German EU nationals emigrated from Germany since 2013, by nationality

Nationality	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference 2020/21
Austria	4,861	5,948	5,192	5,473	6,964	6,033	6,611	5,722	5,610	-2.0%
Belgium	1,019	1,396	1,269	1,311	1,645	1,572	1,695	1,418	1,478	+4.2%
Bulgaria	19,401	24,466	26,299	32,036	34,735	37,833	42,938	34,216	37,118	+8.5%
Croatia	6,642	9,416	11,789	15,122	17,467	18,561	19,634	16,365	15,971	-2.4%
Cyprus	79	175	159	150	220	213	209	210	213	+1.4%
Czech Republic	3,821	4,868	4,858	5,455	5,583	5,490	6,143	4,704	4,160	-11.6%
Denmark	871	1,270	1,061	1,220	1,472	1,432	1,950	1,415	1,579	+11.6%
Estonia	387	511	436	438	449	493	516	371	499	+34.5%
Finland	1,097	1,414	1,243	1,322	1,578	1,436	1,617	1,162	999	-14.0%
France	5,708	7,934	7,666	8,150	9,981	8,908	11,089	7,814	8,962	+14.7%
Greece	7,366	10,127	9,733	11,498	12,813	12,503	14,492	11,523	11,486	-0.3%
Hungary	19,378	23,679	23,253	25,396	27,392	26,510	26,842	21,119	18,574	-12.1%
Ireland	669	873	859	1,079	1,122	1,301	1,612	1,012	1,312	+29.6%
Italy	13,450	19,702	21,601	24,152	27,110	27,241	30,352	23,700	23,644	-0.2%
Latvia	2,654	3,199	2,827	2,989	3,416	3,526	4,195	3,185	3,259	+2.3%
Lithuania	3,282	3,764	3,687	4,058	4,424	5,721	6,808	5,624	5,190	-7.7%
Luxembourg	717	1,113	1,051	1,101	1,211	1,189	1,401	1,396	1,379	-1.2%
Malta	43	52	47	53	61	59	67	48	43	-10.4%
Netherlands	4,480	5,404	5,460	5,910	6,309	6,508	6,765	5,887	5,640	-4.2%
Poland	57,227	70,700	70,740	72,983	77,692	81,198	85,720	66,437	61,472	-7.5%
Portugal	3,957	5,219	4,954	5,198	5,915	5,377	5,961	4,479	4,467	-0.3%
Romania	43,953	63,363	73,183	87,853	100,984	113,413	124,373	102,937	105,979	+3.0%
Slovakia	6,000	7,082	6,803	6,737	7,355	7,483	7,951	6,171	5,343	-13.4%
Slovenia	1,418	1,723	1,890	1,926	1,952	1,837	1,821	1,360	1,288	-5.3%
Spain	6,918	10,352	10,287	11,382	12,002	11,544	12,684	8,731	9,932	+13.8%
Sweden	1,064	1,402	1,303	1,432	1,638	1,550	1,863	1,413	1,561	+10.5%
Total EU nationals*	216,462	285,152	297,650	334,424	371,490	388,931	425,309	338,419	337,158	-0.4%

* For reasons of comparison, the emigration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series. In addition, the figures of Croatian nationals are displayed for the entire year of 2013, although Croatia has only been a member of the EU since 01/07/2013.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

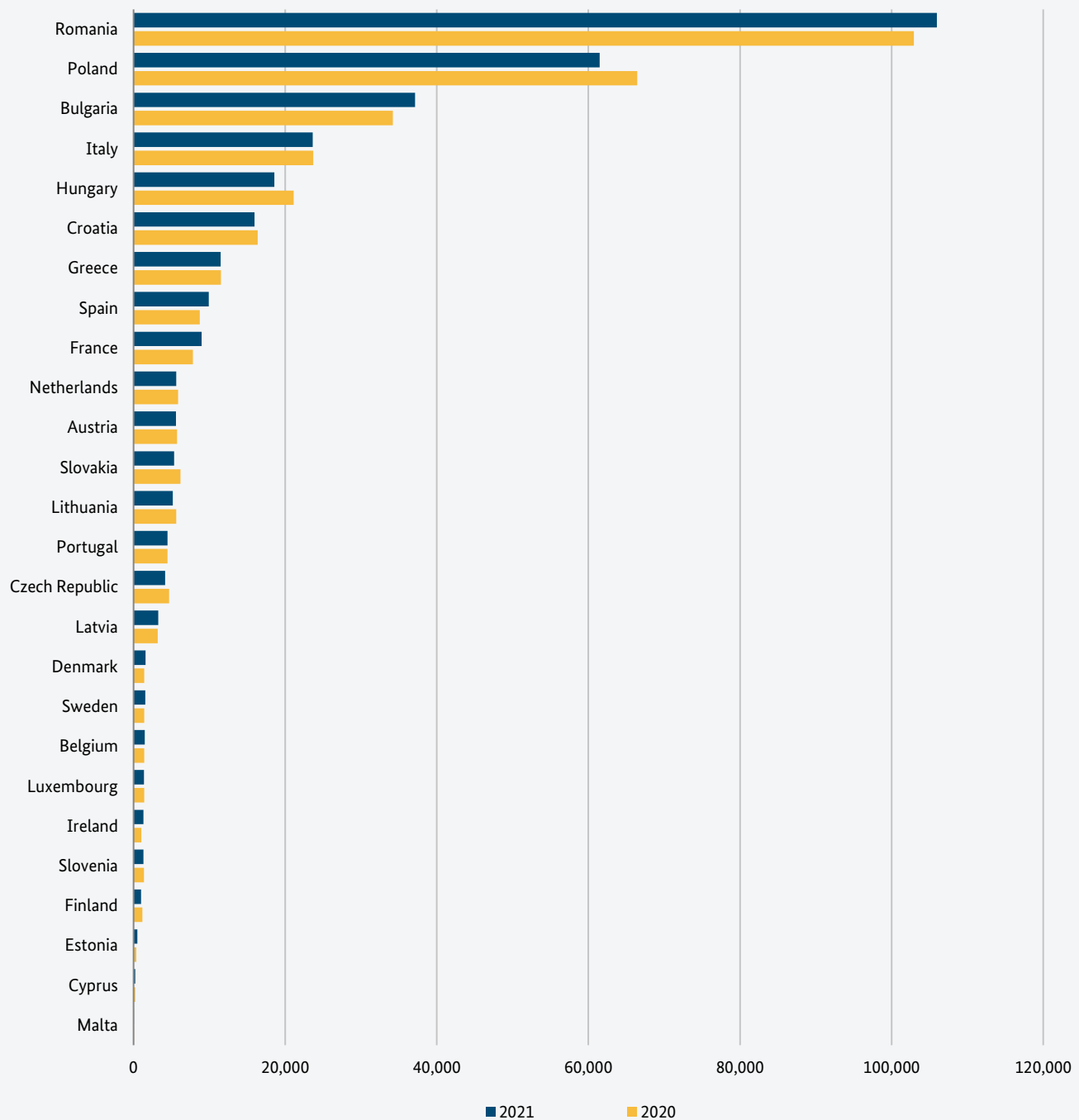
the pandemic, which applied both in Germany and in a similar form in other EU countries. As with immigration, it can be observed here that the development from the previous year has weakened in 2021, but there is still no sign of a return to the situation before the pandemic.

