



Federal Office  
for Migration  
and Refugees



Research  
Centre

**REPORTS ON MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION – SERIES 2**

# Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany

Annual Report 2022

Johannes Graf



# Content

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction and Database</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Immigration of EU Nationals to Germany</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Emigration of EU Nationals from Germany</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. Net Migration</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5. EU Nationals Residing in Germany</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. EU Nationals on the German Labour Market</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex: Immigration and Emigration of EU Nationals by Federal State</b>	<b>23</b>

## **Methodological note:**

Due to legal provisions on statistical secrecy (Federal Statistics Act, Section 16 (1)), it is not allowed to publish values from the Central Register of Foreigners that allow statements about individuals. Therefore, in the following report all statistics (incl. the values of previous years) are subjected to a rounding of five. This means that all values are rounded to the nearest multiple of five. This procedure ensures legal confidentiality in a practical manner while minimising the loss of information at the same time. However, it also means that the sum of the individual values in a table may differ from the column or row totals.

# Summary

## KEY TRENDS

- According to the Central Register of Foreigners, around 481,600 EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2022 (excluding Germans). Although this number is 2.8% higher than in the previous year, it is still significantly below the level before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, an overall stagnating or even declining trend in immigration figures was already evident at that time.
- The number of EU nationals emigrating from Germany was about 338,100, roughly the same as in the two previous years (+0.3%) and thus further below the figures before the pandemic, which had risen steadily over the years.
- The overall slight increase in immigration figures, combined with constant emigration, led to higher net migration to Germany. In total, approx. 143,500 more EU nationals entered Germany than left the country, which represents an increase of 9.2% compared to 2021.
- As before, nationals from Poland, Bulgaria and, above all, Romania are the most significant groups in terms of both immigration and emigration.
- At the end of December 2022, there were over 5 million EU nationals living in Germany, a slight increase of 1.6% compared to December 2021.
- In September 2022, a total of around 2.5 million EU nationals were employed in the German labour market and subject to social insurance contributions. While the employment of all EU nationals increased by 5.7% compared to the same month of the previous year, the countries of particular relevance for immigration, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland, showed above-average increase rates.

# 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 nationals of other Member States of the European Union (EU)<sup>1</sup> to and from Germany in its biannual "Freedom of Movement Monitoring". For this purpose, 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 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, Section 2 (1)). Births or deaths of foreign nationals in Germany are not included in the migration statistics.

The data presented in this report are subject to a three-month follow-on registration period, i.e. values for the year 2022 result from a retrieval on 31 March 2023. This increases the reliability of the data as subsequent registrations in the AZR are considered as well, which, although they did not take place until the first quarter of 2023, still relate to migration processes of the previous year.

The central part of this report is the presentation of the figures on immigration and emigration since 2014, broken down by the individual EU nationalities (Chapter 2 and 3), as well as the resulting net migration (Chapter 4). The annex additionally includes a breakdown of the migration figures by federal states and the ten most common nationalities. Furthermore, the annual report pays special attention to the migration trends 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, as well as
- 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 foreign EU nationals residing in Germany as of 31 December 2022 (Chapter 5) as well as analysis on the participation of this group in the German labour market (Chapter 6). Based on the AZR data, no statements can be made about the actual extent of employment, 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 it is also done for third-country nationals in the Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring.

As in 2020 and 2021, global migration in 2022, was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast to the border closures in 2020, however, there were no actual entry bans. Since then, these had only been in place for so-called virus variant areas. A classification as a so-called high-risk area, on the other hand, only led to extended registration and testing obligations as well as quarantine regulations. As of 1 June 2022, all restrictions based on classification as a high-risk area were lifted. The remaining pandemic-related entry restrictions, especially for third-country nationals, ended on 11 June 2022, with the exception of the regulation for virus variant areas and the special regulation for entries from the territory of China (so-called reciprocity clause; Federal Foreign Office 2023). With the expiry of the Ordinance on Coronavirus Entry Regulations (CoronaEinreiseV) on 7 April 2023, entries of foreign persons are again possible without pandemic-related restrictions, considering general provisions on the right of residence and border police regulations (Federal Ministry of Health 2023).

Following the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU and the end of the transitional period stipulated in the withdrawal agreement on 31 December 2020, UK nationals are

<sup>1</sup> Since the AZR only records data on persons without a German citizenship, the migration figures do not refer to immigrants and emigrants with German nationality, even if they have an additional foreign citizenship.

no longer included in the Freedom of Movement Monitoring. New immigrants from the UK - like other third-country nationals - receive residence titles under the Residence Act and are therefore recorded in the statistics on migration from outside the EU.<sup>2</sup> In order to ensure comparability of the level of intra-European migration across past reporting periods, British nationals have also been excluded from already existing time series in the Freedom of Movement Monitoring.

---

2 For example, British nationals who were granted a residence title for educational and labour migration purposes in 2022 can be found in the Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring (Graf 2023).

## 2. Immigration of EU Nationals to Germany

According to the AZR, a total of around 481,600 EU nationals moved to Germany in 2022. This represents an increase of about 13,100 people or 3% compared to the previous year. The immigration figures for 2022 are thus higher than those for 2021, but still below those for 2020. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the figures were significantly higher, but immigration was already declining slightly

at that time. The pandemic-related entry restrictions have very likely exacerbated this decline significantly, especially in the first half of 2020.

The slight upward trend in immigration in 2022 is evident for the majority of individual nationalities. Table 1 shows

**Table 1: Number of EU nationals immigrating to Germany since 2014, by nationality**

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Difference 2021/22
Austria	7,925	8,790	8,740	8,860	8,320	7,730	8,490	6,970	7,020	+0.7%
Belgium	2,150	2,380	2,405	2,475	2,345	2,285	1,985	2,200	2,240	+1.8%
Bulgaria	63,140	71,710	66,790	66,870	67,885	68,815	63,345	60,090	59,640	-0.7%
Croatia	37,060	50,645	51,165	50,285	48,620	40,150	28,565	23,760	20,235	-14.8%
Cyprus	445	440	420	405	320	280	265	310	375	+21.0%
Czech Republic	8,970	9,475	7,965	8,165	7,905	7,535	6,300	6,005	6,200	+3.2%
Denmark	1,485	1,615	1,735	1,775	1,720	1,740	1,660	1,605	1,510	-5.9%
Estonia	820	805	740	680	700	685	560	515	590	+14.6%
Finland	1,690	1,965	1,905	1,915	1,715	1,485	1,040	1,060	1,345	+26.9%
France	11,060	12,505	12,915	13,110	12,215	11,740	10,060	10,455	10,980	+5.0%
Greece	23,360	23,910	22,330	22,225	20,965	18,885	15,650	14,675	15,775	+7.5%
Hungary	48,065	48,100	42,300	40,015	36,295	30,380	24,230	22,960	24,530	+6.8%
Ireland	1,310	1,660	1,790	1,935	1,985	2,070	1,680	2,060	2,530	+22.8%
Italy	43,675	47,455	42,700	43,430	43,350	39,945	30,645	28,545	31,275	+9.6%
Latvia	5,810	5,400	5,290	6,060	5,970	5,820	4,780	4,250	4,080	-4.0%
Lithuania	6,830	8,220	7,790	8,720	10,205	9,380	7,060	5,685	5,215	-8.3%
Luxembourg	2,065	2,420	2,375	2,305	2,310	2,355	3,090	2,190	2,155	-1.6%
Malta	65	90	70	90	85	95	115	110	110	-
Netherlands	8,350	9,175	8,790	8,580	7,930	7,610	6,470	6,655	6,625	-0.5%
Poland	143,760	147,910	123,135	118,025	113,410	101,465	83,590	75,400	79,230	+5.1%
Portugal	9,175	8,655	8,025	7,385	6,605	6,370	5,545	5,815	6,730	+15.7%
Romania	156,440	174,780	171,380	179,840	194,615	188,090	161,405	157,780	161,335	+2.3%
Slovakia	12,565	12,000	10,020	10,120	9,815	10,070	7,490	8,075	8,385	+3.8%
Slovenia	3,475	3,850	2,840	2,720	2,295	1,990	1,620	1,450	1,495	+3.1%
Spain	21,375	20,145	18,670	16,240	15,620	15,170	14,265	17,610	18,840	+7.0%
Sweden	1,770	2,270	2,090	2,280	2,315	2,160	1,975	2,320	3,170	+36.6%
<b>Total EU nationals*</b>	<b>622,840</b>	<b>676,370</b>	<b>624,375</b>	<b>624,505</b>	<b>625,505</b>	<b>584,310</b>	<b>491,865</b>	<b>468,545</b>	<b>481,610</b>	<b>+2.8%</b>

\* For reasons of comparison, the immigration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series.

