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Opening remarks

The issues of asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants became more salient issues in the EU around 2015/2016 when large numbers of Syrians and others entered the EU seeking asylum. At the time, many countries and citizens debated over how welcoming countries should be to refugees. This was an especially contentious issue in Eastern European countries where countries outright refused to take in refugees, especially with regard to resettlement from countries within the EU, with countries like Greece and Italy being overburdened. This is in stark contrast to the situation in early 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine spurring an exodus of Ukrainians from the country. For the first time in history, the EU triggered the temporary protection directive allowing for direct entry and easy access to government services and the labour market of EU countries. Within a matter of months, the EU absorbed millions of Ukrainians. It is important to note, though, that temporary protection via the EU temporary protection directive is not the same as a refugee status. As the term indicates, it is only temporary but can be renewed.

In the 1990s, the concept of Temporary Protection (TP) emerged as an innovative approach in balancing state interests with international obligations. This innovation was a response to the challenges posed by mass inflows of displaced persons during events like the breakup of Yugoslavia. In 2001, the EU passed the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to coordinate the Union's response to situations involving a mass influx of displaced persons (Koo, 2016) but it had never been triggered/used until 2022, when there was political will to do so.

Currently, there are almost 5 million Ukrainians being hosted in the EU under this directive (Total March 2022-October 2023: 4,753,395).

At the same time, the EU received over 800,000 new asylum requests last year and is already at a similar number for this year.

- **Recognition Rates 2021-2022**

- EU Member States granted protection status to 384,245 asylum seekers in 2022, with a 40% increase compared to 2021.
- Refugee status: 44% (vs 55.7% in 2021)
- Subsidiary protection: 31% (vs 30.5% in 2021)
- Humanitarian protection: 25% (vs 13.8% in 2021)

- **Final Decisions 2021-2022**

- A total of 209,055 final decisions following an appeal or review were made in 2022.
- Germany and France granted over 60% of all final decisions.

Key challenges the EU is facing and has faced in the past years are:

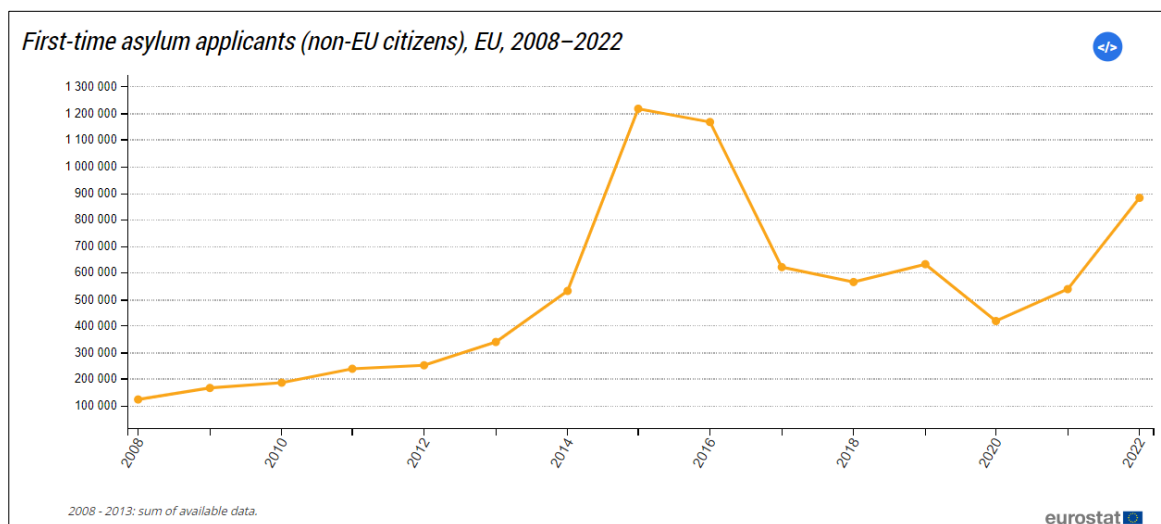
- distribution of refugees (The challenge of distributing refugees in the EU stems from unequal burden-sharing, a lack of solidarity among member states, and differing capacities and resources. Disagreements on quotas, varying national policies, and political and public opposition hinder the establishment of a fair and unified approach. Geographical factors and the concentration of refugee flows further complicate distribution efforts.),
- overcrowding of refugees camps and reception centers (**Inadequate living conditions:** Overcrowding compromises living standards, impacting shelter, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. **Lack of basic services:** Overcrowded camps struggle to provide essential services, including education, healthcare, and sanitation. **Violence and safety concerns:** Overcrowding increases tensions, contributing to safety concerns and reports of violence, especially impacting children)
- housing issues (housing shortages in the EU more generally),
- legal and administrative barriers **Administrative delays, Challenges in legal frameworks and political will, Qualification recognition challenges, Language skill barriers:**
- labour market integration and
- social exclusion (**Access to education, Access to healthcare, Discrimination and xenophobia, Poverty risk**)

While the EU still has a number of challenges ahead, it is helpful to see that positive change can happen as evidenced by the first time triggering of the temporary protection directive.

Asylum Seekers in Europe: Overview (2021-2022)¹

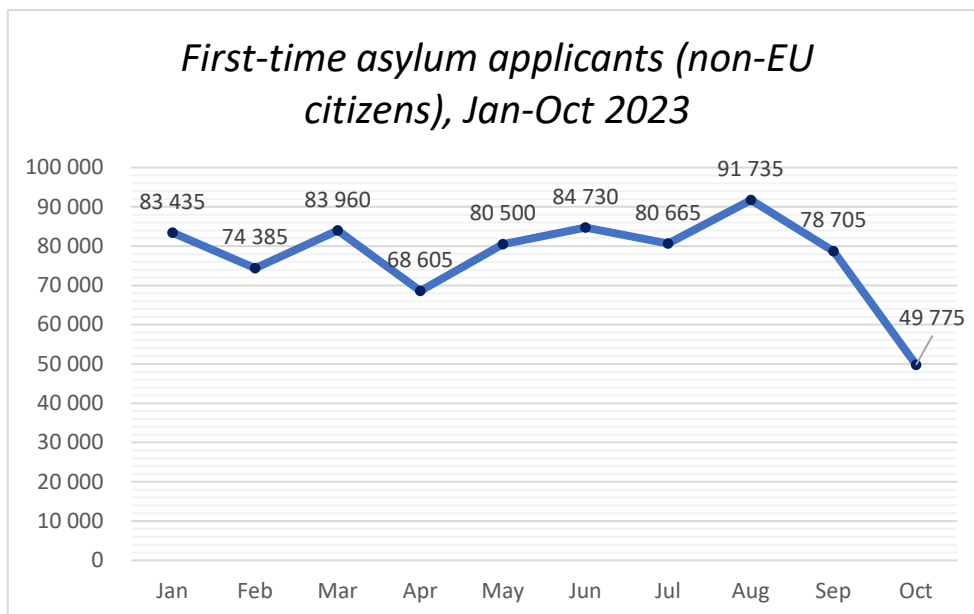
General Trends

- The number of asylum seekers in Europe has seen fluctuations in recent years. In 2022, the total number of asylum applicants reached almost 1 million, marking a significant increase of 52.1% compared to 2021. This surge was the highest since 2016.
 - 2013: 398,560
 - 2014: 530,560
 - 2015: 1,216,860
 - 2016: 1,166,815
 - 2017: 620,265
 - 2018: 564,115
 - 2019: 631,285
 - 2020: 417,070
 - 2021: 537,355
 - 2022: 881,220
 - **Jan-Oct 2023 (reporting from some countries is missing for Sep-Oct): 776,495 (Eurostat, 2023b)**



(Eurostat, 2023a)

¹ (Eurostat, 2023a).

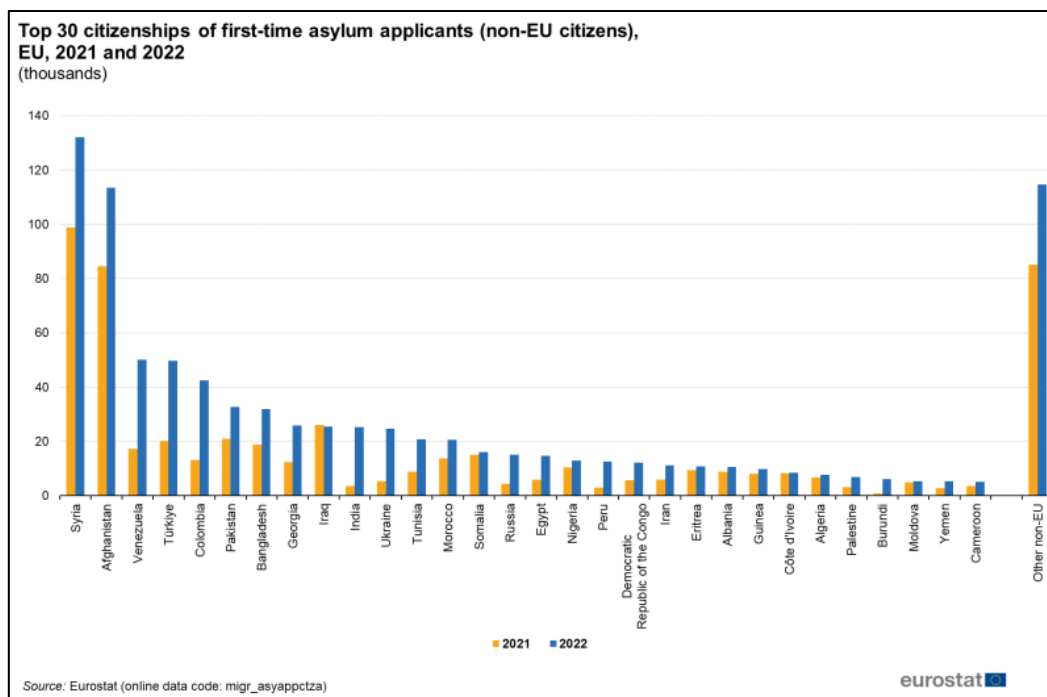


First-Time & Subsequent Applicants (2021-2021)

- In 2022, there were 881,220 *first-time* asylum applicants in the EU, reflecting a substantial increase of 64.0% compared to 2021 (537,355).
- 74,800 *subsequent* asylum applicants (people who reapplied for asylum after a decision had been taken on a previous application) were recorded in the EU in 2022, representing a decrease of 16.6% compared to 2021.

Citizenship of First-Time Applicants

- **2021:** Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis accounted for almost 40% of all first-time asylum applicants in EU Member States in 2021:
 - Syrians: 98,900 applicants (18.4% of the total)
 - Afghans: 84,555 applicants (15.7%)
 - Iraqis: 26,020 applicants (4.8%)
 - Pakistani 21,040 applicants (3.9%)
 - Turks: 20,355 applicants (3.8)
 - Bangladeshi: 18,830 applicants (3.5%)
- **2022:** Syrians, Afghans, Venezuelans, and Turks accounted for almost 40% of all first-time asylum applicants in EU Member States in 2022:
 - Syrians: 131,970 applicants (15.0% of the total)
 - Afghans: 113,495 applicants (12.9%)
 - Venezuelans: 50,050 applicants (5.7%)
 - Turks: 49,720 applicants (5.6%)
 - Colombians: 42,420 applicants (4.8%)
 - Ukrainian first-time asylum applicants experienced a substantial increase of 361.2% in 2022, reaching 24,720 applications.

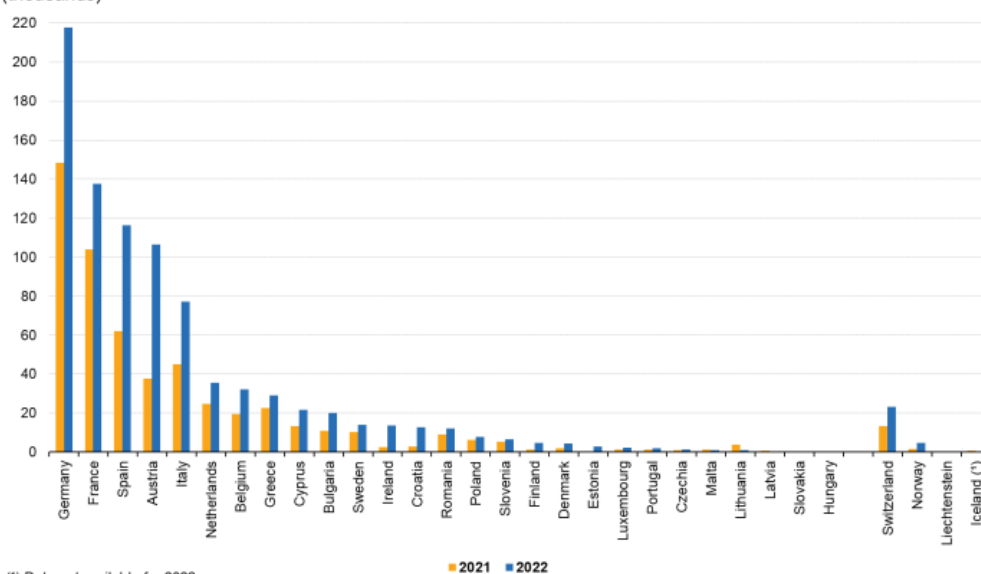


(Eurostat, 2023a)

Main Countries of Destination

- **2021:** Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and Austria were the main countries of destination in 2021.
 - Germany: 148,175 applicants (27.6%)
 - France: 103,790 applicants (19.3%)
 - Spain: 62,050 applicants (11.5%)
 - Italy: 45,200 applicants (8.4%)
 - Austria: 37,800 applicants (7%)
-
- **2022:** Germany, France, Spain, Austria, and Italy were the main countries of destination in 2022. The number of first-time asylum seekers increased in all EU Member States with more than 5,000 applicants in 2022.
 - Germany: 217,735 applicants (24.7%)
 - France: 137,510 applicants (15.6%)
 - Spain: 116,135 applicants (13.2%)
 - Austria: 106,380 applicants (12.1%)
 - Italy: 77,200 applicants (8.8%)

Number of first-time asylum applicants (non-EU citizens), 2021 and 2022
(thousands)



(*) Data not available for 2022.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_asyappctza)

