

COUNTRY FACTSHEET: Cyprus 2015

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in NL during 2015, including latest statistics.

2. Common European Asylum System

In 2015, Cyprus, as many other Member States, was confronted with the challenge of receiving and processing the requests of an increased number of persons seeking international protection.

In 2015, there was no significant legislative change in asylums. The bills which would implement the recast **Asylum Procedures Directive** were pending in 2015, and were expected to be voted in 2016.

As a procedural change to process the asylum application, the asylum authorities started to **prioritise** the asylum applications lodged by Syrians or Syrian Palestinians over the applications by other nationalities.

Cyprus revised the **Contingency Plan**, called *Nafkratis*, to be applied in case of mass influx of persons in need of international protection. The plan was approved by the Council of Ministers and was already made operational in 2015.

As for institutional settings, in 2015 the **Administrative Court** was introduced, and, as of 2016, it would deal with appeals against administrative decisions on international protection requests.

Cyprus agreed to resettle 69 persons under the EU **resettlement** scheme, but no resettlement operation took place in 2015. On **relocation**, Cyprus agreed to relocate 352 persons from Greece and Italy under the EU relocation scheme (until 2017).

In 2015 Cyprus accepted to relocate 15 persons from Greece. Nine of them reportedly absconded, whereas six were successfully transferred to Cyprus in February 2016. Cyprus gave also its availability to relocate 15 asylum applicants from Italy, but no request from Italy reportedly followed up.

Following the request by Cyprus to further improve its asylum and reception system, in July 2015, EASO agreed in extending the implementation period of the **Special Support Plan** until February 2016, with the inclusion of specific measures to meet Cyprus' needs in this field.¹

EASO was also involved in the new **age-assessment procedure**, agreed by the Cypriot authorities in 2015 with the aim to ascertain the age of supposedly minors seeking international protection. Before making the procedure operative, EASO, within the context of the EASO Special Support Plan to Cyprus, would deliver trainings to social welfare and asylum service officials.

Several other trainings were delivered to improve the reception capacity. Caseworkers received a **training** on inclusion, interviewing children, treatment of vulnerable persons and the Common European Asylum System while officials attended several EASO trainings in Cyprus and other Member States.

¹ On 1 July 2015, EASO and Cyprus signed an amendment of the EASO Support Plan which provides for further tailor-made support to Cyprus until 29 February 2016. Besides continuing the implementation of the initial support measures, new activities on statistics, age assessment, guardianship, training and Dublin III procedures have been added.

3. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

No further developments were reported under this area in 2015.

4. European Policy on Legal migration and Integration

A. PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

No further developments were reported under this area in 2015.

B. ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Cyprus implemented some changes on the conditions of residence mainly of low-skilled third-country nationals.

- ★ The duration of the permit for workers in the **agriculture and husbandry sector** was extended from 2 to 3 years and the total duration of stay in the country passed from 4 to 6 years.
- ★ The procedure to hire third-country national **domestic workers** was modified and simplified. For instance, the maximum residence period was set at six years and as of the fourth year, the permit could be biannual. Changing employer became allowed at any time during the first six years, after which renewals could be made only with the same employer.
- ★ On **long-term residents**, following a warning letter from the Commission, the fees for issuing and renewing long-term residence permits were reduced, as well as the number of documents requested for renewal.
- ★ In 2015, the quota set for **Blue Card holders** was maintained at zero.
- ★ The **Seasonal and the Intra-Corporate Transferees Directives** were under implementation.
- ★ Cyprus started the revision of its national scheme for third-country nationals employed by **companies of foreign interest**. The aim of the revision, expected to be concluded in 2016, was to simplify the existing procedure to get a residence permit, with a view of boosting the economy by attracting foreign investments.

C. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Cyprus also revised some practices in place for family reunification, which would be implemented in 2016. These concerned the duration of first-issued and renewed family permits for children and spouses of third-country nationals and the access to the job market of spouses. In particular, the revision (completed in February 2016) foresaw that the spouse would have the same type of access to the labour market as the sponsor, i.e. immediately free or subject to the labour market test.

D. INTEGRATION

In 2015, Cyprus implemented some EU-funded projects to promote the integration of third-country nationals in the wider society. For instance, a project was implemented under the European Refugee Fund (annual programme 2013) that provided education to unaccompanied minors (UAMs) who applied for, or received, international protection. A brand-new reception centre for UAMs and applicants for international protection was also established thanks to the European Refugee Fund's contribution. The centre provided language classes, technology classes and other education programmes.