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

the annual immigration figures since 2014 with the difference compared to the previous year.

Compared to the previous year, the immigration of nationals from a total of 18 states has increased. In 2021, this was only the case for ten states. Among the quantitatively most significant countries of origin, the highest percentage increase was for Italian nationals with 10%. However, the immigration of Spanish, Greek and Hungarian nationals also increased quite strongly with 7% each.

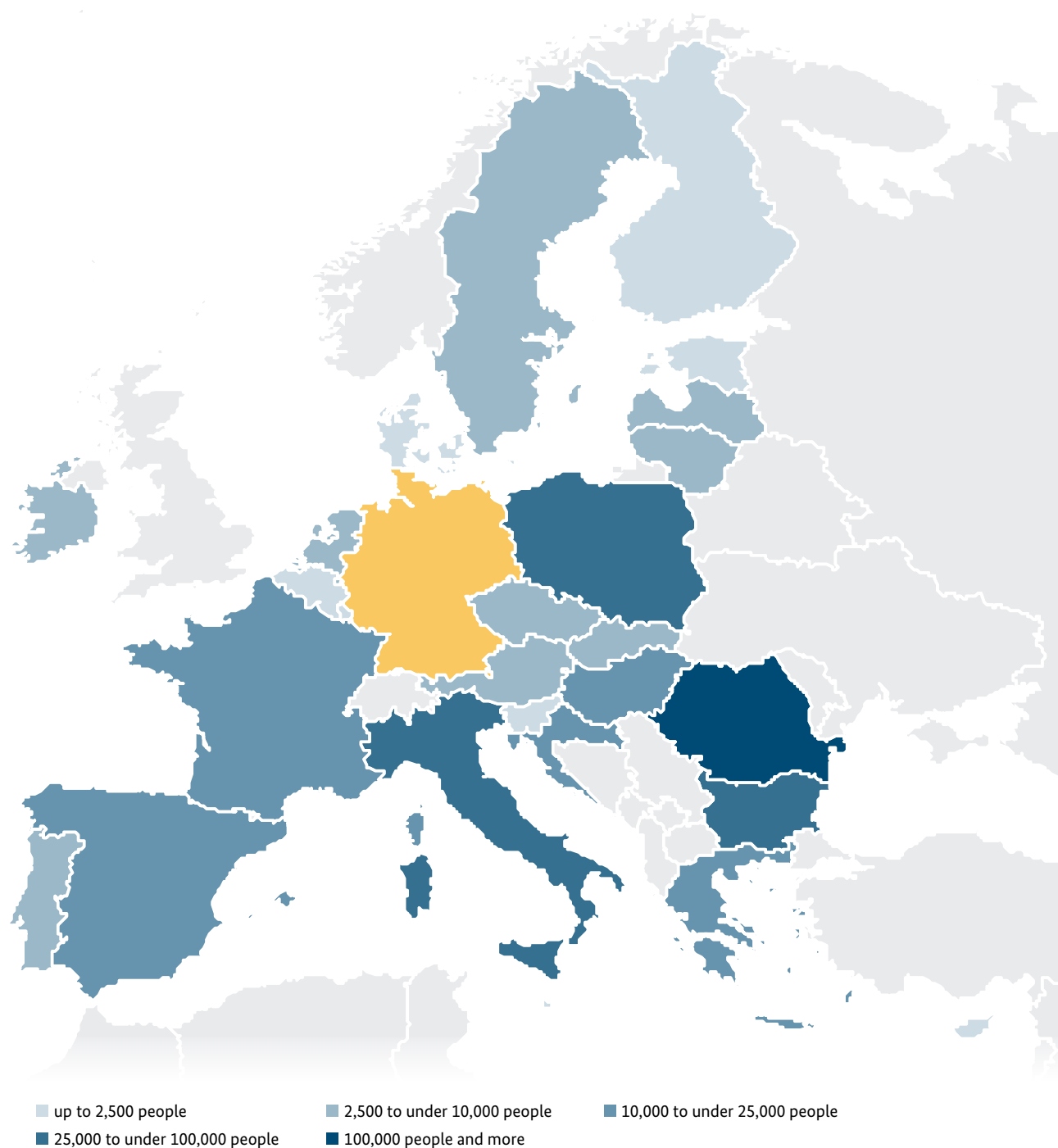
Of the seven countries with declining immigration numbers, only Croatian nationals saw a change of at least four figures (-3,500 persons). At 15%, this decrease is also by far the strongest in percentage terms. For Croatian nationals, a decline in annual immigration figures has already been observed since 2017, from over 50,000 persons at that time to only 20,000 in 2022.

The ranking of the quantitatively most important countries of origin is clearly led by Romania (see Figure 1). It is followed by Poland, Bulgaria and Italy, whose combined immigration figures are roughly equivalent to those from Romania. Due to the steady decline in immigration, Croatian nationals are only in sixth place in 2022, with Hungarian nationals being in fifth. Before the beginning of the pandemic, Croatian nationals were still the fourth largest group. In summary, as in previous years, more than three quarters of the EU nationals who moved into the country had the nationality of a country of the so-called EU 8, the EU 2 or Croatia, with persons with Romanian, Polish and Bulgarian nationality making up more than 80% of this group.

The EU 8 states, for which complete freedom of movement within the EU has applied since 1 May 2011, were responsible for more than one quarter of total immigration. Polish nationals are the most important group in terms of numbers, with a share of over 60%. Since the immigration peak in 2015, however, immigration for the EU 8 as a whole has fallen every year so far. For the first time, there is a slight increase of 4% in 2022 compared to the previous year. In absolute terms, the increase is mainly due to Hungarian and Polish nationals.

The number of immigrants with a citizenship from the EU 2 states Bulgaria and Romania has also increased at an above-average rate since the introduction of the unrestricted EU freedom of movement of workers for this group on 1 January 2014, reaching its highest level to date for Bulgarian nationals as early as 2015 and for Romanian nationals in 2018. Since 2019, immigration from both states has declined. In 2022, it rose again slightly for Romanian nationals (+2%), while it continued to decrease for Bulgarian nationals, although at less than one percent the decline was significantly lower than in previous years.

Overall, the intra-EU migration to Germany, which had collapsed due to the pandemic, slightly recovered in 2022. However, the level before the pandemic could still not be reached: Immigration in 2022 was about 100,000 persons lower than in 2019. The slightly rising trend can be observed for the majority of nationalities that are central to the level of immigration. Croatia is the only clear exception. It remains to be seen whether the currently visible increase will consolidate or even increase further. A few years ago, changing demographic structures in the most important countries of origin and the associated changes in their labour markets had led to the prediction of a significant decrease in immigration from these countries.

**Figure 1: EU nationals immigrating to Germany in 2022, by number of migrants**

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

### Age and gender of immigrant EU nationals

As in previous years, over 90% of the EU nationals who immigrated in 2022 were of working age (16 to 64 years) (see Table 2). The largest share was accounted for by the 25 to under 35 age group with more than a quarter. For most countries of origin this age group had the highest figure, which suggests a high labour force participation of EU immigrants. However, since the purpose of residence is not

recorded in the AZR for EU nationals, this can only be assumed or other statistics must be used (see Chapter 6). For five countries, the highest value was 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 2023).