As in previous years, the highest emigration figures were recorded among Romanian nationals, followed by Polish and Bulgarian nationals. As a result, these three nationalities continue to account for the highest immigration as well as

emigration figures and thus for a high dynamic of migration. Together, they accounted for over 60% of both migration to and from Germany. Detailed country-specific information on the emigration of non-German EU nationals from Germany since 2013 is displayed in Table 3.

Compared to the previous year (see Figure 2), emigration continued to fall for 15 nationalities and increased for eleven. In 2020, emigration had fallen for all states except Cyprus. While nationals of the EU 2 states each show an

Figure 2: Number of non-German EU nationals emigrated from Germany in 2020 and 2021, by nationality



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

increase in emigration (together +4.3%), the figures have fallen further for most EU 8 states (together -8.4%) and Croatia (-2.4%). Particularly high declines can be observed in absolute terms for Polish nationals, with a drop of almost 5,000 persons, and in percentage terms for Finnish nationals (-14.0%). High increases were recorded for persons from Romania and Bulgaria with a plus of around 3,000 persons each and Estonia with an increase of about 35%.

It is important to note that the extent of emigration of non-German EU nationals generally depends, among other things, on the level of immigration in previous years (cf. chapter 2) and on the number of EU nationals most recently living in Germany (cf. chapter 5).

4. Net Migration

Net migration or migration balance is calculated from the difference between immigration and emigration figures. This allows statements to be made about the change in foreign population groups in Germany. When assessing the level of net migration for the individual nationalities, the respective number of persons residing in Germany should also be considered (chapter 5), as it has a decisive influence on the volume of emigration and immigration.

In 2021, net migration totalled about 130,000 persons. Germany recorded migration gains vis-à-vis each individual EU member state, i.e. more people migrated to Germany than left, in contrast to 2019 and 2020, when slight migration losses were registered for individual states (see Table 4).

Compared to the previous year, the migration gain from the EU fell significantly by about 22,000 persons or more than 14%. In 2020, it had only fallen by about 5%. Net migration

Table 4: Net migration of non-German EU nationals since 2013, by nationality

Nationality	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference 2020/21
Austria	2,490	1,977	3,600	3,267	1,896	2,288	1,119	2,768	1,361	-50.8%
Belgium	864	753	1,113	1,095	829	773	590	566	721	+27.4%
Bulgaria	25,776	38,674	45,410	34,754	32,137	30,050	25,877	29,129	22,973	-21.1%
Croatia	11,991	27,644	38,857	36,041	32,816	30,057	20,517	12,198	7,789	-36.1%
Cyprus	333	270	280	269	186	107	72	55	97	+76.4%
Czech Republic	4,083	4,103	4,618	2,511	2,580	2,415	1,393	1,594	1,844	+15.7%
Denmark	560	214	552	513	305	288	-212	245	24	-90.2%
Estonia	541	308	371	302	230	208	167	187	16	-91.4%
Finland	403	278	720	583	335	281	-131	-124	60	/
France	4,703	3,124	4,839	4,766	3,130	3,306	652	2,244	1,491	-33.6%
Greece	17,555	13,234	14,177	10,832	9,414	8,464	4,392	4,127	3,189	-22.7%
Hungary	27,645	24,384	24,846	16,906	12,622	9,783	3,540	3,109	4,385	+41.0%
Ireland	460	439	801	713	814	686	458	667	748	+12.1%
Italy	20,966	23,974	25,856	18,546	16,321	16,110	9,595	6,943	4,899	-29.4%
Latvia	3,520	2,611	2,573	2,300	2,646	2,442	1,625	1,597	989	-38.1%
Lithuania	3,832	3,068	4,533	3,732	4,297	4,482	2,573	1,436	497	-65.4%
Luxembourg	1,203	953	1,369	1,274	1,095	1,121	953	1,695	812	-52.1%
Malta	29	13	42	18	27	25	28	67	67	0.0%
Netherlands	3,427	2,946	3,714	2,881	2,271	1,421	847	582	1,014	+74.2%
Poland	79,455	73,060	77,170	50,151	40,332	32,210	15,747	17,153	13,929	-18.8%
Portugal	6,469	3,956	3,699	2,827	1,468	1,227	407	1,067	1,346	+26.1%
Romania	58,800	93,077	101,596	83,527	78,854	81,202	63,718	58,468	51,801	-11.4%
Slovakia	5,475	5,485	5,197	3,282	2,763	2,330	2,120	1,319	2,733	+107.2%
Slovenia	1,776	1,754	1,962	913	768	457	169	258	164	-36.4%
Spain	14,634	11,023	9,857	7,286	4,236	4,077	2,486	5,534	7,676	+38.7%
Sweden	565	368	968	660	641	763	299	563	760	+35.0%
Total EU nationals*	297,555	337,690	378,720	289,949	253,013	236,573	159,001	153,447	131,385	-14.4%

* For reasons of comparison, the net migration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series. In addition, the figures of Croatian nationals are displayed for the entire year of 2013, although Croatia has only been a member of the EU since 01/07/2013.

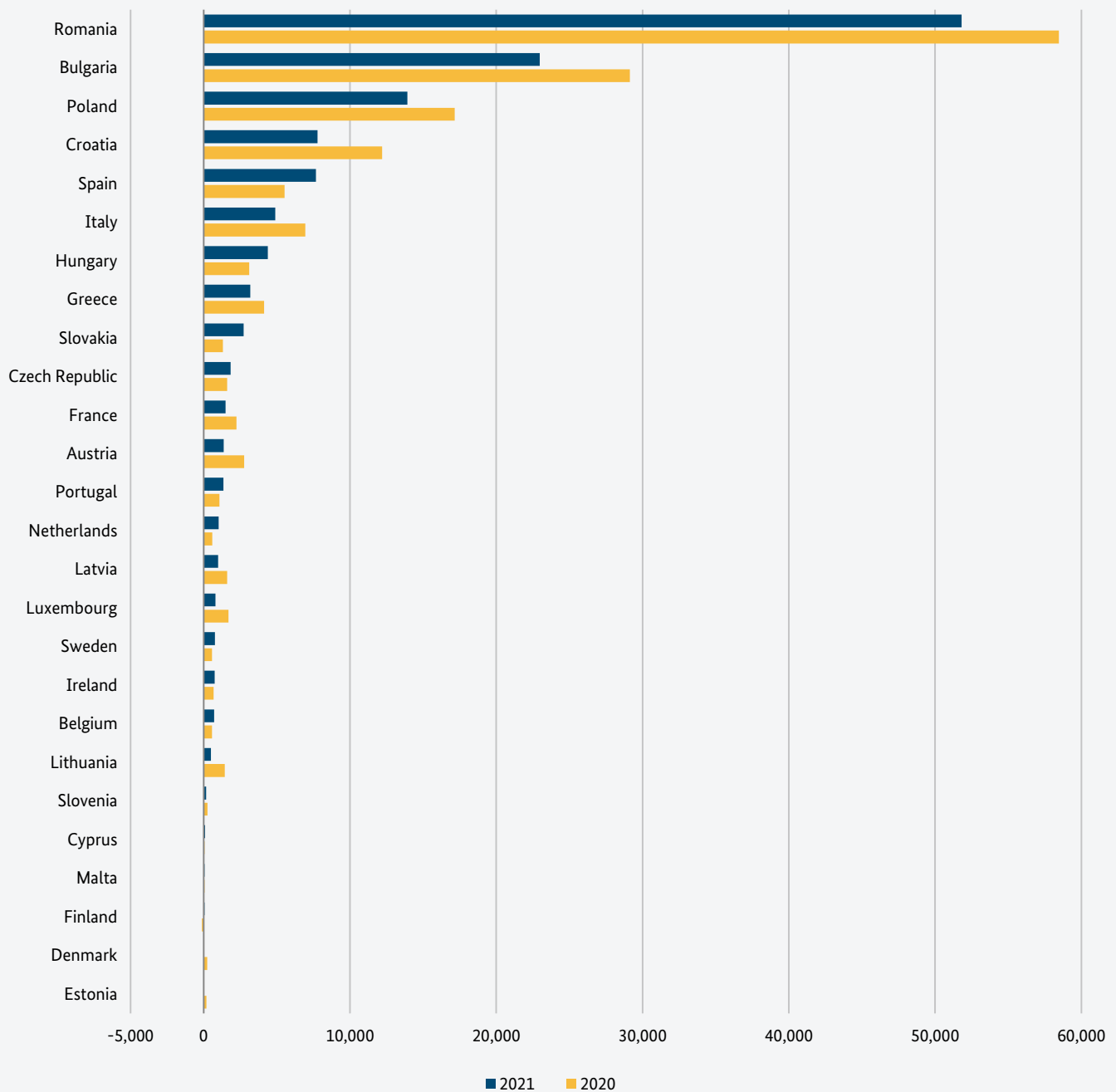
/ Indication not meaningful.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

was also already declining before the COVID-19 pandemic, as emigration figures had been steadily increasing until then, but immigration had stagnated or already declined up to 2019. The relatively small decline in net migration in 2020 was due to a sudden sharp drop in emigration figures. However, since emigration – in contrast to immigration – stabilised again in 2021, the decline is significantly higher in the current reporting period.

Figure 3 shows the net migration of EU nationals in 2021, sorted by value. As in previous years and despite the changes in immigration and emigration, Romania remains the country of origin with the highest migration gain from EU nationals in Germany. This country alone accounted for almost 40% of the total migration gain in the reporting period. Bulgaria and Poland follow with shares of 17% and 11%, respectively. Croatian nationals, whose importance for net migration was still at a similar level to that of Polish and

Figure 3: Net migration of non-German EU nationals in 2020 and 2021, by nationality



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Bulgarian nationals until 2019, are now already well behind in fourth place.

Comparing the migration balances of the individual nationality groups in 2021 with those of the previous year, 14 EU Member States show lower figures. The largest absolute decline in net migration is observed among Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, with a decrease of more than 6,000 persons each. Among the quantitatively most important countries of origin, net migration declined at an above-average rate not only for Croatia, but also for Italy and especially Austria.

At the same time, net migration increased for nationals from ten EU Member States.³ The highest increase in absolute terms of over 2,000 persons can be identified for Spanish nationals, followed by persons from Slovakia and Hungary with an increase of over 1,000 persons. For Slovakian nationals, this equates to approximately a doubling of the figures from the previous year.

The evaluations of net migration for the year 2021 indicate how different developments of immigration on the one

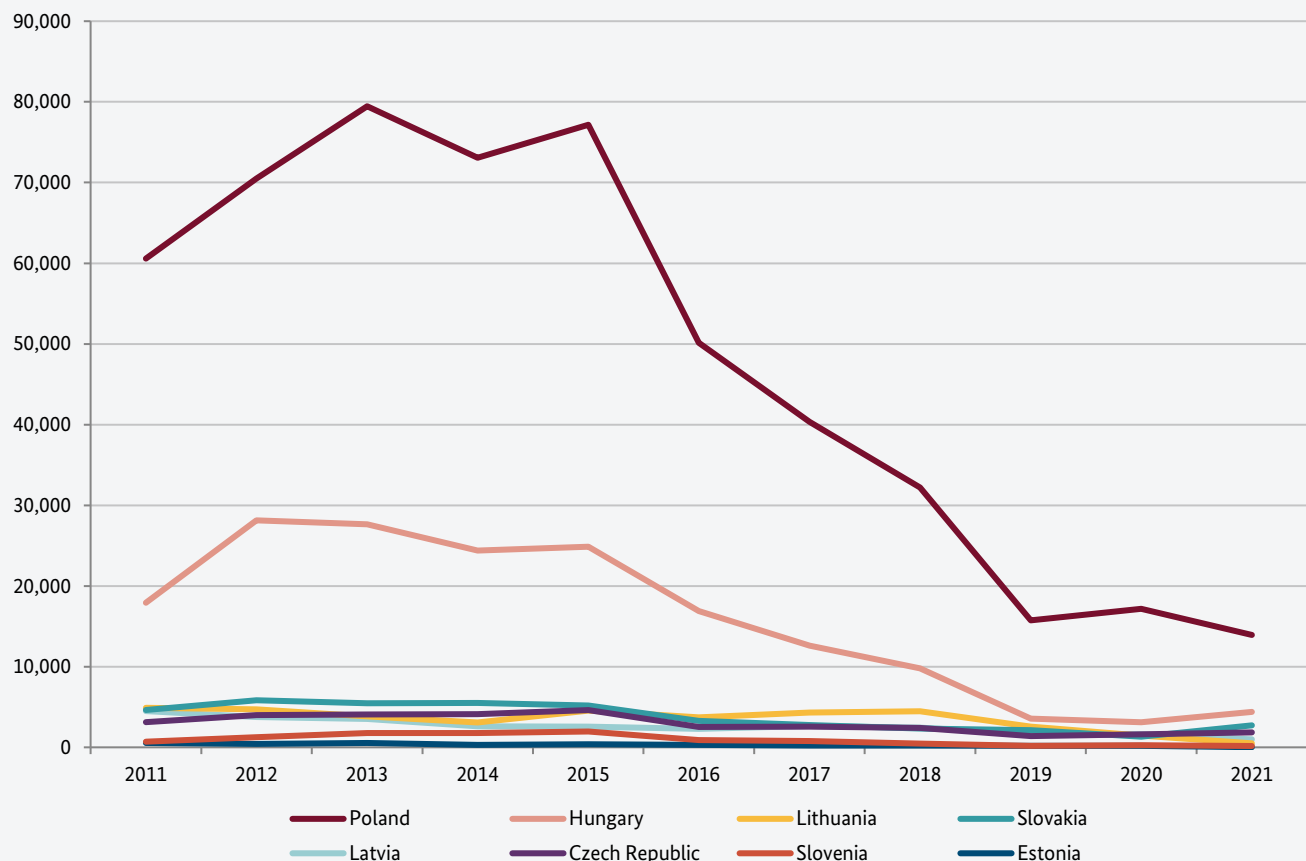
hand and emigration on the other hand affect the resulting net migration. Due to the stabilisation of emigration and the simultaneous further decline in immigration, net migration in the second year of the pandemic is even lower than it was in the first year. At the same time, this is merely a continuation of the trend that was already observable before the pandemic. Whether this will change in the future depends not only on the further course of the pandemic but also on its economic and social after-effects both in Germany and in the countries of origin. Ultimately, it is important to keep the social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine in mind when reporting for the year 2022.

Net migration of EU 8 nationals

As shown in Table 4, the introduction of full freedom of movement for workers of nationals from the EU 8 states on 1 May 2011 was particularly noticeable in the development of net migration of Polish and Hungarian nationals. While the annual migration gain for all other EU 8 nationals was significantly less than 10,000 persons throughout the entire observation period, it reached its peak for Hungarian migrants in 2012 with a migration gain of about 28,000 persons. The migration balance for Polish nationals was even higher. At almost 80,000 persons, the maximum annual net migration for Polish nationals was reached in 2013. Since

³ For nationals from Malta, net migration remained unchanged compared to the previous year.

Figure 4: Net migration trends for nationals of the EU 8 countries since 2011



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

these peaks, however, both groups have shown almost constant downward trends. In 2021, net migration increased for Czech, Hungarian and especially Slovakian nationals. However, this is only coupled with an actual increase in immigration for the latter.

