SPAIN
EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2020

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS

OVERARCHING CHANGES

The Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration was created, with responsibility for developing Spanish policy on aliens, immigration and emigration. The new Ministry absorbed the Secretary of State for Migration (SEM), which included two Directorates General, for Migration (DGM) and for Inclusion and Humanitarian Attention.

LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

Restrictions at external borders meant the suspension of the programme for collective management of hiring at origin. This measure also applied to the 7 050 Moroccan workers already in Spain for the red fruit harvest season, whose permits expired during the State of Alarm.

Royal Decree-Law 13/2020 adopted urgent measures in agricultural employment to encourage the temporary recruitment of workers by introducing extraordinary measures to make employment more flexible and social and ensure agricultural activity during the State of Alarm.

Young people between the ages of 18 and 21 in a regular situation but without authorisation to work (students, asylum seekers, extutored minors) were authorised to work in the agricultural sector without any migration procedure. Under Instructions 3/2020

KEY POINTS

Spanish legislation on aliens was adapted to combat the COVID-19 pandemic through more flexible procedures to prevent irregularity of foreign workers, residents, students and Blue Card holders, and to find workers for the agriculture and healthcare sectors.

Considerable efforts were made to resolve applications for international protection, with double the number of files (116 614) resolved compared to 2019.

Other aliens policies adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic included those relating to reception centres for applicants for international protection, border control, detention centres, and development cooperation.

and 9/2020 of DGM, they were granted two-year residence and work permits (renewable for two further years).

Order SND/421/2020 of 18 May and developing Instructions relaxed the conditions in which a third country national could renew their residence and/or work authorisation, in order to avoid irregularity among foreigners fully integrated into Spanish society. DGM Instruction 5/2020 adopted a series of measures to prevent the irregularity of third-country nationals residing in Spain for employment purposes.

A protocol was established for the entry of highly qualified professionals to develop professional activities in the audiovisual sector.

Urgent rationalisation and prioritisation measures were introduced in the processing of aliens in the healthcare sector. A protocol sought to expedite the procedures for recognition of third-country nationals' qualifications. Royal Decree-Law 29/2020 of 29 September authorised the hiring of healthcare professionals without the title of 'specialist' recognised in Spain, as an exceptional and temporary measure.

Order ISM/1289/2020 of 28 December 2020 regulates collective management of hiring at the place of origin for 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic required the inclusion of an employers' obligation to develop a contingency plan and to implement measures to prevent and control virus spread among their workers. The Order also regulated the entry and stay of other workers, for no more than one year.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Instructions were issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation to expedite the issuance and processing of visa applications by embassies and consulates to ensure that students starting their academic courses in September/October 2020 received their visas on time. DGM Instruction 7/2020 provided that foreign minors studying in Spain who could not return to their countries because of COVID-19 would not be in an irregular situation and could renew their authorisation to stay and study for a further academic year.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In the context of COVID-19, DGM Instruction 4/2020 relaxed the application of the sufficient means condition for family reunification authorisations and the family reunification of minors procedure.

OTHER MEASURES

The processing of residence and work authorisations could be done electronically through the Mercurio application. The electronic submission of applications had the potential to reduce the workload of Immigration Offices by 27-29%, depending on the type of authorisation.

Access to a residence authorisation via 'social rooting' was also relaxed in light of COVID-19, particularly for some procedures that began prior to the pandemic.

Various measures were adopted in relation to Brexit, notably to implement Articles 18(4) and 26 of the Withdrawal Agreement, and to change the United Kingdom (UK) to the status of third country after the end of the transition period.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

88 762 applications for international protection were registered, compared to 118 446 in 2019. As the Asylum Office (OAR) continued to work despite COVID-19 restrictions, 116 614 international protection files were resolved, twice that of 2019 (58 060). A new database to handle international protection files was developed to digitalise OAR procedures.

Accelerated processing of Venezuelan applicants complying with all guarantees will significantly alleviate the current workload of the OAR. In place since February 2019, the measure resolved the political issue of frequent denial of international protection for this group by granting temporary residence and annual renewable work permits.

Measures were taken to adapt the reception of asylum applicants to the emergency situation caused by COVID-19. Procedures to enter and stay in reception facilities were more flexible and the facilities were adapted to comply with the conditions of the State of Alarm.

RELOCATION AND RESETTLEMENT

A telematic procedure was developed for the instruction and signing of resolutions. Fulfilment of commitments and optimisation of National Resettlement Programmes continued, as did the 2019 pilot project on community sponsorship in the Basque country, in 2020 in Valencia.

MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Procedures were implemented to detect special needs and identify profiles requiring particular care and supports. Specific aspects of the formalisation of family groups with minors and non-accompanied minors were facilitated. SEM Instruction 1/2020 allowed foreign minors from the age of 16 to work. This initiative targeted unaccompanied minors, whose authorisation to reside (provided under the Service of Protection for Minors) did not automatically allow them to work.