**Table 2: Age and gender structure of EU nationals immigrating in 2022, 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	490	1,795	2,550	995	590	360	240	7,020	49.4%
Belgium	155	625	750	355	215	100	45	2,240	40.6%
Bulgaria	7,770	11,680	13,500	12,115	9,890	3,760	925	59,640	39.2%
Croatia	1,990	4,455	5,125	3,555	2,935	1,755	415	20,235	37.5%
Cyprus	25	100	155	55	25	10	5	375	49.3%
Czech Republic	715	1,385	1,730	1,210	775	285	95	6,200	42.4%
Denmark	80	540	540	135	110	60	40	1,510	49.7%
Estonia	55	170	175	105	45	25	15	590	48.3%
Finland	90	470	475	175	85	40	20	1,345	54.6%
France	640	4,760	3,410	1,210	575	250	135	10,980	49.5%
Greece	1,820	3,290	4,640	2,540	1,950	1,025	515	15,775	39.6%
Hungary	1,400	5,415	7,070	4,555	4,275	1,495	320	24,530	36.1%
Ireland	100	915	920	315	175	85	25	2,530	40.0%
Italy	2,085	8,740	10,780	4,585	2,875	1,485	730	31,275	42.0%
Latvia	320	955	1,035	865	565	285	55	4,080	35.2%
Lithuania	225	1,460	1,435	865	720	400	115	5,215	39.0%
Luxembourg	170	805	630	185	130	160	80	2,155	49.4%
Malta	10	20	40	20	15	5	0	110	45.5%
Netherlands	560	1,425	2,000	970	810	565	300	6,625	40.9%
Poland	3,875	18,245	21,895	15,330	12,845	5,515	1,515	79,230	35.1%
Portugal	525	1,550	2,140	1,195	845	380	95	6,730	38.6%
Romania	12,250	40,060	41,125	32,415	26,415	7,460	1,610	161,335	34.7%
Slovakia	1,060	2,165	2,075	1,530	1,080	410	65	8,385	38.8%
Slovenia	135	355	465	275	150	80	35	1,495	37.8%
Spain	2,295	5,885	5,730	2,480	1,770	520	160	18,840	44.3%
Sweden	740	610	850	565	275	90	40	3,170	45.9%
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	<b>39,570</b>	<b>117,880</b>	<b>131,230</b>	<b>88,590</b>	<b>70,140</b>	<b>26,610</b>	<b>7,590</b>	<b>481,610</b>	<b>37.8%</b>

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

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

The share of women among all immigrated EU nationals was less than 40 %. The gender ratio varies considerably between the individual nationalities. Only among Finnish nationals slightly more women than men have been immigrating to Germany during this period. The quantitatively

important immigration groups from the EU 2 and EU 8 states, on the other hand, have particularly low shares of women (36%), with Romania, Poland and Latvia in last place with 35% each.

### 3. Emigration of EU Nationals from Germany

According to the AZR, a total of around 338,100 EU nationals left Germany in 2022. Emigration was thus at about the same level as in 2021 (+0.3%) and 2020 (-0.1%), but about a fifth lower than in 2019.

significant decline that followed in 2020 is thus likely to be mainly due to the travel restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which applied both in Germany and in a similar form in the other EU Member States.

In contrast to immigration, emigration had been constantly rising before the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 3). The

**Table 3: Number of EU nationals emigrating from Germany since 2014, by nationality**

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Difference 2021/22
Austria	5,950	5,190	5,475	6,965	6,035	6,610	5,720	5,610	5,420	-3.4%
Belgium	1,395	1,270	1,310	1,645	1,570	1,695	1,420	1,480	1,560	+5.4%
Bulgaria	24,465	26,300	32,035	34,735	37,835	42,940	34,215	37,120	38,840	+4.6%
Croatia	9,415	11,790	15,120	17,465	18,560	19,635	16,365	15,970	16,920	+5.9%
Cyprus	175	160	150	220	215	210	210	215	210	-2.3%
Czech Republic	4,870	4,860	5,455	5,585	5,490	6,145	4,705	4,160	4,330	+4.1%
Denmark	1,270	1,060	1,220	1,470	1,430	1,950	1,415	1,580	1,475	-6.6%
Estonia	510	435	440	450	495	515	370	500	385	-23.0%
Finland	1,415	1,245	1,320	1,580	1,435	1,615	1,160	1,000	1,030	+3.0%
France	7,935	7,665	8,150	9,980	8,910	11,090	7,815	8,960	8,235	-8.1%
Greece	10,125	9,735	11,500	12,815	12,505	14,490	11,525	11,485	11,720	+2.0%
Hungary	23,680	23,255	25,395	27,390	26,510	26,840	21,120	18,575	18,240	-1.8%
Ireland	875	860	1,080	1,120	1,300	1,610	1,010	1,310	1,425	+8.8%
Italy	19,700	21,600	24,150	27,110	27,240	30,350	23,700	23,645	24,590	+4.0%
Latvia	3,200	2,825	2,990	3,415	3,525	4,195	3,185	3,260	2,855	-12.4%
Lithuania	3,765	3,685	4,060	4,425	5,720	6,810	5,625	5,190	4,325	-16.7%
Luxembourg	1,115	1,050	1,100	1,210	1,190	1,400	1,395	1,380	1,325	-4.0%
Malta	50	45	55	60	60	65	50	45	70	+55.6%
Netherlands	5,405	5,460	5,910	6,310	6,510	6,765	5,885	5,640	5,390	-4.4%
Poland	70,700	70,740	72,985	77,690	81,200	85,720	66,435	61,470	55,920	-9.0%
Portugal	5,220	4,955	5,200	5,915	5,375	5,960	4,480	4,465	4,660	+4.4%
Romania	63,365	73,185	87,855	100,985	113,415	124,375	102,935	105,980	109,570	+3.4%
Slovakia	7,080	6,805	6,735	7,355	7,485	7,950	6,170	5,345	5,685	+6.4%
Slovenia	1,725	1,890	1,925	1,950	1,835	1,820	1,360	1,290	1,240	-3.9%
Spain	10,350	10,285	11,380	12,000	11,545	12,685	8,730	9,930	11,105	+11.8%
Sweden	1,400	1,305	1,430	1,640	1,550	1,865	1,415	1,560	1,550	-0.6%
<b>Total EU nationals*</b>	<b>285,150</b>	<b>297,650</b>	<b>334,425</b>	<b>371,490</b>	<b>388,930</b>	<b>425,310</b>	<b>338,420</b>	<b>337,160</b>	<b>338,095</b>	<b>+0.3%</b>

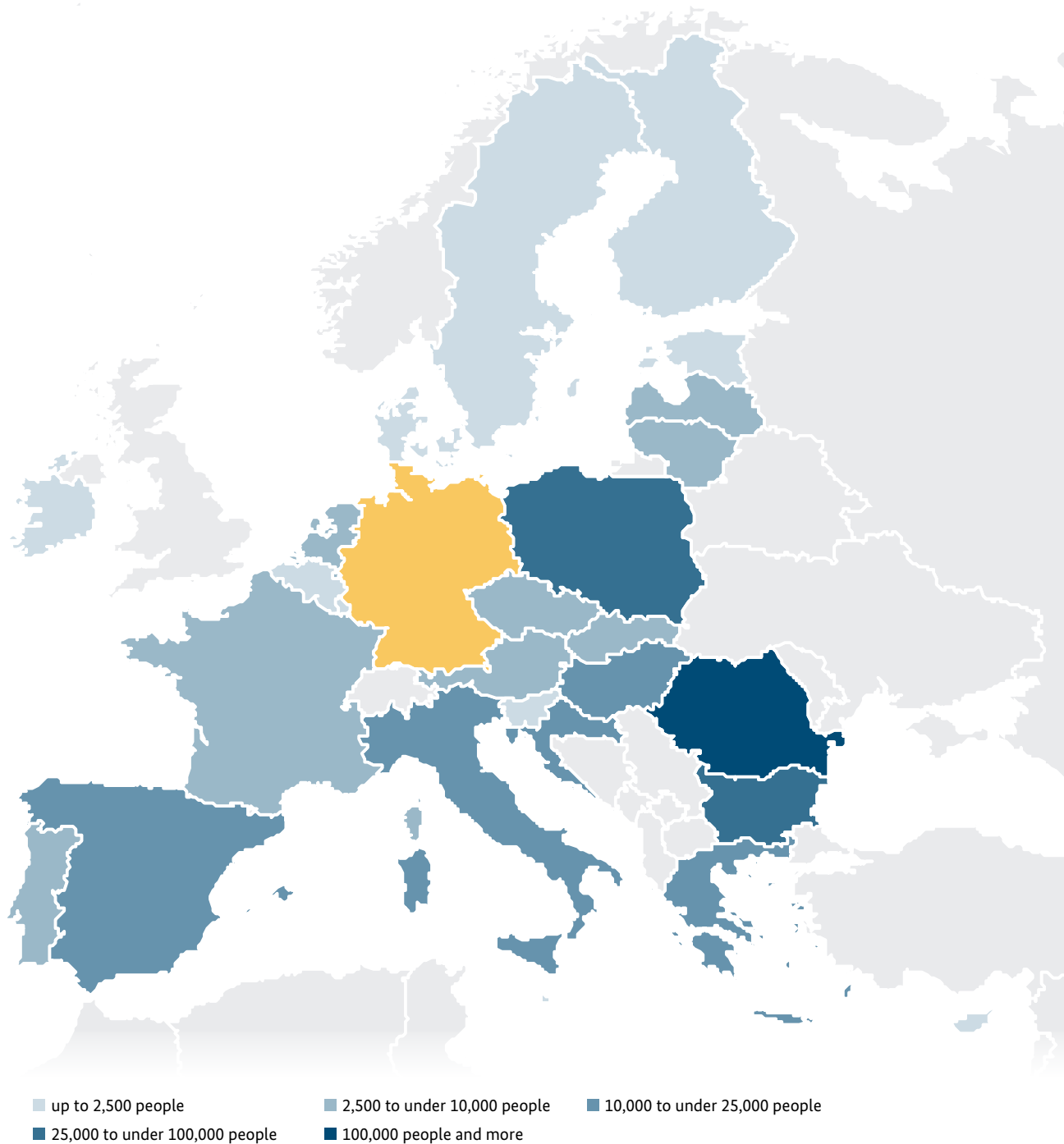
\* For reasons of comparison, the emigration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series.

