



Federal Ministry
of the Interior, Building
and Community



Federal Office
for Migration
and Refugees

Migration Report 2021

Key findings



Migration Report 2021:

The most important trends in immigration to and emigration from Germany

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020, migration in Germany was strongly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in the spring. The associated border closures and the measures to contain the pandemic at home and abroad continued to have an impact in 2021, especially in the first half of the year. In relation to the year as a whole, however, there was a clearly discernible increase in migration.

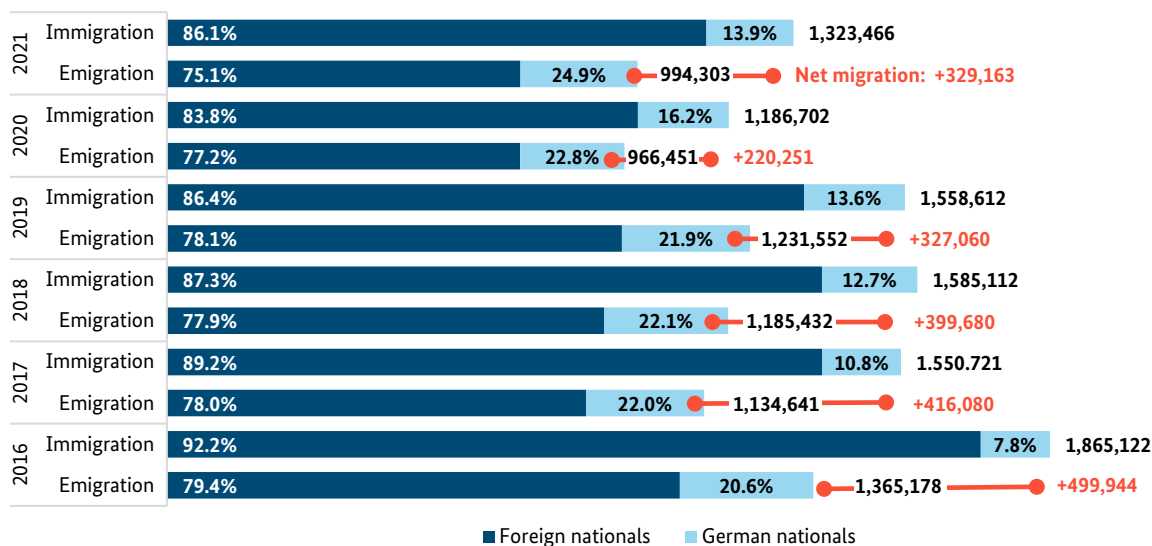
Overall migration patterns

The migration statistics for 2021 show a total of 1,323,466 immigrants and 994,303 emigrants. Com-

pared to 2020, immigration to Germany has risen by 11.5% and emigration by 2.9%. These developments culminated in net migration of +329,163 persons. This was a significantly higher value than in 2020 (+220,251 persons). With the exception of internal EU migration, the individual forms of migration also show correspondingly more or less strong increases.

The increase in external migration compared to 2020 is primarily dominated by foreign nationals. While inflows of German nationals decreased by 4.3% and outflows increased by 12.5%, the inflows of foreign nationals increased by 14.6%. The number of emigrants remained at the level of the previous year.

Total migration in Germany since 2016 ^{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.
- 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

Almost two thirds of all immigration from European countries

In 2021, 63.8% of all immigrants (2020: 69.1%) came to Germany from European countries¹, of which 46.7% came from EU countries (excluding the United Kingdom²). 17.2% of the immigrants came from an Asian country. Only 4.2% moved to Germany from African countries and 4.4% from America, Australia and Oceania (combined category).³

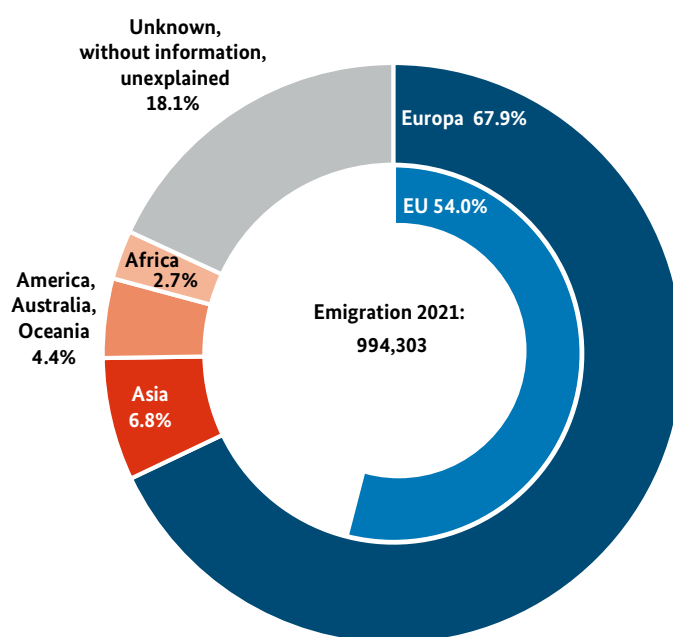
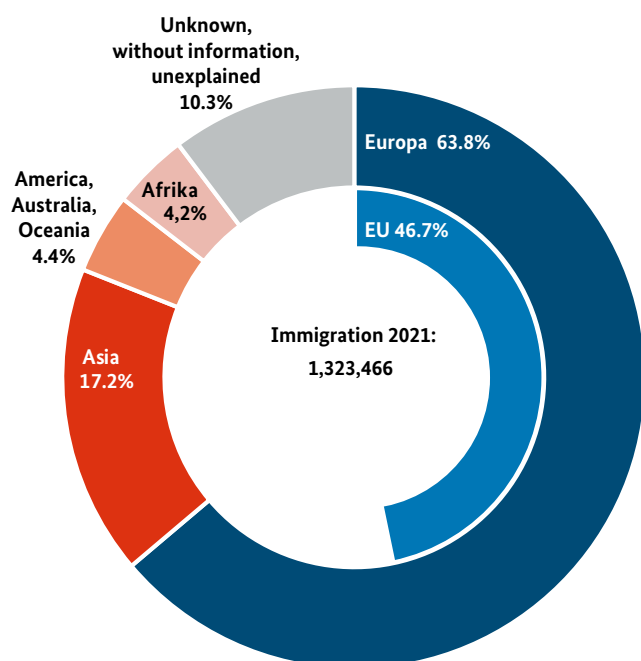
- 1 European Union and European third countries including Turkey and the Russian Federation (the official statistics count both as Europe).
- 2 On 1 February 2020, the United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union. Between this exit date and 31 December 2020, a transition period was agreed between the EU and the United Kingdom in which the EU freedom of movement continued to apply to UK nationals. Therefore, for the reporting year 2020, the United Kingdom was still counted as an EU state in the migration report. From the reporting year 2021, however, it will be uniformly listed as a third country in the category "Other Europe". This means that the EU now consists of 27 member states.
- 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.

The importance of intra-European migration is also reflected in the number of departures: Europe was the main destination region here too. In 2021, more than two-thirds of emigrants moved from Germany to another European country (67.9%, 2020: 67.4%), 54.0% migrated to other EU Member States. The share of emigration to Asia was 6.8%, and to America, Australia and Oceania (combined category) 4.4%. Only 2.7% of all emigrants migrated to Africa.

As in previous years, Romania was the main country of origin in 2021 (14.4% of all immigrants), followed by Poland (7.3%) and Bulgaria (5.4%). The other quantitatively important countries of origin in 2021 were Turkey, Italy, Syria, Afghanistan, India, Spain and Hungary. Thus, 6 of the 10 main countries of origin for immigrants in are EU countries.