Young people aged between 18 and 21, in a regular situation but without a work permit, were authorised to work in the agricultural sector without any migration procedure. This was a key step in advancing the protection and inclusion of previously protected minors.

Following a recommendation of The Spanish Ombudsman an unaccompanied minor can make an application for international protection, even without a legal representative.

New services were opened for the care of LGTBI+ people (Red Acoge NGO). A global first, the exclusively LGTBI Spanish reception system, the Pedro Zerolo Reception Centre, opened in November.

INTEGRATION

Integration programmes continued, with those requiring face-to-face action suspended during the State of Alarm. Annual grants were awarded for the development of social cohesion actions.

INTEGRATION OF ADULTS

No new developments were implemented. However, current instruments were adapted to the requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially reception centres for those applying for international protection.

CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

The procedures to acquire nationality were paused during the State of Alarm. Once they resumed, however, there were no further interruptions.

STATELESSNESS

619 applications for statelessness were submitted (1 691 in 2019). The OAR reduced the backlog in requests for stateless status.

BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

Several COVID-19 mobility restrictions were imposed at internal and external borders. These temporary measures were taken in the coordination framework established at EU level through Commission Communications and Council Recommendations. Reintroduction of controls at internal borders required extraordinary deployments of border control staff, especially at land borders with France and Portugal.

VISA POLICY

The visa sections of Spanish embassies and consulates were not closed at any time due to COVID-19. C visas were issued in cases exempt from the entry ban, in accordance with Orders passed by the Ministry of the Interior. D visas were issued normally, as entry with a national visa was allowed at all times.

SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE

Controls at internal borders were reintroduced, alongside mobility restrictions throughout the Spanish territory.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Irregular arrivals reduced substantially during the first wave of COVID-19, mainly due to mobility restrictions in transit countries. However, the maritime irregular migration route to the Canary Islands rose to more than 20 000 people, an increase of 940% on 2019.

These increases required greater assistance capability, including temporary solutions for the reception of more than 7 000 beneficiaries of the Humanitarian Assistance programme in different locations, some provided by public administration, with most in hotels.

MISUSE OF LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The new uniform residence permit was issued from July 2020 and was also used for residence cards for family members of EU citizens, improving document security.

MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR STAY

Collaboration was developed with African countries, including Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and The Gambia. In light of the increase in irregular arrivals to the Canary Islands, a joint operation was developed with Frontex.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Ministry of the Interior coordinated preparation of a National Strategic Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

An Extension of the Contingency Plan against Gender Violence was designed specifically to guarantee the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking for sexual purposes, as well as the provision of services and resources to meet their specific needs.

The Barajas Protocol was implemented to assist victims/ potential victims of trafficking on arrival at the airport. The goal of the Protocol is to establish action guidelines when foreign nationals of legal age or family units (including minors) arrive at Barajas airport and request international protection. When any responsible person suspects that someone is a victim of trafficking in human beings, they are referred within the framework of the reception system for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

RETURN AND READMISSION

MAIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

COVID-19 saw returns almost completely halted after March 2020, with only individual returns carried out. Detention centres were subject to strict preventive measures against COVID-19 and were emptied shortly afterwards, with little prospect of enforcing returns. Voluntary returns were complicated by countries' blocking international flights from Spain. However, some could fly, with many restrictions and requirements (polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, blood tests, preventive isolation in destination country).

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Spanish Strategy on Cooperation was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to boost Spain's cooperation with the most vulnerable countries and people in order to offer a global response.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex was prepared by the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Spain on aspects of migration and international protection (2017-2020), including legal residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, integration, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics were not available at the time of publication, this is indicated in the Annex as 'N/A'.

A How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available [here](#).

Spain - 2020

GENERAL NOTES

This four-page statistical annex complements the Country Factsheet with relevant migration-related data organised in up to nine thematic sections - depending on data availability. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators.
Whenever data are not available, the relative chart is left blank or indicated with 'N/A'.
Data are provided for the latest available year or the latest available four-year period. For some indicators, data are rounded in the source. The sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value. This is due to rounding and confidence intervals in the original data.
A How to Read guide, describing each chart and reporting the sources, is available on the EMN website.

COLOUR LEGEND

Whenever not specified, the following colour legend is adopted.
Colours for multiple nationalities are randomly chosen.

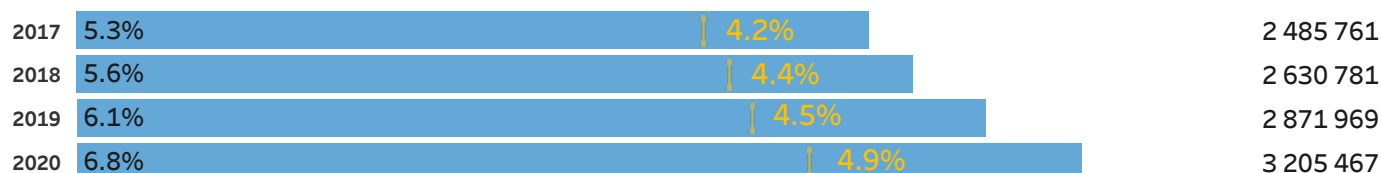■ data relative to Spain   ▌ data relative to EU

LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

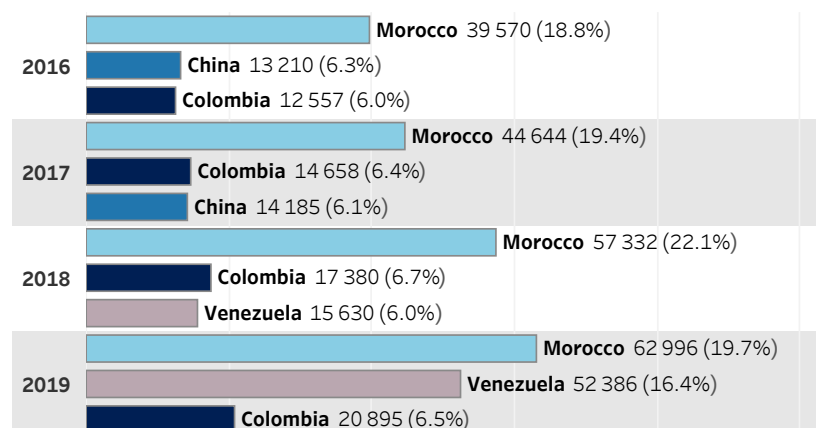**Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) as % of total population (in the country and in the EU)**
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Number of TCNs

Year	Spain	EU	Number of TCNs
2017	5.3%	4.2%	2 485 761
2018	5.6%	4.4%	2 630 781
2019	6.1%	4.5%	2 871 969
2020	6.8%	4.9%	3 205 467

Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued: number of permits and % of total annual permits
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

2016
Morocco 39 570 (18.8%)
China 13 210 (6.3%)
Colombia 12 557 (6.0%)

2017
Morocco 44 644 (19.4%)
Colombia 14 658 (6.4%)
China 14 185 (6.1%)

2018
Morocco 57 332 (22.1%)
Colombia 17 380 (6.7%)
Venezuela 15 630 (6.0%)

2019
Morocco 62 996 (19.7%)
Venezuela 52 386 (16.4%)
Colombia 20 895 (6.5%)

First residence permits annually issued: tot. num. and % of tot. pop. in the country (and EU)
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Year	% (country)	(% EU)	Total number
2016	0.46%	(0.56%)	211 533
2017	0.50%	(0.61%)	231 153
2018	0.56%	(0.62%)	259 600
2019	0.68%	(0.66%)	320 037
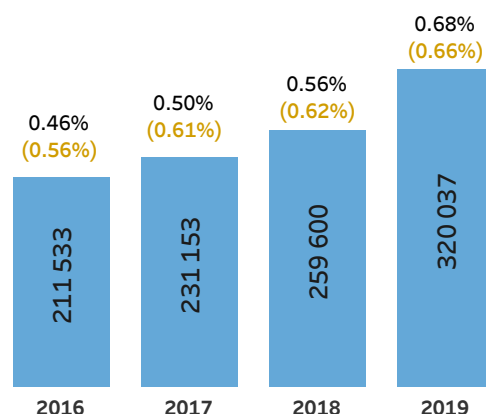
First residence permits annually issued by reason in 2019
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Reason
- Family 45%
- Education 14%
- Work 20%
- Other 21%
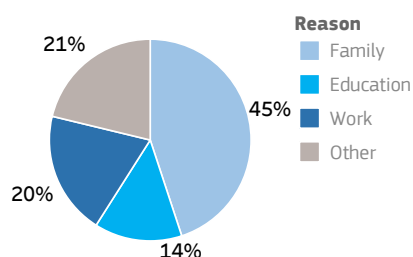
First residence permits annually issued for work reasons in 2019
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resocc)

Working reason
- Researcher 1%
- Highly skilled 7%
- Seasonal 18%
- Other 73%
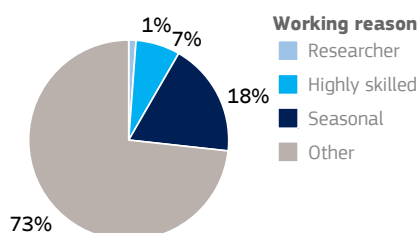
First residence permits annually issued for 'other reasons' in 2019
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

Other reason
- Refugee/Sub.Prot. 7%
- Unacc. minors 3%
- Residence only 18%
- Humanitarian 52%
- Not specified 19%

EMN — European Migration Network   KCMD

Spain - 2020
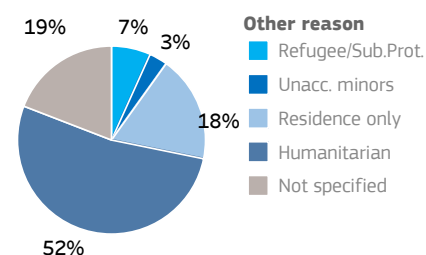
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Total/first-time asylum applications; first-time asy app as % of population in the country (and in EU) SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza, migr_pop1ctz)

- first-time
- total

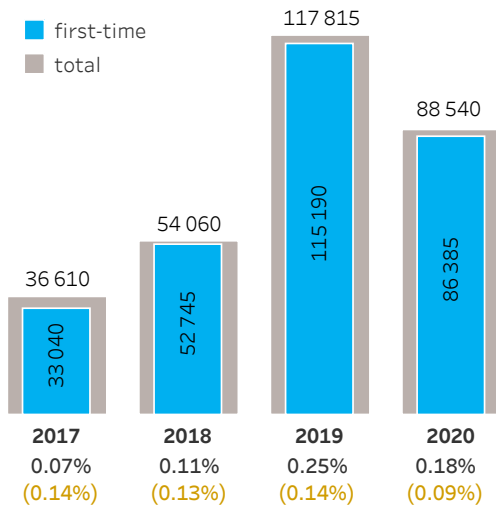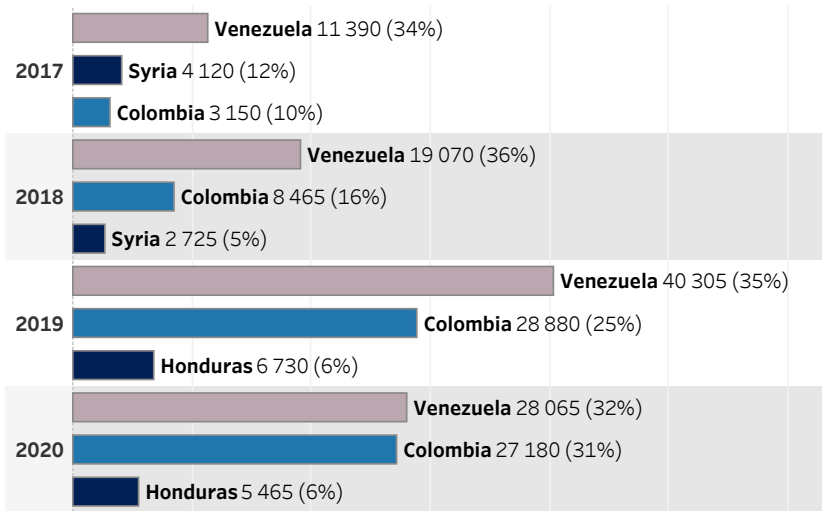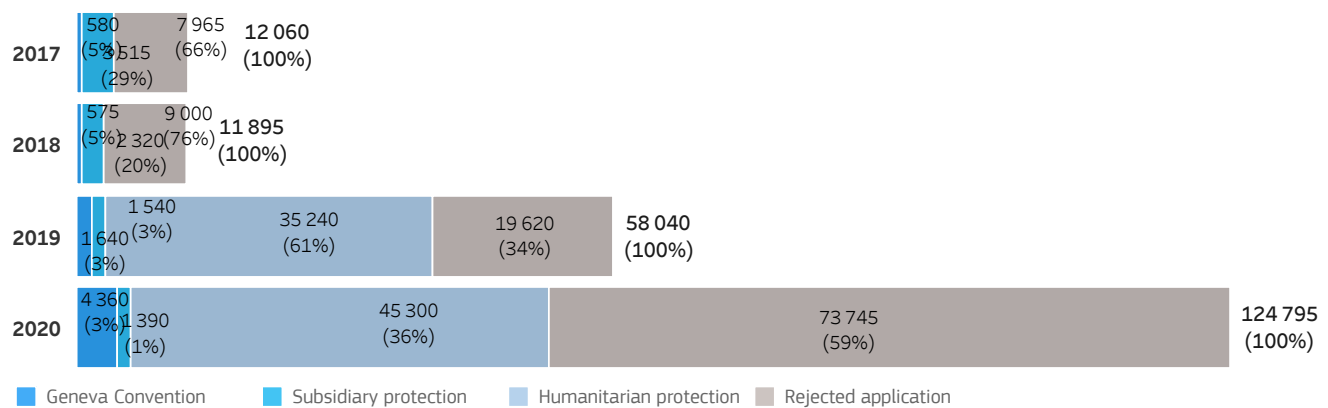| Year	total	first-time	% pop	(EU)
2017	36 610	33 040	0.07%	(0.14%)
2018	54 060	52 745	0.11%	(0.13%)
2019	117 815	115 190	0.25%	(0.14%)
2020	88 540	86 385	0.18%	(0.09%)

Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)
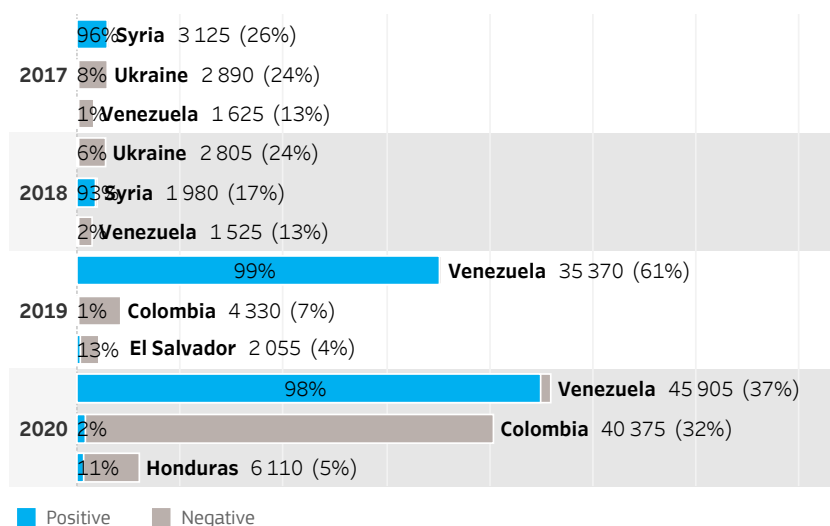
Year			
2017	Venezuela 11 390 (34%)	Syria 4 120 (12%)	Colombia 3 150 (10%)
2018	Venezuela 19 070 (36%)	Colombia 8 465 (16%)	Syria 2 725 (5%)
2019	Venezuela 40 305 (35%)	Colombia 28 880 (25%)	Honduras 6 730 (6%)
2020	Venezuela 28 065 (32%)	Colombia 27 180 (31%)	Honduras 5 465 (6%)

Number of first-instance asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

Year	Geneva Convention	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian protection	Rejected application	Total
2017	580 (5%)	3 515 (29%)	7 965 (66%)		12 060 (100%)
2018	575 (5%)	2 320 (20%)	9 000 (76%)		11 895 (100%)
2019	1 640 (3%)	1 540 (3%)	35 240 (61%)	19 620 (34%)	58 040 (100%)
2020	4 360 (3%)	1 390 (1%)	45 300 (36%)	73 745 (59%)	124 795 (100%)

- Geneva Convention
- Subsidiary protection
- Humanitarian protection
- Rejected application

Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-instance decisions: number of decisions (% of total decisions in the country) and % of positive outcome
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asydcfsta)

Year	Positive %	Nationality
2017	96%	Syria 3 125 (26%)
2017	8%	Ukraine 2 890 (24%)
2017	1%	Venezuela 1 625 (13%)
2018	6%	Ukraine 2 805 (24%)
2018	93%	Syria 1 980 (17%)
2018	2%	Venezuela 1 525 (13%)
2019	99%	Venezuela 35 370 (61%)
2019	1%	Colombia 4 330 (7%)
2019	13%	El Salvador 2 055 (4%)
2020	98%	Venezuela 45 905 (37%)
2020	2%	Colombia 40 375 (32%)
2020	11%	Honduras 6 110 (5%)

- Positive
- Negative

Third-Country Nationals resettled: absolute number and as % of total resettled in EU
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyresa)

Year	Number	%
2017	1 490	(8.3%)
2018	830	(4.4%)
2019		
2020		

Spain - 2020
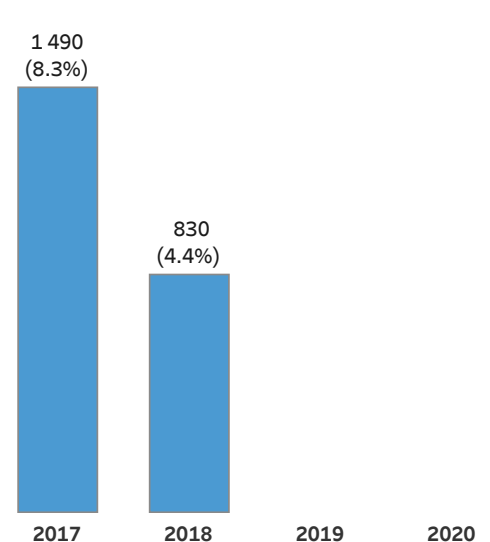
✋ UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

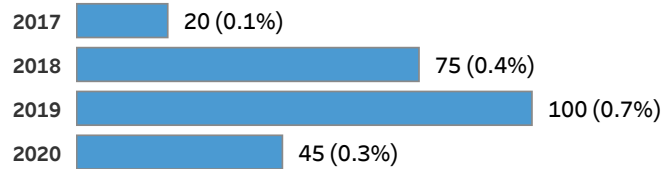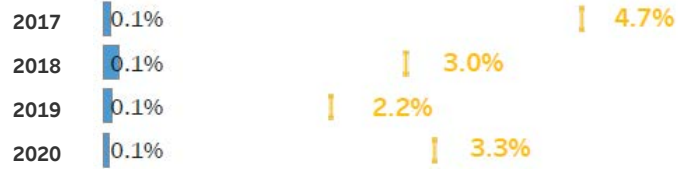**Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the country (and % of total applications from unaccompanied minors in EU)**
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)

Year	Value
2017	20 (0.1%)
2018	75 (0.4%)
2019	100 (0.7%)
2020	45 (0.3%)

Unaccompanied minors as % of first asylum applications (in the country and in EU)
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa)

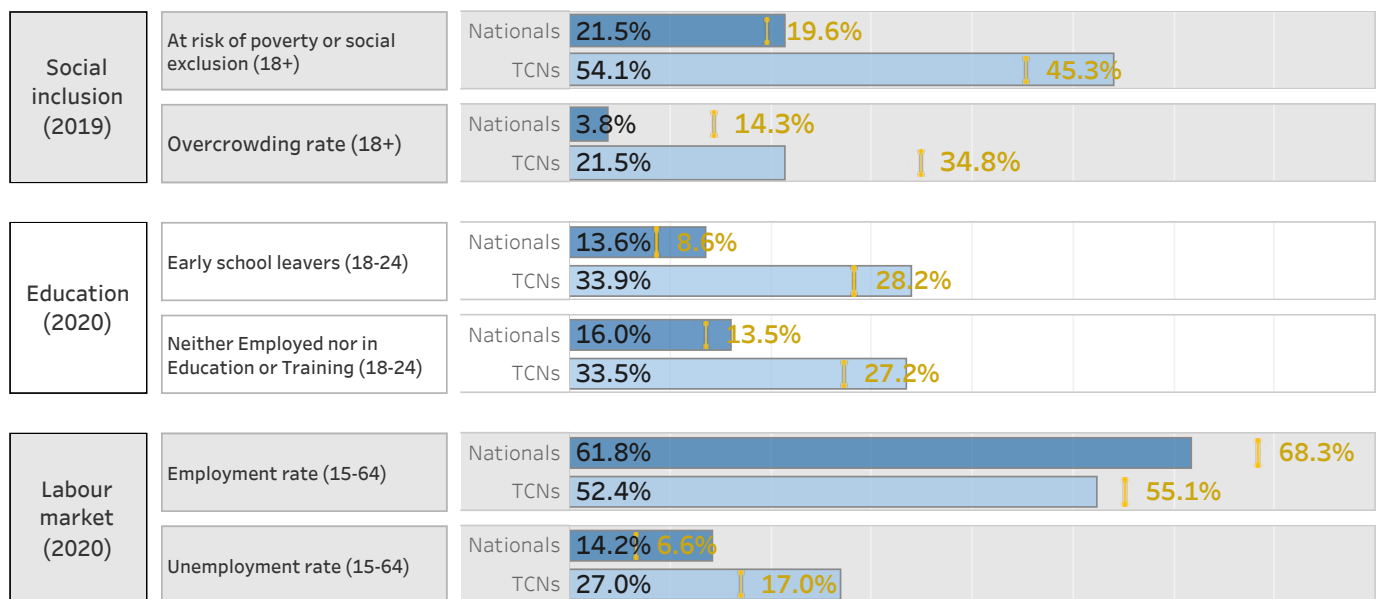| Year	Country	EU
2017	0.1%	4.7%
2018	0.1%	3.0%
2019	0.1%	2.2%
2020	0.1%	3.3%

🧩 INTEGRATION

Integration indicators for nationals of the country (blue) and Third-Country Nationals (TCNs – light blue) in the country (when available). The same indicator is provided in yellow for EU. Data are relative to the last available year.
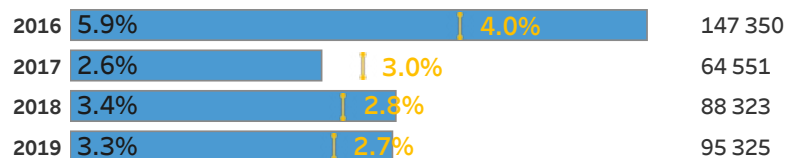SOURCE: Eurostat (ilc_peps05, ilc_lvho15, edat_lfse_01, edat_lfse_23, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_urgan)

Social inclusion (2019)		Country	EU
At risk of poverty or social exclusion (18+)	Nationals	21.5%	19.6%
	TCNs	54.1%	45.3%
Overcrowding rate (18+)	Nationals	3.8%	14.3%
	TCNs	21.5%	34.8%

Education (2020)		Country	EU
Early school leavers (18-24)	Nationals	13.6%	8.6%
	TCNs	33.9%	28.2%
Neither Employed nor in Education or Training (18-24)	Nationals	16.0%	13.5%
	TCNs	33.5%	27.2%

Labour market (2020)		Country	EU
Employment rate (15-64)	Nationals	61.8%	68.3%
	TCNs	52.4%	55.1%
Unemployment rate (15-64)	Nationals	14.2%	6.6%
	TCNs	27.0%	17.0%

## 📖 CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

Third-Country Nationals who have acquired citizenship as a share of total Third-Country Nationals (in the country and in the EU) and in absolute number
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acqs, migr_acq)

Year	Country	EU	Absolute
2016	5.9%	4.0%	147 350
2017	2.6%	3.0%	64 551
2018	3.4%	2.8%	88 323
2019	3.3%	2.7%	95 325

Stateless, unknown citizens and recognised non-citizens (RNC) – where present
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctza)

Year	Stateless
2017	1 043
2018	1 276
2019	1 607
2020	1 952

■ Stateless
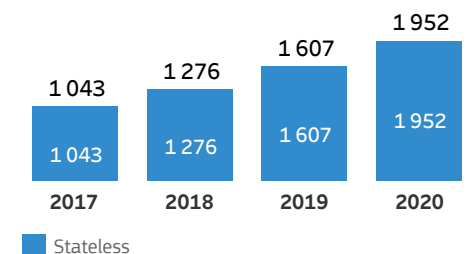
Top 3 nationalities by number of citizenship acquisition in 2019: absolute number and % of total acquisitions in the country by Third-Country Nationals
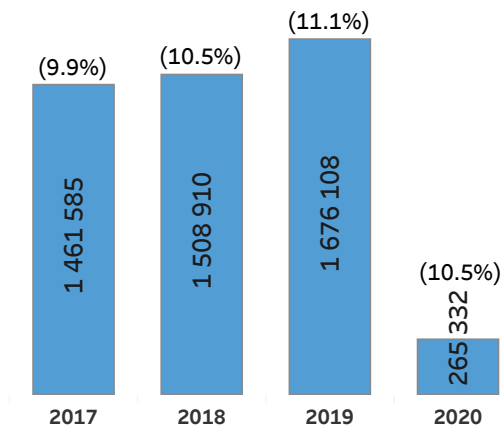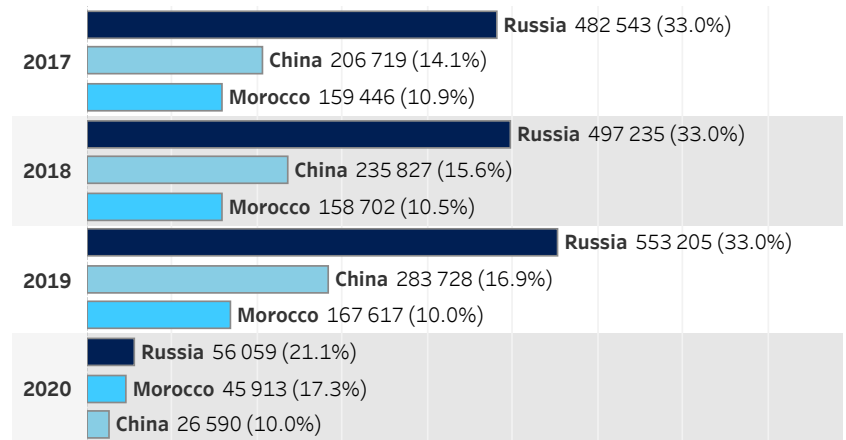SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_acq)

2019
- **Morocco** 24 527 (26%)
- **Ecuador** 8 157 (9%)
- **Colombia** 7 515 (8%)

Spain - 2020
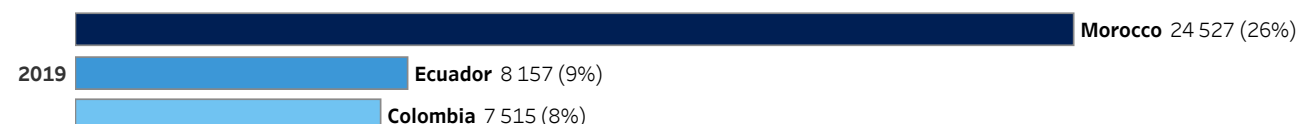
BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Short-term visa issued (% of Schengen)
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs

Year	Value	%
2017	1 461 585	(9.9%)
2018	1 508 910	(10.5%)
2019	1 676 108	(11.1%)
2020	265 332	(10.5%)

Short-term visa issued in top 3 consulate countries (% of total issued)
SOURCE: DG Migration and Home Affairs

2017
- Russia 482 543 (33.0%)
- China 206 719 (14.1%)
- Morocco 159 446 (10.9%)

2018
- Russia 497 235 (33.0%)
- China 235 827 (15.6%)
- Morocco 158 702 (10.5%)

2019
- Russia 553 205 (33.0%)
- China 283 728 (16.9%)
- Morocco 167 617 (10.0%)

2020
- Russia 56 059 (21.1%)
- Morocco 45 913 (17.3%)
- China 26 590 (10.0%)

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirfs, migr_eipre, migr_eiord, migr_eirtn)

Refused entry at ext. borders

Year	Value
2017	203 025
2018	230 540
2019	493 455
2020	3 515

Found to be illegally present

Year	Value
2017	44 625
2018	78 280
2019	62 865
2020	72 265

Ordered to leave (OTL)

Year	Value
2017	27 340
2018	59 255
2019	37 890
2020	50 285

Returned to third country following an OTL

Year	Value
2017	10 165
2018	11 800
2019	11 525
2020	4 855
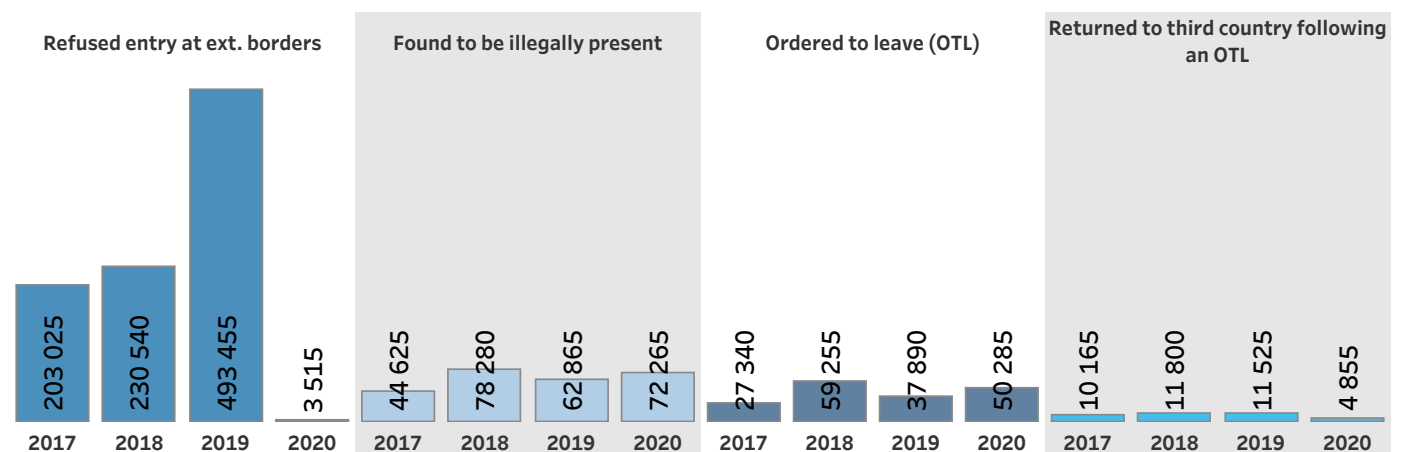
Top 3 nationalities ordered to leave the country, 2020
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eiord)

- Algeria 12 170 (24%)
- Morocco 11 980 (24%)
- Mali 6 885 (14%)
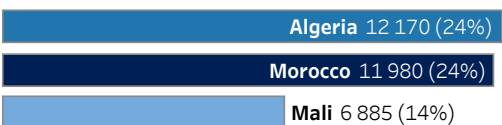
Top 3 nationalities returned to third countries, 2020
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirtn)

- Morocco 1,515 (31%)
- Colombia 710 (15%)
- Algeria 635 (13%)
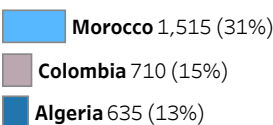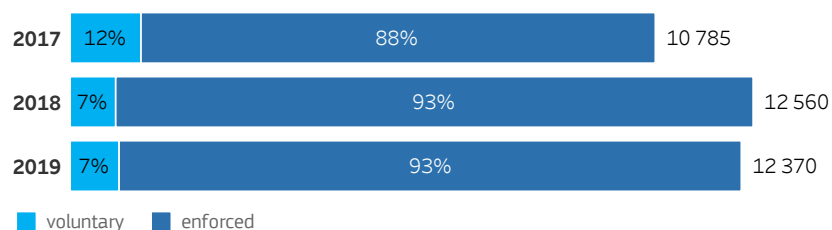
RETURN AND READMISSION

Number of Third-Country Nationals who left the territory by type of return (in %) and total returns
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_eirt_vol)

Year	voluntary	enforced	total
2017	12%	88%	10 785
2018	7%	93%	12 560
2019	7%	93%	12 370

■ voluntary ■ enforced

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings
SOURCE: Eurostat (migr_resoth)

Year	Value
2016	141
2017	127
2018	227
2019	295