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

As in previous years, the highest number of emigrations was recorded for Romanian nationals (Figure 2). They were followed by people from Poland and Bulgaria. Thus, these three nationalities continue to have the most inflows as well as outflows and thus a high dynamic of migration. Taken together, these countries account for over 60 % of both the immigration and the emigration figures.

With regard to the different nationalities, there has been a very heterogeneous development compared to the previous year. The emigration figures decreased for nationals from half of the countries and increased for the other half. Among the quantitatively most important countries, there were increases for Croatian nationals (+6%) and for persons from the EU 2 states Bulgaria and Romania (+5% and 3%

**Figure 2: EU nationals emigrating from Germany in 2022, by number of migrants**



Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

respectively). There was also a particularly high increase in emigration for Spanish nationals (12%).

In contrast, the emigration of EU 8 nationals is declining overall (-7%). Due to the quantitative significance for this group, this is mainly due to Polish nationals (-9%), but with the exception of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, all other EU 8 states also show declines in emigration.

When interpreting the emigration figures, it should be noted that their level depends, among other things, on the extent of immigration in previous years (cf. Chapter 2) as well as on the number of EU nationals currently living in Germany (cf. Chapter 5).

## 4. Net Migration

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

In 2022, about 143,500 more EU nationals immigrated to Germany than emigrated from the country. As in the previous year, such a positive migration balance exists for all EU member states (see Table 4 and Figure 3).

Net migration from the EU is thus 12,100 persons or 9% higher than in the previous year. Overall, migration gains were already decreasing before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they fell even more sharply in the first half

**Table 4: Net migration of EU nationals since 2014, by nationality**

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Difference 2021/22
Austria	1,975	3,600	3,265	1,895	2,285	1,120	2,770	1,360	1,600	+17.6%
Belgium	755	1,110	1,095	830	775	590	565	720	680	-5.6%
Bulgaria	38,675	45,410	34,755	32,135	30,050	25,875	29,130	22,970	20,800	-9.4%
Croatia	27,645	38,855	36,045	32,820	30,060	20,515	12,200	7,790	3,315	-57.4%
Cyprus	270	280	270	185	105	70	55	95	165	+73.7%
Czech Republic	4,100	4,615	2,510	2,580	2,415	1,390	1,595	1,845	1,870	+1.4%
Denmark	215	555	515	305	290	-210	245	25	35	+40.0%
Estonia	310	370	300	230	205	170	190	15	205	+1.266.7%
Finland	275	720	585	335	280	-130	-120	60	315	+425.0%
France	3,125	4,840	4,765	3,130	3,305	650	2,245	1,495	2,745	+83.6%
Greece	13,235	14,175	10,830	9,410	8,460	4,395	4,125	3,190	4,055	+27.1%
Hungary	24,385	24,845	16,905	12,625	9,785	3,540	3,110	4,385	6,290	+43.4%
Ireland	435	800	710	815	685	460	670	750	1,105	+47.3%
Italy	23,975	25,855	18,550	16,320	16,110	9,595	6,945	4,900	6,685	+36.4%
Latvia	2,610	2,575	2,300	2,645	2,445	1,625	1,595	990	1,225	+23.7%
Lithuania	3,065	4,535	3,730	4,295	4,485	2,570	1,435	495	890	+79.8%
Luxembourg	950	1,370	1,275	1,095	1,120	955	1,695	810	830	+2.5%
Malta	15	45	15	30	25	30	65	65	40	-38.5%
Netherlands	2,945	3,715	2,880	2,270	1,420	845	585	1,015	1,235	+21.7%
Poland	73,060	77,170	50,150	40,335	32,210	15,745	17,155	13,930	23,310	+67.3%
Portugal	3,955	3,700	2,825	1,470	1,230	410	1,065	1,350	2,070	+53.3%
Romania	93,075	101,595	83,525	78,855	81,200	63,715	58,470	51,800	51,765	-0.1%
Slovakia	5,485	5,195	3,285	2,765	2,330	2,120	1,320	2,730	2,700	-1.1%
Slovenia	1,750	1,960	915	770	460	170	260	160	255	+59.4%
Spain	11,025	9,860	7,290	4,240	4,075	2,485	5,535	7,680	7,735	+0.7%
Sweden	370	965	660	640	765	295	560	760	1,620	+113.2%
<b>Total EU nationals*</b>	<b>337,690</b>	<b>378,720</b>	<b>289,950</b>	<b>253,015</b>	<b>236,575</b>	<b>159,000</b>	<b>153,445</b>	<b>131,385</b>	<b>143,515</b>	<b>+9.2%</b>

\* For reasons of comparison, the net migration figures of UK nationals were subtracted for every year in this time series.

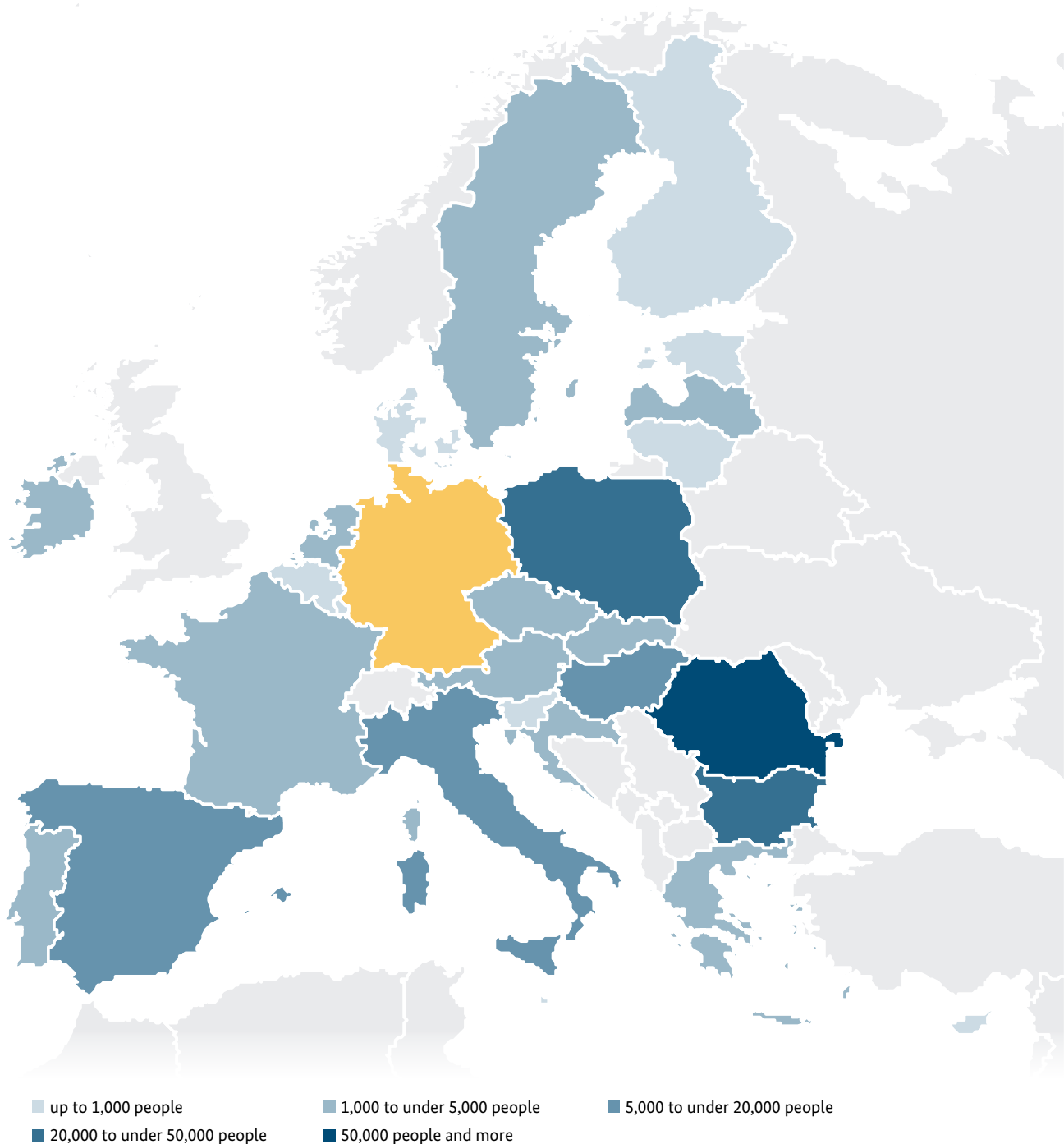
Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