The European Integration Fund (annual programme 2013) also contributed to the development of projects aimed at fostering the integration of third-country nationals. For instance, a guide about Cyprus, containing a wide range of information, from the history of the country to employment and training opportunities, was published.

E. MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY²

No further developments were reported under this area in 2015.

F. EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EU MIGRATION POLICY

No further developments were reported under this area in 2015.

5. Irregular Migration and Return

Cyprus reported that the Visa Information System (VIS) had been installed at the Aliens and Immigration branches. Whereas officials have been trained to use VIS for extending visas, VIS has not yet been used for identification purposes.

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

The Aliens and Immigration Headquarters were in the process of preparing a handbook for the use of the VIS equipment to be disseminated to the officers. Moreover, the Larnaca International Airport was provided with the technical equipment to detect false documents.

Eight trainings were delivered to 120 border guards on EU and national regulations on border protection, asylum issues, trafficking, risk analysis and the Schengen Border code.

On smuggling, Cyprus appointed in 2015 a National Contact Point for Smuggling, and the Police participated in the Europol's project against migrants' smuggling.

Finally, in 2015, Cyprus signed an agreement with Bahrain which, among others, envisaged cooperation among the two countries to prevent illegal migration, exchange information and provide mutual assistance and trainings.

6. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

No further developments were reported under this area in 2015.

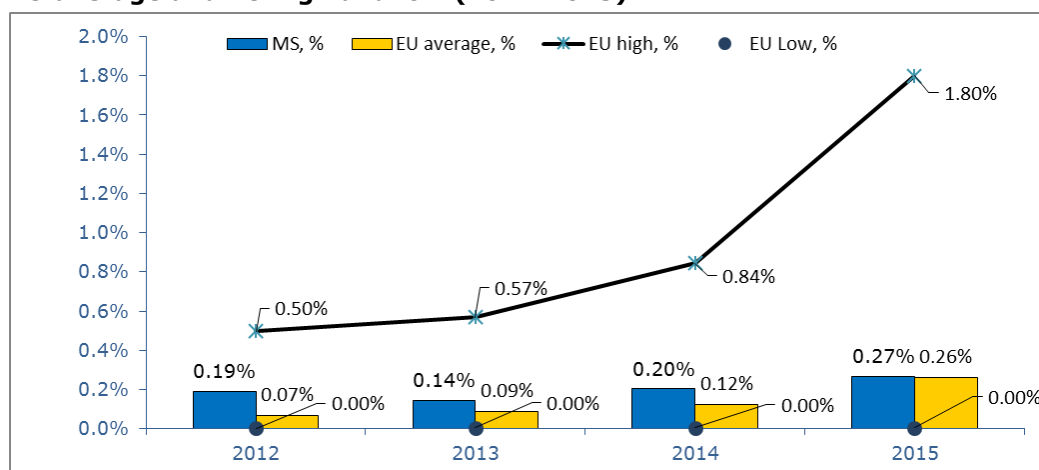
STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Cyprus on aspects of migration and asylum (2012-2015), 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: Immigration and Asylum in Cyprus (2012-2015)

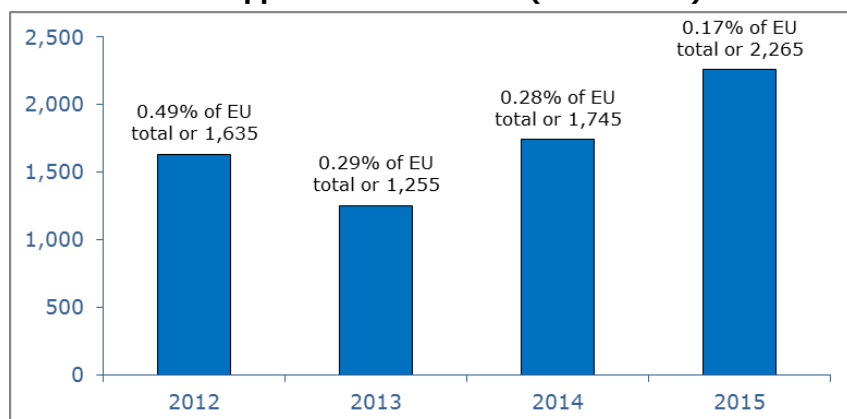
1. COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Cyprus, EU average and EU high and low (2012-2015)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 04/07/2016

Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2012-2015)



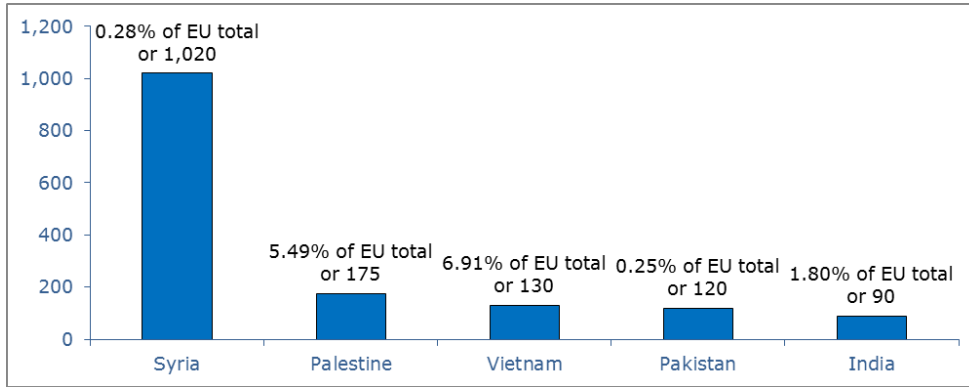
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 04/07/2016

Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2012-2015)

2012			2013			2014			2015		
Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total	Nationality	Nr	% of total
Syria	565	35%	Syria	570	45%	Syria	995	57%	Syria	1,020	45%
Vietnam	200	12%	Egypt	145	12%	Ukraine	95	5%	Palestine	175	8%
Bangladesh	190	12%	Bangladesh	105	8%	Egypt	85	5%	Vietnam	130	6%
Egypt	155	9%	Vietnam	85	7%	India, Vietnam	80	5%	Pakistan	120	5%
Pakistan	110	7%	Pakistan	55	4%	Bangladesh, Pakistan	70	4%	India	90	4%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 04/07/2016

Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2015)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 04/07/2016

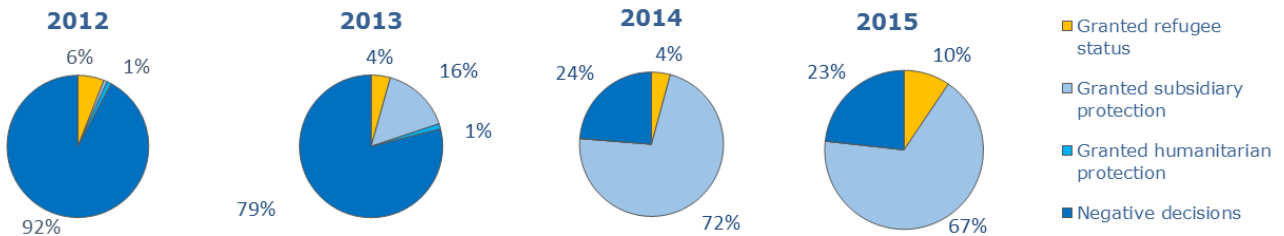
Note: the figure reads as: Cyprus received 1,020 asylum applications from Syrians or 0.28% of all asylum applications from Syrians launched in EU in 2015.

Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2012-2015)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2012	1,335	105	80	10	15	1,230
2013	800	165	35	125	10	635
2014	1,305	995	55	940	0	310
2015	2,065	1,585	195	1,390	0	480

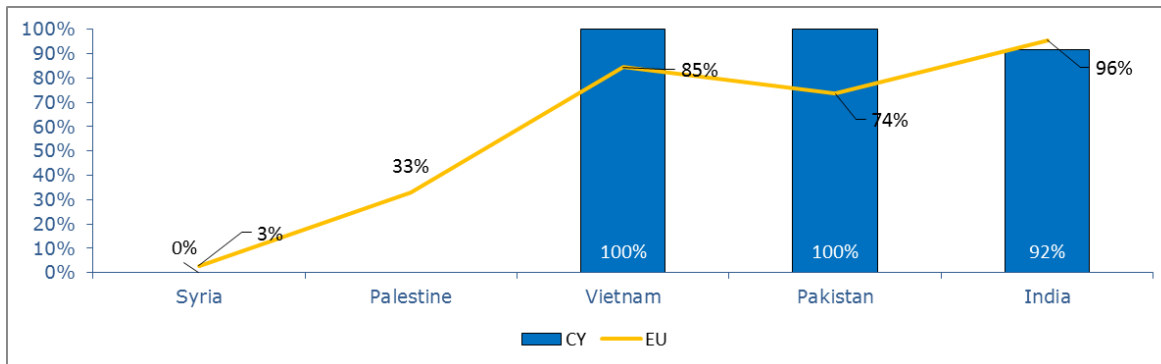
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 04/07/2016

Figures 4-7: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2012-2015)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 04/07/2016