Romania, Poland and Bulgaria were also the most important destinations for emigrants in 2021. These countries thus evidence large migration volume, i.e. many people migrate from these countries to Germany, while many others emigrate there again. The largest positive net migration in 2021 was recorded for Syria (+41,479) and Romania (+35,254). Afghanistan follows with +31,435.

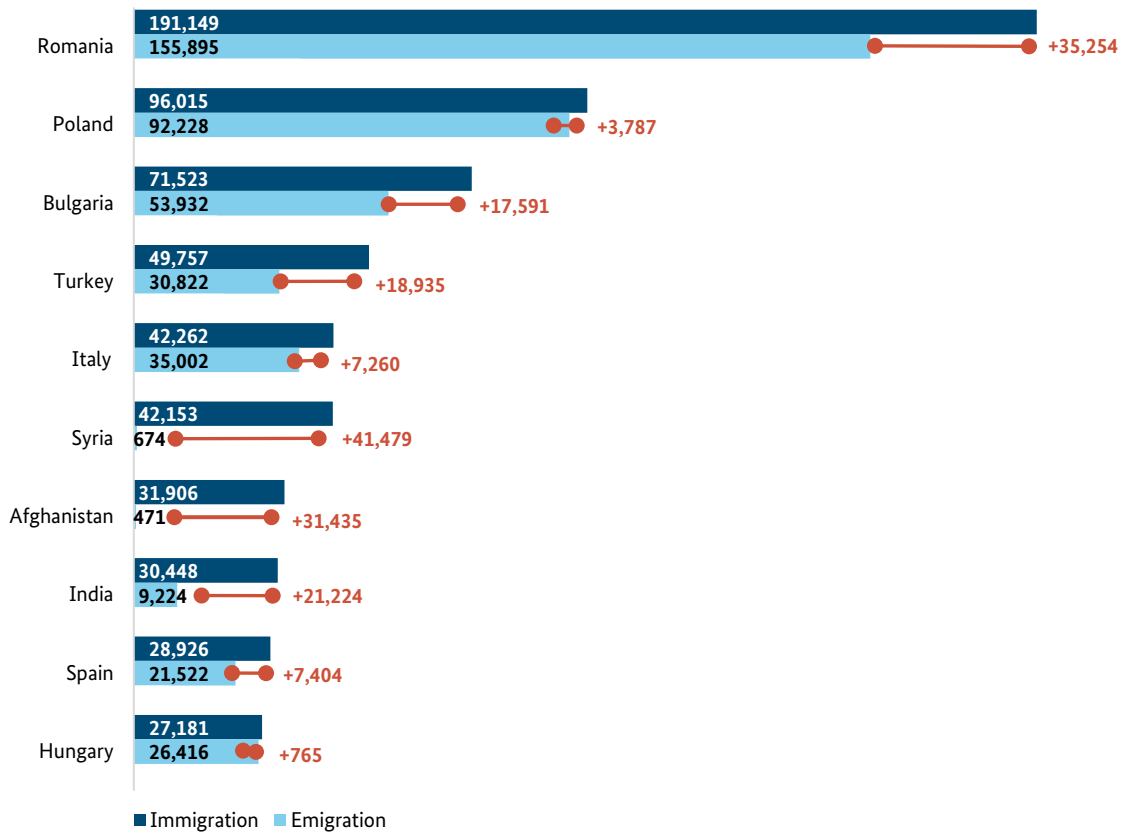
Migration by regions of origin and destination in 2021



Note: Europe incl. Turkey and Russian Federation.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Migration by most common countries of origin and destination in 2021



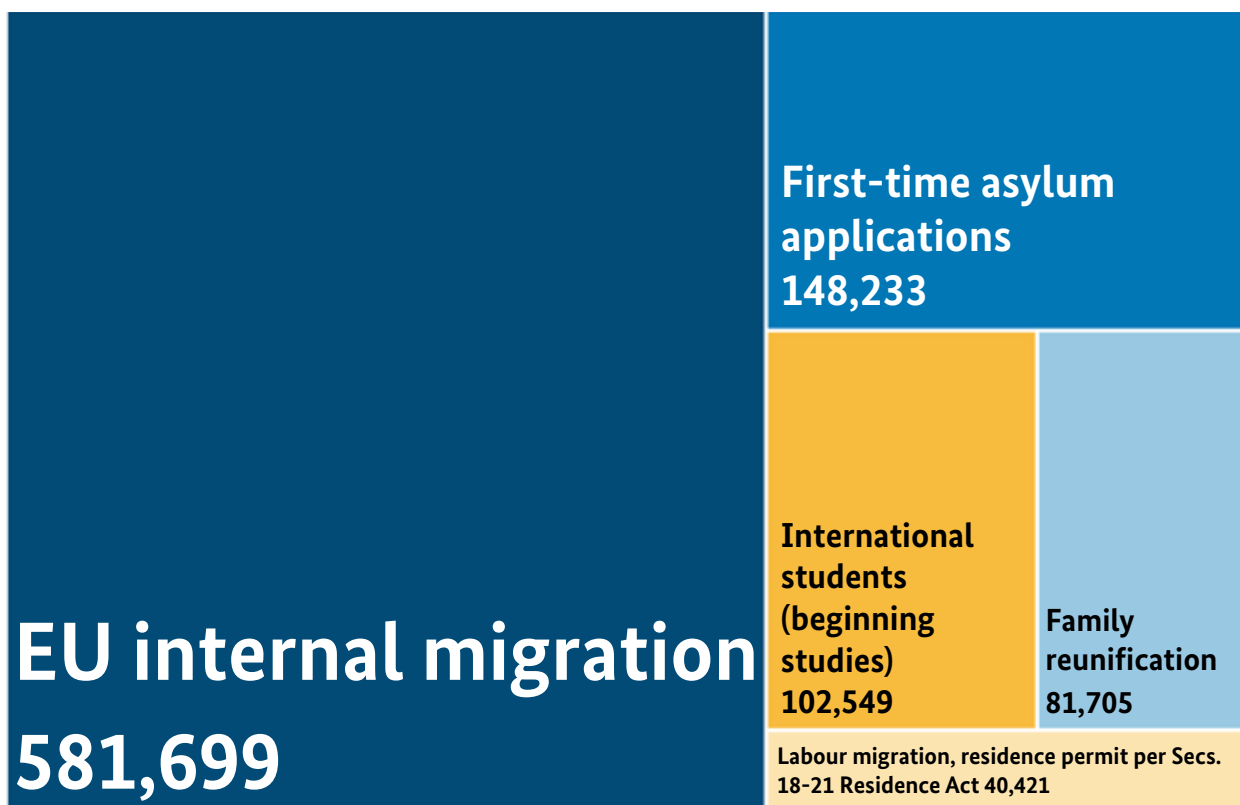
Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Overview of immigration groups

In 2021, EU nationals accounted for 44.0% of immigration to Germany (2020: 50.7%). Migration for humanitarian reasons has increased again for the first time since 2016: While 102,581 first-time asylum applications were received in 2020, the number increased by 44.5% to 148,233 in 2021. In the context of family

reunification, 81,705 residence permits were issued to third-country nationals in 2021 (2020: 58,022, +40.8%). 102,549 international students (who obtained their qualification for higher education in another country) started their studies in Germany (2020: 86,529, +18.5%), and 40,421 third-country nationals were granted a residence permit for employment in 2021 (2020: 29,747, +35.9%).

Most important migration groups in 2021



Note: 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.

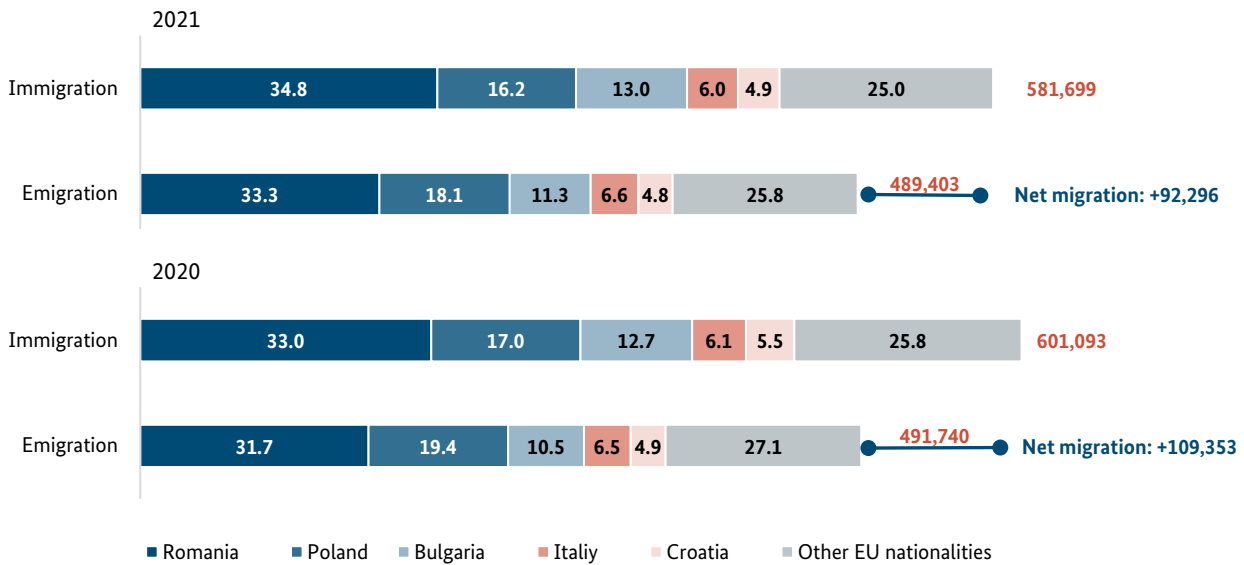
Sources: Federal Statistical Office, BAMF, Central Register of Foreigners

Internal EU migration

A more detailed look at the inflows and outflows of EU nationals (excluding German nationals) in 2021 shows: The number of immigrants decreased by 3.2% compared to the previous year, to 581,699 (2020: 601,093). The share of foreign EU nationals in total immigration was thus 44.0% (2020: 50.7%). The total

number of EU citizens who emigrated from Germany was also on the decline in 2021 to 489,403 departures (-0.5%, 2020: 491,740). The share of internal EU migration in total emigration fell from 50.9% in 2020 to 49.2% in 2021. Overall, the positive net migration of EU nationals thus amounted to +92,296; this is also slightly lower compared to the previous year (2020: +109,353).

Immigration and emigration of EU nationals to and from Germany in 2020¹⁾ and 2021²⁾ (excluding Germans, selected countries)



- 1) 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 deregistration.
- 2) From 2021 without the United Kingdom.

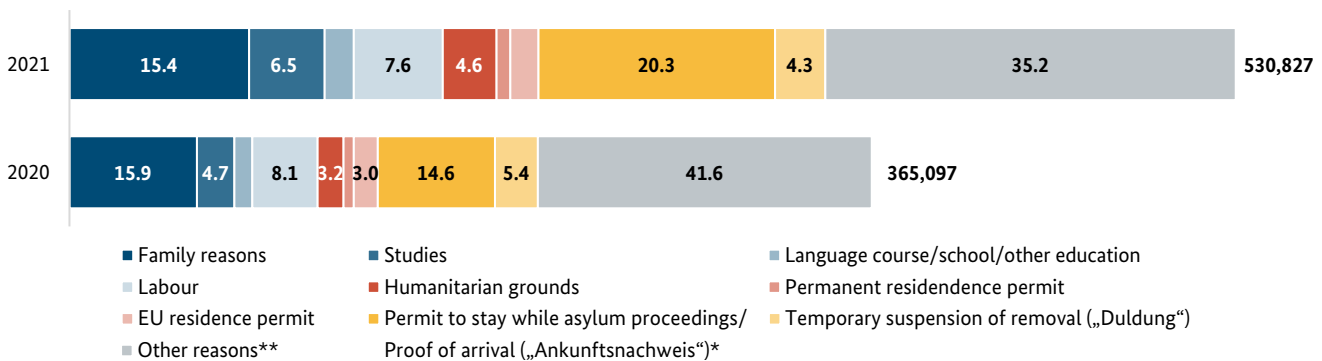
Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

Migration of third-country nationals

In this section, the immigration of third-country nationals to Germany is examined on the basis of the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR), as only this source allows statements on the purposes of resi-

dence. After a decline in the first pandemic year 2020, the immigration of third-country nationals increased by 45.4% in 2021. A look at the individual purposes of residence shows that there was an increase in all areas, especially in the area of humanitarian immigration (+107.8%) and study (+101.9%).

Immigration of third-country nationals by residence permit in 2020 and 2021



Note: Figures below 3% are not shown.

* As of the reporting year 2021, the permit to stay while asylum proceedings and the proof of arrival are reported jointly; in the Migration Report 2020 persons with a proof of arrival were still reported under the category "Other reasons". The values for 2020 were adjusted for information purposes in this presentation. A proof of arrival is a certificate of registration as an asylum seeker (§ 63a Asylum Act).

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

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

15.4% of the third-country nationals who moved to Germany in 2021 entered the country for family reasons. 9.0% of the third-country nationals who entered the country were students, attended a school or a language course or completed another training course. 7.6% have a permit for employment. In 2021, 4.6% of the third-country nationals who entered Germany received a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, 20.3% received a residence permit to conduct an asylum procedure or a proof of arrival and 4.3% were granted a temporary suspension of removal.

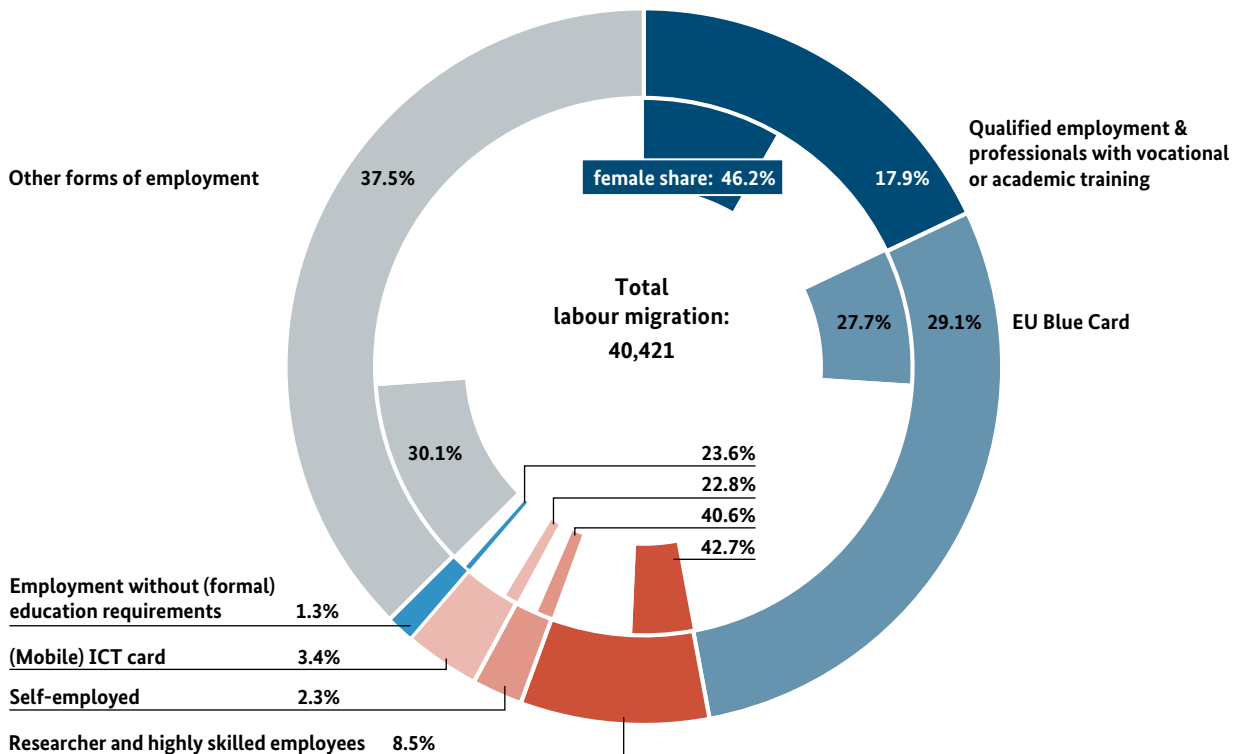
Labour migration

With the Skilled Labour Immigration Act (FEG), a major legal change for labour migration to Germany came into force on 1 March 2020 with the aim of making 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. In 2021, an increase in

numbers was recorded again: 40,421 persons entered Germany who received a residence permit for labour migration. This corresponds to an increase of 35.9% compared to 2020. Due to the pandemic-related restrictions as well as changes in the statistical recording resulting from the FEG, the figures for labour migration of third-country nationals can only be compared to a limited extent with those of the previous years. An assessment of the effects of the FEG is therefore also possible only to a limited extent on this basis.

Looking at the structure of labour migration to Germany in 2021, it becomes apparent that the majority of the persons from third countries are qualified or highly qualified professionals (a total of 24,744 persons or 61.3%). This group includes residence titles for qualified employment that existed before the FEG, skilled persons with vocational or academic training, highly qualified persons, researchers, holders of a (Mobile) ICT Card or an EU Blue Card, and self-employed individuals. The share of EU Blue Card holders as the largest single group is 29.1%.

Immigration from non-EU countries for employment purposes (residence permits granted for entry in 2021)



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

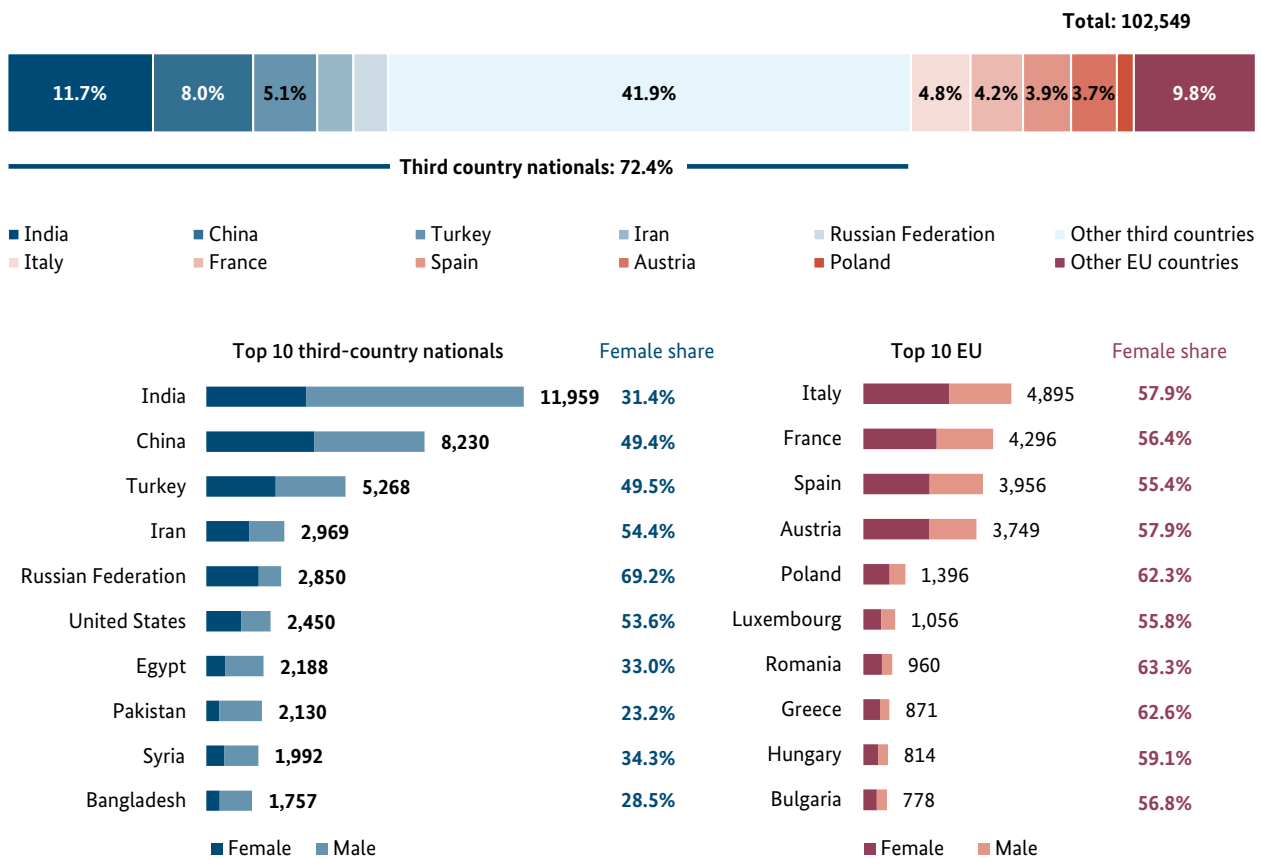
International students

The number of foreign students⁴ who began their studies in Germany rose from 86,529 in 2020 to 102,549 in 2021, an increase of 18.5%. After the lowest number of foreign students among first-semester students at German higher education institutions since 2014 in 2020, an increase in this group can be observed again.

The largest group of international students who began their studies at a German higher education institution in 2021 were, for the second time in a row, students with Indian citizenship (11,959 or 11.7%) and not - as in the years 2007 to 2019 - students from China, who made up the second largest group (8,230 or 8.0%). Students with Turkish citizenship followed in third place (5,268 or 5.1%). The largest group of foreign students from EU countries came from Italy, with 4,895 students or 4.8% in fourth place, ahead of France with 4,296 (4.2%) students.

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 2021 and winter semester 2021/2022)



Note: Figures below 3% are not shown.

Source: Federal Statistical Office

Asylum applications

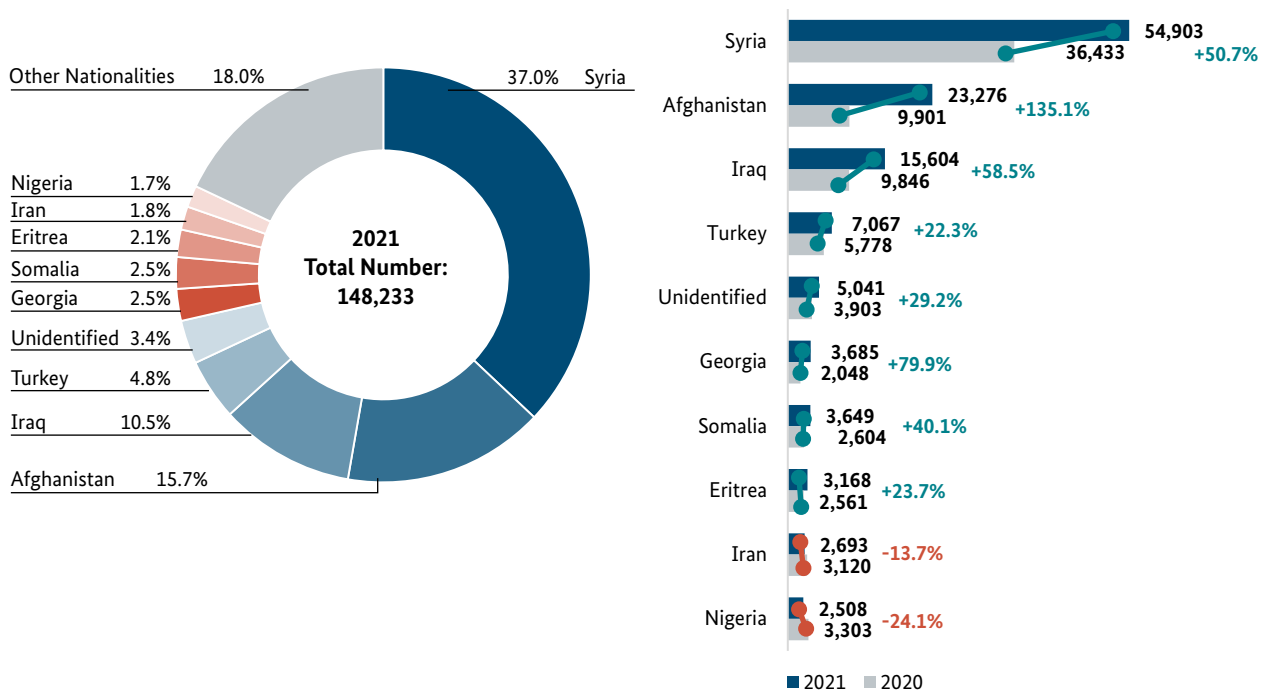
Following the peak in 2016 (722,370), the number of asylum applications dropped significantly in the following years. In 2021, contrary to the trend, an increase was recorded again: 148,233 people applied for the first time for asylum in Germany, which is 44.5% more than in 2020 (102,581). 17.5% of the first applications in 2021 were for children under the age of one born in Germany (25,879). 82.5% (76,702) were therefore cross-border asylum applications.

The evolution of refugee migration to Germany has always been a reflection of global crises and conflicts. Since 2014, Syria has been the largest group of origin in terms of numbers.

This was also the case in 2021: 54,903 asylum applications were filed by Syrian nationals, which corresponds to a share of 37.0%. Compared to the previous year, the number of initial applications from Syrian nationals increased by 50.7% (2020: 36,433). The second most important country of origin, Afghanistan, shows an increase of 135.1% with 23,276 asylum applications (2020: 9,901). Iraq is the third most important country of origin with 15,604 first-time applications and a share of 10.5% of the total number of initial applications. The number of first-time applications by Iraqi nationals increased by 58.5% compared to the previous year (2020: 9,846).

The composition of the 10 nationalities with the highest influx has not changed between 2020 and 2021, only their order.

First-time asylum applicants by the 10 most common nationalities in 2021



Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

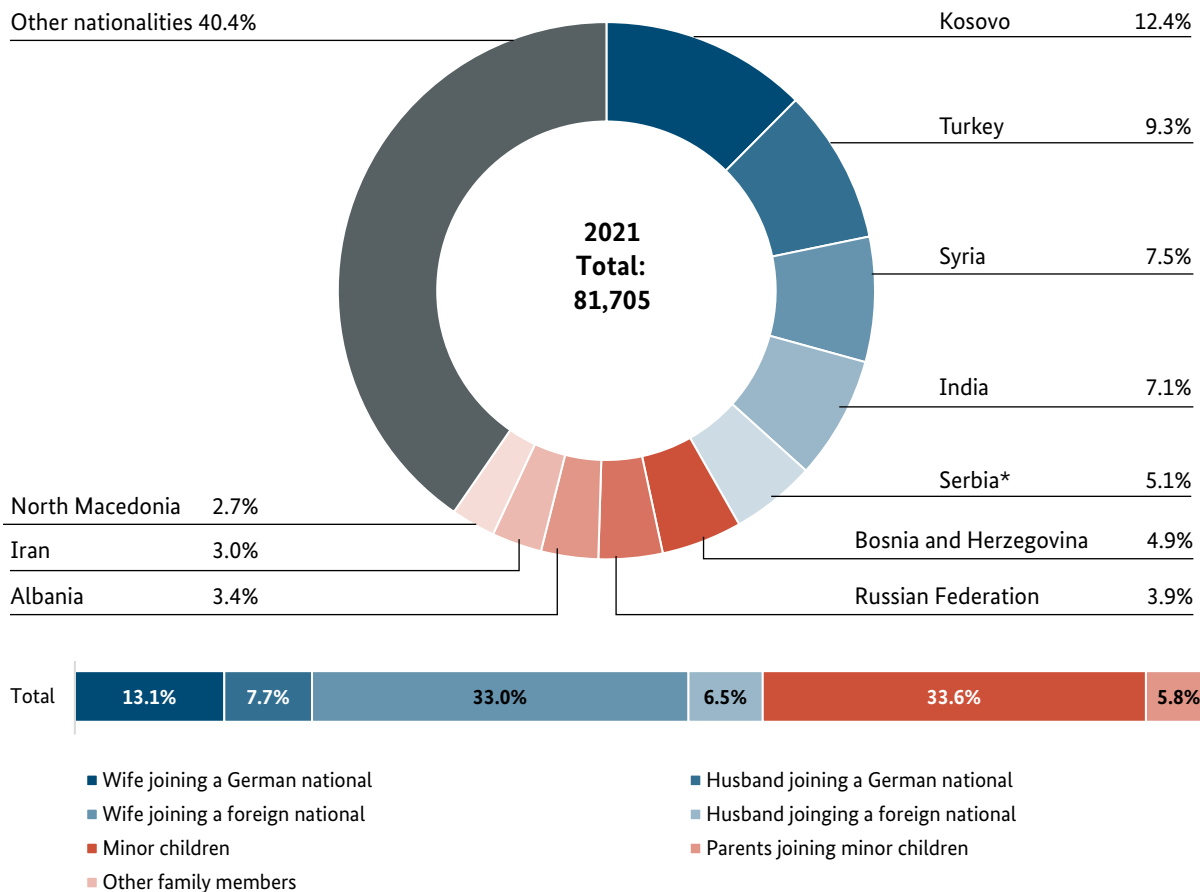
Family reunification of third-country nationals

In total, 81,705 persons who were subsequently granted residence permits on family grounds entered the country in 2021 (2020: 58,022). Compared to the previous year, the number increased by 40.8%. In 9,128 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 11.2%. More than half (60.3%) of all residence permits granted for family reasons concerned the subsequent immigration of spouses, and a good third (33.6%) concerned minor children.

In 2021, Kosovar nationals (10,171 or 12.4% of the residence permits issued) formed the largest group in family reunification. Migration for family reasons from this country of origin increased by 73.1% compared to the previous year. The second largest group was Turkish nationals. 7,610 residence permits (9.3%) were issued to Turkish nationals for family reasons, 35.1% more than in the previous year (2020: 5,632). Since 2018, family reunification of Syrian nationals has declined significantly. However, this trend did not continue in 2021 with an increase of 57.5% (2021: 6,144, 2020: 3,900).

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 2021



Note: Figures below 3% are not shown. The categories on spouses also include civil partners.

* incl. former Serbia and Montenegro.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Resettlement of ethnic Germans

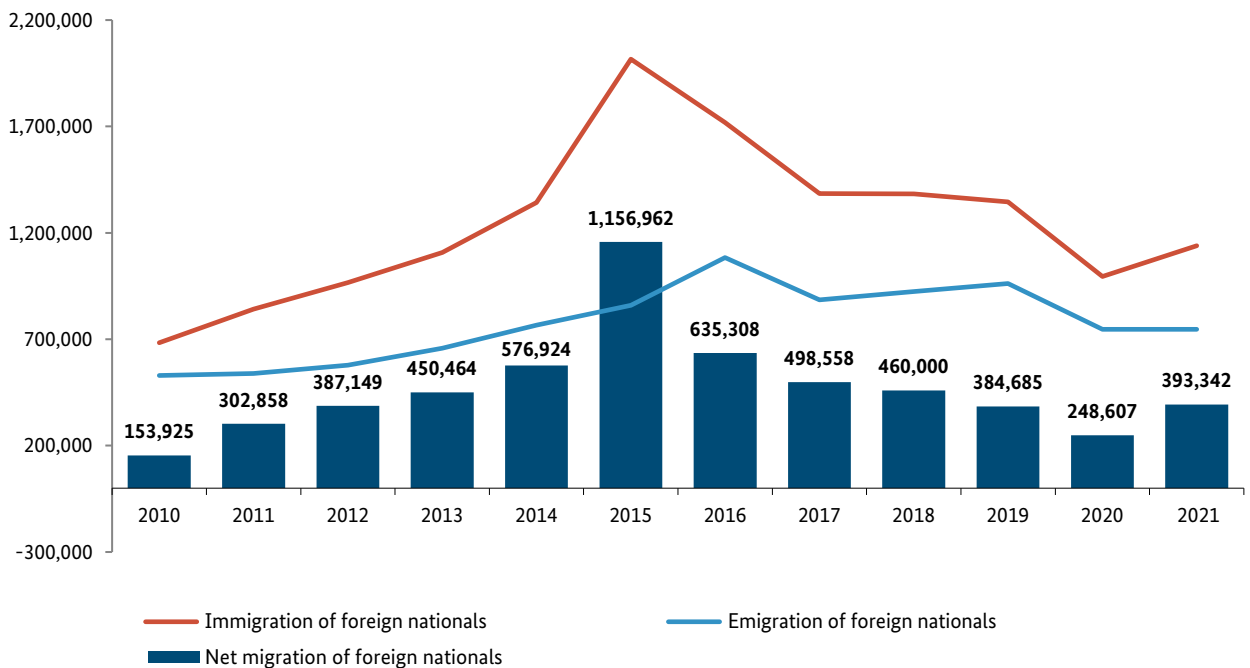
Following a steady decrease from 2001 (around 98,500 persons) to 2012 (around 1,800 persons), subsequent years saw a slight increase, up to 7,155 persons in 2019, in the immigration of resettled ethnic Germans and their family members – a consequence of changes in the law that most notably made family reunification easier. In 2020, on the other hand, only 4,309 persons were registered as ethnic German repatriates by the Federal Office of Administration, which in turn can be explained by restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, however, the number of ethnic Ger-

man immigrants rose again to the level of 2019 (7,052, +63.7% compared to 2020).

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 2021, 14.9 million people moved to Germany from other countries. But 9.3 million left the country over the same period.

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



- 1) The accuracy of the results for 2016 is limited due to inconsistencies in connection with the treatment of protection seekers under registration law. Furthermore, 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.
- 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 in the public access of registration offices or extended deadlines for registration and deregistration.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Migration Statistics

In 2021, 746,474 departures of foreign nationals were registered (2020: 746,212). In the same period, there were 1,139,816 arrivals of this group of persons. The net migration thus amounted to +393,342 and increased by 58.2% compared to 2020 (+248,607).

For German nationals, emigration has also increased compared to 2020, namely by 12.5% (247,829, 2020: 220,239 emigrants). At the same time, in 2021, German nationals were the second-largest group of immigrants (177,702 inflows) after Romanians. In 2021,

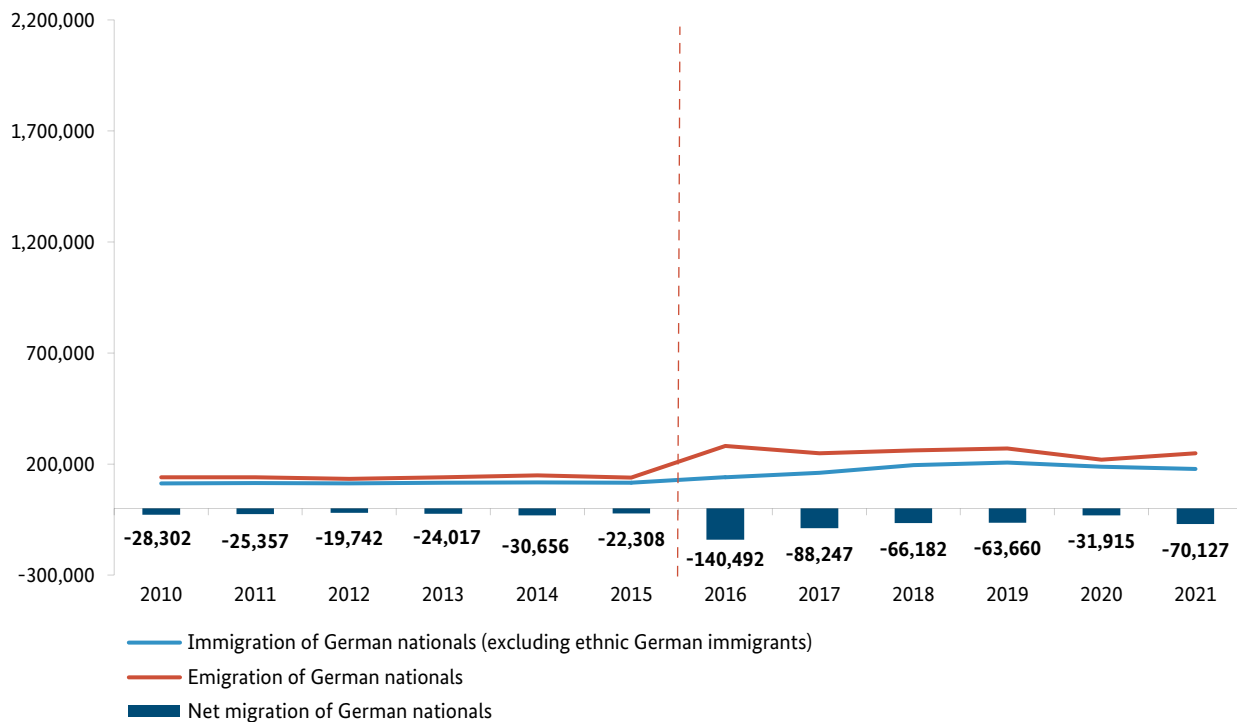
the loss of migration⁶ among German nationals was -70,127 (2020: -31,915).

Immigration in European comparison

Compared to other European countries, Germany is still the main destination country for migration in absolute figures. Among the EU states, Germany re-

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 (immigration excluding ethnic German immigrants¹) since 2010^{2),3),4)}



Note: From 2016 onwards, there is a break in the time series. As of 1 January 2016, immigration and emigration of Germans nationals from or to "unknown/no information" are additionally taken into account in the migration statistics, therefore the immigration and emigration figures of Germans are higher as of 2016. The results are only comparable with the previous year's figures to a limited extent.

- Persons who received German citizenship with the issuance of the late repatriate certificate. This applies to ethnic German repatriates in their own right (section 4 (1) BVFG) as well as their spouse and their descendants (section 7 (2) BVFG).
- 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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Source: Federal Statistical Office, Federal Office of Administration

corded the highest long-term immigration⁷ in 2020⁸ (728,606 in-migrants). With 488,138 persons emigrating, the result for Germany was a positive net migration of +240,468 (2019: +310.022). Spain, France, Italy and Poland also have high immigration figures.

7 "Longer-term" means that the (intended) duration of stay of the migrant is at least one year. This definition results in deviations in the figures from those of the official migration statistics in Germany.

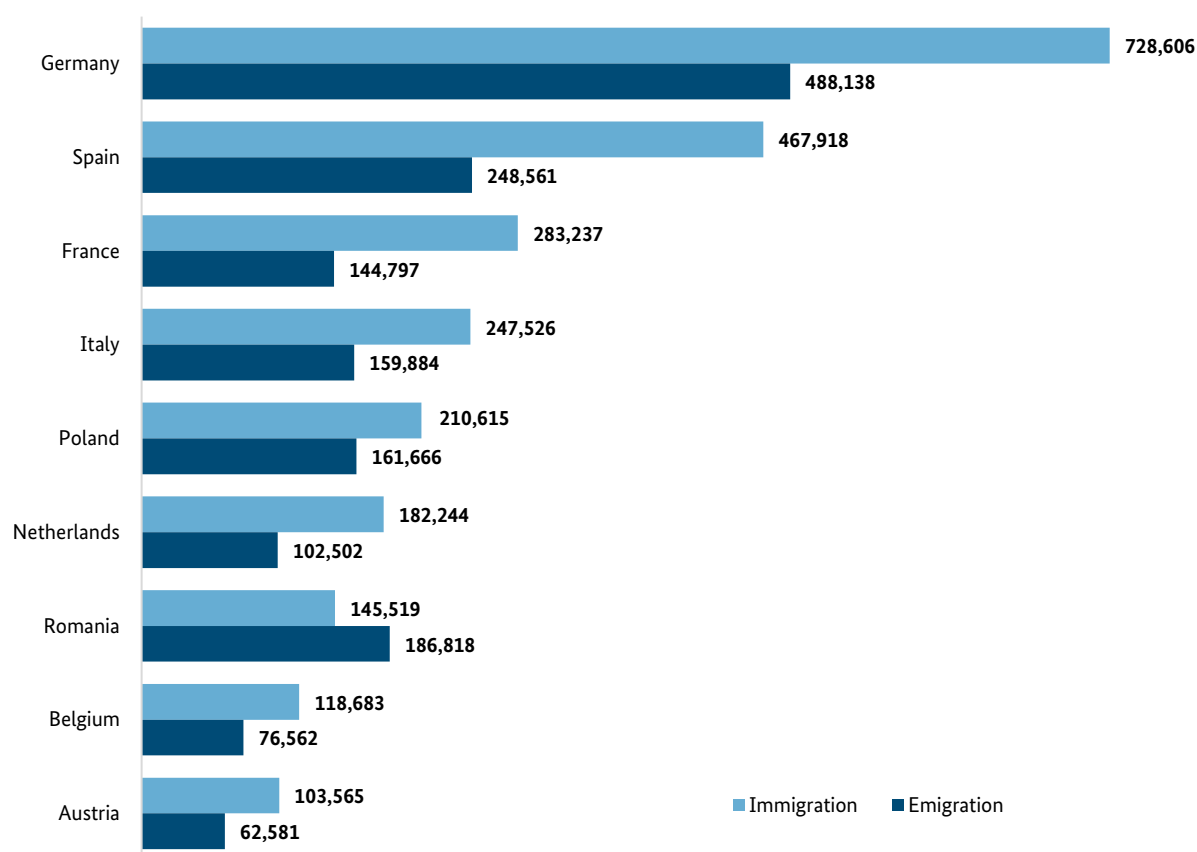
8 Comparable figures for the EU only become available after a delay of about two years, therefore only the figures from 2018 can be considered here.

A different picture emerges when looking at the ratio of immigration figures to the respective population size: here, in addition to Luxembourg with 35.9 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants, Cyprus (29.1) and Malta (27.0) also had high immigration figures in relative terms in 2021. In contrast, Germany's immigration rate of 8.8 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants is in the middle of the range when comparing EU countries.

Irregular migration

Foreign nationals who are detected during unauthorised entry by the Federal Police or by other authorities

Immigration and emigration (according to UN definition) in 2020 by most frequent destination countries in the EU



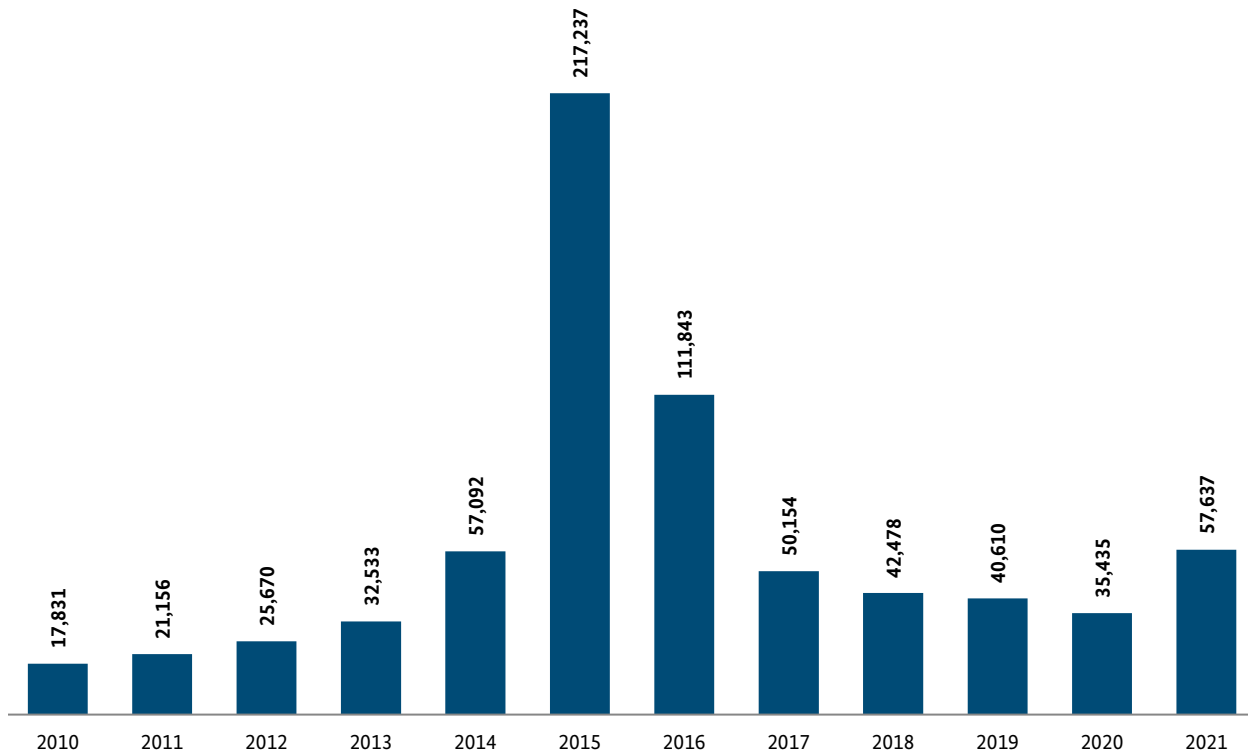
Source: Eurostat (migr_imm1ctz/migr_emi1ctz, query status: 15.09.2022)

responsible for the police control of cross-border traffic are included in the statistics of the Federal Police. In 2021, there were a total of 57,637 such detections, an increase of 62.7% compared to the previous year (2020: 35,435).

If foreign nationals do not voluntarily comply with an established, enforceable requirement to leave the country, the procedure for removal intervenes.

In 2021, 11,982 removals were carried out in Germany, which represents an increase of 10.9% compared to the previous year (2020: 10,800). The removals in 2021 include 2,656 transfers to other EU or Schengen member states under the Dublin procedure. This corresponds to 22.2% of the total number of removals. Of the removals that took place in 2021, 1,200 were of Georgian, 983 of Albanian, 639 of Serbian, 555 of Moldovan, 551 of Pakistani and 500 of Afghan 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 Microcensus data, 22.3 million people in Germany had a migration background in 2021, which corresponds to 27.3% of the population living in German private households. According to the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, this includes people who themselves or at least one parent do not have German citizenship by birth. More than half of the people with a migrant background in Germany are German nationals (52.7%), almost two thirds (62.6%) are immigrants themselves, while a good third (37.4%) were already born in Germany.

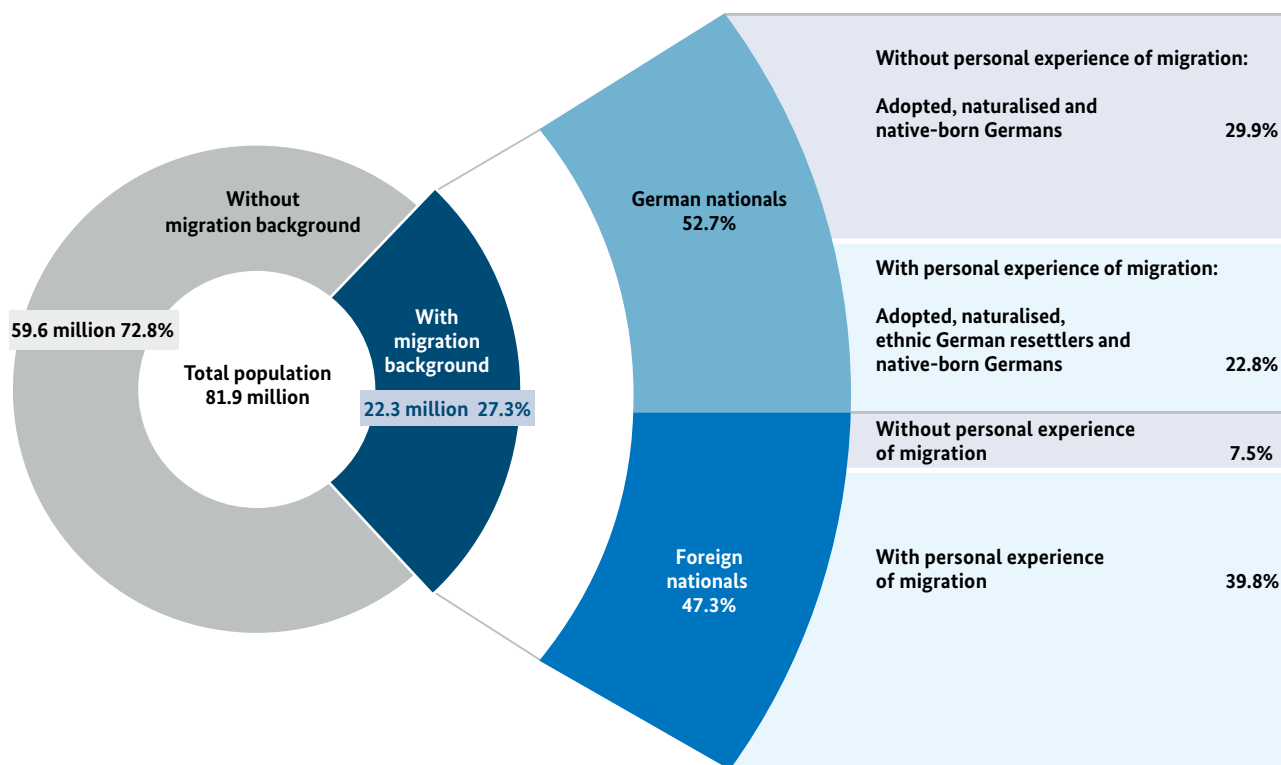
In the Microcensus, the groups of origin of the population with a migration background are derived from the country of birth of the respondents or their par-

ents, if the respondents themselves were born in Germany. The results of the Microcensus 2021 show that a good third of persons with a migration background come from EU countries and almost a further third from other European countries. The remaining third consists of people from various countries outside Europe. In terms of the most important "countries of birth", the approximately 2.7 million people with a Turkish migration background are the largest group.

Persons who immigrated to Germany themselves have lived in Germany for around 21 years on average, but a good third (37.6%) have lived in Germany for less than 10 years.⁹ This reflects in particular large refugee immigration in 2015/2016.

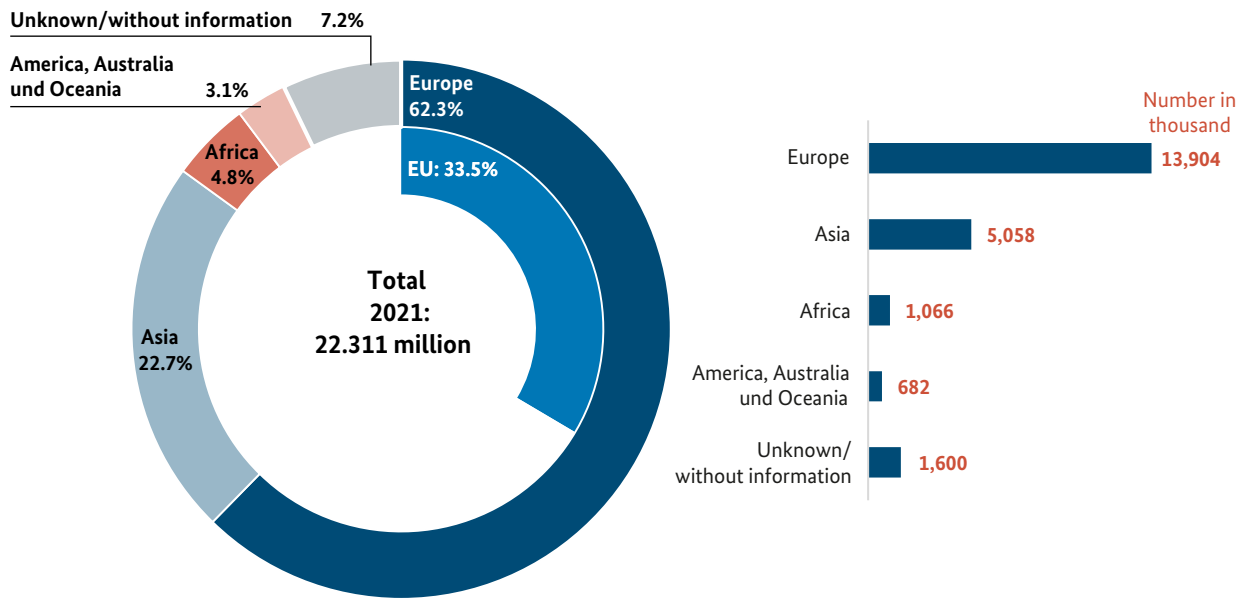
⁹ Related to the persons with information on the duration of stay.

Population with a migration background in Germany in 2021



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus

Population with a migration background by region of birth¹⁾ in 2021



1) Refers to respondent's own region of birth or, if born in Germany, the parents' region of birth. Europe incl. Turkey and the Russian Federation.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus

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