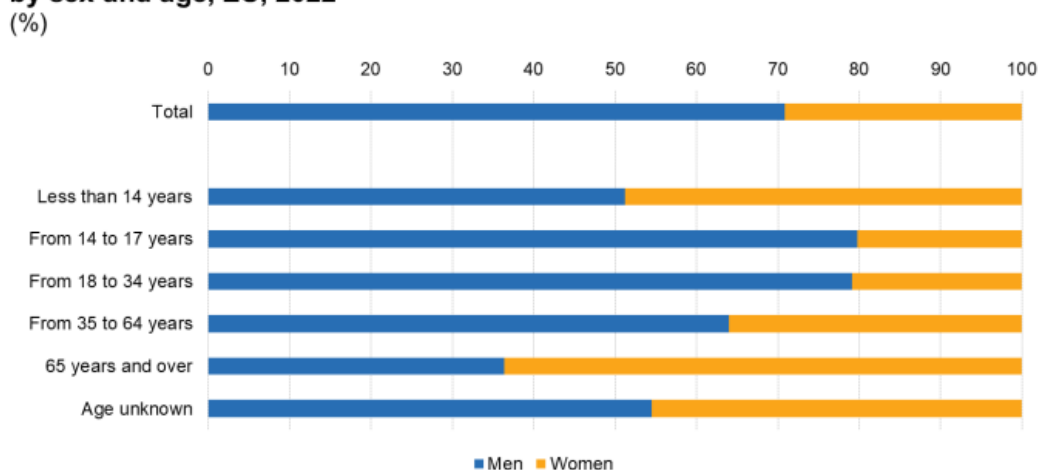


(Eurostat, 2023a)

Age and Sex of First-Time Applicants

- 2021**
 - More than 80% of first-time asylum seekers in the EU in 2021 were under 35 years old (81.4%).
 - 50.2% were aged 18–34 years, and 31.2% were minors (under 18 years).
 - The majority of applicants (69.1%) were male.
- 2022**
 - Almost 80% of first-time asylum seekers in the EU in 2022 were under 35 years old.
 - 53.9% were aged 18–34 years, and 25.2% were minors (under 18 years).
 - The majority of applicants (70.8%) were male.

Distribution of first-time asylum applicants (non-EU citizens) by sex and age, EU, 2022



Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_asyappctza)



(Eurostat, 2023a)

Applications by Unaccompanied Minors (2021-2022)

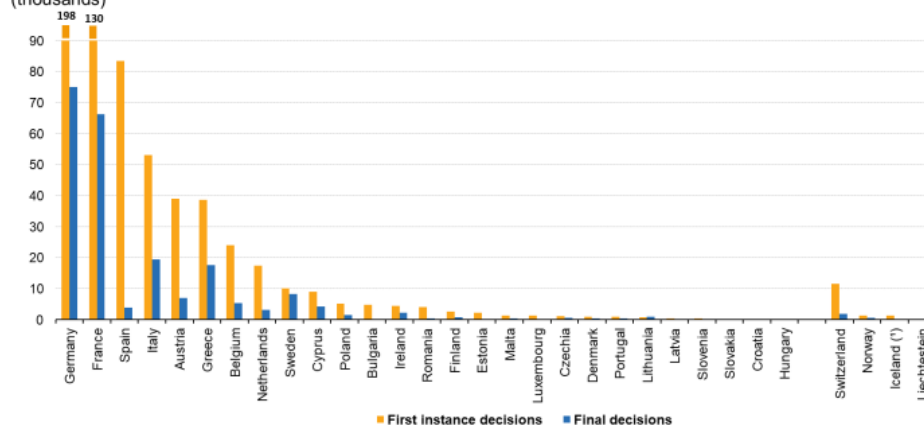
- In 2022, the total number of unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in EU Member States reached 42,230, a 56.6% increase compared to 2021 (26,960).

Decisions on Asylum Applications

• *First Instance Decisions 2021-2022*

- In 2021, 524,380 first instance decisions on asylum applications were made in EU Member States.
- Germany and France granted over 50% of all first instance decisions.
- In 2022, 632,360 first instance decisions on asylum applications were made in EU Member States.
- Similarly to 2021, Germany and France granted over 50% of all first instance decisions.

Number of first instance and final decisions on asylum applications (from non-EU citizens), 2022
(thousands)



(*) Iceland, data not available for final decisions 2022.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr_asydcfsta and migr_asydcfina)

eurostat

(Eurostat, 2023a)

• *Final Decisions 2021-2022*

- A total of 209,055 final decisions following an appeal or review were made in 2022.
- Germany and France granted over 60% of all final decisions.
- A total of 218,260 final decisions following an appeal or review were made in 2022.
- Similarly to 2021, Germany and France granted over 60% of all final decisions.

• *Recognition Rates 2021-2022*

- EU Member States granted protection status to 384,245 asylum seekers in 2022, with a 40% increase compared to 2021.
- Refugee status: 44% (vs 55.7% in 2021)
- Subsidiary protection: 31% (vs 30.5% in 2021)²
- Humanitarian protection: 25% (vs 13.8% in 2021)³

• *Pending Applications 2021-2022*

- At the end of 2021, 747,410 applications for international protection in EU Member States were still under consideration.
- Germany had the largest share of pending applications (35.4% of the EU total).
- At the end of 2022, 877,785 applications for international protection in EU Member States were still under consideration.
- Similarly to 2021, Germany had the largest share of pending applications (30.6% of the EU total).

² Subsidiary protection

- **Definition:** "Subsidiary protection status means status as defined in Art.2(g) of [Directive 2011/95/EU](#). According to Art.2(f) of [Directive 2011/95/EU](#) a person eligible for subsidiary protection means a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in Article 15, and to whom Article 17(1) and (2) does not apply, and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country." (Eurostat, n.d.).
- **Duration:** The duration of subsidiary protection status varies among EU member states. In some countries, it may be granted for a fixed period, while in others, it may be granted for an indefinite period, subject to review. The national legislation of each member state determines the specific duration and conditions for the revocation of subsidiary protection status (MacGregor, 2021).

³ Humanitarian protection

- **Definition:** Humanitarian protection in the EU is not harmonized at the EU level and is granted by individual member states to individuals who do not qualify for subsidiary protection but are considered to be in need of protection due to special humanitarian reasons. This includes protection based on general humanitarian grounds, exceptional circumstances, serious health conditions, climate change reasons, and protection for minors and unaccompanied minors, among others (European Commission, n.d.)
- **Duration:** The specific duration and conditions for humanitarian protection are determined by the national legislation of each member state (Vassiliou, 2023).

Key Challenges in Refugee Hosting and Integration

Distribution of Refugees

- The challenge of distributing refugees in the EU stems from unequal burden-sharing, a lack of solidarity among member states, and differing capacities and resources.
- Disagreements on quotas, varying national policies, and political and public opposition hinder the establishment of a fair and unified approach. Geographical factors and the concentration of refugee flows further complicate distribution efforts.
- Overcoming this challenge requires fostering consensus, addressing political resistance, and promoting a more equitable sharing of responsibilities among EU member states (Altemeyer-Bartscher et al., 2016).

Overcrowding of Refugee Camps and Reception Centers

Main challenges related to overcrowded refugee camps and reception centers:

- **Inadequate living conditions:** Overcrowding compromises living standards, impacting shelter, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.
- **Lack of basic services:** Overcrowded camps struggle to provide essential services, including education, healthcare, and sanitation.
- **Violence and safety concerns:** Overcrowding increases tensions, contributing to safety concerns and reports of violence, especially impacting children
- **Example:** The EU-funded refugee camps on the Greek Aegean islands, initially envisioned to offer improved living conditions and efficient asylum procedures, have encountered substantial challenges, including critical staff shortages, causing significant delays in asylum procedures, and disturbing allegations of violence within the camps, particularly affecting children. The camps struggle with a notable gap in interpreter services, limiting effective communication. Additionally, there are severe limitations in healthcare access, compounded by a shortage of permanent doctors, leading to delays in essential medical checks. Overcrowding and resource strains further hinder efforts to provide accommodations in line with asylum standards (Bird & Dodd, 2023; Emmanouilidou et al., 2023).

