



Federal Ministry
of the Interior
and Community



Federal Office
for Migration
and Refugees

Migration Report 2020

Key Results



Migration Report 2020:

The most important trends in immigration to and emigration from Germany

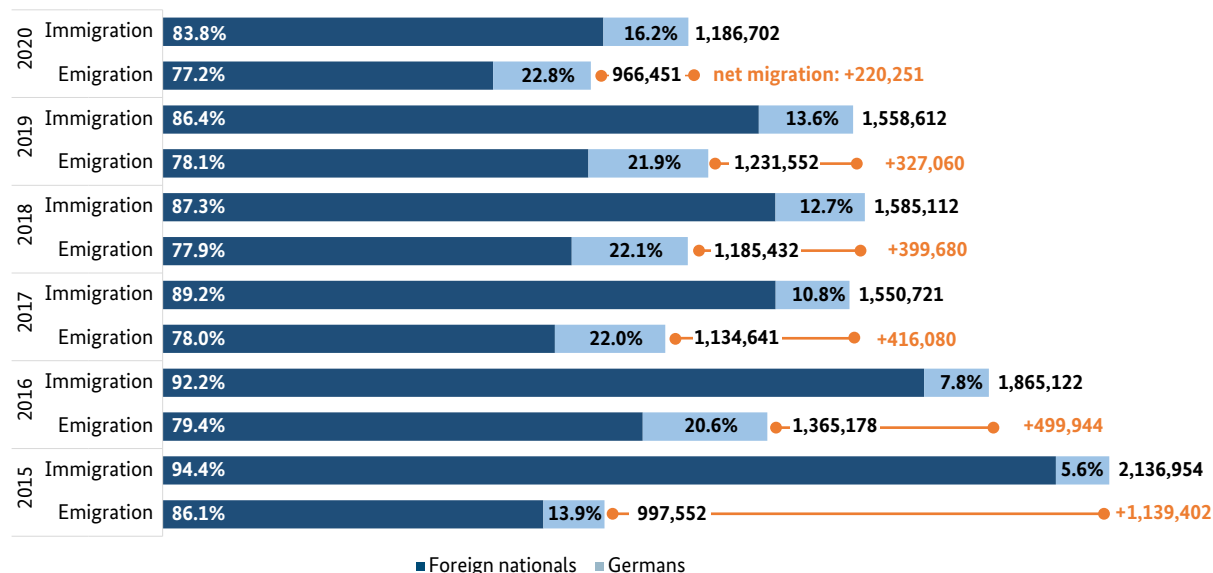
COVID-19 pandemic severely restricts migration

Net migration (difference between immigration and emigration) has been declining continuously in Germany since 2016. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified this trend. As a result of the global travel restrictions that were caused by the pandemic, the decline in migration was particularly noticeable from March 2020 onwards. Nevertheless, migration did not come to a standstill; in total, more people still migrated to Germany than left. In 2020, a total of 1,186,702 arrivals and 966,451 departures were recorded, so that immigration to Germany

decreased by 23.9%, and emigration fell by 21.5% in comparison to 2019. These developments culminated in net migration of +220,251 persons. This was a significantly lower value than in 2019 (+327,060 persons). More or less pronounced declines were therefore also shown in the individual forms of migration.

The decrease in external migration compared to 2019 is primarily dominated by foreign nationals. While inflows of German nationals fell by only 9.8% (outflows -18.5%), these figures were significantly higher for foreign nationals (inflows: -26.1%, outflows: -22.4%).

Total migration since 2015^{1,2,3}



- 1) From the 2016 reporting year onwards, comparability of results with prior-year figures is limited because of methodological changes and refinements of measuring techniques. Precision of results is limited by inconsistencies associated with the requirements of law for the treatment of persons seeking protection. Detailed information is available on the Federal Statistical Office's website on migration.
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- 3) As part of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a time delay in the recording of migration cases in the statistics from mid-March 2020 onwards due to restrictions on public access to registration offices or extended deadlines for registration and de-registration.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

More than two thirds of all immigration from European countries

In 2020, 69.1% of all immigrants (2019: 66.4%) came to Germany from European countries¹, of which 54.6% came from EU states (incl. the United Kingdom).² 11.4% of the immigrants came from an Asian country. Only 3.6% came to Germany from African countries and 4.7% from America, Australia and Oceania.³

The importance of intra-European migration is also reflected in the number of departures: Europe was the main destination region here too. About two-thirds of

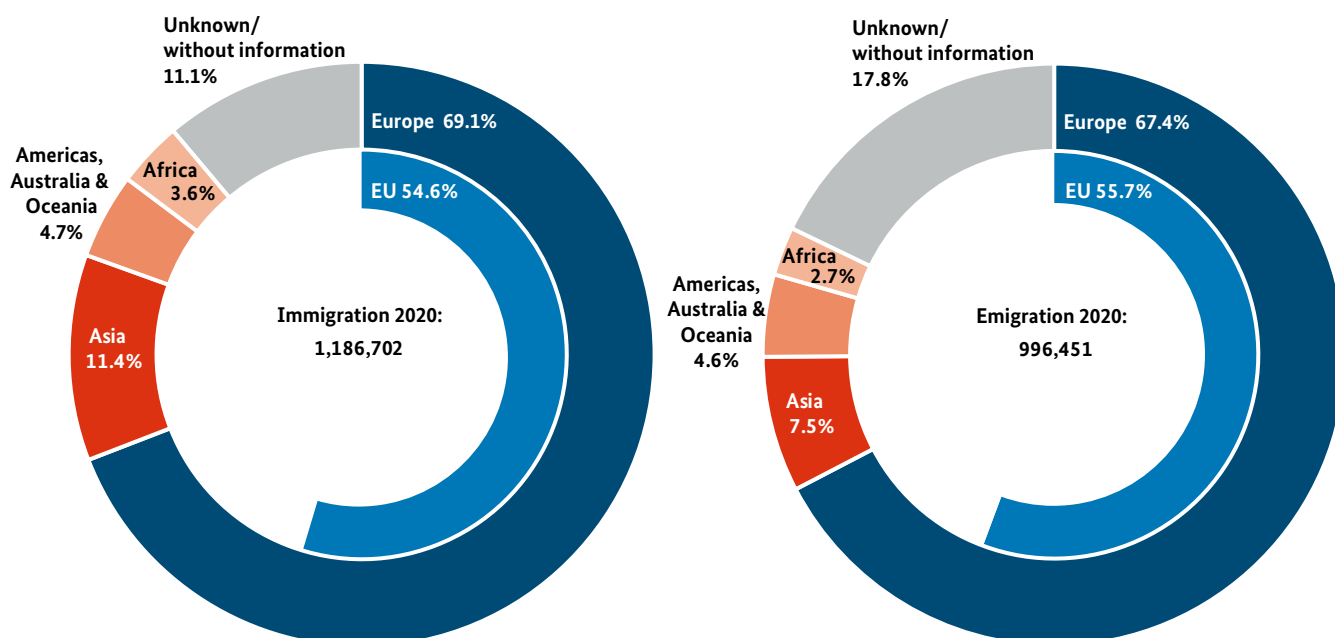
those emigrating moved from Germany to another European country in 2020 (67.4%; 2019: 67.2%); 55.7% migrated to other EU Member States including the United Kingdom. Emigration to Asia accounted for 7.5%; emigration to the Americas, Australia and Oceania came to 4.6%. Only 2.7% of the registered emigrants moved to Africa.

As in previous years, Romania was again the main country of origin for immigrants in 2020 (15.7% of all immigrants), followed by Poland (8.7%) and Bulgaria (6.1%). The other quantitatively important countries of origin in 2020 were Italy, Turkey, Croatia, Hungary, Spain, Greece and Serbia. Thus, 8 of the 10 main countries of origin for immigrants in 2020 are EU countries.

