



COUNTRY FACTSHEET: SWEDEN 2016

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in Sweden during 2016, including latest statistics.

2. International Protection and Asylum

In 2016, Sweden noted the lowest annual figure of asylum seekers since 2009. **28,939 people applied for asylum**, which also represents a significant decrease compared to the previous year, when a record number of asylum seekers had come to Sweden (almost 163,000). A number of significant legal and policy changes regarding asylum entered into force in Sweden in 2016.

On 1st January 2016, the **revised Asylum Procedures Directive¹ was implemented**. The related legal changes to the Swedish Aliens Act included more specific rules regarding manifestly unfounded asylum applications, rules regarding the right to remain until a court has ruled on inhibition during the appeal of clearly unfounded decisions (and of subsequent applications), and rules providing that unaccompanied minors (UAMs) always have a right to legal representation in the asylum procedure.

Moreover, a **temporary law applicable between 20th July 2016 and 19th July 2019 demands that beneficiaries of international protection are granted temporary residence permits**, as opposed to permanent ones. Refugees are now granted permits for three years and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection for 13 months. Those granted temporary permits but who are deemed to have well-grounded prospects of obtaining a permanent residence permit will continue to have a right to family reunification with their spouse, cohabitant and/or minor children. Refugee children will

continue to have a right to reunification with their parents.

Furthermore, a new **Act for an effective and solidarity-based refugee reception system entered into force on 1st March 2016**. It foresees that all municipalities within Sweden can be required to receive newly-arrived refugees and other beneficiaries of protection, as well as their family members, for settlement and integration.

As a result of **changes to the Reception of Asylum Seekers Act**, which entered into force on 1 June 2016, a person who has applied for asylum and received a final refusal of entry or expulsion order is no longer entitled to accommodation and daily allowances provided by the Swedish Migration Agency once the deadline for voluntary return has expired. This does not apply to adults living with their children.

On 9th June 2016, the Council of the EU decided that the **obligations of Sweden under the relocation decisions (EU) 2015/1523 and (EU) 2015/1601 shall be suspended until 16th June 2017**. Sweden did therefore not receive any asylum seekers relocated from Italy or Greece in 2016. However, Sweden continued its resettlement efforts, finalising **the resettlement of the 491 individuals** pledged in the framework of a Council decision. In November 2016, Sweden also pledged to grant legal admission to 1,927 Syrian nationals that were present in Turkey and had a clear need of international protection.

During 2016, **Sweden resettled 1,907 persons** in need of international protection within the framework of its national resettlement program. The majority of persons were resettled from countries neighbouring Syria, as well as from the Horn of Africa and Central Africa/Great Lakes regions.

In September 2016, the Government confirmed that Sweden will **increase its annual resettlement**

¹ Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.

programme by 1,500 additional places in 2017. The resettlement quota will then be 3,400 persons.

3. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

Throughout 2016, **special safety houses** have been established close to the largest cities in Sweden. These houses are dedicated to asylum applicants with special needs that cannot be satisfied within ordinary reception facilities and with the ordinary support by staff from the Migration Agency.

As mentioned in Section 2, **all UAMs will be appointed a legal counsel** in the first days of their asylum process. The legal counsels are instructed to meet the minors before further steps are taken in the asylum process, in the best interest of the minors.

In addition, a reform was announced to change the **compensation system for the reception of UAMs in municipalities**, in order to simplify the regulatory framework, improve municipalities' planning, reduce administrative burdens and increase cost effectiveness.

4. Legal migration and Mobility

4.1 PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

On 28th January 2016, the Government instructed a number of relevant government agencies to generate a draft for a **new information website aimed at foreign workers, foreign employers, and self-employed foreigners** who are already active or plan to establish themselves in Sweden. The aim is to create a single website where foreign nationals and corporations that are present on the Swedish labour market will find all relevant information on rules and regulations regarding everything from immigration law to tax policy.

4.2 ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Following an evaluation of the implementation of the **Long-term Residence Directive** in Sweden, the Government has proposed changes to the Aliens Act. For instance, the applicant should no longer be required to have a permanent residence permit to be granted long-term residence status. The proposed amendments entered into force on 1st March 2017.

On 15th December 2016, a newly-established **committee on labour migration** made various suggestions to the Swedish government, including additional sanctions against employers who intentionally do not abide by the laws regulating the employment of third-country nationals. These proposals have been submitted for public consultation.

4.3 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The new temporary law mentioned in Section 2 provides for refugees who are granted temporary residence permits and who are deemed to have well-grounded prospects of obtaining a permanent one to still have a

right to family reunification with their spouse, cohabitant and/or minor children. Refugee children will have a right to reunification with their parents. A beneficiary of subsidiary protection who has been granted a temporary residence permit under the temporary law and who submitted his/her asylum application before 24th November 2015 has the same right to family reunification as a refugee.

The temporary law also introduced **stricter maintenance requirements as a condition for family reunification** by extending them to include both the sponsor and support to the family member. The maintenance requirement will not apply if the sponsor is a child. Family members of beneficiaries of international protection are also exempt from the maintenance requirement if the family member applies for family reunification within three months of the date when the beneficiary of protection obtained his/her residence permit.

4.4 MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY²

Following temporary legislation which became effective on 4th January 2016, extraterritorial ID-checks on travellers have been carried out on public transportation from Denmark throughout 2016 and temporary controls at Sweden's Schengen borders were prolonged on several occasions. The latter were originally introduced in November 2015 in response to the extraordinary refugee situation.

An IT-project regarding verification and authentication of certificates in passports at external borders was ongoing at the time of drafting this factsheet. This is linked to the upcoming changes in Article 8 of the Schengen Borders Code regarding systematic checks on persons enjoying the right of free movement.

The Swedish Police Authority has published national curricula for different categories of staff within the field of border policing. This includes common national training material as well as training for future trainers, both regarding teaching skills and legal material/best practices. It has also continued to make use of the risk indicators at an operation level, as presented by the European Commission, to better identify foreign fighters at border control points.

5. Integration

Improving the integration of new arrivals into Swedish society was a priority in 2016. On 1st January 2016, a new regulation entered into force, which foresees an **obligatory mapping/assessment of newly arrived children' and young peoples' knowledge and previous education.** It also prescribes regulations on the organisational form of 'introductory classes' and on the number of teaching hours for newly arrived students. The overall aim is to improve the quality of education for newly arrived students.

² "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

Since mid-August 2016, folk high schools can participate in the **“Swedish from day one” programme**, which was introduced in 2015 as a means to offer asylum seekers meaningful activities, including Swedish language tuition, while their applications are being processed.

The Government also made amendments to the 2010 Introduction Act and implemented supplementary measures to create **more opportunities for newly arrived immigrants to quickly find work or an educational programme**.

Moreover, it continued to create a number of new “fast tracks” to labour market entry for newly arrived immigration with education or skills relevant for shortage occupations. “Fast tracks” are now in place for approximately 20 different professions.

Following up on measures adopted in previous years, an **additional SEK 30 million (approximately €3,07 million) were committed to activities by civil society and local governments** aimed at improving conditions for new arrivals to establish themselves in the Swedish society.

6. External Dimension of EU Migration Policy

In 2016, the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency was instructed to report on how migration is integrated into its operations. The Government offices are now following up on this analysis. The Government’s new Policy Framework for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid has a specific chapter on migration and development.

The Swedish Consumer Agency reported positive results for the website ‘Money from Sweden’. This website allows users to compare transfers costs for remittances.

7. Irregular Migration and Return

7.1. THE FIGHT AGAINST FACILITATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

No major developments were reported for 2016.

7.2. RETURN OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

In 2016, the Migration Agency joined the **EURLO project (EU Return Liaison Officers)**. The aim is to reinforce and facilitate returns and to increase the number of returns amongst “difficult cases”, particularly to Morocco and Afghanistan, as well as to other third countries where other Member States have deployed EURLO officers. On 2nd May 2016, the Police Agency and the Migration Agency were tasked to deploy an additional number of liaison officers at Swedish missions abroad in order to facilitate the return of rejected asylum seekers. At the time of drafting this factsheet, three Return Liaison Officers are deployed in Tbilisi, Amman and Nairobi, in addition to the EURLO officers in Rabat and Kabul.

In June, **the Swedish Migration Agency joined the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) as a**

privileged partner. As a result, the Migration Agency will provide a broad range of reintegration measures to people returning to Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Morocco and Somalia. Throughout 2017, Sweden anticipates to increase the number of countries in which reintegration support for rejected asylum seekers who have returned is provided.