Housing Issues

- The housing challenge in the European Union has become increasingly pronounced, becoming one of its worst crises in decades.
- This scarcity is deeply impacting migrants, with Germany, for instance, projecting a housing shortage of 700,000 by 2025, marking its most severe housing crisis in two decades.
- The Netherlands faces the need to build approximately 845,000 homes by 2030, while France contends with an estimated 300,000 homeless individuals, three times the count in 2001.
- This housing issue intersects with the surge in migration, with an estimated 2.3 million immigrants entering the EU in 2021, an 18% increase from the previous year.
- The resultant housing shortage, however, is not solely attributable to migration, as changing social norms, governance, and a lack of social housing also contribute.
- Discrimination in the housing market poses additional challenges for migrants, exposing racial bias despite legal protections. For example, Ukrainians fleeing war were granted expedited housing access, while long-term asylum seekers faced prolonged waiting lists. Discrimination persists, as revealed by studies, raising questions about the effectiveness of legal frameworks in combating racism in housing.
- The housing issue emerges as a critical barrier to the inclusion and participation of migrants and refugees in European societies, necessitating comprehensive and equitable solutions (Penny, 2016; Santos, 2023; Adam et al., 2023).

Legal and Administrative Barriers

The main legal and administrative barriers for asylum seekers and refugees in the EU include:

- **Administrative delays:**
 - Significant delays in processing work permits contribute to obstacles faced by asylum seekers and refugees.
 - Lengthy administrative procedures adversely affect their employment history, impacting employability.
- **Challenges in legal frameworks and political will:**
 - Complex national legal frameworks related to the asylum process contribute to barriers.
 - Limited political will and civil society mobilization further impede solutions for refugees and asylum seekers.
- **Qualification recognition challenges:**
 - Recognition of qualifications and transferability of skills pose significant hurdles.
 - The issue creates barriers to effective integration into the labor market (*see next paragraph*).
- **Language skill barriers:**
 - Insufficient language skills represent a major hindrance to economic and social integration (Ong, 2023;).

Labor Market Integration

The main challenges in the context of labor market integration for asylum-seekers and refugees in the EU include:

- **Legislation disparities:**
 - EU legislation provides full access to the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection but varies for asylum seekers.
 - Member States required to offer integration support, but practical obstacles persist.
- **Limited immediate access:**
 - Immediate labour market access granted to asylum seekers in only a few countries.
 - Administrative delays in processing work permits significant.
- **Restricted access across countries:**
 - Most countries impose restrictions on asylum seekers' labour market access.
 - Examples include workload limitations, occupation eligibility criteria, wage thresholds, and labour market tests.
- **Administrative challenges:**
 - Lengthy procedures and administrative burdens negatively impact employment history and employability.
 - Some employers deterred from hiring refugees due to administrative complexities.
- **Institutional support gaps:**
 - Insufficient institutional support for labour market integration in various Member States.
 - Examples include limited or no access to public employment services for asylum seekers in the Czech Republic, Denmark, and Hungary.
- **Economic factors:**
 - High national unemployment rates and work availability within the shadow economy hinder legal labour market access.
- **Qualification recognition issues:**
 - Challenges in recognizing qualifications of migrants and ensuring transferability of their skills.
- **Language skill barriers:**
 - Insufficient language skills pose a major obstacle.
 - Language courses, crucial for integration, often unavailable to asylum seekers in many countries (European Employment Policy Observatory (EEPO), 2016).

Social Exclusion

The main social exclusion challenges for asylum seekers and refugees in the EU include:

- **Access to education:**
 - Lack of access to education puts refugees at risk of economic dependence and social exclusion.
 - Education is vital for integration, and its absence can lead to long-term disadvantages.
- **Access to healthcare:**
 - Migrants, asylum seekers, and irregular immigrants are at high risk of poverty and social exclusion, sometimes lacking appropriate healthcare.
- **Discrimination and xenophobia:**
 - Refugees often experience discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion, income, language, and perceived "otherness".
 - This discrimination, fueled by xenophobia, can lead to social exclusion and even violence.
- **Poverty risk:**
 - Migrants from outside the EU face a significantly higher risk of poverty compared to the local population.
 - The risk of poverty becomes a driver for social exclusion, compounding challenges for refugees and migrants (UNHCR, n.d.).

The EU Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)

Historical Context and Evolution

In the 1990s, the concept of Temporary Protection (TP) emerged as an innovative approach in balancing state interests with international obligations. This innovation was a response to the challenges posed by mass inflows of displaced persons during events like the breakup of Yugoslavia. In 2001, the EU passed the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to coordinate the Union's response to situations involving a mass influx of displaced persons (Koo, 2016)

Definition and Characteristics of Temporary Protection

Temporary Protection (TP) is a link between non-refoulement and a durable solution, particularly connected with the persistence of the causes of persecution. Unlike refugee status, TP has not become a consistent category enshrined in international law. It is often viewed as a return-oriented protection mechanism, emphasizing the provisional aspect of refugees' stay while minimizing immediate efforts to promote integration (Koo, 2016)

Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) – Key Features and Mechanisms

The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), Directive 2001/55/EC, outlines key features and mechanisms:

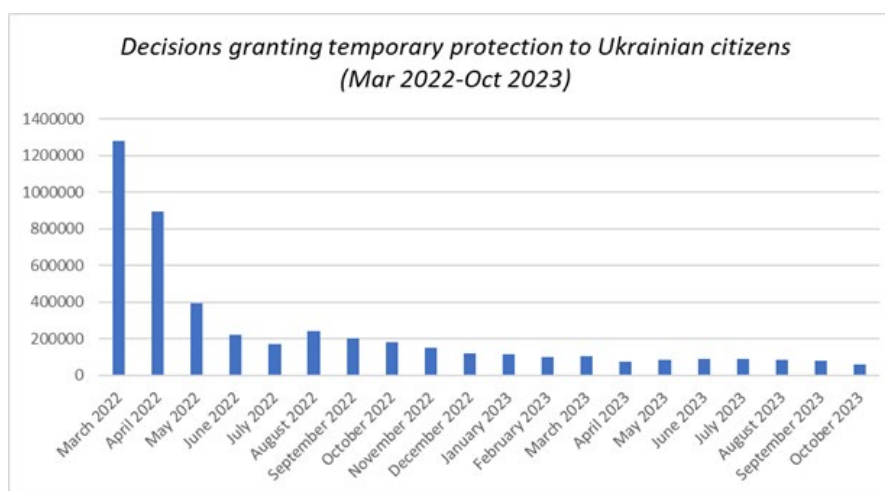
- **Recognition Criteria:** Mass influx into the EU, involving a large number of displaced persons from a specific country or geographical area, triggers the directive.
- **Scope of Displaced Persons:** Displaced persons include those who “have fled areas of armed conflict or endemic violence” or “persons at serious risk of, or who have become the victims of, systematic or generalized violations of their human rights”
- **Duration of TP Period:** Immediate protection for up to three years.
- **Burden Sharing:** Burden sharing among states is promoted to ensure effectiveness, coherence, and solidarity, preventing the risk of secondary movements.
- **Harmonized Rights:** Minimum set of rights includes the right to *non-refoulement* during the TP period, reception, social and economic rights, and the right to claim asylum (though the latter can be suspended).
- **Trigger Mechanism:**
 - The EU Commission initiates the process by identifying a mass influx and groups of beneficiaries.
 - States inform the Commission of their capacity to receive displaced persons.
 - Council decision requires a qualified majority vote (15 states representing 65% of the total EU population) (Council of the European Union, 2001; Hauswedell, 2022).

Recent Activation

In March 2022, the Council of the European Union invoked the TPD for the first time in response to the refugee crisis resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Approximately four million people from Ukraine are covered by this protection. Beneficiaries are entitled to a residence permit for the entire protection duration (up to three years) and various rights, including access to accommodation, medical care, employment, and education (Government of The Netherlands, 2023).

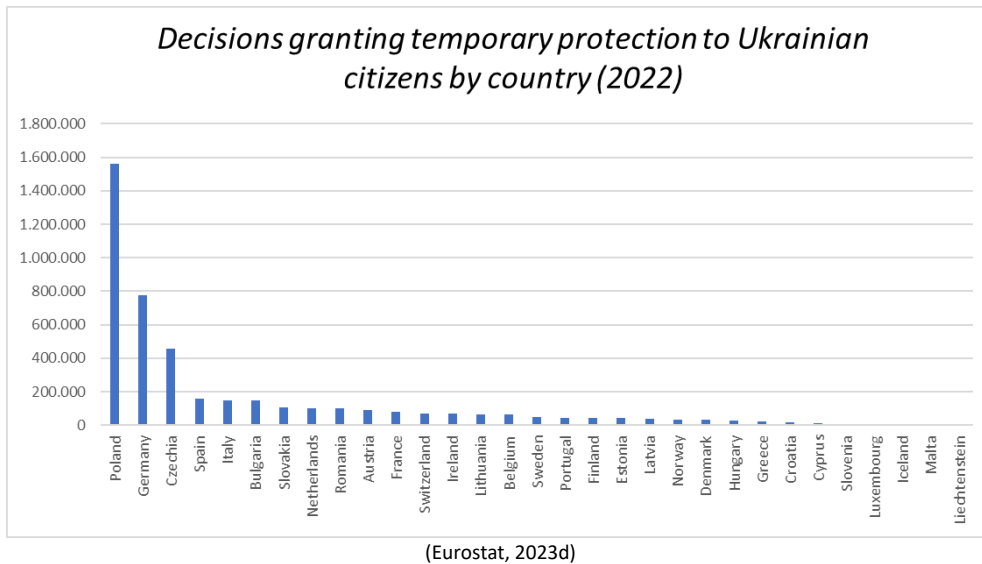
Data on Ukrainians Under Temporary Protection

- Total March 2022-October 2023: 4,753,395

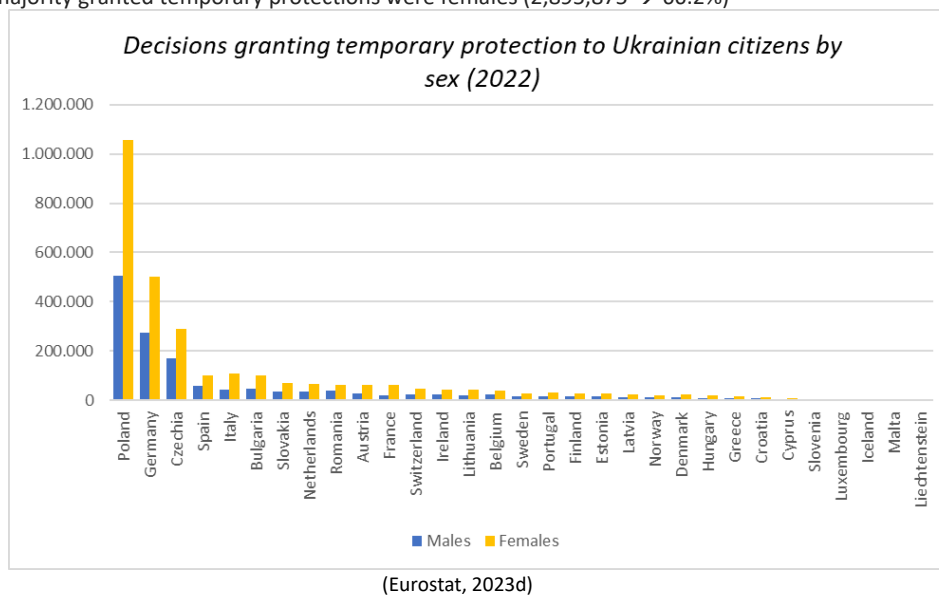


(Eurostat, 2023c)

- Total March-December 2022: 4,267,555
- Top 5 countries granting temporary protection (2022):
 - Poland: 1,561,780
 - Germany: 774,415
 - Czechia: 457,670
 - Spain: 158,305
 - Italy: 149,295



- **Gender:** The majority granted temporary protections were females (2,895,875 → 66.2%)



Ukrainian Unaccompanied Minors Granted Temporary Protection

- Total unaccompanied minors granted temporary protection (March 2022-October 2023): 151,950



- Top 5 countries granting temporary protection to Ukrainian unaccompanied minors:
 - Belgium: 22,415
 - Lithuania: 18,630
 - Bulgaria: 13,990
 - Romania: 13,880
 - Finland: 12,125



(Eurostat, 2023e)

Best Practices in Implementing the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)

- All EU Member States have implemented the Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainian citizens and eligible residents leaving Ukraine.
- The Temporary Protection Status, initially set to be extended until at least March 2024, is now expected to be extended until at least March 4, 2025, as agreed by the European Council in September 2023.
- The extension will become binding once formally adopted, which is anticipated to happen shortly.
- Several non-EU countries, including Albania, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, have introduced similar protection programs.
- At the domestic level, there is variation among EU Member States in legislating and implementing Temporary Protection Status, including differences in eligible applicants and the application process (Fragomen, 2023).

Table 1. Good Practices in Implementing the TPD (Council Directive 2001/55/EC) (UNHCR, 2022)

GOOD PRACTICE	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
Scope of Temporary Protection: EU Member States have implemented the TPD, with varying scopes. While the Council Decision outlines mandatory criteria, some countries have extended protection to additional categories, such as residents unable to return to their countries of origin.	Germany	Extended temporary protection to Ukrainian nationals residing in the country before the crisis. This includes those unable to renew residency permits, no longer meeting the relevant issuance criteria.
	Slovenia, Luxembourg Portugal	Broadened the scope to include third-country nationals with short-term residence permits in Ukraine who cannot return to their countries of origin.
	Ireland	Includes Ukrainian nationals on short-stay visas and other migratory permits. Individuals can choose to either extend existing permits or opt for temporary protection upon expiration.
	Finland	Extended the application of temporary protection to Ukrainian citizens unable to return to Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict as well as their family members. This includes not only Ukrainians displaced after 24 February but also those previously residing in Finland.
	Spain	Expanded the scope of temporary protection to Ukrainian citizens who were residing in Spain and their family members, as well as to those irregularly in the country before 24 February. In addition, third-country nationals who were legally residing in Ukraine, including on short-term residence permits or student visas and cannot return to their home countries, are also included.

Enhanced Registration Capacity: Some countries have established streamlined processes to efficiently register a large number of applicants. This practice ensures quick data collection, management, and the provision of necessary assistance to those in need of temporary protection.	Czech Republic	Established a network of regional assistance centers (KACPU) and the National Centre for Help and Assistance to Ukraine (NACPU) overseeing registration and coordination. Over 350,000 individuals were registered and issued documentation by the end of April 2022. The process includes health insurance, work permits, and accommodation. Additional personnel have been hired to manage refugee flows efficiently.
	Bulgaria	Made registration and documentation issuance accessible through over 100 Initial Reception Points (IRPs) located at various places, including border crossing points, police stations, migration offices, bus stations, and accommodation locations. An interactive map is published for easy access, and the IRPs are listed on the national portal for those affected by the war in Ukraine.
Digitalization: Several countries have adopted rapid digitalization by developing online systems for the registration process, aiming to prevent backlogs and enhance communication with temporary protection beneficiaries.	Slovakia	Applicants for temporary protection can register online, available in Slovak, Ukrainian, and English. This digital process expedites administrative procedures at Slovakia's foreign police unit.
	Portugal	Temporary protection requests in Portugal are filed digitally, whether within or outside the country. Children, however, need to register requests at one of the 24 designated points nationwide.
	Greece	Greece's Ministry of Migration and Asylum launched an online site on March 28, 2022, allowing beneficiaries to submit applications and preregister for temporary protection permits in Greek, Ukrainian, and English. Mobile units facilitate registration in collective centers hosting refugees.
	Croatia	Croatia allows online applications for temporary protection in Croatian, Ukrainian, and English. Mobile teams from the Ministry of Interior also register refugees in collective accommodations.
Documenting Identity: Some countries have adopted a flexible approach to documenting identity, acknowledging the challenges faced by refugees who may lack proper identification. This flexibility allows for the acceptance of various documents, preventing unnecessary delays in accessing protection and services.	Ireland	Advises that individuals fleeing Ukraine may present "any identification documentation available" during the application process, promoting flexibility in the proof of identity.
	Portugal	Accepts any means of proof of identity, including expired or unofficial documents, with a case-by-case analysis.
Issuance of Documentation and Access to Rights: Some countries have prioritized the swift issuance of documentation, providing temporary protection beneficiaries with legal status and access to essential rights. This includes granting identification numbers, residence permits, and work authorization, facilitating a smooth integration process into the host country's society and workforce.	Poland	In Poland, Ukrainian citizens and their family members can apply for a PESEL number, equivalent to the Polish ID number. This facilitates access to social benefits, medical services, and the right to open a business. Over 1 million arrivals from Ukraine had received PESEL numbers by the end of April 2022.
	Estonia	The Police and Border Guard Board issue decisions for temporary protection immediately upon application. This grants fast access to the labor market and other rights, with beneficiaries receiving a written decision and a residence permit card for Schengen area travel within 30 days.
	Spain	Applicants receive authorization to work 24 hours after issuance. They can then electronically download their decision granting temporary protection status through the Ministry of Interior's website.
	Croatia Greece	Croatia ensures access to social welfare for temporary protection beneficiaries, aligning them with nationals and international protection beneficiaries. In Greece, the temporary protection residence permit provides direct access to social security and tax registration numbers.
Under One Roof Approach: This approach involves integrated systems at the moment of reception/registration. This includes services like individual registration, identity information capture, issuance of documentation, eligibility processing, legal aid, and counseling. It maximizes efficiency in information exchange and collaboration among different entities.	Latvia	Established a support center providing various services "under one roof", providing all necessary services in a single location, including registration, documentation issuance, information provision, access to education, accommodation, social support schemes, medical first aid, and legal and psychosocial counseling. Collaboratively run by several agencies, it serves around 1,000 persons daily. Collaboration of the State Employment Agency, State Social Insurance Agency, and National Health Service maximizes efficiency.
Information Provision: Some countries have established clear channels for information provision, such as dedicated helplines,	Czech Republic	The Czech Republic's Ministry of Interior has launched a dedicated helpline, email address, and website ("Our Ukrainians") to provide information on accessing temporary protection. The website offers advice on registration, requirements, timelines, and entitlements for temporary protection holders.

websites, and platforms. These resources offer guidance on the application process, rights, and available services. Timely and accessible information contributes to a transparent and fair procedure for individuals seeking temporary protection.	Romania	Romania's Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with civil society and UN agencies, has launched the web platform Dopomoha.ro. It offers multi-lingual support with necessary information for Ukrainians and others fleeing from Ukraine, outlining the possibilities of applying for temporary protection, asylum, short stays, and associated rights. The platform also provides information about helplines and websites of government entities, UN agencies, and NGOs.
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Main Avenues to Access Protection in Europe

Main avenues to access protection in Europe for asylum-seekers⁴

- **Resettlement**
 - Since 2009, the European Commission has sought to coordinate resettlement efforts to integrate resettlement on a structural level. The Union Resettlement Framework, approved in late 2022, aims to replace the current EU-sponsored Resettlement Schemes. Between January 2015 and July 2021, over 80,000 people were resettled by EU Member States. Resettlement priorities include vulnerable UNHCR referrals, and the EU provides a lump sum of EUR 10,000 per resettled person.
 - Challenges:
 - Challenges in national reception systems due to the mass arrival of displaced persons from Ukraine and the admission of Afghan citizens at risk.
- **Community Sponsorship**
 - Community sponsorship involves private individuals, civil society actors, and faith-based organizations partially or fully meeting responsibilities, including financial assistance, for resettlement. Community sponsorship programs operate in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, and Germany.
 - Impact of COVID-19:
 - Programs impacted by delays due to travel restrictions and processing hold.
- **Humanitarian Visa**
 - Visas on humanitarian grounds can be issued by Schengen-associated States. Discussions on a European-wide Humanitarian Visa Scheme have taken place, but no EU framework currently exists. Approximately 90% of those granted refugee status or subsidiary protection arrive in an irregular manner.
- **Family Reunification**
 - Family reunification is crucial for beneficiaries of international protection, recognized in the EU Family Reunification Directive. The right to family life is protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
 - Discretionary Element:
 - States have discretionary control over family admission, but the European Court of Human Rights emphasizes examining personal circumstances.
 - Impact on Well-being: Acknowledged in the Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification.

Data on Resettlement⁵

Key Developments in 2021

- There was a significant increase in the number of resettled refugees between 2008 and 2021, with a six-fold rise from 4,200 to 27,200 refugees being resettled in the EU+. This record high in 2021 follows a steady year-over-year increase.
- In 2020, there was a sharp drop in resettlements (-58%) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the removal of many restrictions in 2021, the number of resettled refugees more than doubled, surpassing both the pre-pandemic level of 2019 and any previous records.

Resettlement by Country

- **Top Implementing Countries in 2021:**
 - Sweden: 6,400 resettled refugees
 - Germany: 5,400 resettled refugees
 - Italy: 5,300 resettled refugees
 - Norway: 3,700 resettled refugees
 - Switzerland: 1,100 resettled refugees

⁴ (Red Cross EU Office, 2023).

⁵ (European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), 2022; 2023).

- Belgium: 950 resettled refugees
- **Notable Changes:**
 - Sweden saw a 28% increase in resettled refugees, driven by transfers from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan.
 - Germany recorded a 10% increase, especially due to more transfers of Syrians and Congolese.
 - Italy experienced a quadrupling of transfers (+291%), with a significant rise in Afghan citizens arriving from Afghanistan through humanitarian corridor programs.
 - Norway witnessed a one-third increase (+31%) with more Afghans, Eritreans, and Syrians resettled.
 - Conversely, France (-65%) and the Netherlands (-75%) saw declines, mainly due to fewer Syrians being transferred.

Resettlement by Citizenship

- **Major Countries of Origin:**
 - Syria: 11,500 resettled persons
 - Afghanistan: 7,600 resettled persons
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2,600 resettled persons
 - Sudan: 1,700 resettled persons
 - Eritrea: 1,200 resettled persons
 - South Sudan: 900 resettled persons
- **Declines in Resettlement:** Syrians (-3,900), Sudanese (-400), Eritreans (-400), Somalis (-800), Ethiopians (-100), and Iraqis (-500).