For all EU 8 nationals, continuous declines in migration gains have been recorded since 2016. Since 2018, the level of 2011 - the year of the start of full freedom of movement for these nationals - has been undercut again. In 2021, net migration fell again by about 8% to a total of less than 25,000 persons, which is less than one-fifth of the peak in 2013 (cf. Figure 4).

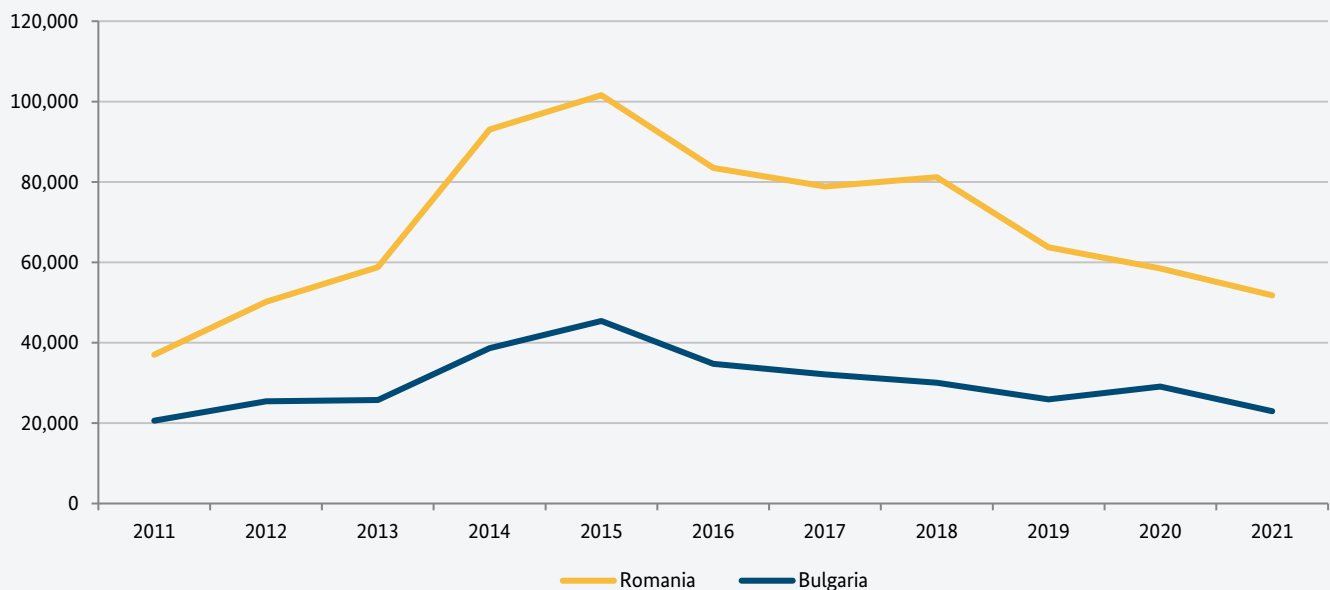
Net migration of EU 2 nationals

With the EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria on 1 January 2007 and the introduction of full EU freedom of movement for workers from 1 January 2014, the net migration of nationals of the two EU 2 states rose steadily to its peak of around 150,000 people in 2015. Here, too, there was an overall downward trend in the following years. Although the migration balance of Bulgarian citizens rose again in 2020, this was not due to increased immigration. As shown in Chapters 2 and 3, emigration figures increased for both countries in 2021, while immigration continued to decline. This resulted in an overall decrease in net migration of about 15%. The overall pattern of annual migration gains from the EU 2 states since 2011 is displayed in Figure 5.

Net migration of Croatian nationals

The migration balance of Croatian nationals to Germany has risen sharply in the first half of the past decade. The reason for this is Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013 and the associated facilitation of immigration and residence for these nationals. Thus, the migration gain rose from around 2,500 persons in 2012 to almost 40,000 persons in 2015. This temporary peak is most likely due to the introduction of full EU freedom of movement for workers for Croatian citizens as of 1 July 2015. In the following years, however, net migration fell steadily. This development also continued with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In both 2020 and 2021, net migration of Croatian nationals declined significantly by about 41% and 36% respectively. Thus, the migration gain in 2021 was for the first time back again below the level of the year of Croatia's EU accession (Figure 6).

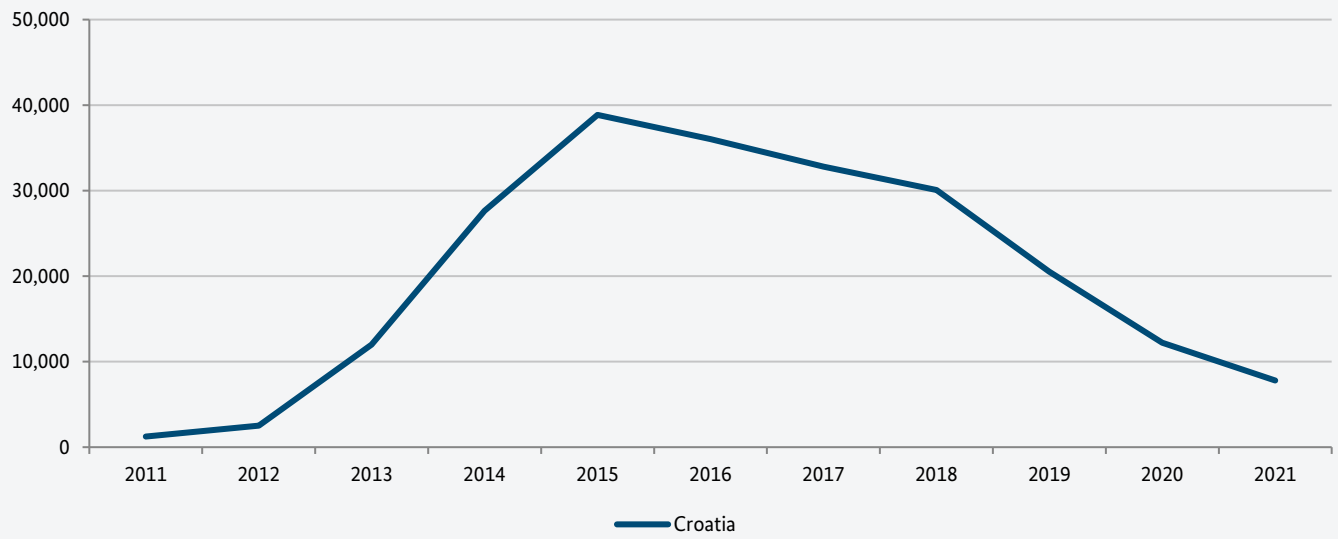
Figure 5: Net migration trends for nationals of the EU 2 countries since 2011



Source: Central Register of Foreigners



Figure 6: Net migration trend for Croatian nationals since 2011



5. EU Nationals Residing in Germany

According to the AZR, 4,985,489 nationals of other EU member states were resident in Germany as of 31 December 2021⁴, which represents an increase of 89,584 persons or 1.8% compared to 31 December 2020.⁵ Non-German EU nationals accordingly accounted for about two-fifths (42%) of all foreign nationals living in Germany (a total of 11,817,789 persons). The proportion of women among EU nationals was 46%. However, this proportion varies significantly between the different EU states. While almost two-thirds of those with Finnish nationality were female (65%), the share of women for Irish migrants was only 41%. Overall, women were in the majority only among seven EU nationalities.

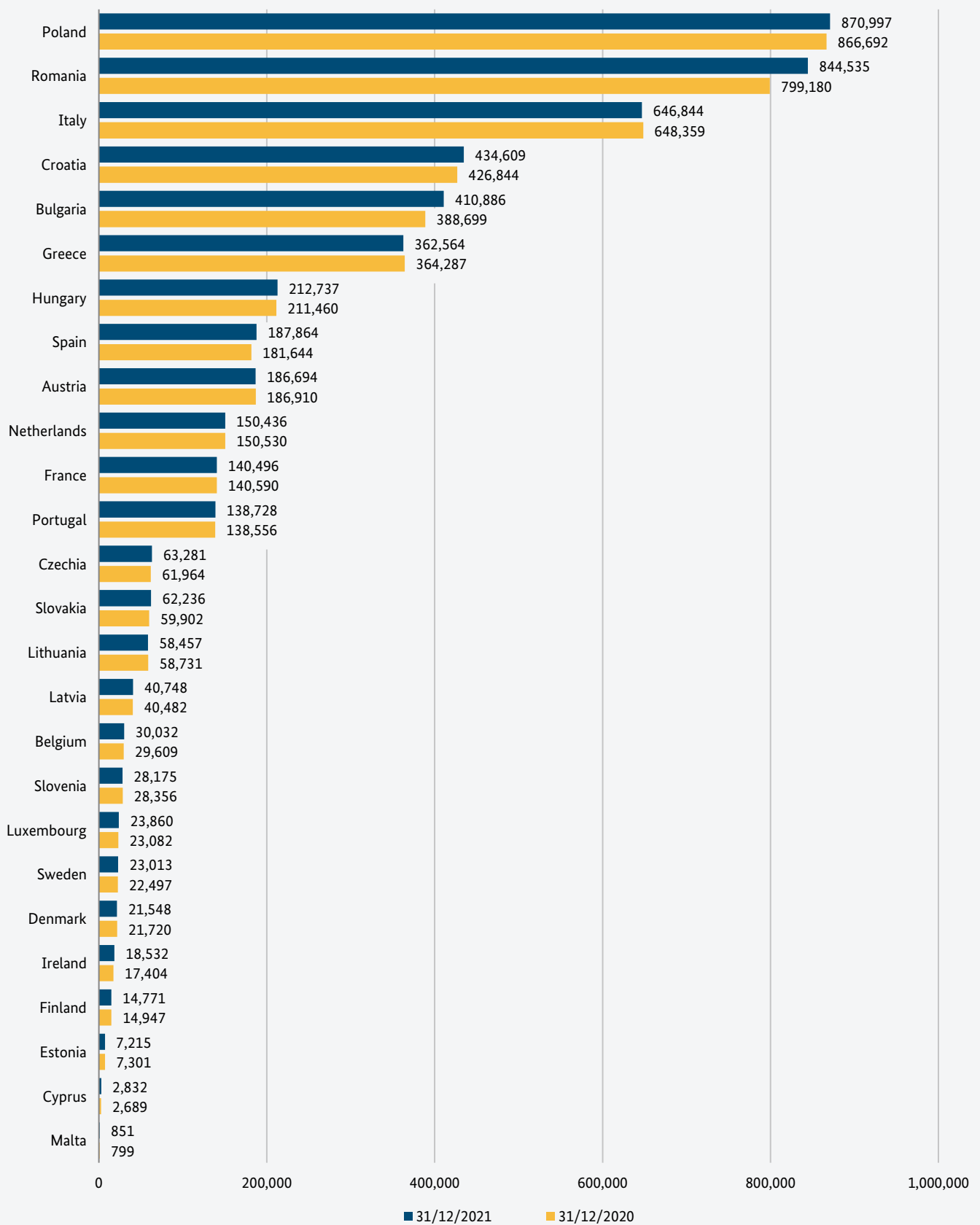
Figure 7 shows the number of non-German EU nationals residing in Germany by nationality. Polish nationals represented the largest nationality group with around 870,000 persons, closely followed by Romanian nationals with over 840,000 persons (both with a share of 17% each). In third place are Italian nationals with almost 650,000 persons (13%). Compared to 31 December 2020, the respective figure increased for 16 EU countries and decreased for ten. The largest increase in absolute terms was visible for Romanian nationals with over 45,000 persons or 5.7%, while Greek nationals recorded the largest decrease with about 1,700 persons or 0.5%.

The overall increase in non-German EU nationals residing in Germany was slightly below the level before the outbreak of the pandemic (2018/2019: +2.3%). What effect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the number of residents in the medium term will be shown in later reports.

⁴ Total of resident nationals of all EU states except Germany (see Figure 7) plus immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia who could not be clearly assigned to a successor state (Czech Republic or Slovakia).

⁵ The change in the number of resident EU foreigners results from net migration, from the number of births and deaths of these nationals in Germany and from the number of naturalisations and changes of nationality. In addition, there are changes based on subsequent entries and data adjustments in the Central Register of Foreigners. Additionally, 90,802 British nationals were removed from the figure for 2020 in order to ensure comparability.

Figure 7: Number of non-German EU nationals residing in Germany on 31 December 2020 and 2021, by nationality



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

6. EU Nationals on the German Labour Market

As the purpose of residence of EU nationals is not recorded in the AZR, it is not possible to make any statements about their participation in the German labour market on the basis of these data. For this purpose, the employment statistics data provided by the Federal Employment Agency (Federal Employment Agency 2022) has to be consulted. Table 5 therefore shows the number of foreigners with the nationality of an EU member state who are employed in Germany and subject to social insurance contributions as of 30 September 2021.⁶

At this date, a total of about 2.4 million foreign EU nationals were employed in Germany and subject to social insurance contributions.⁷ This represents an increase of almost 130,000 persons or 5.6% compared to the same month last year. In the first year of the pandemic, this increase was still significantly lower at 1.3% and is now back at the level of 2019 (+5.4%).⁸ With regard to employment subject to social insurance contributions, this indicates a recovery of the labour market, which has been weakened by the pandemic (Fuchs et al. 2021).

Non-German EU nationals accounted for 7.0% of all employees subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market as of 30 September 2021. Furthermore, nationals from within the EU made up the majority of all foreign employees, with 51%. This is a higher figure than for all resident foreigners (42%; see Chapter 5). Whether this can be attributed to a different age structure or a different employment rate compared to third-country nationals cannot be conclusively clarified using the database of this report. The differing number of cross-border commuters or a higher proportion of employment subject to social insurance contributions compared to other forms of employment could also be reasons for the higher proportion.

About one third of the foreign EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions in Germany were citizens of an EU 8 state and about another quarter were citizens of a so-called GIPS state⁹ or an EU 2 state. Together with Croatia, these 15 states account for 90% of the foreign EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market. With around 80,000 persons or 3%, France represents the country with the largest share outside the aforementioned group. However, a larger proportion of cross-border commuters can be assumed here, as well as in Germany's other neighbouring countries.

Within the ten most frequent countries of origin, persons from Bulgaria and Romania showed the highest increase rates compared to the same month of the previous year, with more than 10% each. However, an above-average increase was also recorded for Spanish nationals.

The share of women among all employed EU nationals was only 39% in September 2021. This has thus increased somewhat since 2019 (+0.7 percentage points). The current increase in employment is slightly higher for women (+6.2%) than for men (+5.2%). Among the ten most common nationalities, this was not the case only for persons from Spain. Persons from Austria show the highest proportion of women among these countries, with a share only slightly lower than for German employees (46% compared to 48%). The lowest value can be found for Romanian nationals with only 35%.

6 As there is a six-month waiting period for the data, the 2021 year-end figures cannot be used in this report.

7 I.e. excluding marginally employed persons, self-employed persons, civil servants, family workers as well as professional and temporary soldiers, but including cross-border commuters.

8 Both figures still include employees from the United Kingdom.

9 Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Table 5: Foreign EU nationals with employment subject to social insurance contributions in Germany, by nationality (as of 30/09/2021)

Nationality	Employees subject to social insurance contributions			Difference compared to the same month of the previous year	
	Number	Share	Proportion of women	Absolute	Percentage
Total EU nationals	2,397,495	100.0%	38.9%	127,283	+5.6%
EU 8 countries	751,894	31.4%	40.3%	39,038	+5.5%
EU 2 countries	633,838	26.4%	35.3%	43,602	+7.4%
GIPS countries	573,791	23.9%	38.9%	17,102	+3.1%
Top 10 nationalities					
Poland	482,120	20.1%	39.6%	26,650	+5.9%
Romania	464,639	19.4%	34.8%	43,390	+10.3%
Italy	279,152	11.6%	37.7%	6,154	+2.3%
Croatia	208,057	8.7%	40.8%	8,067	+4.0%
Bulgaria	169,199	7.1%	36.7%	16,170	+10.6%
Greece	151,619	6.3%	39.5%	3,596	+2.4%
Hungary	110,088	4.6%	40.5%	4,168	+3.9%
France	81,329	3.4%	41.5%	702	+0.9%
Spain	78,508	3.3%	42.3%	5,823	+8.0%
Austria	65,481	2.7%	46.5%	326	+0.5%
Other EU nationals	307,303	12.8%	40.8%	12,237	+4.1%

Source: Federal Employment Agency (own calculation)

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Annex:

Immigration and Emigration of EU Nationals by Federal State

- Non-German EU nationals immigrating in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities
- Non-German EU nationals emigrating in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities
- Net migration of non-German EU nationals in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

Non-German EU nationals immigrating in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Italy	Croatia	Hungary	Spain	Greece	France	Slovakia	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	30,921	7,822	8,229	5,613	5,865	5,333	2,487	2,523	2,025	1,250	5,867	77,935
Bavaria	33,443	11,228	8,755	6,673	8,410	8,085	3,121	3,469	1,936	2,442	9,930	97,492
Berlin	4,024	3,773	2,854	3,353	747	859	1,881	1,001	2,233	184	5,613	26,522
Brandenburg	1,554	3,112	545	269	90	172	178	186	131	125	521	6,883
Bremen	372	261	852	60	60	85	77	114	26	7	245	2,159
Hamburg	684	487	510	185	146	32	154	74	115	15	491	2,893
Hesse	13,370	6,697	7,512	3,297	2,741	1,330	2,312	1,576	1,015	383	3,954	44,187
Lower Saxony	18,474	10,362	6,607	1,321	874	1,422	1,049	961	327	508	3,755	45,660
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	1,062	2,370	619	290	98	148	109	145	54	142	647	5,684
North Rhine-Westphalia	30,427	15,287	13,968	4,421	2,611	2,280	4,110	2,972	1,353	775	8,950	87,154
Rhineland-Palatinate	9,038	3,618	3,873	1,326	965	1,177	842	645	450	261	3,535	25,730
Saarland	1,435	294	832	319	78	359	135	118	260	70	680	4,580
Saxony	3,066	3,036	1,011	539	347	684	430	337	275	1,020	2,063	12,808
Saxony-Anhalt	2,935	2,608	1,266	182	330	422	145	193	70	133	653	8,937
Schleswig-Holstein	3,818	2,111	1,701	405	233	207	363	220	105	156	1,142	10,461
Thuringia	3,157	2,335	957	290	165	364	215	141	78	605	1,151	9,458
Total	157,780	75,401	60,091	28,543	23,760	22,959	17,608	14,675	10,453	8,076	49,197	468,543

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2022

Non-German EU nationals emigrating in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Italy	Hungary	Croatia	Greece	Spain	France	Netherlands	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	22,240	7,118	5,114	5,542	4,608	4,452	2,268	1,590	1,705	341	5,603	60,581
Bavaria	21,563	8,307	5,405	4,432	6,290	4,789	2,541	1,582	1,381	413	8,490	65,193
Berlin	2,246	3,369	1,821	2,447	497	466	738	1,451	2,128	602	4,294	20,059
Brandenburg	962	1,967	385	131	107	53	116	86	82	38	384	4,311
Bremen	356	329	615	88	102	72	85	91	42	32	204	2,016
Hamburg	878	877	573	382	66	143	114	309	341	100	727	4,510
Hesse	9,486	6,380	4,973	2,944	1,129	2,149	1,286	1,332	1,060	407	3,521	34,667
Lower Saxony	12,040	8,346	4,469	972	1,210	613	688	518	206	870	2,403	32,335
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	628	1,317	164	161	95	84	102	62	34	24	483	3,154
North Rhine-Westphalia	21,483	13,470	8,078	4,172	2,041	1,875	2,596	1,902	1,061	2,442	5,718	64,838
Rhineland-Palatinate	6,057	3,018	2,512	1,014	982	650	331	402	358	200	2,207	17,731
Saarland	1,025	220	487	307	271	41	55	68	214	16	438	3,142
Saxony	1,666	1,792	367	369	497	179	199	199	192	47	1,446	6,953
Saxony-Anhalt	1,606	1,768	718	168	268	139	118	65	51	32	423	5,356
Schleswig-Holstein	2,190	1,787	892	319	144	183	170	185	71	44	1,007	6,992
Thuringia	1,553	1,407	545	196	267	83	79	90	36	32	1,032	5,320
Total	105,979	61,472	37,118	23,644	18,574	15,971	11,486	9,932	8,962	5,640	38,380	337,158

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2022

Net migration of non-German EU nationals in 2021 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

	Romania	Bulgaria	Poland	Croatia	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Greece	Slovakia	Czech Republic	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	8,681	3,115	704	1,413	897	71	725	255	255	41	1,197	17,354
Bavaria	11,880	3,350	2,921	3,621	1,539	2,241	1,795	928	692	689	2,643	32,299
Berlin	1,778	1,033	404	281	430	906	362	263	48	129	829	6,463
Brandenburg	592	160	1,145	37	92	138	65	70	60	14	199	2,572
Bremen	16	237	-68	-12	-14	-28	-17	29	3	-6	3	143
Hamburg	-194	-63	-390	3	-155	-197	-34	-40	-1	1	-547	-1,617
Hesse	3,884	2,539	317	592	980	353	201	290	108	36	220	9,520
Lower Saxony	6,434	2,138	2,016	261	531	349	212	273	250	83	778	13,325
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	434	455	1,053	14	47	129	53	43	50	24	228	2,530
North Rhine-Westphalia	8,944	5,890	1,817	736	2,208	249	239	376	80	89	1,688	22,316
Rhineland-Palatinate	2,981	1,361	600	315	440	312	195	314	75	29	1,377	7,999
Saarland	410	345	74	37	67	12	88	63	30	-6	318	1,438
Saxony	1,400	644	1,244	168	231	170	187	138	661	538	474	5,855
Saxony-Anhalt	1,329	548	840	191	80	14	154	75	65	74	211	3,581
Schleswig-Holstein	1,628	809	324	50	178	86	63	50	67	21	193	3,469
Thuringia	1,604	412	928	82	125	94	97	62	290	88	356	4,138
Total	51,801	22,973	13,929	7,789	7,676	4,899	4,385	3,189	2,733	1,844	10,167	131,385

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2022

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