Romania, Poland and Bulgaria were also the most important destinations for emigration in 2020. These countries thus evidence large migration volumes; i. e., many people migrate from these countries to Germany, and many others emigrate there again. The largest net volume of migration in 2020 was from Romania (+36,824) and Bulgaria (+22,757). This is followed by Syria with +18,196; however, this state, like other important countries of origin of asylum seekers, is

- 1 European Union and European third countries including Turkey and the Russian Federation (the official statistics count both as Europe).
- 2 The figures for total migration in 2019 and 2020 refer to the EU-28 level including the United Kingdom. The latter is considered in the Migration Report 2020 as still belonging to the EU, see the explanations in the report itself.
- 3 This section focuses on the migrants' countries of origin and destination, not on their nationality. As a result, for example, immigration from EU countries might also include third-country nationals who moved from EU countries to Germany. See the section on "Internal EU migration" for more about the migration of EU nationals.

Migration by regions of origin and destination in 2020¹

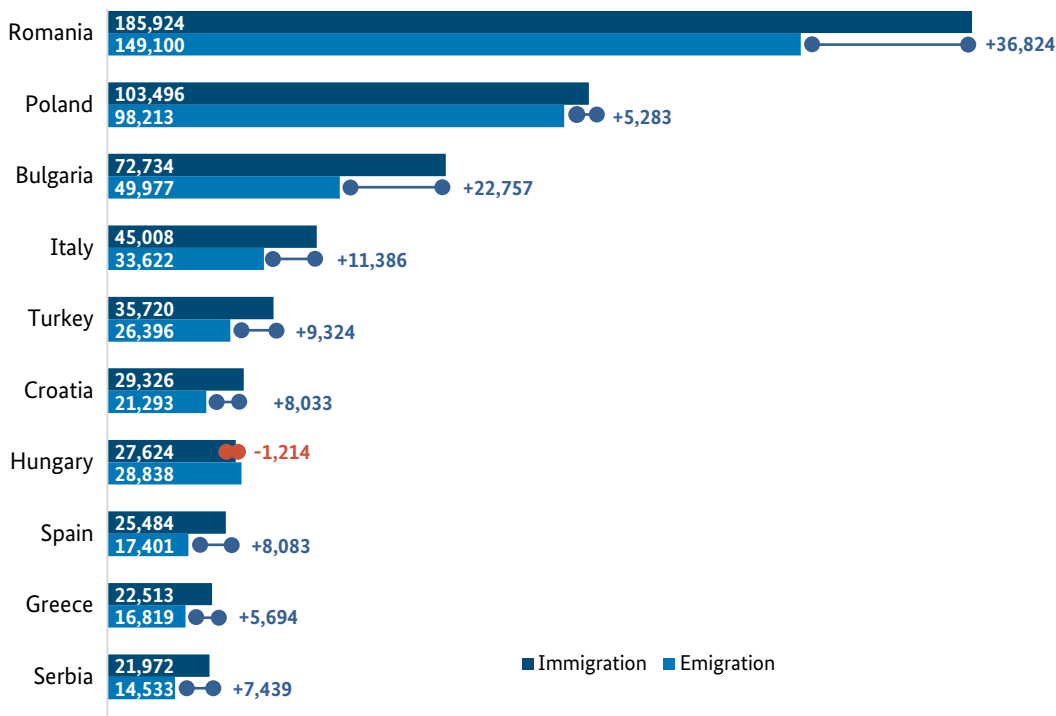


- 1) As part of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a time delay in the recording of migration cases in the statistics from mid-March 2020 onwards due to restrictions on public access to registration offices or extended deadlines for registration and de-registration.

Note: Europe incl. Turkey and Russian Federation, EU incl. United Kingdom (EU 28).

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Migration by most common countries of origin and destination in the year 2020¹



1) As part of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a time delay in the recording of migration cases in the statistics from mid-March 2020 onwards due to restrictions on public access to registration offices or extended deadlines for registration and deregistration.

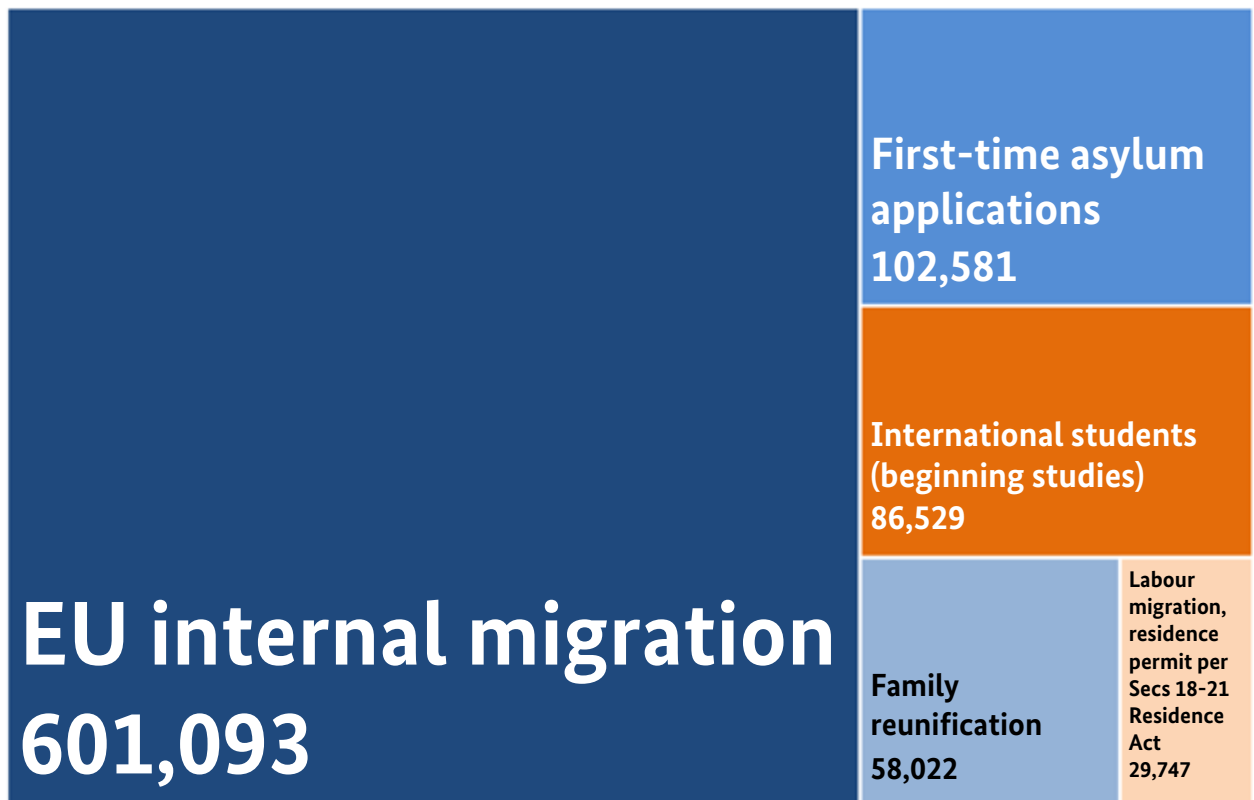
Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

no longer among the 10 most important countries of origin of immigration. The positive net migration from Syria has declined steadily in recent years (2019: +23,967, 2018: +28,814).

Overview of immigrant groups

Immigration to Germany has changed considerably since 2015 in terms of both scope and composition, and was additionally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Migration has been dominated primarily by movements from and to other European states. In 2020, EU nationals accounted for 50.7% of

immigrants to Germany (2019: 51.1%). Migration for humanitarian reasons decreased once again: While 142,509 first applications for asylum were received in 2019, the figure decreased to 102,581 (-28.0%) in 2020. Immigration for family reunification decreased in 2020: 58,022 residence permits were granted to third-country nationals in 2020 (2019: 96,633, -40.0%). 86,529 international students (who obtained their qualification for higher education in another country) started their studies in Germany (2019: 110,974, -22.0%) and 29,747 third-country nationals were granted a residence permits for employment.

Most important migration groups in 2020

Because of different recording criteria (e.g., per-case vs. per-person statistics) and duplicate counts (e.g., EU internal migration and seasonal workers from EU states), the immigrant groups cannot be added up to a meaningful total.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Central Register of Foreign Nationals

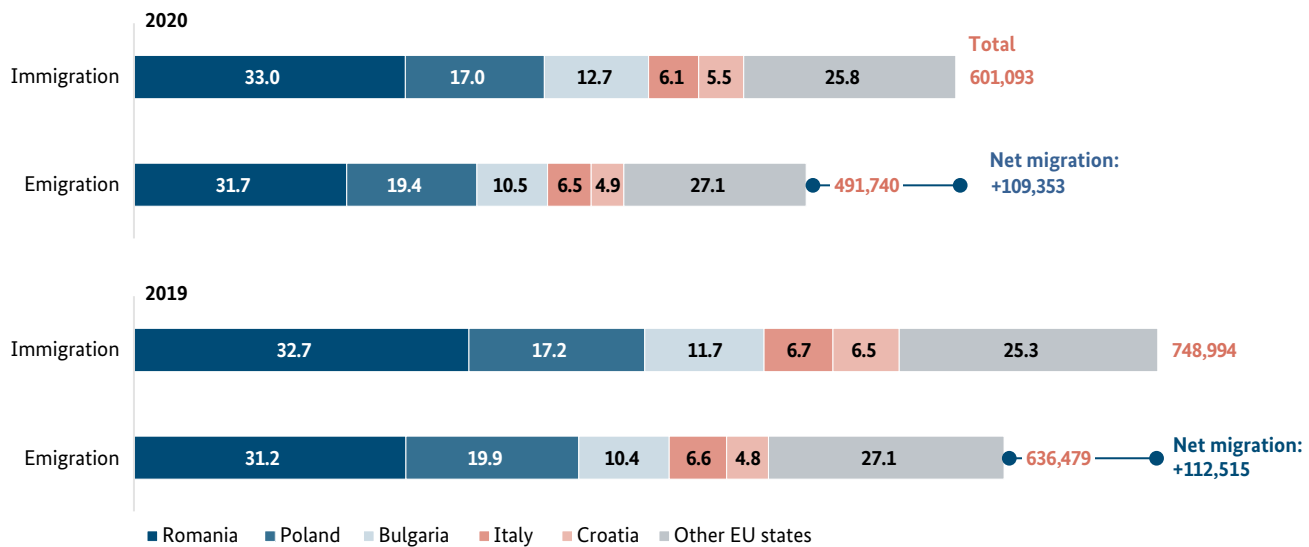
Internal EU migration

A more detailed look at immigration and emigration by EU nationals (incl. United Kingdom, excluding Germans) in 2020 shows: The number of immigrants decreased by 19.7% compared to the previous year, to 601,093 (2019: 748,994). The temporary entry restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a strong decrease in immigration for almost all nationalities, but also in emigration. The only exceptions were Austria and Luxembourg, for whose nationals inflows rose

by 0.6% and 22.2% from the year before. Non-German EU nationals thus accounted for 50.7% of total immigration (2019: 48.1%).

The total number of EU citizens who emigrated from Germany declined in 2020 to 491,740 (-22.7%, 2019: 636,479). The share of non-German EU nationals among total emigrants fell from 51.7% in 2019 to 50.9% in 2020. Overall, the net migration of EU citizens came to +109,353; this is also slightly lower compared to the previous year (2019: +112,515).

Immigration and emigration by EU nationals to and from Germany in 2019¹ and 2020²



- 1) The 2019 migration figures include ex officio de-registrations of EU nationals made by registration authorities in the context of the European election. For this reason, the departure figure for 2019 is only comparable to a limited extent with the values before and after it.
- 2) Incl. United Kingdom. As part of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a time delay in the recording of migration cases in the statistics from mid-March 2020 onwards due to restrictions on public access to registration offices or extended deadlines for registration and de-registration.

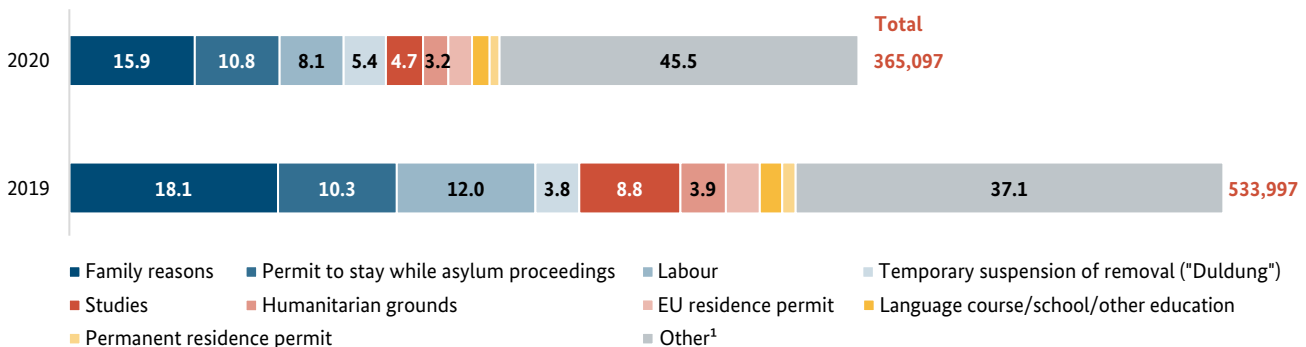
Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Migration of third-country nationals

Due to the pandemic, the immigration of third-country nationals fell by 31.6% overall. A closer look at the individual purposes of residence of third-country nationals shows that a decline was recorded in all areas, especially the number of third-country nationals immigrating for university-level studies (-63.5%), residence permits for employment (-53.7%) and on humanitarian grounds (-43.9%).

15.9% of the third-country nationals who came in 2020 to Germany received a residence permit for family reasons and 8.1% obtained a title for qualified employment. 6.9% of the third-country nationals who came to Germany were international students, attending a school or language course, or completing another course of training. 3.2% of the third-country nationals who came to Germany in 2020 received a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, 10.8% received a residence permit to conduct an asylum procedure and 5.4% a temporary suspension of removal.

Immigration of third-country nationals by residence permit in 2019 and 2020, in per cent



- 1) This includes, among others, persons who hold another residence permission, who have applied for a residence permit or who are exempt from a residence permit requirement.

Note: Figures below 3% are not shown.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Labour migration

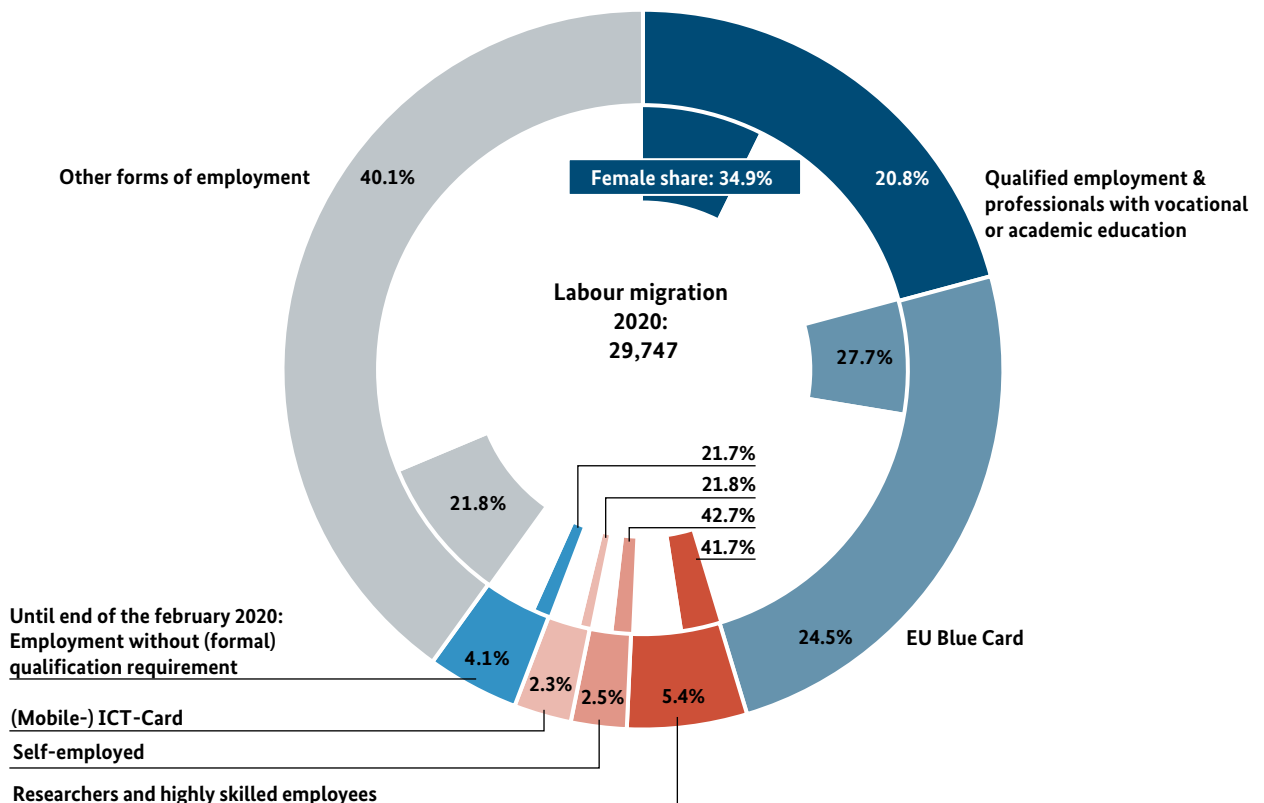
The Skilled Labour Immigration Act (Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz – FEG) brought about a significant change to the law on labour migration in Germany. The Act came into force on 1 March 2020 and aims to make Germany even more attractive for the immigration of skilled workers from third countries. At the same time, however, the spreading COVID-19 pandemic slowed down international mobility and thus also the influx of labour migrants. Since March 2020, due to the pandemic, it was temporarily no longer possible to apply for a visa abroad, or only under considerably more difficult conditions. In Germany, the temporary closure of foreigners authorities to the public also led to a decline in the number of residence permits issued for employment purposes.

In 2020, 29,747 persons came to Germany who received a residence permit for employment. This cor-

responds to a decrease of 53.7% compared to 2019. Due to the developments outlined above as well as changes in statistical recording resulting from the FEG, the figures for labour migration of third-country nationals in 2020 can only be compared with those of previous years to a very limited extent. An assessment of the effects of the FEG is therefore not yet possible on this basis.

Looking at the structure of labour migration to Germany in 2020, it becomes apparent that the majority of the persons concerned are qualified or highly-qualified experts (a total of 16,597 persons, or 55.8%). This group includes previous residence titles for qualified employment (until the end of February 2020), skilled persons with vocational or academic training, highly-qualified individuals, researchers, holders of a (mobile) ICT Card or of an EU Blue Card, and self-employed persons. The share of EU Blue Card holders as the largest single group is 24.5%.

Immigration from non-EU countries for employment purposes (residence permits granted for entry in 2020)



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

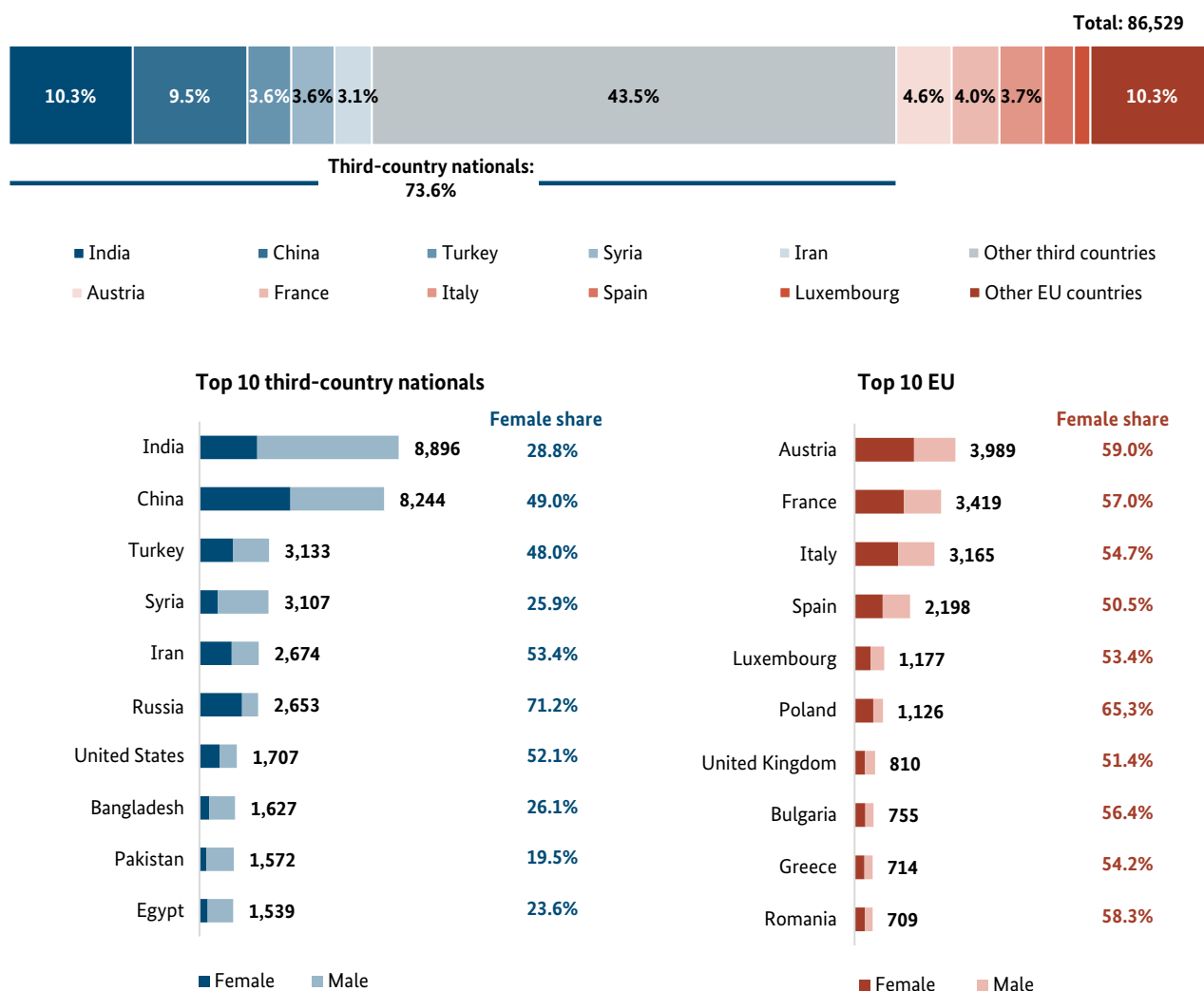
International students

The number of international students⁴ who began their studies in Germany fell from 110,974 in 2019 to 86,529 in 2020, thus declining by 22.0%. This means that the lowest number of foreign students among first-year students at German higher education institutions since 2014 was recorded in 2020. This is also likely to be connected with the international mobility restrictions that were imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The largest group of foreign students who began university-level studies in Germany in 2020 were Indian nationals (8,896 or 10.3%). They thus displaced students from China in second place, who had been in first place every year since 2006 (in 2020: 8,244 or 9.5%). The largest group of foreign students from EU countries came from Austria, ranking third with 3,989 students or 4.6%. After students from third countries still made up four of the five largest groups in 2019 (in addition to China and India, Syria and the United States were represented), in 2020, France (3,419 or 4.0%) and Italy (3,165 or 3.7%), and thus EU states, now also occupied these places alongside Austria.

⁴ Persons of foreign nationality with a higher education entrance qualification obtained abroad.

International students in the first semester of higher education, by most common nationalities (summer semester 2020 and winter semester 2020/2021)



Note: Figures below 3% are not shown.

Source: Federal Statistical Office

Asylum applications

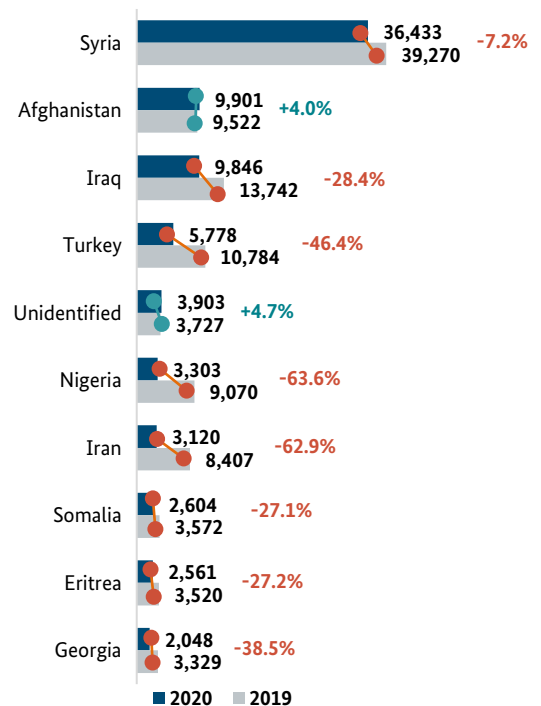
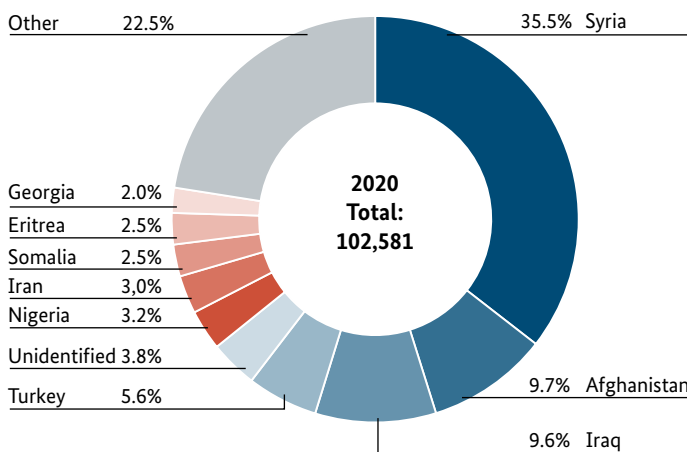
Following a peak of asylum applications in 2016 (722,370), their number has dropped significantly. That trend continued in the pandemic year 2020: 102,581 people applied for asylum for the first time, which is 28.0% less than in 2019 (142,509). 25.9% of these applications in 2020 were for children under the age of one born in Germany (26,520). Only 74.1% (76,061) were therefore cross-border asylum applications.

The evolution of refugee migration to Germany has always reflected worldwide crises and conflicts across the years. Since 2014, Syria has been in first place among the nationalities with the largest incoming numbers. This was also the case in 2020: 36,433 ap-

plications for asylum were filed by Syrian nationals, equivalent to 35.5% of the total. Compared to the previous year, the number of first-time applications from Syrian nationals nevertheless fell by 7.2% (2019: 39,270). The second most important country of origin, Afghanistan, showed an increase of 4.0% with 9,901 asylum applications (2019: 9,522). Iraq is the third most important country of origin with 9,846 initial applications and a share of 9.6% of the total number of initial applications. The number of first-time applications from Iraqi nationals has decreased by 28.4% compared to the previous year (2019: 13,742).

The composition of the ten nationalities with the highest numbers has not changed between 2019 and 2020, only their order.

First-time asylum applications by the ten most common nationalities in 2020



Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

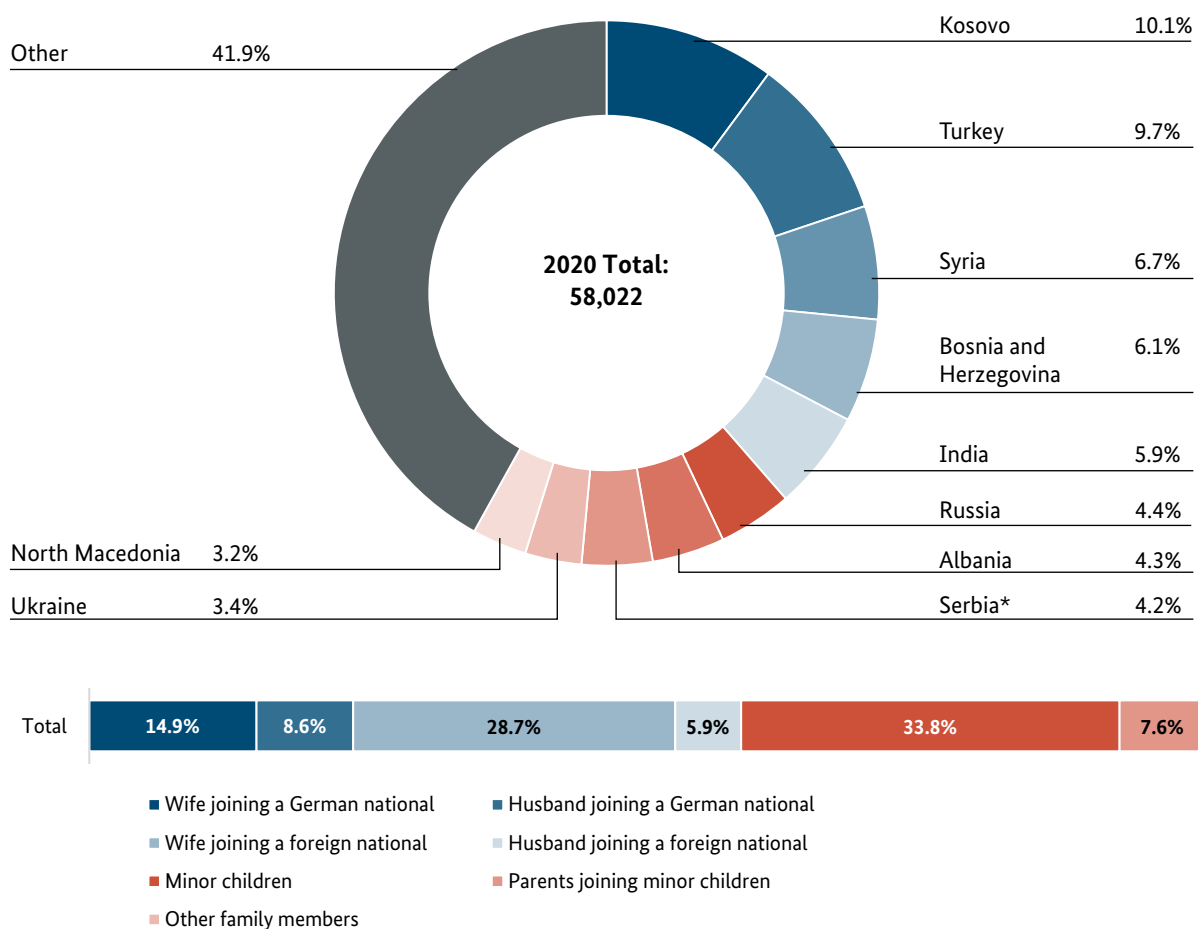
Family reunification of third-country nationals

In total, 58,022 persons were granted residence permits on family grounds in Germany (2019: 96,633). Compared to the previous year, the number fell by 40.0% due to the pandemic. In 6,412 cases, these were relatives who came to Germany to join family members with granted protection⁵ in the context of family reunification. Their share of the total family reunification amounted to 11.1%. Slightly more than half (55.9%) of all residence permits issued for family reasons concerned the subsequent immigration of spouses, a good third (33.8%) minor children.

In 2020, Kosovar nationals (5,887 or 10.1% of the residence permits issued have been the largest group for family reunification. However, migration for family reasons also decreased there by 24.7% compared to the previous year. The second largest group was Turkish nationals with 5,632 residence permits (9.7%) issued for family reasons in 2020, 35.3% less than in the previous year (2019: 8,708). Already since 2018, family reunification of Syrian nationals has been declining significantly. This trend continued in 2020 with a decline by 69.5% (2020: 3,900; 2019: 12,790).

⁵ Relatives of persons entitled to asylum, recognised refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection.

Migration for family reasons (residence permits granted), ten most frequent nationalities in 2020



* Incl. former Serbia and Montenegro

Note: Figures below 3% are not shown.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

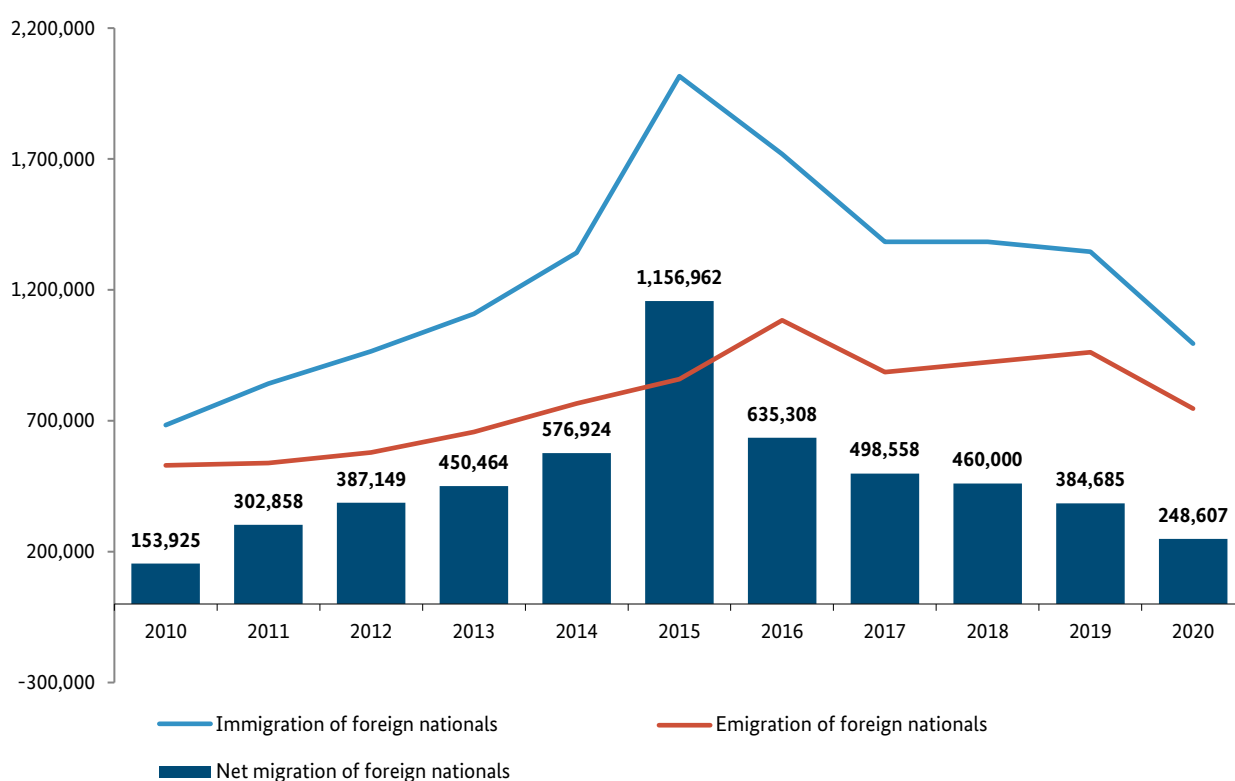
Resettlement of ethnic Germans

Following a steady decrease from 2001 (around 98,500 persons) to 2012 (around 1,800 persons), subsequent years saw a slight increase, up to 7,155 persons in 2019, in the immigration of resettled ethnic Germans and their family members – a consequence of changes in the law that most notably made family reunification easier. In 2020, however, only 4,309 persons were registered as resettled ethnic Germans by the Federal Office of Administration. This is 39.8% less than in the previous year, which in turn can be explained by restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emigration from Germany

While immigration increased, after a certain delay an increased number of foreign nationals have also been leaving Germany, as the figures since 2010 show. Emigration remained relatively constant until 2012; then the figure rose until it peaked, for the time being, in 2016. From 2010 to 2020, 13.8 million people moved to Germany from other countries. But 8.5 million left the country over the same period.

Immigration and emigration of foreign nationals to and from Germany since 2010^{1,2,3}



- 1) From the 2016 reporting year onwards, comparability of results with prior-year figures is limited because of methodological changes and refinements of measuring techniques. Precision of results is limited by inconsistencies associated with the requirements of law for the treatment of persons seeking protection. Detailed information is available on the Federal Statistical Office's website on migration.
- 2) The 2019 migration figures include ex officio de-registrations of EU nationals made by registration authorities in the context of the European election. For this reason, the departure figure for 2019 is only comparable to a limited extent with the values before and after it.
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Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

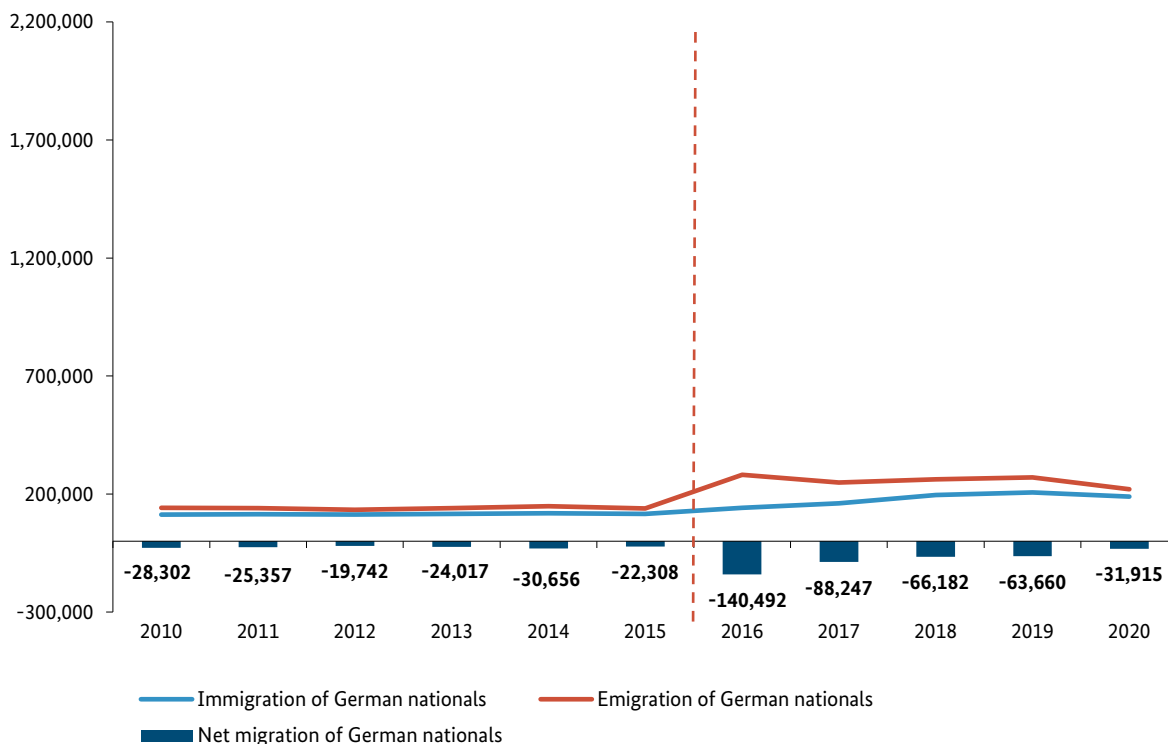
In 2020, 746,212 departures of foreign nationals were registered (2019: 961,258). There were 994,819 arrivals in the same period. The net migration among persons from other countries thus amounted to +248,607, a 35.4% decrease from 2019 (+384,685).

For German nationals, emigration has also decreased compared to 2019. German nationals were the second-largest group of immigrants in 2020 (188,324 in-

flows), following Romanians, but at the same time, the number of emigrants decreased from the prior year, to 220,239 (-18.5%, 2019: 270,294). In 2020, the net migration⁶ of German nationals was -31,915 (2019: -63,660).

⁶ Excluding ethnic Germans included in the procedure under the laws on expellees, who were recorded as immigrating Germans in the immigration statistics.

Immigration and emigration of German nationals to and from Germany since 2010^{1,2,3}



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Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Immigration in European comparison

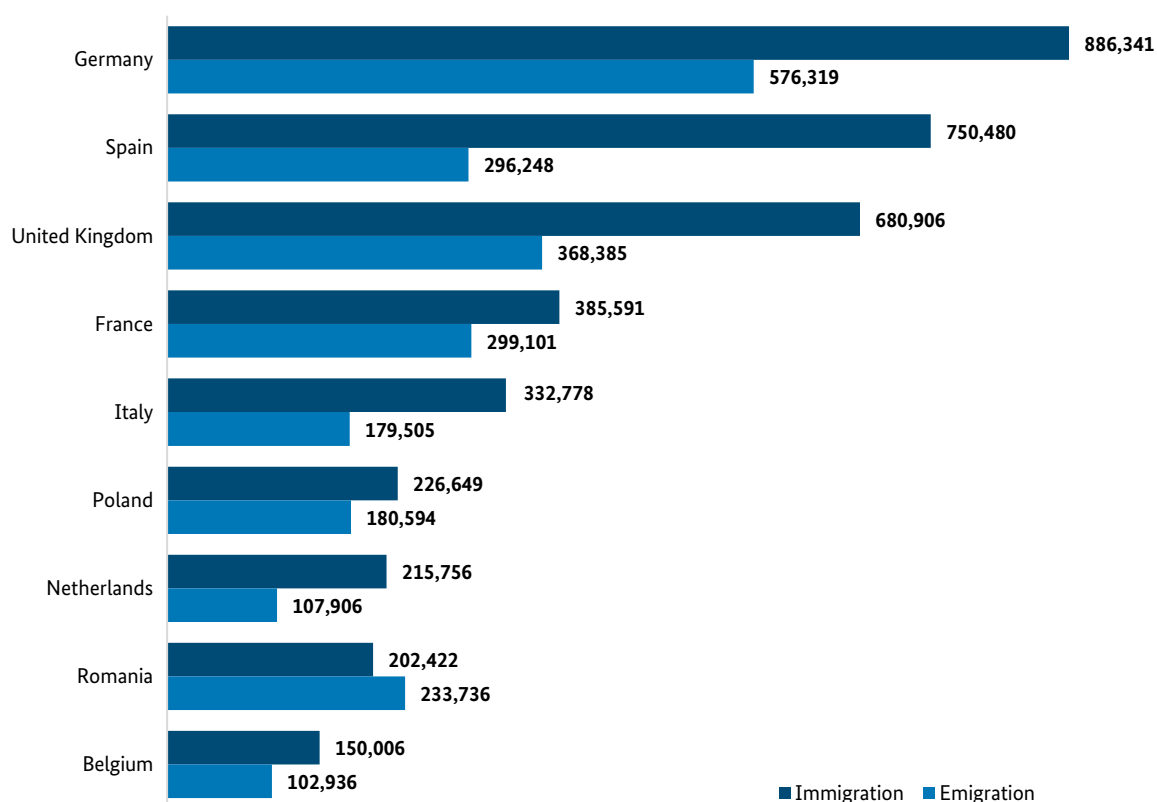
Compared to other European countries, Germany is still one of the main destination countries for migration. Among the EU states, Germany had the highest longer-term immigration⁷ in 2019⁸ (886,341 immigrants). With 576,319 persons emigrating in 2019, Germany had a net migration of +310,022 (2018: +353,471). Other countries with large immigration figures were Spain, the United Kingdom, France and Italy.

A different picture emerges when looking at the ratio of immigration figures to the respective population size: in addition to Malta with immigrants 57.4 per 1,000 inhabitants, Luxembourg (43.4) and Cyprus (29.9) also had high immigration figures in relative terms. Germany's immigration rate in comparison with other EU states was in the middle, with 10.7 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants.

7 "Longer-term" means that the (intended) duration of stay of the immigrating person was at least one year.

8 Comparable figures for the EU only become available after a delay of about two years, therefore only the figures from 2018 can be considered here.

Immigration and emigration (as defined by the UN) in 2019 by most frequent destination countries in the EU



Source: Eurostat (migr_imm1ctz/migr_emi1ctz, query status: 23.09.2021)

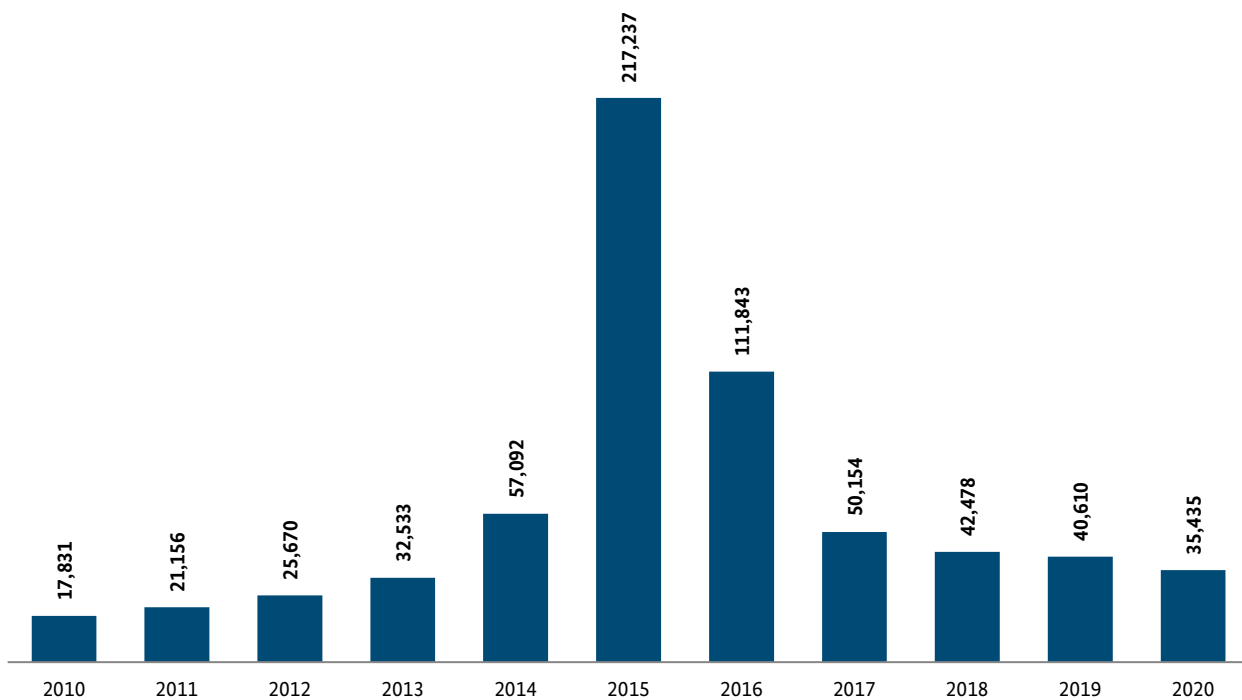
Irregular migration

Statistics of the Federal Police cover foreign nationals whom the Federal Police or other authorities policing cross-border traffic have identified as entering the country without permission. There were a total of 35,435 such identifications in 2020, equivalent to a decrease of 12.7% from the prior year (2019: 40,610).

If foreign nationals do not voluntarily comply with an established, enforceable requirement to leave the

country, the procedure for removal intervenes. In 2020, 10,800 removals were carried out (2019: 22,097). Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, removals decreased by 51.1% compared to the previous year. Removals in 2020 also include 2,953 transfers to other EU Member states or Schengen countries under the Dublin procedure. This corresponds to 27.3% of the total number of removals. Out of the removals that took place in 2020, 1,006 involved Albanian nationals, 995 were Georgian, 754 were Serbian, 654 were Moldovan and 427 were Northern Macedonian nationals.

Identification at German borders of foreign persons entering the country without permission since 2010



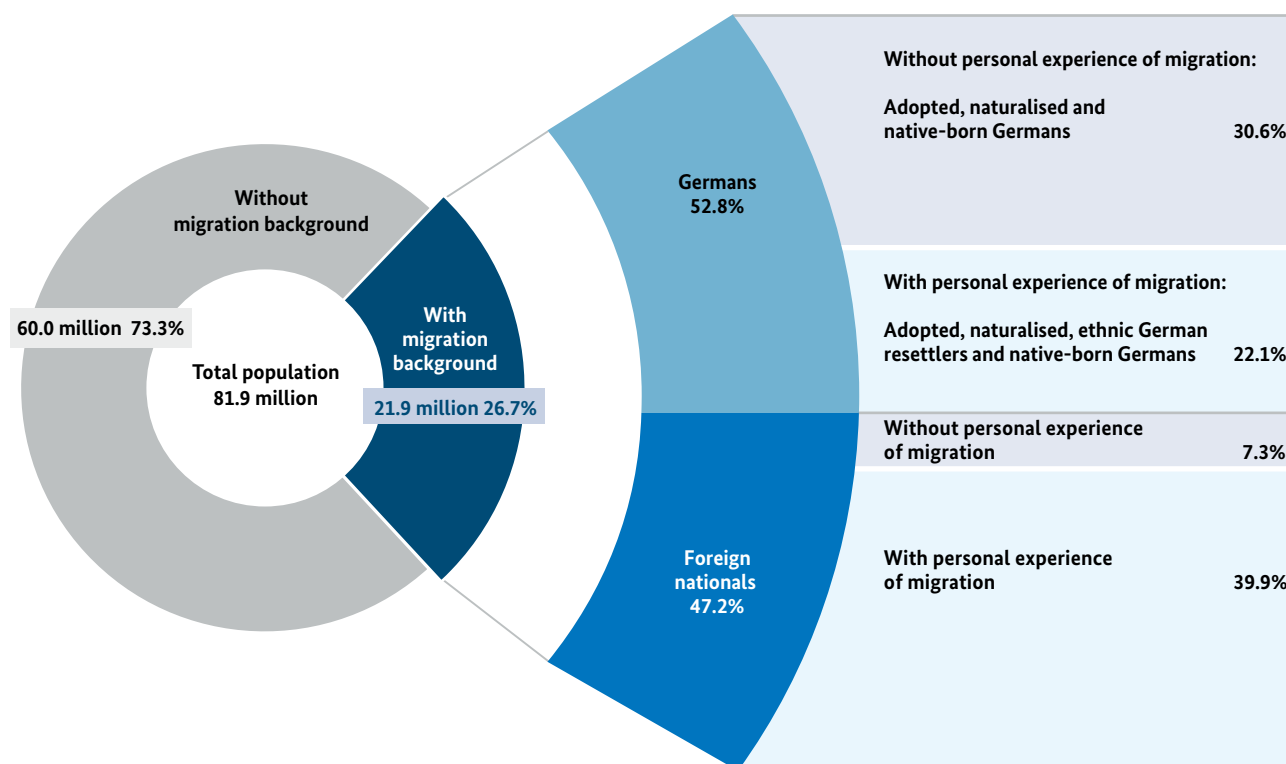
Source: Federal Police

Population with a migration background

According to the 2020 Microcensus data, 21.9 million people in Germany had a migration background, equivalent to 26.7% of the population living in German households. The Federal Statistical Office defines a person as having a migration background “if the person himself or herself, or at least one parent, did not acquire German citizenship by birth”. More than half of the people with a migration background in Germany are German nationals (52.8%), almost two thirds (62.1%) immigrated themselves, while over one third (37.9%) were born in Germany.

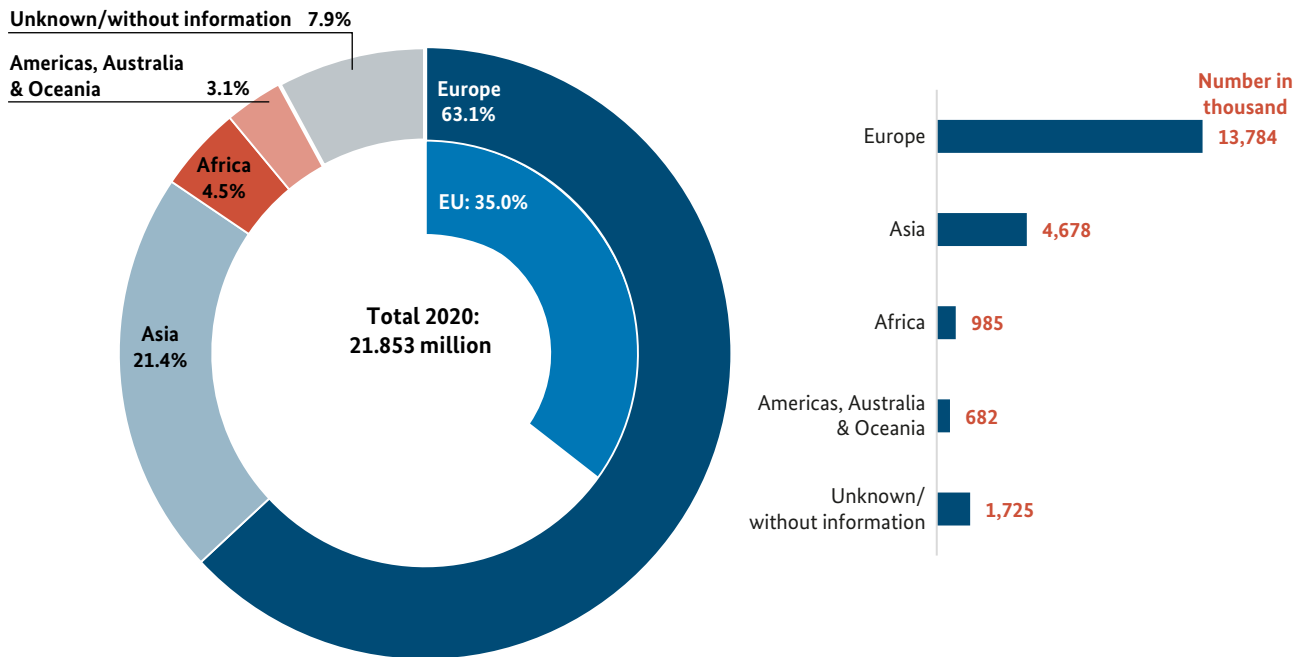
The population with a migration background was grouped by origin in the Microcensus on the basis of the respondents’ country of birth, or the origin of their parents if the respondents themselves had been born in Germany. According to the results from the 2020 Microcensus, more than one-third of persons with a migration background came from other EU countries, and nearly another third came from another European country. The remaining third is composed of persons from various countries outside Europe. In terms of the most important “countries of birth”, the roughly 2.7 million people with a Turkish migration background constituted the largest group.

Population with a migration background in Germany in the year 2020



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus

Population with migration background by region of birth¹ in Germany in the year 2020



1) Refers to respondent's own region of birth or, if born in Germany, the parents' region of birth.

Note: Europe incl. Turkey and Russian Federation, EU incl. United Kingdom (EU 28).

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus

Persons who immigrated to Germany themselves have lived in this country an average of about 21 years, but over one-third (35.5%) have lived here less than ten years.

This figure especially reflects the large refugee immigration of 2015/2016.

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