Demographics

- **Age Distribution:**
 - Minors (under 14): 13,000 resettled refugees
 - Adults (18-34 years): 8,200 resettled refugees
 - Adults (35-64 years): 5,700 resettled refugees
 - Persons older than 65: 300 resettled refugees
- **Gender Dimension:**
 - Males: 14,100 resettled
 - Females: 13,200 resettled

Key Developments in 2022

- In 2022, 21,000 persons were resettled in the EU+ from third countries. Despite a slight decrease (-9%) compared to the previous year, resettlement remains at high levels. Challenges in national administrations may have contributed to the decline, including crises in national reception systems and the admission of displaced persons from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Resettlement by Country

- **Top Implementing Countries in 2022:**
 - Sweden: 5,000 resettled refugees
 - Germany: 4,800 resettled refugees
 - France: 3,200 resettled refugees
 - Norway: 3,100 resettled refugees
- **Changes from 2021:**
 - Sweden: 21% decrease, but still the second-highest number on record.
 - Germany: 29% decrease due to fewer transfers from Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
 - France: 65% increase, mainly due to more nationals from Syria and the Central African Republic.
- **Notable Changes in Other Countries:**
 - Netherlands: Resettlements nearly tripled (1,400).
 - Spain: Resettlements more than doubled (1,100).
 - Denmark: Resettlements nearly tripled (150), with over 90% from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
 - Finland: Overall figure rose by around one-fifth (1,100).

Resettlement by Citizenship

- **Major Countries of Origin:**
 - Syrians: 13,000 resettled persons (61% of all resettlements)
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2,600 resettled persons (the most on record)
 - Eritreans: 1,300 resettled persons
 - Afghans: 1,000 resettled persons (-72% from 2021)
 - Central African Republic: 450 resettled persons (+125% from 2021)
- **Stateless Persons Resettlement:** Surge in resettling stateless persons: 175 resettled in 2022 (compared to 5 in 2021), with Norway receiving the majority.

Demographics

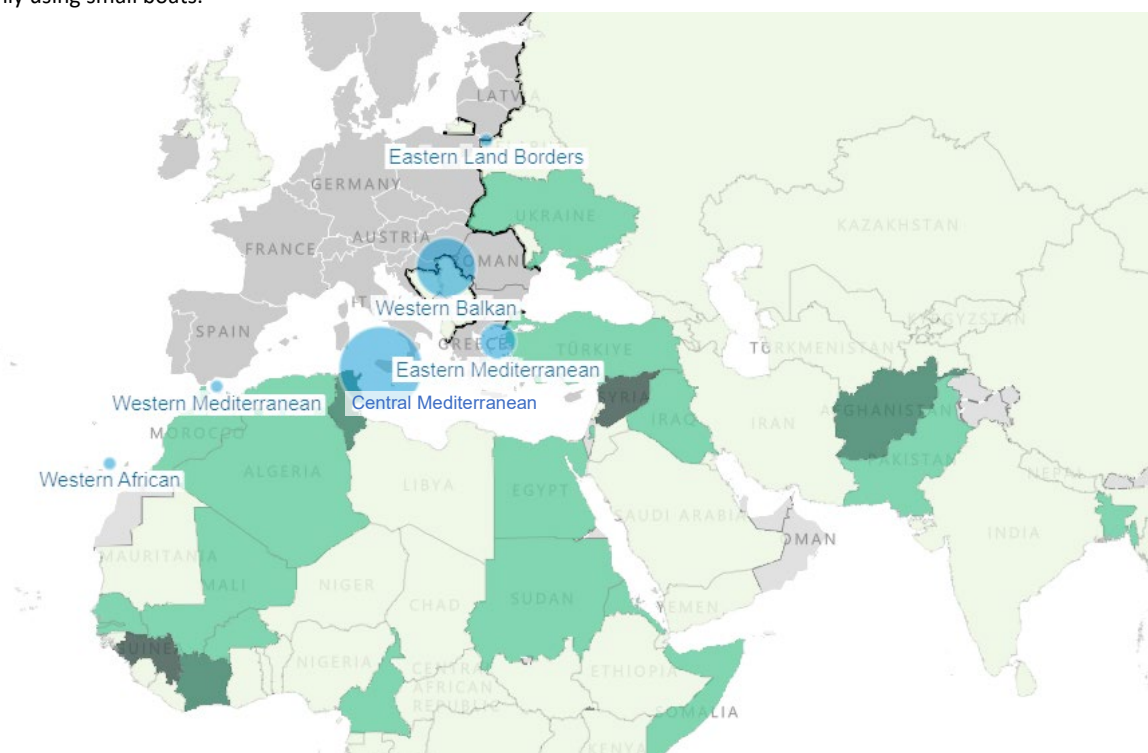
- **Age of Resettled Persons:**
 - Minors: One-half of all resettled refugees (almost 11,000), primarily from Syria.
 - Children under 14 years old: 9,500.
 - Adults (18-34 years): Approximately 5,600.
 - Adults (35-64 years): 4,600.
 - Persons older than 65 years: Just 210.
- **Gender Dimension:**
 - Gender balance in 2022, with nearly 11,000 males and over 10,000 women resettled.
 - A steady trend of slightly more males being resettled in EU+ countries from 2017 to 2022.

Main Migration Routes for Irregular Entries in Europe⁶

Main Migration Routes

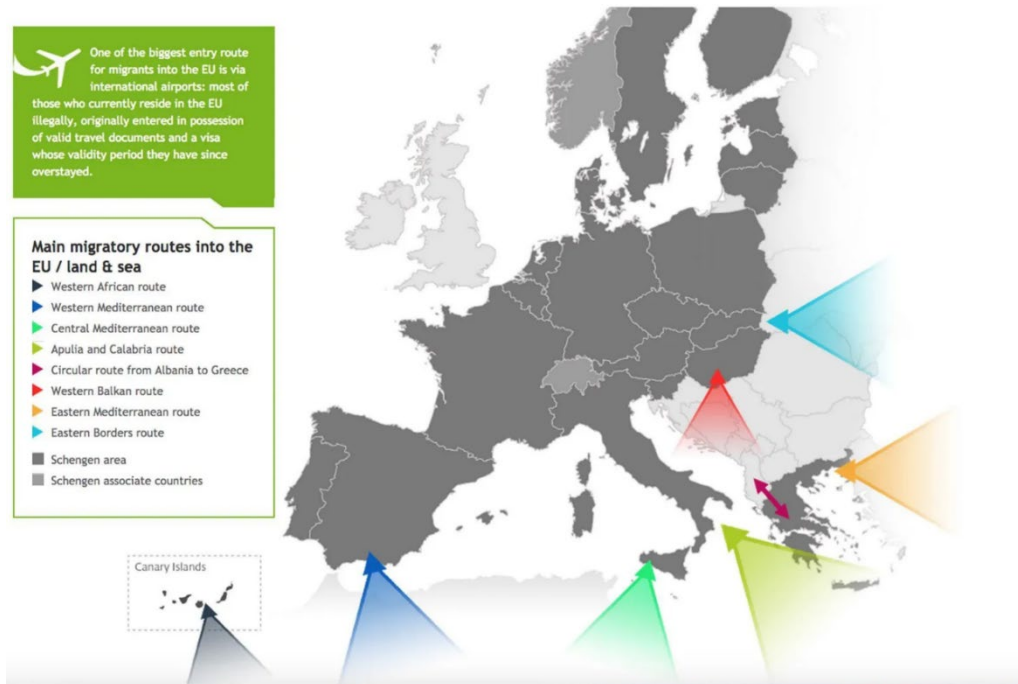
Frontex – the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, responsible for coordinating and enhancing border security among EU member states – classifies the following routes as diverse pathways taken by migrants attempting irregular entries into Europe:

- **Western African Route:** This route involves irregular border crossings from Western African countries, particularly towards the Canary Islands in Spain.
- **Western Mediterranean Route:** Irregular arrivals to Europe via the Western Mediterranean route, where migrants often depart from Algeria.
- **Central Mediterranean Route:** This route involves the central part of the Mediterranean Sea and is one of the most utilized paths to Europe.
- **Western Balkan Route:** The Western Balkan route is a path into Europe, with migrants often attempting to enter through southern common borders with Greece and Bulgaria.
- **Eastern Mediterranean Route:** This route involves arrivals to the EU via the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Eastern Borders Route:** This refers to irregular border crossings at the eastern land borders of the EU Member States neighboring Belarus.
- **The Channel Route:** This migratory route involves irregular border crossings from continental Europe to the United Kingdom, mainly using small boats.



(Frontex, 2023b)

⁶ (Frontex, 2023a; 2023b)



(Frontex, 2017)

Data Overview on Irregular Border Crossing 2021-2022

The migration landscape in Europe underwent notable changes in 2021 and 2022, with key developments on various routes.

In 2021, the Central Mediterranean Route took the lead as the most frequented path, seeing a significant 90% increase in irregular border crossings, largely due to heightened migration from Libya. Simultaneously, the Western Balkan Route became the second most-used path, doubling detections from the previous year. The Eastern Borders Route experienced a noteworthy tenfold increase, linked to a migrant crisis prompted by the Lukashenko regime. The Channel Route saw a substantial 241% rise in illegal border crossings.

In 2022, despite an overall decrease in migratory pressure, the Central Mediterranean Route saw a resurgence, led by arrivals from Egypt, Tunisia, and Bangladesh. The Western Balkan Route reported the highest number of irregular border crossings since 2015, featuring diverse nationalities. The Channel Route remained active, recording over 71,000 irregular crossings, highlighting the nuanced dynamics of migration in Europe.

Overview 2021

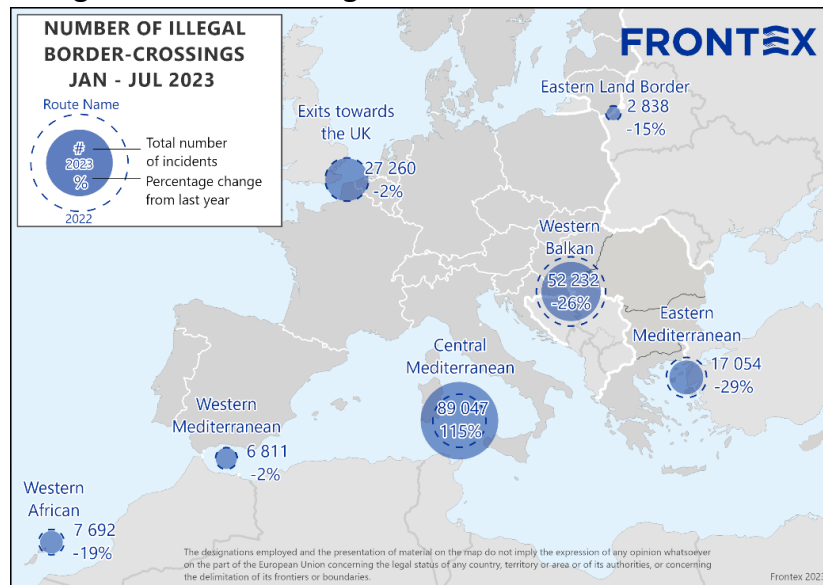
- Western African Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 22,504
 - Main nationality detected: Moroccan, followed by various Western African nations.
- Western Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 18,466
 - Majority of migrants detected: Algerian, followed by Moroccans.
- Central Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 67,724
 - Increase of 90% from the previous year
 - Main country of departure: Libya
 - Notable increase in arrivals from Tunisia, Turkey, and a sevenfold increase in Egyptian migrants.
 - Top detected nationalities: Tunisians and Bangladeshi nationals.
- Western Balkan Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 61,735
 - More than doubled from the previous year
 - Non-regional migrants using southern common borders with Greece and Bulgaria.
 - Exiting the region largely at the northern common borders of Hungary, Romania, Croatia, or with Serbia.
- Eastern Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 20,567
 - Increase in migratory pressure in Cyprus.
 - Africans among the detected migrants.

- **Eastern Borders Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 8,184
 - More than tenfold increase, attributed to a migrant crisis created by the Lukashenko regime.
- **The Channel Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: Over 52,000
 - Increase of 241% from the previous year
 - France and Belgium detected around 22,000 sea crossing attempts, while the UK detected over 30,000 successful crossings.

Overview 2022

- **Western African Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 15,460
 - 31% decrease from 2021
 - More than two-thirds from Morocco and various sub-Saharan countries.
- **Western Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 15,134
 - Decrease in migratory pressure with around a fifth fewer detections than in the previous year.
 - 80% of irregular migrants from Northwest African countries.
 - Major increases for selected Sub-Saharan African nationalities and Syrians.
- **Central Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: Over 100,000
 - Increase by more than half from the previous year
 - Top three nationalities: Egyptians, Tunisians, and Bangladeshis.
 - Most arrivals from Libya since 2017 and the highest number of arrivals from Tunisia in recent history..
- **Western Balkan Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 145,600
 - 136% more than in 2021
 - Highest number reported since 2015
 - Top nationalities: Syrians, Afghans, and Turks. Also, new nationalities like Tunisians, Indians, and Burundians.
- **Eastern Mediterranean Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 42,800
 - Top nationalities: Syrians, Afghans, and Nigerians.
 - Roughly doubled compared with 2021 but below half of the figures in 2019.
- **Eastern Borders Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: 6,332
 - Smaller scale compared to other migratory routes.
 - Significant challenges for border control.
 - Unprecedented migratory pressure in 2021.
- **The Channel Route:**
 - Irregular border crossings: Over 71,000
 - Active route with increased crossings after the Brexit transition period.
 - Over 50 different nationalities recorded, including those from the Middle East, Albania, and the Horn of Africa.

Data Overview on Irregular Border Crossing Jan-Jul 2023



(Frontex, 2023c)

- Overview:** In the initial six months of 2023, there were 132,370 detections of irregular border crossings at the EU's external borders, marking the highest total for this period since 2016, with a 10% increase from the previous year's figures. The Central Mediterranean emerged as the primary migratory route, constituting nearly half of all detections during January-June, totaling almost 65,600—a significant surge compared to the previous year.
- Key Findings**
 - In June alone, there were 29,240 detections of irregular border crossings, marking a 40% increase year-on-year – the highest monthly figure since 2016.
 - Central Mediterranean Dominance:** The Central Mediterranean route accounted for 50% of the irregular entries into the EU, maintaining its status as the most active route, with almost 66,000 detections reported in the first half of 2023.
 - Decline in Other Routes:** Entries on alternative migratory routes into the EU experienced declines, ranging from 6% on the Western Mediterranean to 34% on the Eastern Mediterranean route.
 - Western Balkan Route:** Despite being the second most active route, the Western Balkan route witnessed a 29% decline in detections during the January-June period, primarily attributed to tighter visa policies.
 - English Channel Crossings:** The number of irregular crossings in the English Channel towards the UK in June surged to 5,900 detections – the highest for the year. Favorable weather conditions and simultaneous departures by smugglers contributed to the rise.
- Concerns and Challenges**
 - Despite the increased migratory pressure, especially on the Central Mediterranean route, the sea crossings remain dangerous. IOM data reveals that almost 1,900 individuals went missing in the Mediterranean in June alone, predominantly on the Central Mediterranean route.
 - The surge in arrivals on this route is expected to persist due to intensified competition among criminal groups, leading to lower prices for migrants departing from Libya and Tunisia.

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