On 5th October, Sweden signed a **bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with Afghanistan on cooperation in the field of migration**. It aims at facilitating the return of Afghans who do not have a right to stay in Sweden and makes it possible for Sweden to carry out forced as well as voluntary returns to Afghanistan.

8. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

In May 2016, the Government decided on an **Action Plan for 2016-2018 to protect children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse**. This matches the goals of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, which foresees the elimination of abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and all forms of violence or torture against children, and the abolition of all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres.

In October, a government inquiry presented several proposals for a **revision of the criminal law protection against human trafficking**. One proposed amendment suggests to lower the level of proof required to convict perpetrators of human trafficking. It also proposed criminal law protection against exploitation of vulnerable people in cases other than human trafficking, for instance on ‘exploitation of the distress of others’ and on improper ‘financial exploitation of others’.

As a result of the project “Development of a Transnational Referral Mechanism for Sweden - Targeted support to the County Administrative Board of Stockholm”, **specific guidelines have been developed for the identification and referral of trafficked persons**. These guidelines are now translated into a “Manual on suspicion of human trafficking”, which intends to support professionals who come in contact with human trafficking victims. It clarifies the responsibilities of various authorities with regard to assistance and protection for victims of trafficking.

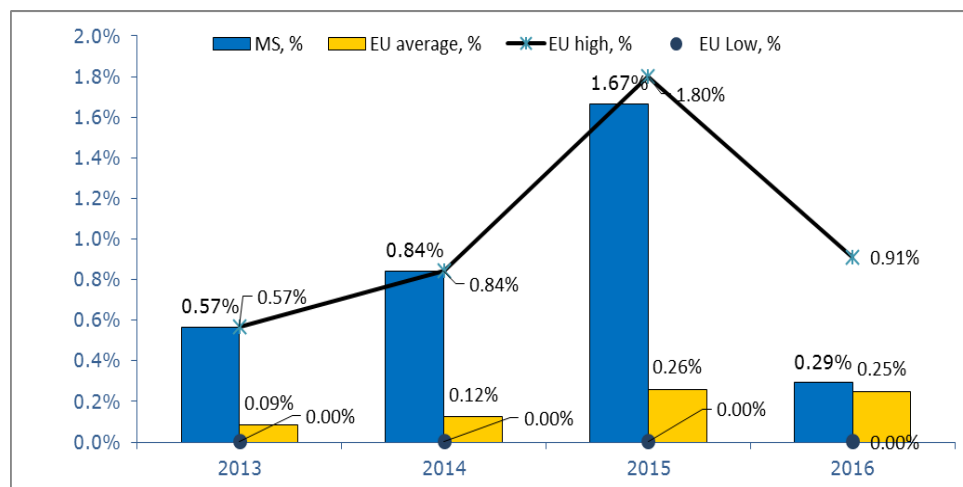
STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Sweden on aspects of migration and asylum (2013-2016), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as “N/A”.

Statistical Annex: Migration and Asylum in Sweden (2013-2016)

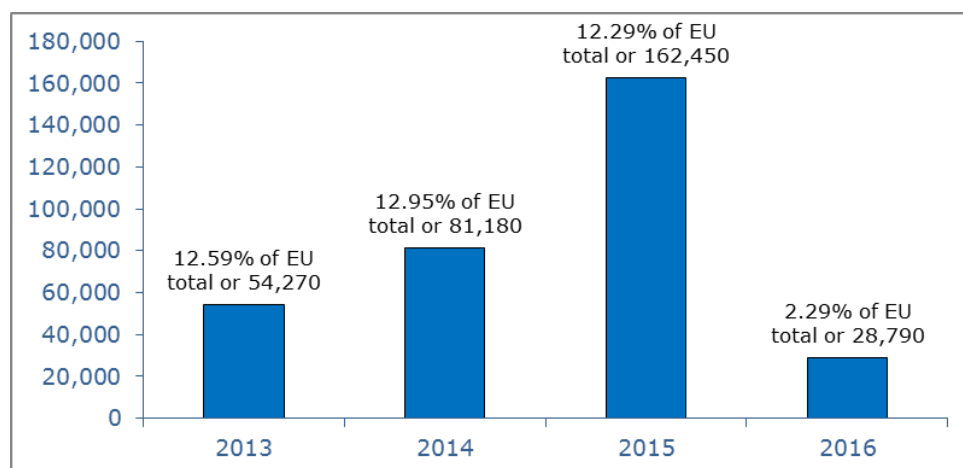
1. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Sweden, EU average and EU high and low (2013-2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#))³, data extracted 02/08/2017.

Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2013-2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017.

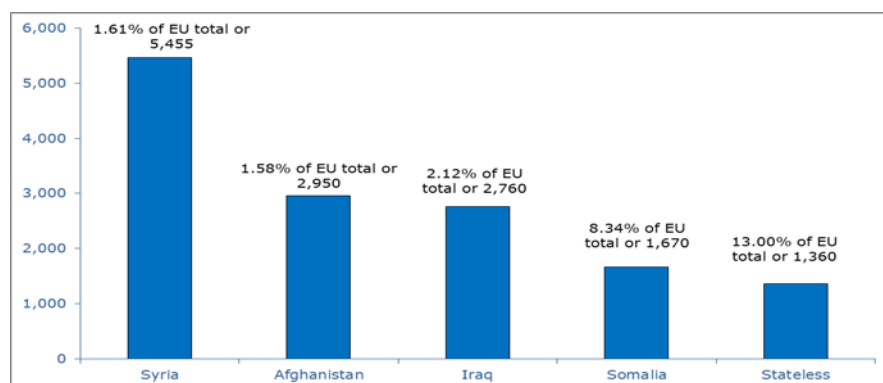
Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2013–2016)

2013			2014			2015			2016		
Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total
Syria	16,540	30%	Syria	30,750	38%	Syria	51,310	32%	Syria	5,455	19%
Stateless	6,885	13%	Eritrea	11,530	14%	Afghanistan	41,445	26%	Afghanistan	2,950	10%
Eritrea	4,880	9%	Stateless	7,820	10%	Iraq	20,780	13%	Iraq	2,760	10%
Somalia	3,940	7%	Somalia	4,870	6%	Stateless	7,725	5%	Somalia	1,670	6%
Afghanistan	3,025	6%	Afghanistan	3,105	4%	Eritrea	7,230	4%	Stateless	1,360	5%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017.

³ Figures regarding the total population were extracted from Eurostat ([demo_gind](#))

Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017.

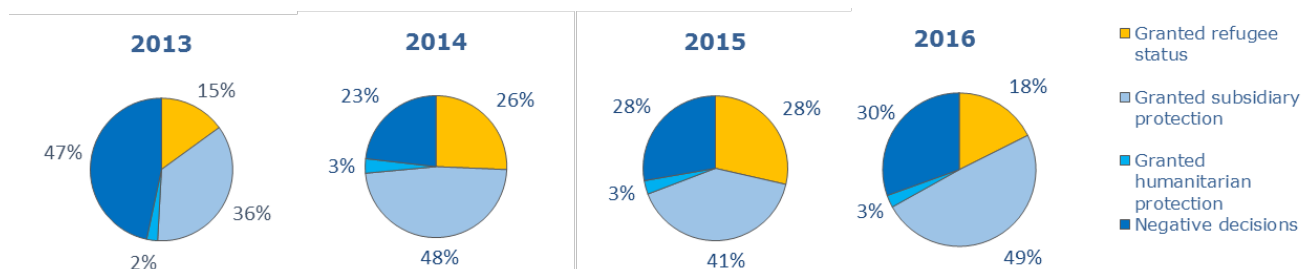
Note: the figure reads as: Sweden received 5,455 asylum applications from Syria or 1.61% of all asylum applications lodged by Syria in EU in 2016.

Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2013-2016)

Year	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2013	45,120	24,015	6,750	16,145	1,120	20,990
2014	40,015	30,650	10,245	19,095	1,310	9,255
2015	44,695	32,215	12,740	18,125	1,350	12,375
2016	95,605	66,585	16,875	47,210	2,500	29,185

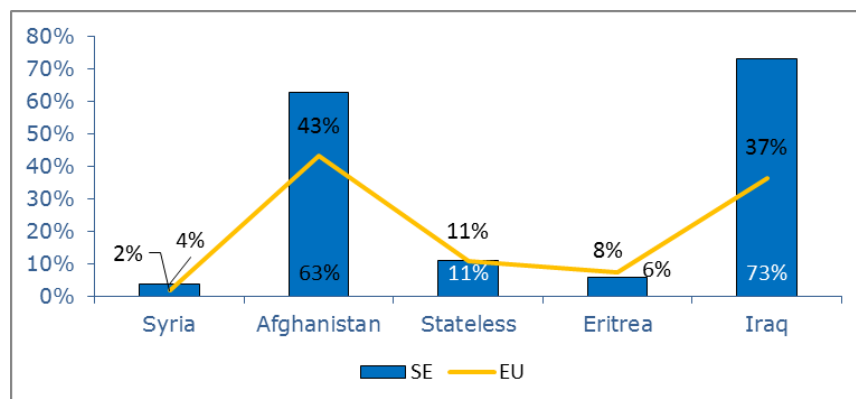
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017.

Figures 4-7: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2013-2016)



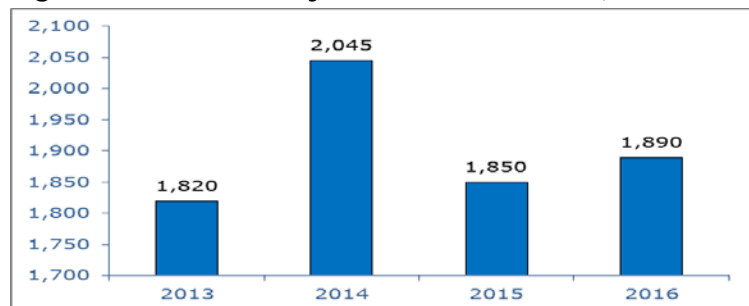
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017.

Figure 8: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017.

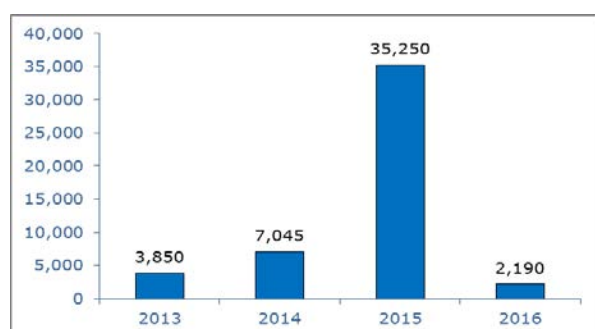
Figure 9: Third-country nationals resettled (2013-2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyresa](#)), data extracted 09/05/2017.

2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 10: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2013-2016)



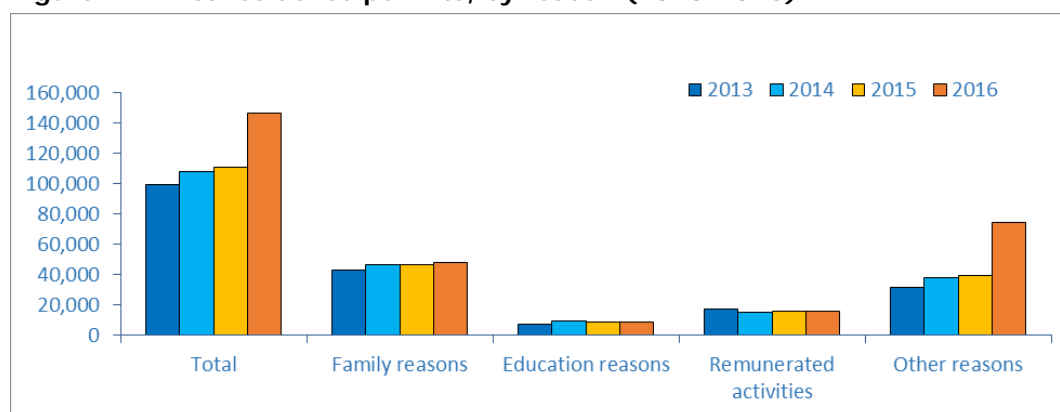
Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) ([migr_asyunaa](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017; EMN NCPs

Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2013-2016)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Unaccompanied minors (total)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	3,850	7,045	35,250	2,190

3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Figure 11: First residence permits, by reason (2013-2016)



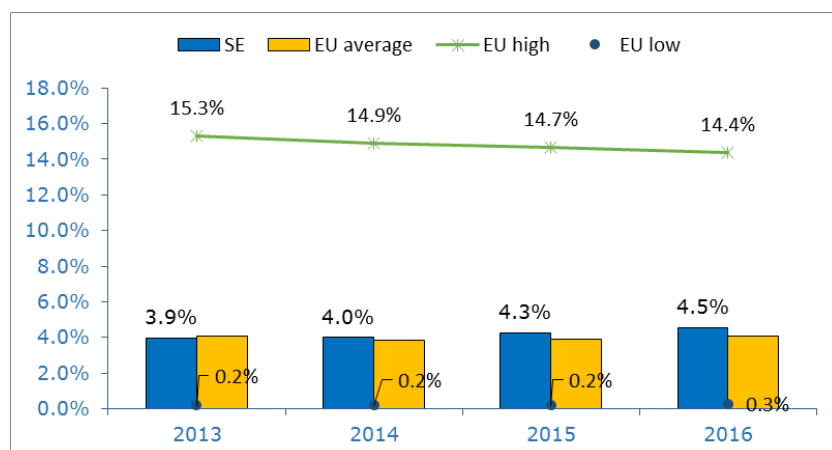
Source: Eurostat ([migr_resfirst](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017; EMN NCPs. "Other reasons" includes protection reasons (asylum).

Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2013–2016)

2013		2014		2015		2016	
Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number
Syria	16,291	Syria	26,428	Syria	29,316	Syria	54,140
Somalia	10,112	Stateless	8,115	Eritrea	8,299	Stateless	8,711
Thailand	7,618	Eritrea	7,080	Thailand	6,594	Eritrea	8,511
Stateless	6,107	India	6,589	India	6,508	India	7,873
India	5,947	China (incl. Hong Kong)	4,922	Stateless	6,389	Thailand	6,171

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_resfirst](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017.

Figure 12: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Sweden EU average, EU high and low (2013-2016)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_pop1ctz](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017.

4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2013–2016)

Third country nationals:	2013	2014	2015	2016
Refused entry at external borders	185	345	615	570
Found to be illegally present	24,400	72,835	1,445	1,210
Ordered to leave	14,695	14,280	18,150	17,585
Returned following an order to leave	14,315	6,630	9,830	11,865

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_eirfs](#))([migr_eipre](#))([migr_eiord](#)), ([migr_eirtn](#)) data extracted 09/05/2017.

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2013-2016)

Year	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2013	3,400	10,611	433
2014	2,766	8,006	216
2015	2,545	7,285	N/A
2016	1,591	9,683	N/A

Source: EMN NCP.

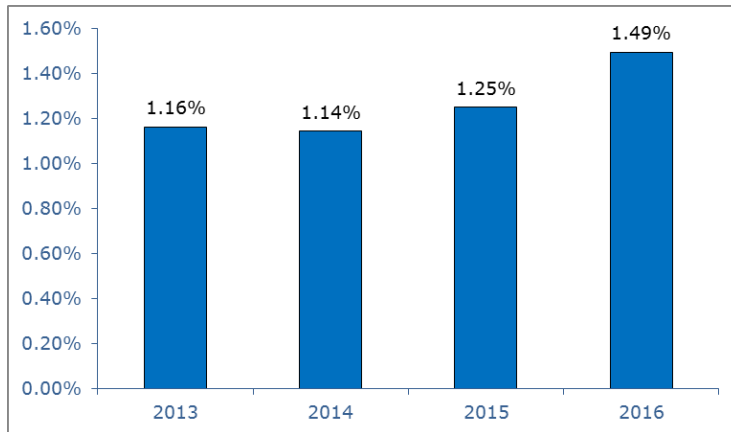
5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of Schengen visas applications received by Sweden (2013–2016)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	200,543	191,009	192,852	227,005

Source: DG Migration and Home – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States.

Figure 13: Uniform visa applications received in Sweden as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2013-2016)



Source: DG Migration and Home affairs – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States.

Table 8: Top five countries in which the highest number of visa applications for Sweden was lodged (2013-2016)

2013		2014		2015		2016	
Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number
Russia	56,860	Russia	39,944	China	48,922	China	74,140
China	31,440	China	36,885	Russian Federation	24,921	Russian Federation	21,222
Thailand	17,864	Iran	15,941	Iran	15,934	Iran	18,054
Iran	12,525	India	12,770	India	15,597	India	17,918
India	12,232	Thailand	11,185	Turkey	11,604	Thailand	15,084

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs.