

Statistics on migration, residence permits, citizenship and asylum for the enlargement countries

2020 edition



The enlargement process in the EU

The accession of any country to the EU requires that country to respect a range of democratic values, as well as the consent of the EU institutions, all of the EU Member States and the citizens of the new Member State (through their national parliament or a referendum).

As of December 2019, the EU had granted the perspective of membership to seven enlargement countries, five of which have candidate country status: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Turkey. The two remaining countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo ⁽¹⁾, are potential candidates.

The process of ensuring compliance with the EU's standards and rules (the EU *acquis* or the body of EU law) is divided into different policy fields, including statistics. Eurostat monitors the progress of enlargement countries in complying with the EU *acquis* in the field of statistics, collecting a wide range of data from each country. These data are considered essential for measuring the progress of reforms, while they are also used to gauge the effectiveness of enlargement policies and assistance programmes. In return, Eurostat provides technical assistance and support to national statistical authorities. The ultimate goal is the provision of harmonised, high quality data that conforms to European and international standards. For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/eu-enlargement_en.

The EU's migration and asylum policies

Migration policies within the EU are built upon solidarity and responsibility, taking account of the contribution that immigrants make to the EU's economic development and performance. The EU aims to balance the management of legal (regular) immigration with combating irregular immigration. All relevant legal acts and information regarding the EU's immigration policy can be accessed on the [European Commission's website](#).

The Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the related 1967 Protocol defined who is a refugee, and laid down a common approach towards refugees that have been one of the cornerstones for the development of a common asylum system within the EU. Since 1999, the EU has worked towards creating a common European asylum regime in accordance with the Geneva Convention and other applicable international instruments. More information concerning the Common asylum system can also be accessed on the [European Commission's website](#).

This compact guide looks at changes in the size of the population of the enlargement countries due to international migration and then focuses on citizens of enlargement countries living within the EU-28, presenting information for the number having had residence permits issued to them and their acquisition of citizenship of an EU Member State. It concludes with information concerning citizens of enlargement countries having applied for asylum in the Member States.

⁽¹⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Population change: natural change and net migration

There were approximately 513 million persons resident in the EU-28 on 1 January 2019 (see Table 1). The combined population of the enlargement countries was 100 million inhabitants, which was equivalent to slightly less than one fifth (19.4 %) of the EU-28 total. Turkey was by far the most populous enlargement country, with 82 million inhabitants in 2019. The population of Turkey was 4.6 times as large as the population of all of the other enlargement countries combined (including 2018 data for Bosnia and Herzegovina), 11.8 times as large as that of the next largest enlargement country (Serbia) and 131.8 times as large as that of the smallest one (Montenegro).

Between 1 January 2013 and 1 January 2019 the population of Turkey increased at a relatively rapid pace, growing by 8.4 % overall during the period under consideration. The number of inhabitants in North Macedonia and Montenegro grew at a modest pace, increasing by 0.7 % and 0.2 % respectively. Elsewhere, there were declines in the populations of the enlargement countries: down 1.1 % in Kosovo, 1.2 % in Albania, 3.0 % in Serbia and 8.7 % in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013-2018).

Table 1: Population and population change, 2013-2019

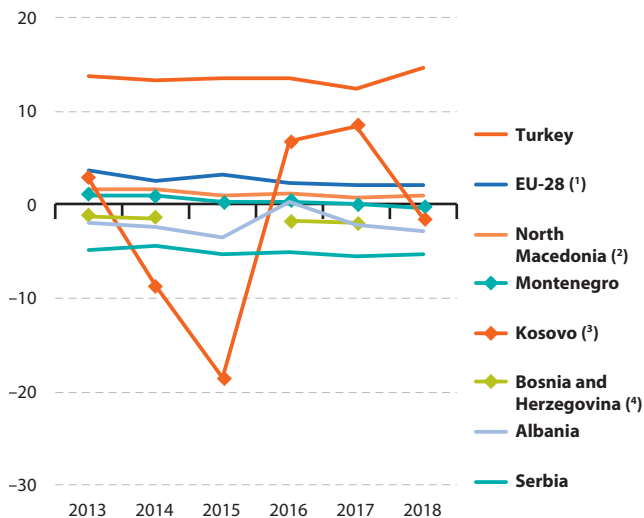
	Population (thousands)						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU-28 (1)	505 163	507 235	508 520	510 182	511 373	512 379	513 482
Montenegro	621	622	622	622	622	622	622
North Macedonia	2 062	2 066	2 069	2 071	2 074	2 075	2 077
Albania	2 898	2 892	2 886	2 876	2 877	2 870	2 862
Serbia	7 182	7 147	7 114	7 076	7 040	7 001	6 964
Turkey	75 627	76 668	77 696	78 741	79 815	80 811	82 004
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3 836	3 831	3 825	3 516	3 510	3 503	:
Kosovo (2)	1 816	1 821	1 805	1 772	1 784	1 799	1 796
	Natural population change (number)						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU-28	87 468	195 700	-114 015	24 202	-190 871	-354 224	:
Montenegro	1 558	1 515	1 057	1 105	909	760	:
North Macedonia	3 930	3 878	2 614	2 585	1 436	1 606	:
Albania	15 308	15 104	10 297	10 345	8 637	7 130	:
Serbia	-34 746	-34 786	-38 021	-36 100	-38 828	-37 680	:
Turkey	910 968	947 383	920 565	887 636	865 274	822 741	:
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-4 978	-5 577	:	-6 254	-7 178	:	:
Kosovo (2)	22 192	18 295	16 392	14 921	14 681	18 562	:
	Net migration and statistical adjustment (number)						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU-28 (1)	1 760 857	1 087 815	1 775 684	1 164 313	1 196 818	1 456 689	:
Montenegro	-930	-937	-938	-936	-937	-937	:
North Macedonia	-455	-475	-508	-161	163	225	:
Albania	-20 684	-21 702	-20 501	-9 346	-14 904	-15 027	:
Serbia	0	2 420	0	0	0	0	:
Turkey	129 512	80 657	124 584	186 182	130 380	370 616	:
Bosnia and Herzegovina	244	0	:	0	0	:	:
Kosovo (2)	-17 167	-33 982	-49 732	-2 994	294	-21 402	:

(1) 2014, 2015 and 2017: breaks in series.

(2) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [demo_gind](#))

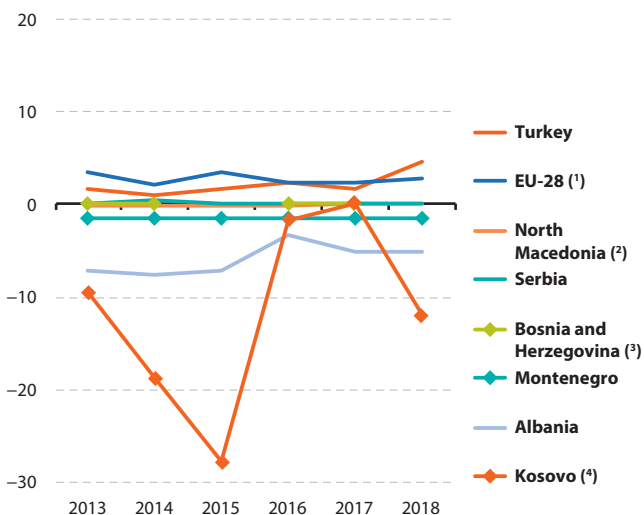
Figure 1: Total population change, 2013-2018
(per 1 000 inhabitants)



(¹) Breaks in series. 2016-2018: provisional.
(²) 2018: estimate.
(³) Estimates.
(⁴) 2014 and 2016: provisional. 2015 and 2018: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [demo_gind](#))

Figure 2: Population change due to migration (and statistical adjustment), 2013-2018
(per 1 000 inhabitants)



(¹) Breaks in series. 2016-2018: provisional.
(²) 2018: estimate.
(³) 2014 and 2016: provisional. 2015 and 2018: not available.
(⁴) Estimates.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [demo_gind](#))

Persons having received first residence permits

Some of the people who emigrate from enlargement countries move to EU Member States and are issued with residence permits. This analysis focuses on the number of persons issued with first residence permits during a year, in other words the number of new residents in the Member States having been issued with permits. In general, this figure excludes renewals of existing permits, but a residence permit is also considered to be a first permit if the time gap between the expiry of an old permit and the start of validity of the new permit issued for the same reason is at least six months.

Table 2 shows that more than 310 000 citizens of enlargement countries were issued with first residence permits in 2018 by EU Member States, the largest number during the period from 2008 to 2018. As such, around one tenth (9.6 %) of all persons issued with first permits by Member States in 2018 were citizens of enlargement countries. One quarter (25.6 %) of the citizens of enlargement countries issued with first residence permits by EU Member States were citizens of Turkey, one fifth (20.2 %) were Albanians, just over one sixth were citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (17.3 %) or Serbia (16.8 %), and just over one tenth (11.2 %) were citizens of Kosovo; smaller shares were issued to citizens of North Macedonia (7.9 %) and Montenegro (1.0 %).

Table 2: Number of citizens of enlargement countries to whom first residence permits were issued each year within the EU-28, 2013-2018
(number of persons)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Montenegro	2 041	1 694	1 938	2 205	2 452	3 077
North Macedonia	10 349	10 174	12 129	14 336	16 917	24 442
Albania	31 279	33 962	50 859	59 376	51 851	62 525
Serbia	27 059	25 041	27 195	31 289	40 350	52 049
Turkey	59 722	57 914	58 308	60 000	67 096	79 532
Bosnia and Herzegovina	16 440	18 688	19 934	26 395	36 365	53 764
Kosovo	17 526	18 062	19 270	21 009	26 168	34 778

Note: 2018, break in series.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_resfirst](#))

Germany issued the largest numbers of first residence permits for citizens of six of the enlargement countries, the exception being for citizens of Albania who were more likely to have received a first residence permit from Italy or Greece — see Table 3. The concentration of persons who were issued first residence permits in Germany was highest for Montenegrins and citizens of Kosovo as more than half of citizens of these two countries issued with such permits in the EU-28 received their permit from Germany.

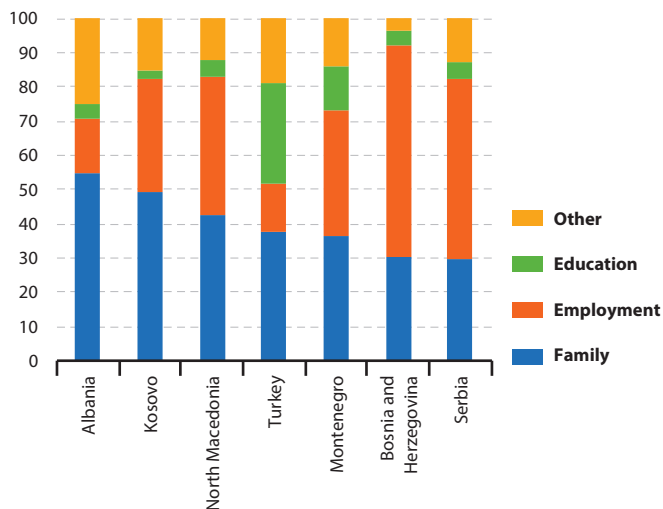
Table 3: First residence permits issued in the EU-28 to citizens of enlargement countries, analysed by the Member State issuing the permit, 2018

	First		Second		Other EU Member States
	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	
Montenegro	Germany	50.4	Luxembourg	6.5	43.0
North Macedonia	Germany	47.4	Italy	9.1	43.5
Albania	Italy	37.0	Greece	27.1	35.9
Serbia	Germany	31.0	Slovenia	9.9	59.1
Turkey	Germany	29.2	Poland	16.7	54.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	30.7	Slovenia	29.2	40.0
Kosovo	Germany	54.6	Slovenia	11.0	34.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_resfrist](#))

Among the more than 310 000 citizens of enlargement countries issued with first residence permits in 2018, two fifths (40.2 %) were for family-reasons, one third (33.4 %) for employment, one tenth (10.8 %) for education and 15.5 % for other reasons (including international protection, residence without the right to work (for example, pensioners), or people in the intermediate stages of a regularisation process). As can be seen from Figure 3, the reasons for which first permits were issued varied somewhat between the enlargement countries.

Figure 3: Distribution by reason for issuing first residence permits to citizens of enlargement countries, EU-28, 2018
(% of number of persons issued with first residence permits)



Ranked on the share for family reasons.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_resfrist](#))

Acquisition of citizenship

Citizenship of an EU Member State brings new rights and opportunities, such as the rights to move, live and work freely within the EU. During 2017, more than 121 000 citizens of enlargement countries acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State (excluding Romania), 18.1 % of the number of citizens of all non-member countries who acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State. Nearly half (48.8 %) of the citizens of enlargement countries who acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State were Albanians and nearly a quarter (24.7 %) were citizens of Turkey. Shares below one tenth were recorded for citizens of Serbia (7.5 %), Kosovo (6.8 %), Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.2 %), North Macedonia (5.3 %) and Montenegro (0.7 %).

The number of Albanians who had acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017 was twice as high as it had been in 2012, while the numbers of citizens of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina who had acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017 were respectively 81 %, 48 % and 14 % higher than they had been in 2012. Kosovo also recorded an increase in the number of its citizens acquiring the citizenship of an EU Member State, up from 6 573 in 2013

Table 4: Number of people acquiring citizenship of an EU Member State, 2012-2017
(number of persons)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Montenegro	535	545	493	562	597	792
North Macedonia	3 522	4 231	4 615	7 569	9 235	6 372
Albania	29 183	41 668	41 003	48 487	67 483	58 853
Serbia	12 889	9 384	8 950	8 754	10 812	9 085
Turkey	55 868	46 479	37 463	35 019	32 821	29 807
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 533	6 305	6 287	7 692	8 827	7 469
Kosovo (¹)	:	6 573	6 814	8 756	9 538	8 150

Note: 2013, 2014 and 2016, breaks in series. Data for Romania by single former citizenship are not available in 2012 and 2017.

(¹) 2012: data not collected.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_acq](#))

(when the time series starts) to 8 150 in 2017 (an increase of 24 %). For citizens of Serbia, the number acquiring the citizenship of an EU Member State was lower in 2017 than it had been in 2012 (down 30 %), while the number of citizens of Turkey who had acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017 was just over half (down 47 %) the number recorded in 2012.

In 2017, German citizenship was the one most commonly acquired (among the citizenships of the EU Member States) by citizens of four enlargement countries: Serbia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo — see Table 5; note that data are not available for the number of citizens from enlargement countries having acquired the citizenship of Romania. For Montenegrins, the most commonly acquired citizenship among the EU Member States was that of Luxembourg, for citizens of North Macedonia it was that of Italy, while for Albanians it was that of Greece. Three fifths (60.3 %) of citizens of North Macedonia who acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017 became Italians, 50.6 % of Albanians who acquired the citizenship of a Member State became Greeks and 50.2 % of Turkish citizens who acquired the citizenship of a Member State became Germans.

Table 5: Citizens from enlargement countries having been granted citizenship, analysed by the Member State having granted the citizenship, 2017

	First		Second		Other EU Member States
	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	Share of EU-28 (%)
Montenegro	Luxembourg	33.3	Germany	24.0	42.7
North Macedonia	Italy	60.3	Germany	15.5	24.1
Albania	Greece	50.6	Italy	46.1	3.4
Serbia	Germany	21.5	Sweden	19.9	58.6
Turkey	Germany	50.2	France	17.9	31.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	28.0	Austria	17.2	54.7
Kosovo	Germany	48.0	Italy	30.2	21.8

Note: data for Romania by single former citizenship are not available in 2017.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_acq](#))

Asylum applicants and first instance decisions in the EU

This final section describes recent developments in relation to the number of asylum applicants in the EU-28 from citizens of enlargement countries as well as decisions on asylum applications. Asylum is a form of international protection given by a state on its territory. It is granted to a person who is unable to seek protection in his/her country of citizenship and/or residence, in particular for fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

During 2018, the number of first-time asylum applicants in the EU-28 (2) who were citizens of enlargement countries was 54 720. This was 5.5 times as many as 10 years earlier. As such, 9.3% of citizens of non-member countries who were first-time applicants for asylum in the EU-28 in 2018 were citizens of enlargement countries.

Table 6: Number of first-time applicants for asylum from citizens of enlargement countries, EU-28, 2013-2018 (number of persons)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Montenegro	760	1 455	3 615	1 550	515	375
North Macedonia	7 355	6 730	10 545	6 135	4 255	3 325
Albania	10 505	16 145	66 145	29 145	22 270	19 580
Serbia	14 825	20 095	19 095	8 885	5 085	4 445
Turkey	4 605	4 415	4 180	10 105	14 655	22 075
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5 255	7 780	5 940	3 095	1 775	1 625
Kosovo	16 690	34 115	66 885	9 170	5 320	3 295

Note: rounded values.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr_asyappctza](#))

Two fifths (40.3 %) of these citizens of enlargement countries who were first-time asylum applicants in the EU-28 in 2018 were Turkish citizens and more than one third (35.8 %) were Albanians. Shares below one tenth were recorded for citizens of Serbia (8.1 %), North Macedonia (6.1 %), Kosovo (6.0 %), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3.0 %) and Montenegro (0.7 %).

Among the EU Member States, the largest number of first-time applicants for asylum in 2018 from six of the enlargement countries were registered in France; the only exception was for citizens of Turkey who were more likely to be first-time applicants in Germany or Greece — see Table 7. Germany was the second most common Member State in which citizens of five of the enlargement countries were first-time applicants. As such, France and Germany each figured among the top two for six of the enlargement countries.

Data for decisions on asylum applications are shown in Figure 4 for first instance decisions. Some applications rejected at first instance may subsequently be accepted in a final decision (after an appeal or review). In 2018, 51 375 first instance decisions on asylum applications from citizens

(2) The EU-28 total is calculated as the sum of data for the EU Member States. Data for each Member State refer to the number of persons applying for asylum for the first-time in that Member State. However, an individual may apply for international protection in more than one Member State in a given reference year. Consequently, the EU-28 total may include such multiple applications by a single person.

of enlargement countries were made in the EU Member States; the vast majority (81 %) of these applications were rejected. The proportion of positive first instance decisions was 15 % or lower for applications from citizens of six of the enlargement countries. The exception was applications from Turkish citizens, nearly half (47 %) of which were accepted.

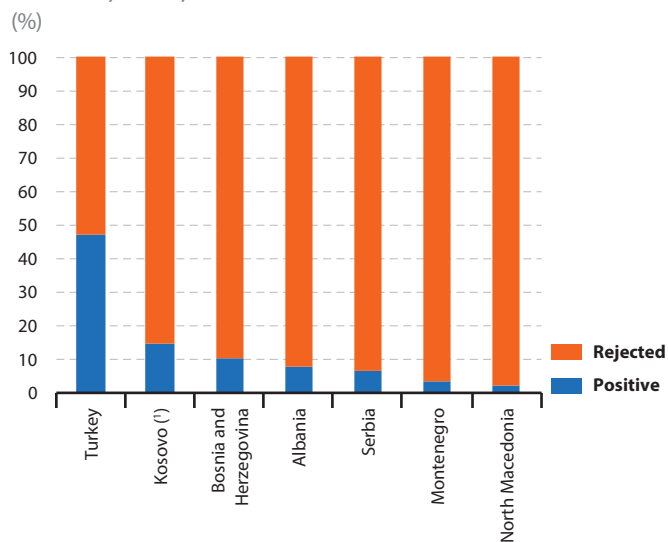
Table 7: First-time applicants for asylum from citizens of enlargement countries, analysed by the Member State having received the application, 2018

	First		Second		Other EU Member States
	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	Name	Share of EU-28 (%)	
Montenegro	France	46.7	Germany	40.0	13.3
North Macedonia	France	48.3	Germany	37.4	14.3
Albania	France	42.4	Greece	16.0	41.6
Serbia	France	56.5	Germany	24.7	18.8
Turkey	Germany	46.0	Greece	21.8	32.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	France	51.1	Germany	25.2	23.7
Kosovo	France	66.3	Germany	17.1	16.5

Note: based on rounded values.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: *migr_asyappctza*)

Figure 4: Distribution of first instance decisions on applications for asylum from citizens of enlargement countries, EU-28, 2018



Ranked on the share of positive decisions.

(1) Calculated from rounded data: shares adjusted proportionally to sum to 100 %.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: *migr_asydcfsta*)

Further information

Data were extracted on 29 October 2019

Symbols

: not available

Italics value is either an estimate or provisional

Eurostat's website

Eurostat's website (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>) provides free access to its statistics; it is available in German, English and French. Eurostat online data codes, which are given in the source under each table or figure, provide users with a quick and efficient way to access the most up-to-date statistics. When entered in the 'search' facility on Eurostat's website, these codes provide users with the freshest data and longer time series.

Statistics Explained

Statistics Explained (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>) is Eurostat's wiki-based system that presents statistical topics in an easy to understand way; it is composed of articles that together make up an encyclopaedia of statistics. There is a wide range of articles on enlargement countries.

Statistical articles on enlargement countries:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement_countries_-_statistical_overview

Background information on the enlargement countries:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement_policy_and_statistical_cooperation

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