

Enforcement of immigration legislation statistics

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted: 05 May 2025.
Planned update: May 2026.*

Highlights

" 123 655 third-country nationals were refused entry into the EU at one of its external borders in 2024, a small increase of 0.3% compared to 2023. "

" 918 925 third-country nationals were found to be illegally present in the EU in 2024, a decrease of 27.4% compared to 2023. "

" 453 380 third-country nationals were ordered to leave the territory of the EU in 2024, a decrease of 7.3% compared to 2023. "

" 110 385 third-country nationals were returned to a third country following an order to leave the EU in 2024, up 19.3% compared to 2023. "



Third-country nationals subject to immigration law enforcement in 2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs), (migr_eipre), (migr_eiord1) and (migr_eirtn1)

This article presents indicators on the [enforcement of immigration legislation](#). It provides statistics on third-country nationals who were refused entry at the external borders of the EU; third-country nationals who were illegally present on the territory of a country; third-country nationals who were ordered to leave the territory of an EU country; and third-country nationals who left an EU or EFTA country following an order to leave. Each of these indicators can be regarded as an official record of persons subject to the enforcement of EU [immigration](#) legislation, providing a general overview of the outcome of territorial surveillance and control procedures.

Figure 1

Since 2020, both, the number of refusals of entry and returns have remained relatively stable. Between 2020 and 2023, there was an increase in the number of citizens found to be illegally present in EU countries, with a decrease of 27.4% in the last year (Figure 1).

Third-country nationals refused entry into the EU

In 2024, the number of third-country nationals refused entry to the EU was nearly the same as last year (+0.3%)

In 2024, 123 655 third-country nationals were refused entry into the EU at one of its external borders. Almost one third of the total number of refusals were recorded in Poland (16.7%) and in Croatia (11.3%) (Table 1).

Third-country nationals refused entry into an EU or EFTA country, 2015-2023

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Share in the EU total, 2024	Change, 2023-2024
	(number of persons)										(%)	(%)
EU	278 025	318 990	349 150	393 685	670 795	137 840	139 520	142 490	123 260	123 655	100.0	0.3
Belgium	1 640	1 530	2 440	2 200	2 300	770	1 140	1 720	1 805	1 840	1.5	1.8
Bulgaria	2 405	2 170	2 870	3 220	4 245	4 685	6 180	7 955	7 230	6 395	5.2	-11.5
Czechia	465	365	230	315	460	440	340	290	405	365	0.3	-10.3
Denmark	125	120	300	325	650	480	640	535	510	480	0.4	-5.1
Germany	3 670	3 775	4 250	5 175	6 730	4 210	4 635	5 970	5 820	6 935	5.6	19.2
Estonia	965	875	1 175	1 635	2 120	500	565	5 465	5 855	2 725	2.2	-53.4
Ireland	3 450	3 950	3 745	4 795	7 455	2 790	3 725	9 240	7 405	6 895	5.6	-6.9
Greece	6 890	18 145	21 175	14 295	7 015	3 145	3 075	5 450	7 270	6 610	5.3	-9.1
Spain	168 345	192 135	203 025	230 540	493 455	3 515	2 545	7 250	7 250	6 415	5.2	-11.5
France	10 860	8 580	10 215	9 515	9 880	4 240	8 210	9 180	9 650	10 235	8.3	6.1
Croatia	9 355	9 135	10 015	13 240	13 025	14 710	14 190	11 800	10 900	13 945	11.3	27.9
Italy	7 425	9 715	11 260	8 245	9 720	4 060	5 760	5 795	6 295	7 165	5.8	13.9
Cyprus	415	565	1 425	2 025	900	360	440	425	465	800	0.6	72.5
Latvia	875	800	1 065	1 685	1 800	640	855	2 260	3 625	3 070	2.5	-15.3
Lithuania	3 480	4 575	5 180	5 200	6 085	4 555	3 585	5 240	4 255	2 880	2.3	-32.4
Luxembourg	5	10	5	5	5	5	5	10	10	30	0.0	166.7
Hungary	11 505	9 905	14 010	15 050	14 240	36 500	34 650	15 780	12 575	6 910	5.6	-45.0
Malta	400	380	460	405	385	110	265	350	365	285	0.2	-21.8
Netherlands	2 295	2 700	2 410	2 555	2 900	1 980	3 745	3 140	2 470	2 375	1.9	-3.8
Austria	560	460	740	400	770	310	555	575	680	730	0.6	7.0
Poland	30 245	34 485	38 660	53 695	65 425	28 130	26 160	23 330	14 850	20 675	16.7	39.2
Portugal	1 280	1 655	2 140	3 760	4 995	1 510	1 150	1 750	1 560	1 560	1.3	0.0
Romania	4 810	5 390	5 305	7 260	7 640	12 570	11 010	8 945	7 155	10 160	8.2	42.0
Slovenia	4 410	4 455	3 680	3 535	3 875	4 260	3 905	4 025	735	2 160	1.7	194.1
Slovakia	465	750	1 085	1 755	1 375	435	465	1 110	985	645	0.5	-34.5
Finland	1 070	950	1 400	1 760	1 775	1 735	1 180	3 985	2 225	395	0.3	-82.3
Sweden	615	1 405	880	1 090	1 565	1 200	550	905	905	965	0.8	6.7
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0.0
Norway	465	525	385	360	350	125	1 975	495	320	310	-	-3.1
Switzerland	945	900	1 225	1 205	1 165	1 305	2 100	1 630	1 295	1 645	-	26.9

Portugal 2024 data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_eirfs)

eurostat

Table 1: Third-country nationals refused entry into an EU or EFTA country, 2017-2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs)

In 2024, the majority (56.9%) of third-country nationals who were refused entry in the EU were through the external EU land borders, followed by refusals at the air borders (39.8%), while only a small proportion (3.4%) of total refusals were at sea borders (Table 2). The largest numbers of refusals recorded at external land borders were reported by Poland (18 030; 87.2% of all refusals of entry in Poland), Croatia (13 535; 97.0%), Romania (8 960; 88.2%), Hungary (6 205; 89.8%), Bulgaria (5 350; 83.7%) and Greece (5 170; 78.2%). As regards the air borders, in 2024 France reported the highest number of refusals (7 800) in the EU, followed by Germany (6 935), Ireland (6 240) and Spain (5 650) in 2025. Italy (1 320) reported the highest numbers of refusals at the EU sea borders in 2024, followed by France (1 145).

Third-country nationals refused entry into an EU or EFTA country, by type of border, 2024

	Total refusals (number)	Refused at the land border (number) (% of total refusals)	Refused at the air border (number) (% of total refusals)	Refused at the sea border (number) (% of total refusals)
EU	123 655	70 330 56,9	49 155 39,8	4 170 3,4
Belgium	1 840	–	1 840 100,0	0 0,0
Bulgaria	6 395	5 350 83,7	990 15,5	50 0,8
Czechia	365	–	365 100,0	0 –
Denmark	480	–	480 100,0	0 0,0
Germany	6 935	–	6 935 100,0	0 0,0
Estonia	2 725	2 670 98,0	50 1,8	5 0,2
Ireland	6 895	330 4,8	6 240 90,5	320 4,6
Greece	6 610	5 170 78,2	905 13,7	535 8,1
Spain	6 415	420 6,5	5 650 88,1	345 5,4
France	10 235	1 295 12,7	7 800 76,2	1 145 11,2
Croatia	13 945	13 525 97,0	400 2,9	15 0,1
Italy	7 165	615 8,6	5 230 73,0	1 320 18,4
Cyprus	800	–	800 100,0	0 0,0
Latvia	3 070	2 445 79,6	605 19,7	20 0,7
Lithuania	2 880	2 670 92,7	200 6,9	10 0,3
Luxembourg	30	–	30 100,0	0 –
Hungary	6 910	6 205 89,8	705 10,2	0 0,0
Malta	285	–	280 98,2	5 1,8
Netherlands	2 375	–	2 260 95,2	120 5,1
Austria	730	–	730 100,0	0 –
Poland	20 675	18 030 87,2	2 540 12,3	105 0,5
Portugal	1 560	–	1 555 99,7	5 0,3
Romania	10 160	8 960 88,2	1 050 10,3	150 1,5
Slovenia	2 160	2 050 94,9	105 4,9	5 0,2
Slovakia	645	590 91,5	60 9,3	0 –
Finland	395	0 0,0	395 100,0	0 0,0
Sweden	965	0 0,0	950 98,4	15 1,6
Liechtenstein	0	0 0,0	0 0,0	– –
Switzerland	1 645	0 0,0	1 645 100,0	– –
Norway	310	75 24,2	235 75,8	0 0,0

Note: – = not applicable; sea borders for landlocked countries; land borders for countries in the Schengen area that just have borders with other countries within the Schengen area.

Portugal 2024 data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_eirfs)

eurostat 

Table 2: Third-country nationals refused entry into an EU or EFTA country, by type of border, 2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eirfs)

The highest number of persons refused entry into the EU in 2024 was concerning Ukrainians

The largest number of persons refused entry into the EU in 2024 was recorded for Ukrainians (19 595), Albanians (14 260), Moldovans (12 100), Turkish (6 760) and Serbians (6 190), all representing countries with EU land borders (Figure 2).

Figure 2The highest number of refusals at the EU land borders was recorded for the citizens of Ukraine (18 339; 93.5% of all refusals concerning Ukrainians), Moldova (10 725; 86.6%), Albania (7 855; 55.1%), Serbia (5 425; 87.7%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (4 855; 95.9%). Regarding air borders, the highest number of such refusals was reported for citizens of Albania (5 415; 38.0% of all refusals concerning Albanians), Colombia (3 515; 89.4%) and Georgia (3 320; 68,8%). At the sea borders, the highest numbers were registered for citizens of Albania (990; 6.9% of all refusals concerning Albanians), Türkiye (460; 6.8%), and Morocco (335; 20.1%). Ukrainian citizens¹ who were refused entry into the EU, mainly attempted to cross the land borders with Poland and Romania (Table 3). Most Albanian citizens were refused entry at Greek, Croatian, Hungarian, and Lithuanian land borders, or at Italian air and sea borders. Most Moldovans were refused entry at Romanian, Polish, and Latvian land borders, as well as in Estonia.

¹ Ukrainian citizens benefitting from temporary protection, i.e. persons who left Ukraine due to Russia's invasion, are generally not covered by the data presented in this article. These persons are subject of a separate data collection on Temporary Protection (TP); see data on temporary protection here and the statistics explained article here.

Third-country nationals refused entry into an EU or EFTA country, by country, type of border and citizenship, 2024 (number of persons)

Belgium				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	1 840	-	1 840	0
Albania	450	-	450	0
Kosovo	135	-	135	0
Moldova	105	-	105	0
Other	1 150	-	1 145	0
Czechia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	365	-	365	-
Georgia	95	-	95	-
United Kingdom	50	-	50	-
Russia	40	-	40	-
Other	180	-	180	-
Germany				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 935	0	6 935	0
Kosovo	795	0	795	0
Türkiye	660	0	660	0
Albania	595	0	595	0
Other	4 885	0	4 885	0
Ireland				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 895	330	6 240	320
Albania	1 010	0	970	40
Brazil	605	10	595	5
Somalia	495	25	465	5
Other	4 780	300	4 210	275
Spain				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 415	420	5 650	345
Colombia	2 120	90	2 020	10
Morocco	615	155	175	290
Peru	480	30	450	0
Other	3 195	145	3 005	45
Croatia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	13 945	13 525	400	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4 645	4 645	0	0
Serbia	2 415	2 415	0	0
Kosovo	1 675	1 670	0	0
Other	5 210	4 795	395	15
Cyprus				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	800	-	800	0
Georgia	130	-	130	0
Syria	100	-	100	0
Pakistan	40	-	40	0
Other	530	-	530	0
Lithuania				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	2 880	2 670	200	10
Albania	1 375	1 375	0	0
Russia	845	840	5	0
Ukraine	110	100	5	5
Other	550	360	190	5
Hungary				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 910	6 205	705	-
Serbia	2 060	2 055	0	-
Albania	1 390	1 340	50	-
Moldova	810	805	5	-
Other	2 655	2 000	650	-
Netherlands				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	2 375	-	2 260	120
Colombia	530	-	530	0
United Kingdom	135	-	105	25
India	115	-	115	0
Other	1 595	-	1 505	90
Poland				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	20 675	18 030	2 540	105
Ukraine	15 450	15 110	335	5
Moldova	1 515	1 475	40	0
Georgia	975	145	835	0
Other	2 730	1 305	1 330	95
Romania				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	10 160	8 960	1 050	150
Moldova	5 950	5 925	25	0
Ukraine	1 475	1 450	10	20
Türkiye	360	290	45	20
Other	2 370	1 295	970	105
Slovakia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	645	590	60	-
Ukraine	190	190	0	-
Moldova	125	125	0	-
Azerbaijan	80	80	0	-
Other	255	195	60	-
Sweden				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	965	-	950	15
Kosovo	75	-	75	0
United Kingdom	75	-	70	0
Serbia	55	-	55	0
Other	760	-	745	15
Switzerland				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	1 645	-	1 645	0
Kosovo	440	-	440	0
Serbia	125	-	125	0
Albania	115	-	115	0
Other	965	-	965	0

Bulgaria				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 395	5 350	990	50
Türkiye	2 190	1 995	175	20
Georgia	815	780	25	5
North Macedonia	425	425	0	0
Other	2 965	2 150	790	25
Denmark				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	480	-	480	0
United Kingdom	65	-	65	0
Russia	45	-	45	0
China	35	-	35	0
Other	335	-	335	0
Estonia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	2 725	2 670	50	5
Russia	995	985	10	0
Moldova	915	915	0	0
Ukraine	260	260	0	0
Other	555	515	35	0
Greece				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	6 610	5 170	905	535
Albania	3 115	2 890	185	35
Türkiye	1 080	745	20	315
North Macedonia	560	555	0	5
Other	1 860	980	695	180
France				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	10 235	1 295	7 800	1 145
Unknown	975	15	940	20
Morocco	525	5	490	30
Algeria	460	5	415	40
Other	8 280	1 270	5 955	1 055
Italy				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	7 165	615	5 230	1 320
Albania	3 160	60	2 245	855
Kosovo	485	40	245	205
Moldova	360	0	360	0
Other	3 160	515	2 380	265
Latvia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	3 070	2 445	605	20
Moldova	1 045	1 000	45	0
Russia	690	605	65	15
Ukraine	515	405	105	5
Other	820	435	385	0
Luxembourg				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	30	-	30	-
Democratic Republic of the Congo	5	-	5	-
Afghanistan	5	-	5	-
Kosovo	5	-	5	-
Other	20	-	20	-
Malta				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	285	-	280	5
Colombia	30	-	30	0
India	20	-	20	0
Serbia	20	-	20	0
Other	215	-	210	5
Austria				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	730	-	730	0
Albania	125	-	125	0
Türkiye	75	-	75	0
Georgia	65	-	65	0
Other	460	-	460	0
Portugal				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	1 560	-	1 555	5
Brazil	940	-	940	0
United Kingdom	65	-	65	0
Venezuela	60	-	60	0
Other	495	-	490	5
Slovenia				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	2 160	2 050	105	5
Albania	305	300	5	0
Türkiye	240	190	50	0
Russia	135	125	10	0
Other	1 475	1 430	40	5
Finland				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	395	0	395	0
Russia	50	0	50	0
China	25	0	25	0
India	20	0	20	0
Other	295	0	295	0
Norway				
Citizens of	Total	Land	Air	Sea
Total	310	75	235	0
Russia	115	70	45	0
United Kingdom	25	0	25	0
India	25	0	25	0
Other	150	10	140	0

Note: – = not applicable; sea borders for landlocked countries; land borders for countries in the Schengen area that just have borders with other countries

Portugal 2024 data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_eirfs)

Almost 50% of the refusals of entry were explained by not-justified purpose or conditions of the stay and absence of a valid visa or residence permit

Looking at the reasons for the refusals of entry— which are based on the [Schengen Borders Code](#) — in 2024, the main reasons for such refusals were: 'Purpose and conditions of stay not justified' (24.3%), 'No valid visa or residence permit' (19.3%) and 'Person already stayed 3 months in a 6-months period' (18.3%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3The main reasons for refusing entry to Ukrainians (19 595) were: 'Persons already stayed 3 months in a 6-month period' (52.0% of the total refusals of Ukrainians in the EU) and 'No valid visa or residence permit' (15.2%). Albanian citizens were mainly refused entry (14 260) due to 'An alert has been issued' (28.8%) and 'Purpose and conditions of stay not justified' (27.2%). Moldovan citizens were refused entry mainly (12 100) for 'Purpose and conditions of stay not justified' (29.7%) and 'Person already stayed 3 months in a 6-month period' (29.2%).

Third-country nationals found to be illegally present

A decrease of 27.4% of the number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present

Around 918 925 third-country nationals were found to be illegally present in the EU in 2024, a decrease of 27.4% compared to 2023. Germany reported the largest number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present in 2024 (249 155; a decrease of 5.5%), followed by France (142 190; an increase of 19.5%) and Italy (108 925; a decrease of 44.1%); these three EU countries together accounted for 54.4% of all third-country nationals found to be illegally present in the EU. Moreover, a noticeable decrease in the number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present was recorder in Slovakia (94.5%), Latvia (83.6%), Hungary (77.8%), Austria (60.4%) and Croatia (54.1%), leading to nearly 255 000 fewer persons apprehended in these five countries (Table 4) compared to the previous year.

Third-country nationals found to be illegally present into an EU or EFTA country, 2024

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Share in the EU total, 2024	Change, 2023-2024
	(number of persons)								(%)	
EU	563 825	572 415	628 735	557 760	679 845	1 121 625	1 265 335	918 925	100,0	-27,4
Belgium	18 285	19 145	17 585	11 495	10 885	10 965	10 825	10 150	1,1	-6,2
Bulgaria	2 595	1 305	655	670	3 200	10 135	22 805	15 150	1,6	-33,6
Czechia	4 360	4 505	4 995	6 515	11 040	29 130	11 185	9 365	1,0	-16,3
Denmark	1 105	1 135	1 195	490	425	510	1 100	1 540	0,2	40,0
Germany	156 710	134 125	133 525	117 930	120 285	198 310	263 670	249 155	27,1	-5,5
Estonia	755	980	1 305	1 330	855	1 070	920	750	0,1	-18,5
Ireland	2 775	2 265	2 790	1 110	545	1 240	1 485	3 265	0,4	119,9
Greece	68 110	93 365	123 025	47 295	38 015	49 060	72 105	77 095	8,4	6,9
Spain	44 625	78 280	62 865	72 265	30 615	68 100	90 860	84 690	9,2	-6,8
France	115 085	105 880	120 455	103 915	117 265	115 135	118 975	142 190	15,5	19,5
Croatia	3 495	5 580	13 630	22 240	13 540	43 830	67 950	31 195	3,4	-54,1
Italy	36 230	26 780	26 885	22 785	92 070	138 420	194 750	108 925	11,9	-44,1
Cyprus	4 090	6 040	8 895	6 215	11 175	21 025	10 115	9 350	1,0	-7,6
Latvia	400	395	215	110	175	13 575	14 205	2 325	0,3	-83,6
Lithuania	2 210	2 660	2 440	1 960	5 025	3 450	4 235	4 235	0,5	0,0
Luxembourg	300	320	580	740	1 045	1 020	1 045	1 350	0,1	29,2
Hungary	25 730	18 915	36 440	89 370	134 140	222 515	159 780	35 520	3,9	-77,8
Malta	530	515	620	590	820	1 405	1 695	1 780	0,2	5,0
Netherlands	2 120	2 790	3 565	3 640	5 010	5 475	6 520	3 995	0,4	-38,7
Austria	26 660	18 840	16 090	18 715	38 410	105 545	59 465	23 525	2,6	-60,4
Poland	28 470	31 245	30 900	12 170	12 795	10 510	16 480	16 065	1,7	-2,5
Portugal	6 005	4 760	5 890	3 145	1 855	2 170	1 615	1 615	0,2	0,0
Romania	3 340	2 565	3 030	3 475	10 780	18 465	21 390	32 550	3,5	52,2
Slovenia	4 180	4 345	5 765	4 605	14 430	35 215	61 245	46 715	5,1	-23,7
Slovakia	2 590	2 635	2 005	1 215	1 715	11 705	47 310	2 585	0,3	-94,5
Finland	930	1 305	1 220	1 145	1 090	1 190	1 100	875	0,1	-20,5
Sweden	2 145	1 720	2 170	2 615	2 635	2 455	2 510	2 965	0,3	18,1
Iceland	15	0	110	0	130	:	:	:	-	:
Liechtenstein	35	35	15	70	55	20	15	5	-	-66,7
Norway	3 850	3 230	2 915	1 900	1 430	2 305	3 360	3 515	-	4,6
Switzerland	13 940	14 420	13 885	11 020	12 175	15 130	19 280	17 265	-	-10,5

Lithuania and Portugal 2024 apprehensions data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)

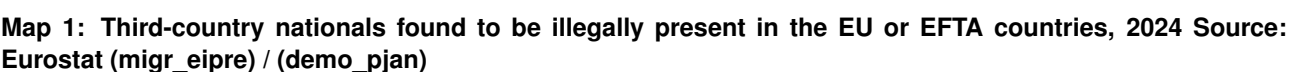
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_eipre)

eurostat

Table 4: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present in an EU or EFTA country, 2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eipre)

In relative terms, the number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present in the EU per thousand inhabitants was 1.8 in 2024, with the highest rates recorded in Slovenia (22.0), Cyprus (9.7), and Croatia (8.1). The lowest rates were recorded in Portugal (0.2), Finland (0.2), the Netherlands (0.2), Denmark (0.3) and Sweden (0.3) (Map 1).

(apprehensions in the EU and EFTA countries - per thousand persons)



In 2024, Syrian citizens accounted for the highest number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present in the EU (140 500), with a decrease of 44.4% compared with the previous year. The next highest numbers in 2024 were recorded for citizens of Afghanistan (60 060; a decrease of 46.6%), Algeria (58 165; an increase of 13.0%) and Türkiye (57 880; a decrease of 30.7%) (Figure 4). These four countries represented around one-third of all the third-country nationals found to be illegally present in the EU (34.5%).

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Third-country nationals ordered to leave the EU

Orders to leave issued to third-country nationals in 2024 decrease 7.3%

In 2024, 453 380 orders to leave were issued to third-country nationals, a decrease of 7.3% comparing to 2023 (Table 5). France issued the highest number of such orders (128 250; 28.3%), followed by Germany (57 075; 12.6%) and Spain (51 025; 11.3%).

Third-country nationals ordered to leave the territory of an EU or EFTA country, 2017-2024

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Share in the EU total, 2024 (%)	Change, 2023-2024
EU	450 390	456 660	491 195	396 435	357 060	472 540	489 335	453 380	100,0	-7,3
Belgium	32 235	24 160	22 010	20 320	19 105	19 275	24 475	24 660	5,4	0,8
Bulgaria	2 600	1 305	1 245	1 225	1 370	4 255	16 760	8 470	1,9	-49,5
Czechia	6 090	3 445	8 955	7 955	6 675	8 315	7 850	4 805	1,1	-38,8
Denmark	3 185	4 155	3 920	2 235	2 355	2 230	2 130	2 170	0,5	1,9
Germany	97 165	52 930	47 530	36 330	31 515	43 550	44 620	57 075	12,6	27,9
Estonia	645	875	1 190	1 235	1 160	1 170	1 035	780	0,2	-24,6
Ireland	1 105	1 385	2 535	795	160	630	1 065	3 275	0,7	207,5
Greece	45 765	58 325	78 880	38 540	28 815	33 500	29 825	31 565	7,0	5,8
Spain	27 340	59 255	37 890	50 285	7 800	45 960	64 260	51 025	11,3	-20,6
France	84 675	105 560	123 845	108 395	125 450	135 645	137 730	128 250	28,3	-6,9
Croatia	4 400	6 350	15 510	23 135	15 135	40 525	14 910	11 750	2,6	-21,2
Italy	36 240	27 070	26 900	22 785	11 095	28 185	26 460	27 970	6,2	5,7
Cyprus	1 850	1 595	1 300	3 030	15 895	16 965	18 460	15 340	3,4	-16,9
Latvia	1 350	1 540	1 615	1 015	890	2 000	2 215	2 350	0,5	6,1
Lithuania	2 080	2 475	2 320	1 905	4 710	3 190	3 885	4 160	0,9	7,1
Luxembourg	915	850	1 070	1 050	725	885	1 095	1 315	0,3	20,1
Hungary	8 730	8 650	3 235	4 505	4 505	2 500	6 680	5 690	1,3	-14,8
Malta	470	515	620	590	695	770	915	850	0,2	-7,1
Netherlands	20 750	17 935	25 435	21 100	17 300	15 750	21 270	19 055	4,2	-10,4
Austria	8 850	10 690	13 960	9 165	10 455	24 755	18 195	13 170	2,9	-27,6
Poland	24 825	29 375	29 305	10 970	10 330	7 635	10 195	11 995	2,6	17,7
Portugal	5 760	4 590	5 980	3 200	1 670	2 190	1 570	1 570	0,3	0,0
Romania	1 975	2 080	3 325	2 415	2 615	4 895	7 245	3 895	0,9	-46,2
Slovenia	1 220	1 290	2 060	1 610	1 365	1 675	2 630	870	0,2	-66,9
Slovakia	2 375	2 500	1 905	865	1 020	1 605	1 380	450	0,1	-67,4
Finland	7 255	5 435	7 395	5 425	3 245	3 405	3 495	3 865	0,9	10,6
Sweden	20 525	22 310	21 260	16 350	31 010	21 070	18 985	17 015	3,8	-10,4
Iceland	0	0	95	:	:	:	:	:	-	:
Liechtenstein	0	20	15	0	0	20	15	5	-	-66,7
Norway	9 795	0	0	3 780	0	0	4 030	3 640	-	-9,7
Switzerland	3 260	3 170	3 100	2 420	5 270	5430	4 585	8 390	-	83,0

Portugal 2024 data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_eiord and migr_eiord1)

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Table 5: Third-country nationals ordered to leave the territory of an EU or EFTA country, 2017-2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eiord) and (migr_eiord1)

In 2024, the highest number of people ordered to leave the territory of an EU country were citizens of Algeria (37 465), Morocco (31 555), and Syria (27 055) (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Returns of third-country nationals

In 2024, the number of third-country nationals returned to a third country increased by 19.3%

In 2024, 110 385 third-country nationals who received an order to leave an EU country were returned to a third

country (table 6), representing 88.1% of total returns (i.e. including also returns to another EU country) (125 305).

Third country nationals returned to a third country following an order to leave, 2017-2024

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		Share in the EU total, 2024	Change, 2023-2024 (%)
	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries	total	to third countries		
	(number of persons)																	
EU	175 085	180 650	163 445	145 905	164 565	142 920	99 345	77 575	87 740	66 280	95 345	72 105	110 190	92 540	125 305	110 385	100.0	19.3
Belgium	8 315	5 680	4 940	4 585	4 245	3 940	2 900	2 675	2 890	2 655	2 220	1 940	2 275	1 960	2 915	2 655	2.4	35.5
Bulgaria	1 755	1 250	710	610	630	595	310	230	685	520	340	515	535	510	965	935	0.8	83.3
Czechia	805	680	820	720	780	590	960	885	610	560	525	525	610	570	2 205	2 150	1.9	277.8
Denmark	1 590	1 115	1 695	1 165	2 035	1 460	1 130	725	1 510	980	930	930	1 390	1 390	965	965	0.9	-30.6
Germany	47 240	44 960	32 140	29 055	28 185	25 140	15 455	12 265	10 785	8 195	13 140	7 730	15 445	10 290	18 540	15 230	13.8	48.0
Estonia	430	580	750	710	1 095	1 050	1 045	995	1 150	1 060	1 105	1 030	945	785	670	670	0.6	-29.1
Ireland	315	270	365	310	555	470	335	325	165	160	205	190	290	285	1 095	1 095	1.0	200.8
Greece	18 785	18 060	12 490	12 465	9 700	9 650	7 005	6 950	6 875	6 855	7 020	6 985	5 845	5 820	5 445	5 420	4.9	-6.9
Spain	10 785	10 185	12 560	11 800	12 370	11 525	5 265	4 855	3 230	3 790	3 335	3 790	3 335	5 995	5 995	8 725	7.9	45.5
France	15 665	12 720	17 035	15 445	17 705	15 615	8 445	6 930	8 210	6 290	10 205	8 640	12 170	10 625	16 680	14 685	13.3	38.2
Croatia	2 125	1 680	2 210	2 165	2 455	2 390	1 515	1 425	2 090	2 040	3 725	3 665	6 910	6 850	6 800	6 685	6.1	-2.4
Italy	7 045	7 045	5 615	5 615	6 470	6 470	2 815	2 815	975	975	2 790	2 790	3 275	3 275	4 480	4 480	4.1	36.8
Cyprus	770	760	730	455	455	455	1 070	1 060	2 165	2 165	4 210	4 205	7 775	7 775	8 910	8 910	8.1	14.6
Latvia	1 275	1 275	1 465	1 465	1 565	1 565	910	910	765	765	1 745	1 745	2 020	2 020	2 055	2 055	1.9	1.7
Lithuania	1 860	1 860	2 110	2 110	2 030	2 015	1 620	1 580	1 765	0	2 450	2 410	3 450	3 425	2 825	2 790	2.5	-18.5
Luxembourg	445	435	285	275	290	270	175	160	165	155	170	155	265	230	415	380	0.3	65.2
Hungary	2 445	685	1 310	875	1 720	810	3 410	995	3 600	1 495	1 915	965	4 320	1 140	2 765	2 210	2.0	93.9
Malta	475	470	530	530	600	600	380	380	710	710	670	665	820	820	820	820	0.7	-10.9
Netherlands	8 390	8 195	8 980	8 830	11 185	11 055	8 870	8 715	3 200	2 540	3 410	945	5 745	1 315	4 215	1 615	1.5	22.8
Austria	6 115	5 715	7 405	6 805	7 400	6 800	5 005	4 610	4 990	4 480	5 875	5 280	7 510	6 780	7 220	6 500	5.9	-4.1
Poland	22 210	22 165	25 715	25 700	25 930	25 895	8 235	8 220	6 390	6 355	4 580	4 575	6 880	6 880	8 520	8 520	7.7	23.8
Portugal	325	310	305	290	500	465	485	470	265	265	595	595	370	370	370	370	0.3	0.0
Romania	1 815	1 815	1 725	1 705	2 385	2 355	1 730	1 725	1 660	1 655	2 610	2 610	2 700	2 700	2 345	1 045	0.9	-61.3
Slovenia	250	120	4 445	150	9 315	155	8 510	125	3 845	135	2 405	170	355	75	310	65	0.1	-13.3
Slovakia	1 740	1 725	2 115	2 095	1 595	1 590	415	410	370	370	260	235	315	265	350	310	0.3	17.0
Finland	4 000	3 565	3 340	2 850	3 435	2 990	3 610	2 200	1 285	1 070	1 185	980	1 455	1 240	1 340	1 235	1.1	-0.4
Sweden	9 950	6 845	10 750	6 850	9 955	6 425	8 265	4 930	27 390	10 575	17 080	8 345	10 330	8 875	13 250	9 910	9.0	11.7
Iceland	0	0	0	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Liechtenstein	0	0	20	5	15	0	0	0	40	5	20	10	0	0	0	0	-	-
Norway	3 605	2 345	0	0	0	0	3 345	840	4 655	1 170	2 245	1 175	2 055	1 045	1 400	1 085	-	3.8
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 640	1 640	2 000	2 000	2 305	2 305	2 810	-	-	-

Portugal 2024 data not available (2023 data used to estimate the EU aggregate)
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_ord and migr_ord1)

eurostat

Table 6: Third country nationals returned following an order to leave, 2017-2024 Source: Eurostat (migr_eirtn) and (migr_eirtn1)

The three EU countries that recorded the highest number of returns to a third country were Germany (15 230; 13.8%), France (14 685; 13.3%) and Sweden (9 910; 9.0%). Altogether, they accounted for more than one third (36.1%) of the total number in the EU in 2024. The share of returns to a third country in the total returns (88.1%) increased by 4.9 percentage points. Denmark, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, and Portugal all reported that their returns were to third countries only (Figure 6).

Figure 6

In 2024, citizens of Georgia were subject to the highest number of returns in the EU with 11 585 of them returned to a third country. They were followed by Turks (7 910), Albanians (7 810), Moldovans (4 970), and Colombians (4 930) (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Type of return and assistance received

In 2024, 53.8% of returns to third countries represented voluntary returns, while 46.2% were forced returns (Figure 8). In Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, and Czechia, more than 90% of third-country nationals returned voluntarily. Only Italy reported all returns as forced returns.

Figure 8

To facilitate the return of third-country nationals there are certain assisted return programmes funded by the EU, national or international organisations to provide reintegration support for returnees. This may include administrative, logistical and/or financial support to migrants who return to their country of origin. In 2024, 74.3% of the returns following an order to leave were assisted returns and 25.7% were non-assisted returns (Figure 9). In Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal, all the reported returns were assisted, while in Latvia and Lithuania, more than 90% were not assisted.

Figure 9

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Enforcement of immigration legislation statistics: tables and map](#)

Data sources

The “Enforcement of Immigration Legislation statistics – Statistics Explained” article presents statistics regarding third-country nationals who were refused to entry, apprehended for illegal stay, ordered to leave, and returned following an order to leave, as recorded by EU and EFTA countries.

Statistics on the enforcement of immigration legislation are based on administrative data provided by national authorities in line with the requirements of [Regulation \(EC\) No 862/2007](#) concerning statistics on migration and international protection. The compilation of these statistics draws on the terms used by the Schengen Borders Code, an EU code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders ([Regulation \(EU\) No 2016/399](#)); for more information on the Schengen area, see [here](#) .

Statistics on the enforcement of immigration legislation exclude outgoing asylum seekers who are transferred from one EU country to another under the mechanism established by the Dublin Regulation ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1560/2003](#) and [Regulation \(EU\) No 604/2013](#)) whereas the [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1351](#) on asylum and migration management has come into effect; these cases are covered by [Dublin statistics](#) .

Some of the EU countries are landlocked and hence, by definition, do not have any sea borders, while others have just internal land borders within the [Schengen area](#) . The compilation of statistics on refused entry by countries within the Schengen area generally only concerns external borders of the Schengen area, although internal borders may be considered in exceptional cases, such as when a temporary border control is introduced between Schengen members.

Note that the data for the number of third-country nationals presented in the text of this article have been rounded to the nearest five. Due to the rounding, various totals (such as for the EU) may not necessarily match the sum of the values for their components (such as the sum of values for the EU countries).

In relation to the statistics presented in this article, for the years 2021 to 2023 data some **derogations**’ were granted to EU countries based on [Commission Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2021/431 of 10 March 2021](#) .

Tables in this article use the following notation:

Value <i>italics</i>	data value is forecasted, provisional or estimated and is therefore likely to change;
:	not available, confidential or unreliable value;
—	not applicable.

Context

The enforcement of migration law refers to two main areas: controlling the EU’s external borders and the management of unauthorised third-country nationals found on the territory of an EU country. Control of the EU’s external borders constitutes one of the pillars for the creation of a freedom, security and justice area. The most noteworthy developments include a harmonised set of rules governing the movement of persons across borders (the Schengen Borders Code published by [Regulation \(EU\) No 2016/399](#)); a comprehensive approach for European integrated border management at the EU’s borders and efficient and effective management of border crossings and the EU returns policy, respecting fundamental rights, and safeguarding free movement, operated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ([Regulation \(EU\) No 2019/1896](#)); and an extensive package on

automated border control, including the Entry-Exit System established by [Regulation \(EU\) No 2017/2225](#) and [Regulation \(EU\) No 2017/2226](#) , and the European Traveler Information and Authorisation System established by [Regulation \(EU\) No 2018/1240](#) and [Regulation \(EU\) No 2018/1241](#)).

Managing irregular migrant populations involves identifying illegally present persons, recognising an order to leave, and ensuring an effective return. The main legal instrument, the so-called Return Directive ([Return Directive \(2008/115/EC\)](#)), came into force at the end of 2010, establishing common standards for returning third-country nationals illegally staying in the EU. The directive provides clear, transparent, common, and fair rules for return and removal, the use of coercive measures, detention and re-entry, while respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of those concerned. The EU also aims to promote a more effective return system ([Policy Document Towards an Operational Strategy for more Effective Returns - COM/2023/45 Final](#)), with operational goals including improving data and statistical evidence on return, building a more targeted, planned, and efficient return policy, and developing a common operational response capability. Several Schengen Area member countries have temporarily reintroduced border control at internal borders pursuant to Article 25 and 28 et seq. of the Schengen Borders Code. This reintroduction can be due to various reasons, such as significant high pressure from irregular migration flows, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, secondary movements, organised crime and terrorism threats, or relevant events that could enhance migration flows and/or crime or terrorism threats ([Member States' notifications of the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders](#)).

In terms of measuring the enforcement of immigration legislation, progress in collecting harmonised data resulted from the adoption of [Regulation \(EC\) No 862/2007](#) , particularly Articles 5 and 7. This regulation aims to support evidence-based decision-making, providing guidelines on the data that should be submitted by EU countries on the number of third-country nationals refused entry at the EU's external borders, the number of third-country nationals apprehended for being illegally present in the EU, and the number of third-country nationals removed from the EU due to unauthorised presence. Irregular migration remains a phenomenon that is difficult to quantify, especially during times when an effective and humane 'returns policy' is considered by many to be an essential part of migration policy.

[Regulation \(EC\) No 2020/851](#) amended Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 aimed at, among other commitments, to establish a framework for a quick response to changing needs regarding statistics on migration and international protection, promoting data collection on a sub-annual basis to address the primary needs for studying, formulating, and evaluating migration policies, developing human-rights-based policies, and enhancing the understanding of migration, international protection, and migratory movements within European Union countries.

Footnotes

Explore further

Other articles

- [All articles on managed migration](#)
- [Enforcement of immigration legislation statistics introduced](#)
- [Annual asylum statistics](#)
- [Asylum applications - monthly statistics](#)
- [Asylum quarterly report](#)
- [Statistics on countries responsible for asylum applications \(Dublin Regulation\)](#)

Database

- [Managed migration \(migr_man\)](#) , see:

Enforcement of Immigration Legislation (migr_eil)

Third country nationals refused entry at the external borders - annual data (rounded) (migr_eirfs)

Third country nationals found to be illegally present - annual data (rounded) (migr_eipre)

Third country nationals ordered to leave - annual data (rounded) (migr_eiord)

Third country nationals ordered to leave by citizenship, age and sex - quarterly data (rounded) (migr_eiord1)

Third-country unaccompanied minors ordered to leave, by citizenship, age and sex of the minor – quarterly data (rounded) (migr_eiord2)

Third country nationals returned following an order to leave - annual data (rounded) (migr_eirtn)

Third-country nationals returned following an order to leave, by type of return, citizenship, country of destination, age and sex – quarterly data (migr_eirtn1)

Third-country unaccompanied minors returned following an order to leave, by type of return, citizenship, country of destination, age and sex of the minor – quarterly data (rounded) (migr_eirtn2)

Third-country nationals who have left the territory by type of return and citizenship (migr_eirt_vol)

Third-country nationals who have left the territory by type of assistance received and citizenship (migr_eirt_ass)

Third-country nationals who have left the territory to a third country by type of agreement procedure and citizenship (migr_eirt_agr)

Third-country nationals who have left the territory to a third country by destination country and citizenship (migr_eirt_des)

Thematic section

- [Managed migration](#)

Methodology

- [Enforcement of Immigration Legislation](#) (ESMS metadata file — migr_eil_esms)

External links

- [Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs \(HOME\)](#)
- [European Migration Network \(EMN\)](#)
- [European Migration Network — Publications](#)
- [Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography](#)

Legislation

- [Communication COM\(2004\) 412 final of 4 June 2004: Study on the links between legal and illegal migration](#)
- [Communication \(COM\(2018\) 250 final of 14 March 2018: Progress report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration](#)
- [Pact on Migration and Asylum of the EU](#)
- [Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals](#)
- [Summaries of EU legislation: returning illegal immigrants — common standards and procedures](#)
- [Policy Document Towards an operational strategy for more effective returns \(COM/2023/45 final\)](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection \(Articles 5 and 7\)](#)
- [Summaries of EU legislation: migration statistics](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2020/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection](#)

- Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 (EUROSUR) and (EU) 2016/1624 (European Border and Coast Guard)
- Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)
- 2025 State of Schengen report
- Summaries of EU legislation: rules on crossing EU borders
- Member States' notifications of the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders pursuant to Article 25 and 28 et seq. of the Schengen Borders Code
- Regulation (EU) 2017/2225 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards the use of the Entry/Exit System
- Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794 for the purpose of establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU
- Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013