of 2020 (-25% compared to the first half of 2019). For 2020 as a whole, however, the decline was only around 3%, as the drop in immigration in the second half of the year was significantly lower, while the number of people leaving the country remained small. In 2021, the number of immigrants was once again slightly lower than in the previous year, but the number of emigrants remained roughly the same. This led to a further decline in net migration (-14%). While emigration remained at a similar level in 2022, immigration rose

slightly again, resulting in the first increase in net migration since 2015.

Despite all changes in immigration and emigration, the country of origin in the EU for whose nationals Germany recorded the highest migration gain in 2022 was, as in previous years, Romania by a wide margin. This country alone accounted for more than a third of the total migration gain in the reporting year. Poland and Bulgaria followed

**Figure 3: Net migration of EU nationals in 2022, by number of migrants**



Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

with a combined total of just over 30 %. Croatian nationals, whose importance for net migration in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic was still at a similar level to that of Polish and Bulgarian nationals, are now only in eighth place, behind Spain, Italy, Hungary and Greece in fourth to seventh place, due to the continuing decline in immigration figures.

Comparing the migration balances of the individual nationalities in 2022 with those of the previous year, only six show a decreased value. In 2021, this was the case for 14 countries, in 2020 for 11. The largest decline in net migration existed among Croatian nationals, with a drop of almost 4,500 persons or 57%. Only Bulgarian nationals also show a major absolute decline (-2,200 persons or -9%). At the same time, the migration balance for nationals from the 20 other EU Member States increased. The highest increase in absolute terms was for Polish nationals with about 9,400 persons, followed by Hungarian, Italian and French nationals with increases of 1,200 to 1,900 persons. For France and Poland, this means an increase in net migration by more than half in each case. This is due to both an increase in immigration and a decrease in emigration.

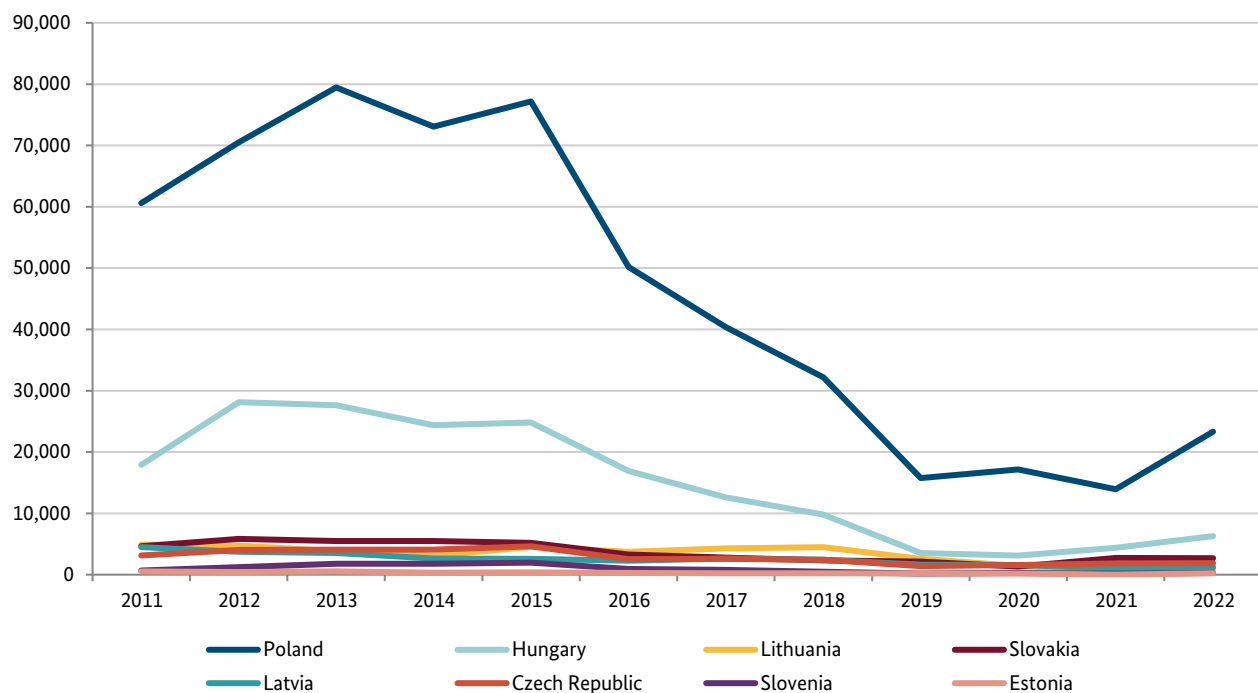
Overall, the increase in net migration shows a slight recovery in migration to and from Germany. In relation to the individual nationalities, however, the analyses also illustrate how heterogeneous this is depending on the country of origin and how different developments in immigration on the one hand and emigration on the other have an impact on the resulting net migration. Future developments depend not only on the further course of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also on its economic and social after-effects both in Germany and in the countries of origin. In addition, the social and economic consequences of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine must be kept in mind. Basically, however, net migration from the EU is still far off from the proportions in the middle of the last decade.

## Net migration of EU 8 nationals

The introduction of full freedom of movement for EU 8 nationals on 1 May 2011 was particularly noticeable in the development of the net migration of Polish and Hungarian nationals.<sup>3</sup> While the annual migration gain for the other EU 8 nationals was well below 10,000 persons throughout the entire observation period, it reached its peak for the time being for Hungarian migrants in 2012 with about 28,000 persons. The migration balance for Polish nationals was even higher. Here, the previous maximum of annual net migration was reached in 2013 with almost 80,000 persons. Since then, however, both groups have shown almost constant downward trends. In 2021, net migration increased for Czech, Hungarian and, above all, Slovakian nationals, although this was only partly associated with an actual increase in immigration. In contrast, in 2022 there was an increase in net migration for all EU 8 nationals except Slovakia, which for most of them was accompanied by both an increase in immigration figures and a decrease in emigration figures.

For the total of 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 workers of these nationalities - has been undercut again. In 2022, net migration increased significantly by 50% to a total of almost 37,000 persons, mainly due to the increase among Polish and Hungarian nationals (cf. Figure 4).

<sup>3</sup> For more detailed information on the years 2011 to 2013, see Graf 2019.