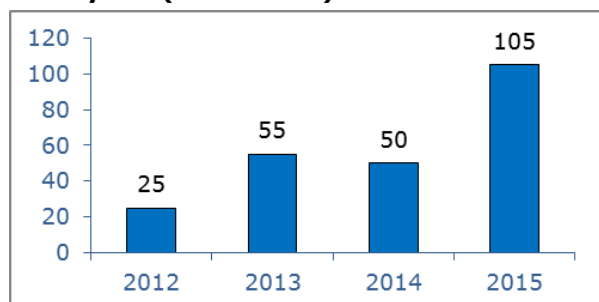
Figure 8: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2015)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 04/07/2016

2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 10: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2012-2015)



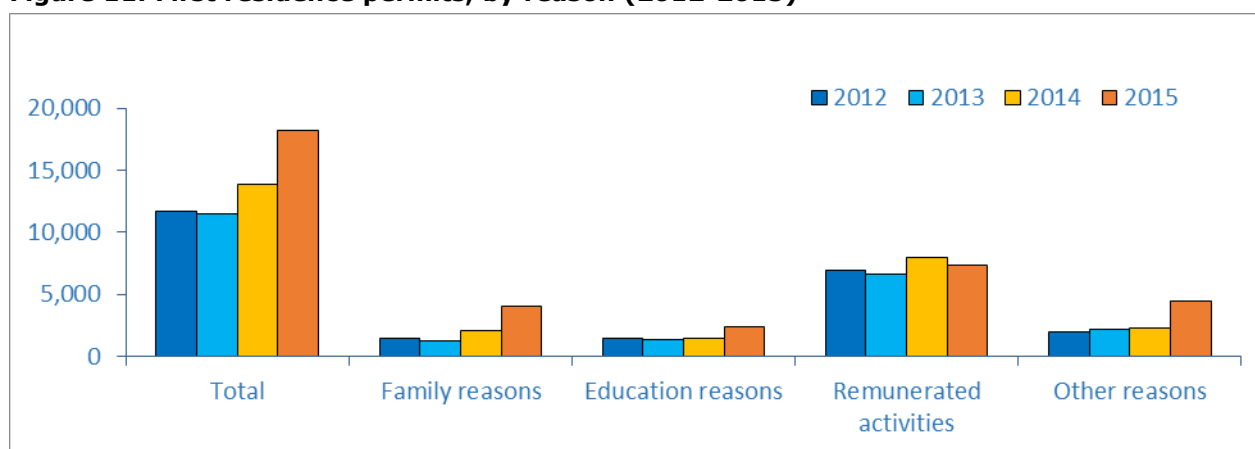
Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) [migr_asyunaa], data extracted 04/07/2016; EMN NCPs

Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2012-2015)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Unaccompanied minors (total)	NA	NA	NA	115
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	25	55	50	105

3. EUROPEAN POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Figure 11: First residence permits, by reason (2012-2015)



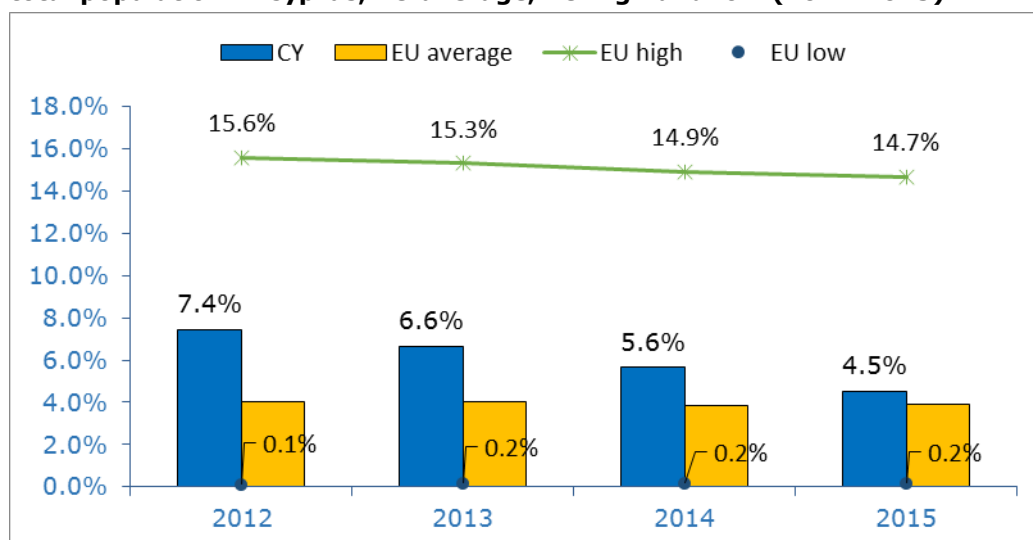
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst), data extracted 04/07/2016

Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2013-2014)

2012		2013		2014		2015	
Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number
Philippines	2,150	Philippines	1,885	Philippines	2,169	Russia	2,069
Russia	1,862	Russia	1,798	Russia	2,133	Syria	1,911
Sri Lanka	1,702	Sri Lanka	1,502	Sri Lanka	1,464	Philippines	1,565
India	1,015	India	1,008	Nepal	1,205	Sri Lanka	1,294
Egypt	721	Egypt	645	India	1,077	India	1,289

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_resfirst), data extracted 04/07/2016

Figure 12: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Cyprus, EU average, EU high and low (2012-2015)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_pop1ctz), data extracted 04/07/2016

4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2012–2015)

Third country nationals:	2012	2013	2014	2015
Refused entry at external borders	14,455	14,910	15,905	14,950
Found to be illegally present	49,365	57,415	65,365	70,020
Ordered to leave	49,365	57,415	65,365	70,020
Returned following an order to leave	54,180	54,960	49,920	48,685

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eirfs)(migr_eipre)(migr_eiord), data extracted 04/07/2016

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2011-2013)

	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2012	3,192	1,135	49
2013	4,027	NA	NA
2014	NA	NA	NA
2015	NA	NA	NA

Source: EMN ncpS

5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of visas issued by type (2012-2015)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	818,775	9,471	NA	NA

Source: DG Migration and Home – 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 Cyprus was lodged (2012-2015)

2011		2012		2013		2014	
Country	Nr	Country	Nr	Country	Nr	Country	Nr
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

6. ASYLUM AND MIGRATION EU FUNDING SOURCES (2007-2013 AND 2014-2020)

Table 9: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) allocation in euro per area

Areas	AMIF 2014-2020
Asylum	10,000,000
Legal Migration and Integration	8,000,000
Return	11,684,433
Technical Assistance	2,624,243
Special cases (resettlement/transfer)	NA
TOTAL	32,308,677

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 10: Internal Security Fund (ISF) allocation in euro per area

Areas	ISF 2014-2020
ISF Borders	34,507,030
ISF SA Frontex	NA
ISF SA Consular cooperation	NA
ISF Borders Emergency Assistance	NA
ISF Police	8,117,257
TOTAL	42,624,287

Source: DG Migration and Home affair

Table 11: SOLID funds allocation in euro and share of total funds allocated to Cyprus (2007-2013)

SOLID FUNDS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
European Refugee Fund (ERF)	NA	1,588,483 (2.1%)	1,764,695 (1.8%)	1,754,495 (1.9%)	1,731,107 (1.8%)	1,490,998 (1.4%)	1,299,247 (1.1%)	9,629,027 (1.7%)
European Return Fund (RF)	NA	936,843 (1.7%)	1,014,839 (1.6%)	1,245,934 (1.5%)	1,642,713 (1.5%)	2,242,701 (1.5%)	2,837,288 (1.6%)	9,920,319 (1.6%)
European Fund for the Integration of TCN (EIF)	766,802 (1.2%)	848,856 (1.1%)	853,447 (0.9%)	884,240 (0.8%)	1,018,124 (0.8%)	1,292,918 (0.8%)	1,521,078 (0.8%)	7,185,465 (0.9%)
External Borders Fund (EBF)	2,090,547 (1.5%)	1,982,610 (1.5%)	3,430,406 (2.2%)	3,429,753 (1.8%)	3,107,214 (1.3%)	7,099,121 (2.2%)	8,877,752 (2.1%)	30,017,404 (1.9%)

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

7. INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT TO DETECT EMPLOYMENT OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

Table 12: Number of Inspections carried out to detect employment of irregular migrants and share of inspections as a percentage of the employers in sector (in %)

Risk sector	2014		2015	
	No.	%	No.	%
Manufacturing	832	17.1%	2,513	96.65%
Construction	2,151	35%	5,023	94.77%
Accommodation and food service activities	633	20.2%	1,986	73.55%

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 13: Number of inspections in which irregular migrant workers were detected (I) and number of irregular migrant workers detected (IWD) – 2015

RISK SECTOR	2014		2015	
	Number of inspections in which irregular migrant workers were detected	Number of irregular migrant workers detected	Number of inspections in which irregular migrant workers were detected	Number of irregular migrant workers detected
Manufacturing	53	57	95	122
Construction	60	106	297	359
Accommodation and food service activities	31	37	98	95

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs