

Glossary: Long-term residence permits

Statistics Explained

Long-term residence permits cover all residence permits granted to third country nationals valid for at least five years or more (including permanent residence permits). At EU level, it regards residence permits issued under the EU long-term permit directive adopted by the Council in 2003 (Council [Directive 2003/109/EC](#)) which stipulates that Member States shall grant long-term resident status and shall issue long-term residence permits to third-country nationals (non-EU citizens) who have resided legally and continuously within its territory for five years. Denmark, Ireland, EFTA countries and the UK are not bound by this directive. Other EU Member States might have in parallel a national framework for granting long-term permits.

In this context, Eurostat collects data on two distinct categories of long-term residence permits:

- **EU long-term residence permits** which have been issued under the EU long-term permit directive. The permit shall be valid at least for five years and it shall, upon application if required, be automatically renewable on expiry. Long-term residents shall enjoy equal treatment with nationals as regards for example access to employment, education, recognition of professional diplomas and other qualifications, social rights and tax benefits. It also grants to the owners mobility rights across the EU Member States. Denmark, Ireland, the EFTA countries as well as the UK are not bound by this directive and do not report data under this category.
- **National long-term residence permits** which have been issued under rules based upon national legislation which are different from the EU directive. The minimum requirement to qualify permit under this category shall be a duration of the permit of at least 5 years.

Two types of statistics are currently collected by Eurostat for the two categories “EU long-term residence permits” and “National long-term residence permits”:

- The number of **long-term residence permits valid at the end of the year (stock data)**. This dataset represents a subset of the dataset on residence permits valid at the end of the year which is also collected by Eurostat.
- The number of **long-term residence permits issued during the year (flow data)** which refers to long-term residence permits (LTR) issued during the year with at least five years of validity, excluding renewals of such permits (the prolongation of the EU or National LTR permit). The cases where a long-term residence status is granted following a change of category should be included in the LTR permits issued (including the change of permit from National long-term residence to EU long term residence permit).

Statistical data

- [Residence permits - statistics on first permits issued during the year](#)