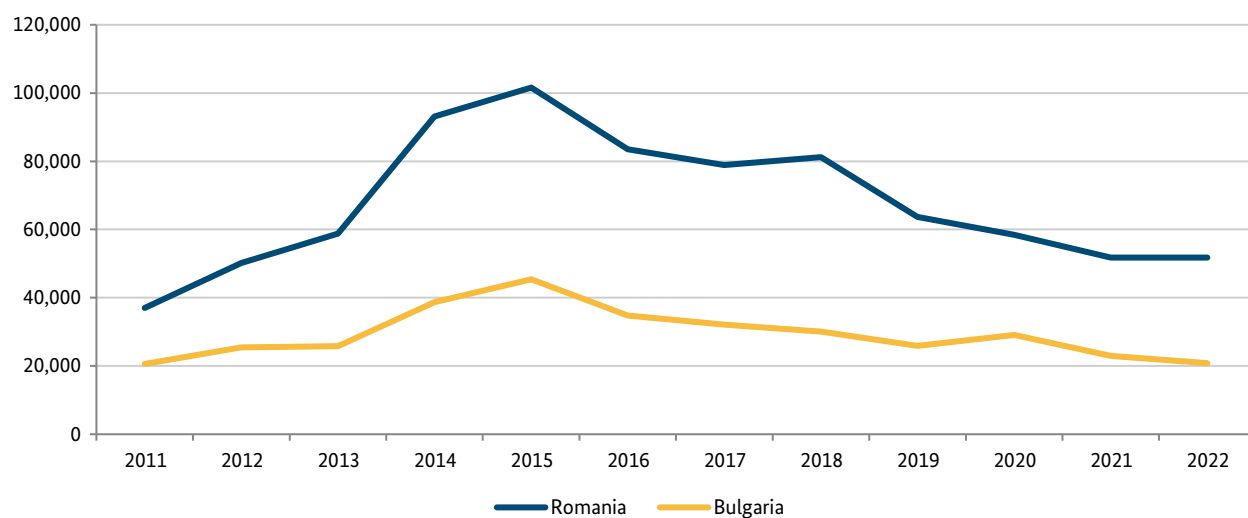
**Figure 4: Development of net migration of EU 8 nationals since 2011**

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

## Net migration of EU 2 nationals

The net migration of nationals of the two EU 2 states Romania and Bulgaria, which joined the EU on 1 January 2007 and received full EU freedom of movement for workers on 1 January 2014, rose steadily to its peak of around 150,000 people in 2015. However, there was an overall downward trend in the following years, which can be attributed primarily to largely stagnating immigration and simultaneously

increasing emigration. In 2022, the emigration figures for both countries continued to rise. Since immigration for Romanian nationals increased to a similar extent, net migration among these persons remained more or less the same. For Bulgarian nationals, on the other hand, immigration even declined slightly, which led to a further decrease in net migration. The entire course of annual migration gains from the EU 2 states since 2011 is shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Development of net migration of EU 2 nationals since 2011**

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

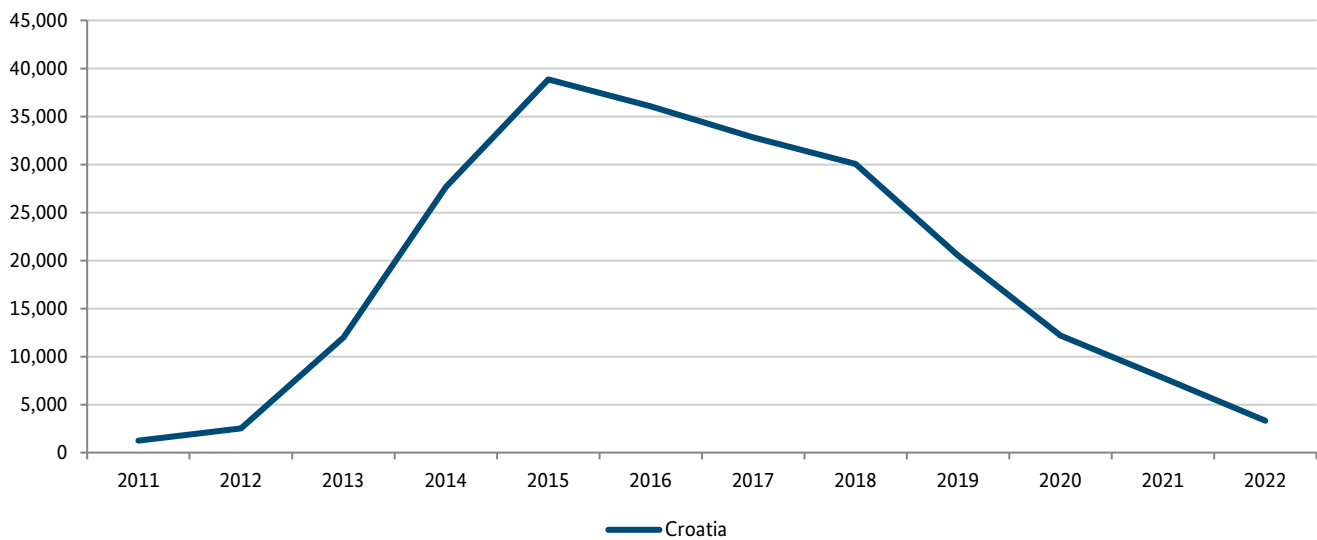


## Net migration of Croatian nationals

The migration balance of Croatian nationals to Germany rose sharply in the first half of the past decade. This was due to Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013 and the associated legal 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 in all likelihood due to the in-

troduction of full EU freedom of movement for workers of Croatian nationality on 1 July 2015. In the following years, however, net migration fell continuously. This development also continued with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In both 2020, 2021 and 2022, net migration of Croatian nationals fell significantly by a total of 84%. Thus, in 2021, the migration gain for the first time was again below the level of the year of Croatia's EU accession (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Development of net migration of Croatian nationals since 2011**



Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

## 5. EU Nationals Residing in Germany

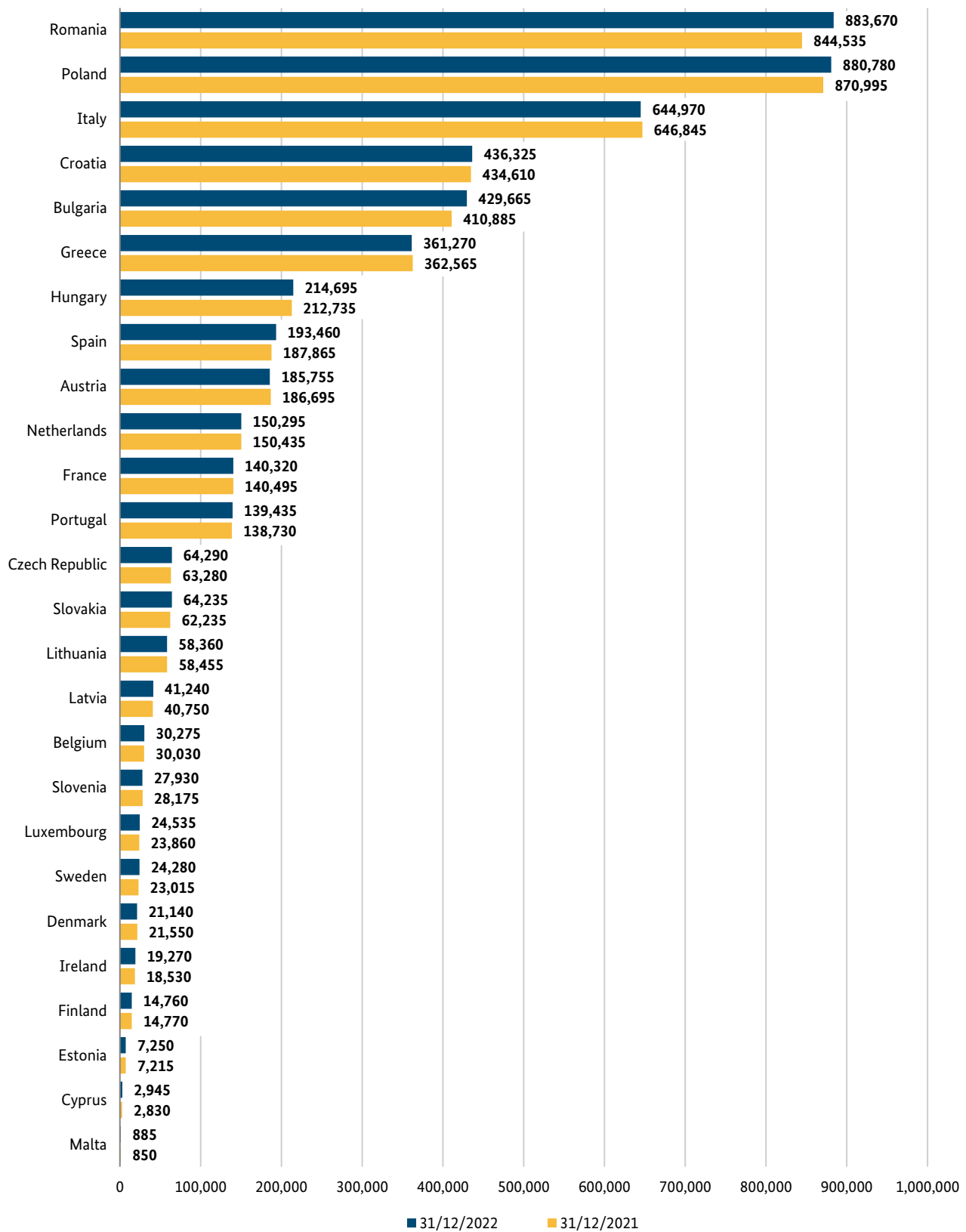
According to data from the AZR, 5,064,515 nationals of other EU member states were resident in Germany on 31 December 2022<sup>4</sup>, which represents an increase of 79,025 persons or 1.6% compared to the end of 2021.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, EU nationals accounted for 38% or almost two-fifths of all foreign nationals living in Germany (a total of 13,383,910 persons). The proportion of women among EU nationals was 46%. However, this varies greatly between the different EU states. While almost two-thirds of those with Finnish citizenship were female (65%), the share of women for Ireland was only 41%. Overall, women were in the majority only among nationals of seven EU member states.

Figure 7 shows the number of EU nationals residing in Germany by nationality. At the end of 2022, Romanian nationals represented the largest nationality group for the first time with about 883,700 persons, closely followed by Polish nationals with about 880,800 persons (both with a share of 17% each). In third place are Italian nationals with about 645,000 persons (13%). Compared to 31 December 2021, the respective figure increased for 17 EU countries

and decreased for nine. The largest increase in absolute terms was for Romanian nationals, with over 39,000 persons, but Bulgarian nationals also saw a significant increase, with almost 19,000 persons. In both cases, this corresponds to a percentage increase of 5% and reflects the still high immigration figures from the two countries. The strongest decrease in absolute terms was recorded for Italian nationals with about 1,900 persons, which, however, only corresponds to a percentage decrease of 0.3%.

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> 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 AZR. In contrast to the data in Chapters 2 to 4, no subsequent recording period is taken into account for the data on resident foreigners.

**Figure 7: Number of EU nationals residing in Germany as of 31 December 2021 and 2022 by nationality**

Source: AZR as of 31/12/2022 or 31/12/2021

## 6. EU Nationals on the German Labour Market

Since no purpose of residence is recorded in the AZR for EU nationals, it is not possible to make any statements about their participation in the German labour market based on these data. For this purpose, the employment statistics data provided by the Federal Employment Agency need to be consulted (Federal Employment Agency 2023a). Table 5 therefore shows the number of foreigners with EU nationality who are employed in Germany and subject to social insurance contributions as of 30 September 2022.<sup>6</sup>

A total of slightly more than 2.5 million nationals of other EU member states were employed in Germany and subject to social security contributions as of the reporting date.<sup>7</sup> This represents an increase of about 137,000 persons or 5.7% compared to the same month of the previous year. After a lower increase in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (+1.3%), the rate of increase is slightly above the level of 2019 (+5.4%), just like last year (+5.6%).<sup>8</sup>

Non-German EU nationals thus accounted for 7% of all employees subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market in September 2022. Furthermore, at 49%, they accounted for about half of all foreign employees. In previous years, the figure was even slightly above 50 %. But even so, the share is higher than among resident foreigners (38%; see Chapter 5). Whether this is due to a different age structure or employment rate compared to third-country nationals cannot be conclusively clarified on the basis of the underlying data of this report. The differing number of cross-border commuters or a higher share of employment subject to social insurance contributions compared to other forms of employment are also possible reasons for the higher share.

Almost one third of the persons from other EU countries who were employed in Germany and subject to social insurance contributions were citizens of an EU 8 country. In addition, the EU 2 states (27%) and the so-called GIPS states<sup>9</sup> (23%) also form central groups. Together with Croatia,

these 15 states account for more than 90 % of EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market. With around 82,400 persons or 3%, France is the country with the largest share outside of this group. However, a larger share 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 again showed the highest increase rates compared to the same month of the previous year, at about 10 % each. But there was also an above-average increase of about 7% each for Polish, Czech and Spanish nationals.

Overall, the employment of EU nationals is strongly characterised by jobs at the so-called "Helfer" level, which do not require explicit training. At around 39%, their share is almost three times as high as among German employees (13%) and also slightly higher than that of people from third countries (34%). In contrast, highly qualified jobs at the "Spezialist" or "Experte" level have a significantly lower share among EU employees (15%) than among German employees (30%), but also than among persons from third countries (19%). The shares of the individual qualification levels, however, vary strongly for the individual nationalities both for persons from the EU and from third countries. Whereas the "Helfer" level is at 46% particularly common for employees from the countries of the EU eastern enlargement from 2004 onwards, their share among the GIPS countries is significantly lower at 30 %, and, for example, for French employees at 16% only slightly higher than the share among German employees.

The share of women among all EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions was only 39% in September 2022. This has thus increased somewhat since 2019 (+0.7 percentage points). The current increase in employment was also slightly higher for women (6.6%) than for men (+5.2%). Among the ten most common nationalities, this was only not the case for persons from Spain, which, however, also formed the country with the highest share of women in employment. The lowest share among these countries was for Romanian nationals at only 35%. It is important to note that these differences do not directly reflect differences in female employment rates. As Chapter 5

<sup>6</sup> As there is a waiting period of six months for the data, the figures for the end of 2022 cannot be used in this report.

<sup>7</sup> I.e. excluding only marginally employed persons, self-employed persons, civil servants, family workers and professional and temporary soldiers, but including cross-border commuters.

<sup>8</sup> Unlike the figures from 2021 onwards, the 2019 and 2020 figures also include UK employees.

<sup>9</sup> Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

shows, the proportion of women in the resident population also varies greatly between the individual countries of origin and thus the extent of female labour force potential.

at 62%, is slightly lower than that of the German population (71%), while the unemployment rate is slightly higher, at 7 to 5% (Federal Employment Agency 2023b).

Overall, analyses by the Federal Employment Agency show that the employment rate for all non-German EU nationals,

**Table 5: Foreign EU nationals with employment subject to social insurance contributions in Germany by nationality (as of 30/09/2022)**

Nationality	Employees subject to social security			Difference compared to the same month of the previous year	
	Number	Share	Proportion of women	Absolute	Percentage
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	2,534,588	100.0%	39.2%	137,093	+5.7%
<b>EU 8 countries</b>	800,283	31.6%	40.5%	48,389	+6.4%
<b>EU 2 countries</b>	696,319	27.5%	35.8%	62,481	+9.9%
<b>GIPS countries</b>	591,173	23.3%	39.1%	17,382	+3.0%
<b>Top 10 nationalities</b>					
Poland	518,270	20.4%	39.7%	36,150	+7.5%
Romania	510,771	20.2%	35.2%	46,132	+9.9%
Italy	284,642	11.2%	38.2%	5,490	+2.0%
Croatia	212,560	8.4%	41.6%	4,503	+2.2%
Bulgaria	185,548	7.3%	37.5%	16,349	+9.7%
Greece	155,859	6.1%	39.8%	4,240	+2.8%
Hungary	113,490	4.5%	40.9%	3,402	+3.1%
Spain	83,981	3.3%	42.3%	5,473	+7.0%
France	82,445	3.3%	41.6%	1,116	+1.4%
Czech Republic	67,944	2.7%	38.0%	4,311	+6.8%
Other EU nationals	319,078	12.6%	43.0%	9,927	+3.2%

Source: Federal Employment Agency 2023 (own calculations)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Federal Employment Agency** (2023a): Beschäftigte nach Staatsangehörigkeiten (Quartalszahlen). Deutschland, Länder und Kreise. 30. September 2022. Nuremberg: Federal Employment Agency.

**Federal Employment Agency** (2023b): Berichte: Arbeitsmarkt kompakt – Ausländische Arbeitskräfte am deutschen Arbeitsmarkt. Nuremberg: Federal Employment Agency.

**Federal Foreign Office** (2023): Reisen und COVID-19-Pandemie – Einreisebeschränkungen weitgehend aufgehoben. Online: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/quarantaene-einreise/2371468> (20/03/2023).

**Federal Ministry of Health** (2023): Coronavirus-Einreiseverordnung (CoronaEinreiseV). Online: <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/guv-19-lp/coronaeinreisev.html> (13/06/2023).

**Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community/Federal Office for Migration and Refugees** (2023): Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung. Migrationsbericht 2021. Berlin: Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community.

**Graf, Johannes** (2019): Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany. Annual Report 2018. Series of Reports on Migration and Integration, Series 2. Nuremberg: Research Centre Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

**Graf, Johannes** (2023): Migration Monitoring: Educational and Labour Migration to Germany. Annual Report 2022. Series of Reports on Migration and Integration, Series 1. Nuremberg: Research Centre Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

# Annex:

## Immigration and Emigration of EU Nationals by Federal State

- EU nationals immigrating in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities
- EU nationals emigrating in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities
- Net migration of EU nationals in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

EU nationals immigrating in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities

	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Italy	Hungary	Croatia	Spain	Greece	France	Slovakia	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	32,795	8,210	8,090	6,045	6,010	5,235	2,550	2,950	1,835	1,275	6,030	81,025
Bavaria	34,440	12,230	8,525	6,805	8,330	6,835	3,150	3,390	1,900	2,540	9,720	97,865
Berlin	4,955	4,820	3,620	4,665	1,240	870	2,370	1,230	2,760	240	7,490	34,255
Brandenburg	1,780	4,105	450	285	190	80	180	190	110	105	595	8,075
Bremen	360	255	840	90	85	45	100	80	30	10	270	2,160
Hamburg	510	455	345	105	25	60	125	45	45	20	275	2,005
Hesse	14,275	6,785	7,560	3,395	1,470	2,340	2,360	1,595	1,070	365	4,260	45,465
Lower Saxony	17,905	9,905	6,055	1,320	1,465	715	1,025	1,000	385	520	3,765	44,060
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	1,335	2,365	580	325	170	70	110	135	75	140	510	5,805
North Rhine-Westphalia	29,255	15,415	14,105	4,775	2,395	2,225	4,350	3,385	1,510	700	9,510	87,620
Rhineland-Palatinate	9,645	4,135	4,185	1,430	1,155	790	895	640	475	195	3,450	27,000
Saarland	1,535	285	730	360	330	60	90	105	245	150	685	4,570
Saxony	3,220	3,270	1,025	680	715	290	695	465	255	1,210	2,260	14,090
Saxony-Anhalt	2,830	2,855	1,320	240	375	245	200	210	70	90	640	9,065
Schleswig-Holstein	3,455	2,205	1,410	470	185	230	355	230	125	100	1,110	9,870
Thuringia	3,050	1,935	805	285	390	150	290	125	80	735	830	8,675
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,335</b>	<b>79,230</b>	<b>59,640</b>	<b>31,275</b>	<b>24,530</b>	<b>20,235</b>	<b>18,840</b>	<b>15,775</b>	<b>10,980</b>	<b>8,385</b>	<b>51,395</b>	<b>481,610</b>

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

**EU nationals emigrating in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities**

	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Italy	Hungary	Croatia	Greece	Spain	France	Slovakia	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	23,430	6,810	5,865	5,935	4,625	4,800	2,335	1,865	1,570	1,045	5,080	63,365
Bavaria	23,150	8,405	5,575	5,155	6,405	5,460	2,760	1,920	1,475	1,890	7,460	69,655
Berlin	1,970	2,275	1,450	2,105	490	495	565	1,150	1,525	105	3,760	15,885
Brandenburg	1,025	2,020	385	215	160	55	135	90	80	60	340	4,570
Bremen	300	295	615	85	95	65	65	85	35	10	245	1,900
Hamburg	775	695	465	280	35	165	80	245	235	25	680	3,685
Hesse	9,440	5,715	4,870	2,815	1,130	2,000	1,285	1,490	925	295	3,265	33,230
Lower Saxony	12,230	7,290	4,375	1,170	1,180	510	730	565	245	330	2,880	31,505
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	700	1,295	245	200	85	50	90	70	50	95	425	3,305
North Rhine-Westphalia	21,325	11,585	8,770	4,090	1,760	1,990	2,605	2,300	1,175	515	7,355	63,465
Rhineland-Palatinate	6,010	2,870	2,715	1,130	915	705	420	475	350	160	2,265	18,015
Saarland	1,020	205	565	310	250	50	75	90	215	35	400	3,215
Saxony	1,905	1,895	545	440	450	195	205	295	185	595	1,275	7,985
Saxony-Anhalt	2,110	1,920	845	135	265	135	135	65	35	75	440	6,165
Schleswig-Holstein	2,520	1,610	995	335	140	165	165	260	80	75	900	7,240
Thuringia	1,660	1,035	565	190	255	75	70	130	60	370	495	4,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,570</b>	<b>55,920</b>	<b>38,840</b>	<b>24,590</b>	<b>18,240</b>	<b>16,920</b>	<b>11,720</b>	<b>11,105</b>	<b>8,235</b>	<b>5,685</b>	<b>37,260</b>	<b>338,095</b>

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023



**Net migration of EU nationals in 2022 by federal state and the ten most common nationalities**

	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Greece	Croatia	France	Slovakia	Others	Total
Baden-Württemberg	9,365	1,400	2,225	685	110	1,385	615	435	265	230	950	17,660
Bavaria	11,290	3,825	2,950	1,230	1,650	1,925	630	1,375	425	650	2,260	28,210
Berlin	2,985	2,545	2,170	1,220	2,560	750	665	375	1,235	135	3,730	18,370
Brandenburg	755	2,085	65	90	70	30	55	25	30	45	255	3,505
Bremen	60	-40	225	15	5	-10	15	-20	-5	-	25	260
Hamburg	-265	-240	-120	-120	-175	-10	-35	-105	-190	-5	-405	-1,680
Hesse	4,835	1,070	2,690	870	580	340	310	340	145	70	995	12,235
Lower Saxony	5,675	2,615	1,680	460	150	285	270	205	140	190	885	12,555
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	635	1,070	335	40	125	85	45	20	25	45	85	2,500
North Rhine-Westphalia	7,930	3,830	5,335	2,050	685	635	780	235	335	185	2,155	24,155
Rhineland-Palatinate	3,635	1,265	1,470	420	300	240	220	85	125	35	1,185	8,985
Saarland	515	80	165	-	50	80	30	10	30	115	285	1,355
Saxony	1,315	1,375	480	400	240	265	260	95	70	615	985	6,105
Saxony-Anhalt	720	935	475	135	105	110	75	110	35	15	200	2,900
Schleswig-Holstein	935	595	415	95	135	45	65	65	45	25	210	2,630
Thuringia	1,390	900	240	160	95	135	55	75	20	365	335	3,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,765</b>	<b>23,310</b>	<b>20,800</b>	<b>7,735</b>	<b>6,685</b>	<b>6,290</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>3,315</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>14,135</b>	<b>143,515</b>

Source: AZR as of 31/03/2023

## THE AUTHOR

Johannes Graf is a research associate at the Research Centre Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Division FIII - Migration and Integration: Monitoring and Series of Reports).

Contact:

johannes.graf@bamf.bund.de

## IMPRINT

### Publisher:

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge  
Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl  
90461 Nürnberg

### Version:

06/2023

### Layout:

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg

### Picture:

Title: iStock

### ISBN:

978-3-944674-42-1

### ISSN:

2750-1604


### Suggested Citation:


Graf, J. (2023). Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany. Annual Report 2022 (Reports on Migration and Integration, Series 2). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. <https://doi.org/10.48570/bamf.fz.bericht.r2.en.2023.freizueg.jb.2022.1.0>

This publication is issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees as part of its public relations work. The publication is distributed free of charge and is not intended for sale. It may not be used by political parties or by election canvassers or election workers during an election campaign for the purpose of election canvassing. This applies to federal, state and local elections as well as to elections to the European Parliament.

### Visit us:

 [www.facebook.com/bamf.socialmedia](https://www.facebook.com/bamf.socialmedia)

 @BAMF\_Dialog

 @bamf\_bund