



COUNTRY FACTSHEET: ESTONIA 2014

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in Estonia during 2014, including latest statistics.

2. Common European Asylum System

The number of applicants for international protection in Estonia increased from 97 applicants in 2013 to 147 applicants in 2014, with the largest group of applicants arriving from Ukraine (55 applicants).

Since 1st April 2014 the **procedure for applying for international protection in Estonia has been simplified**. The application form has been shortened (from 15 pages to 2 pages) making the registration of the application much quicker. In addition, 175 Police and Border Guard Board officials received supplementary training to accept applications for international protection. In practice this means that the officials from the Aliens' unit processing the applications for international protection now have more time to engage in the substantive matters of the procedure. Officials from the Aliens' unit still accept the applications for international protection submitted by unaccompanied minors (UAMs).

Since 1st January 2014, changes to the codes of procedures of the Police and Border Guard Board have been introduced in Estonia as part of the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation (No 604/2013). In addition, **in light of the harmonisation of the recast Asylum Procedures (2013/32/EU) and Reception Conditions (2013/33/EU) Directives, due in the second half of 2015, amendments to the respective national legal acts will be made** during that year.

In 2014, **free legal aid continued to be provided to applicants for international protection by the Estonian Human Rights Centre**, which also represents applicants for international protection in court hearings. The activities of the Centre are co-

funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF). Also with support of the ERF, the IOM office in Tallinn organised a workshop on the procedure and practice for international protection in Estonia for the Police and Border Guard Board, Ministry of Interior and court officials, as well as organisations that offer free legal aid. The workshop also covered the international legal framework for granting international protection and court decisions, recent changes in the EU Directives, as well as the definition of detention in international standards. Staff at the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board also received training from EASO in 2014, on Inclusion and Interview Techniques.

On 1st October 2014 the position of a Country of Origin (CoI) expert was created within the Police and Border Guard Board in Estonia, with training planned to be provided by the end of 2015. With regard to CoIs, in 2014 Estonia took part in initiatives of IGOs and NGOs to alleviate the situation in third countries that have witnessed a large number of seekers of international protection, mainly in Ukraine, but also the Middle East (Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey).

Finally, no major institutional changes occurred in Estonia in 2014, except for the closing of the Reception Centre in Illuka. All applicants for international protection are now accommodated in Vao Accommodation Centre in Väike-Maarja. The new location has allegedly improved access to services, including medical services, education and recreational activities.

3. Unaccompanied Minors and Other Vulnerable Groups

In 2014, there were no UAMs applying for asylum in Estonia. Nevertheless, the regulation on return and removal of UAMs in Estonia was clarified: the decision on return of a UAM can be issued if the minor's representation is ensured when the decision is made and the child's best interests are taken into account. In addition, the decision on return will be complied with if the guardian of the UAM is convinced that s/he will be

sent back to his/ her family or appointed to the reception centre of the receiving state.

In light of the harmonisation of the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act has already been amended to include a separate article on the protection of vulnerable groups, i.e. taking into account the specific needs of UAMs, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with underage children and persons who have been subject to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological or sexual violence.

4. European Policy on Legal Migration and Integration

4.1 PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

Since 2013, several new websites managed by state initiated foundations have promoted legal migration for TCNs in Estonia, these include:

- ★ Work in Estonia (<http://www.workinestonia.com>) (2015);
- ★ Integration Information (2014) (<http://www.integratsiooniinfo.ee/en/>); and
- ★ Invest in Estonia (2013) (<http://www.investinestonia.com/en/>).

Integration Information offers e-counselling and face-to-face advice to those who are interested in coming to Estonia or are already in the country. In September and October 2014, the Labour Inspectorate additionally carried out an information campaign on the rights of posted workers in Estonia and the EU, consisting of 15 information days and a leaflet on the rights and duties of posted workers, as well as the responsibilities of employers.

4.2 ECONOMIC MIGRATION

As previously mentioned, the Aliens Act was amended in 2014, with changes likely to take effect in 2016. The proposed changes include provisions for combatting labour force shortages through legal migration, i.e. workers with experience or education that cannot otherwise be found on the Estonian labour market. The envisaged changes include the drafting of a list of the sectors experiencing labour shortages by the government, as well as of a simplified hiring procedure for the positions on the list (e.g. exemption from the remuneration threshold, etc.). The amendments will also allow TCNs to work with several employers.

Further planned changes, aimed to facilitate the admission and access of certain categories of migrants, include the following: draft amendments under the Aliens Act to simplify the employment of highly-qualified workers in large enterprises whose trustworthiness will be verified through the previous activity of the parent company; amendments as part

of the harmonisation of the Intra-Corporate Transferees (ICTs) (2014/66/EU) and Seasonal Workers (2014/36/EU) Directives. Furthermore, an 'e-resident' service was introduced in Estonia in December 2014 in order to promote entrepreneurship, allowing migrants to use Estonian public e-services and sign documents securely over the Internet through special authentication.

Finally, draft amendments under the Aliens Act also aim to simplify the conditions for applying for long-term residence for TCNs who are already legally resident on the territory of Estonia, including a new ground for issuing such permits (*'to settle permanently in Estonia'*).

4.3 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The draft amendments to the Aliens Act further include provisions for family members of researchers and lecturers wishing to apply for temporary residence permits in Estonia.

4.4 INTEGRATION

In 2014, **Estonia continued to implement the introduction programme for new immigrants** who intend to stay in the country, including providing free-of-charge special training and language learning. In addition, as of 1st August 2015, foreigners who have resided less than five years in Estonia (on the basis of a temporary residence permit/ right of residence) will be offered an adaptation programme – an activity plan that includes special study modules, as well as language training for recently arrived immigrants. The adaptation programme *inter alia* aims to promote self-employment and integration of foreigners in the labour market, as well as entrepreneurship. Both high- and low-skilled migrants and their family members are targeted by the programme; for beneficiaries of international protection, a specific module will be developed.

More favourable conditions for immigrants wishing to apply for Estonian citizenship were introduced in 2014. For example, the unequal treatment of stateless persons whose guardian failed to apply for a residence permit for him/ her when s/he was under 15 years of age (but who was nevertheless residing in the country for eight years prior to that) was eliminated. Draft amendments to the Citizenship Act envisage **making it easier for children and the elderly to obtain Estonian citizenship** as well. Parents who have undetermined citizenship (stateless) but who have been living in Estonia for at least five years will be able to apply for a citizenship for their children (under 15 years old) who were born in Estonia. The amendments will further exempt citizenship applicants who are over 65 years old from the written part of the Estonian language exam.

In December 2014, following a lengthy consultation process, **Estonia's Strategy for Integration and**

Social Cohesion 2014-2020 was approved.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Culture who is responsible for coordinating the integration policy in the country published a final report on the previous integration strategy (2008-2013). According to this report, the Ministry of Culture regards the achievement of the Strategy as satisfactory, given also the economic recession: out of the 14 goals that were set in 2008, more than half were achieved. The goals that were not achieved (4 in total) mostly related to labour market issues, such as: difference in unemployment rates based on ethnicity which has increased; difference in the share of long-term unemployed which has not decreased; and difference in income based on ethnicity which has also not decreased. Nevertheless, the self-assessed level of Estonian proficiency has allegedly increased, as well as the contacts made between inhabitants of different ethnicities in Estonia. The number of stateless persons in the country has decreased and the attitudes of Estonians regarding the involvement of persons of other ethnic backgrounds in the social and economic life of the country have allegedly become more positive.

4.5 MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY¹

In 2014, the Visa Information System (VIS) roll-out started in two different regions in Estonia. The Member State also passed the testing of VISMai2 successfully and is ready for its implementation.

In relation to Schengen Governance, in 2015, Estonia plans to review the training modules and operational practices of staff in order to raise the effectiveness of Schengen compensational measures. Finally, with regard to border monitoring, in October 2014 the Government created a new border control task force to carry out special (e.g. emergency) operations, which will start work in 2015.

4.6 EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EU MIGRATION POLICY

In 2014, there were no migration-related initiatives with third countries in the framework of development policy in Estonia.

5. Irregular Migration and Return

5.1 THE FIGHT AGAINST FACILITATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Further **amendments to the Aliens Act include provisions to fight the facilitation of irregular migration**, in line with the harmonisation of Estonian legislation with the Employers Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC). Such amendments include, for example, that all employers who have allowed TCNs to work in Estonia illegally will be obliged to reimburse the costs of any return procedure, as well as pay TCNs

a salary in the amount of lost earnings. The amendments also provide for an additional measure to deprive employers (with a criminal record for employing TCNs illegally or engaging in trafficking in human beings (THB)) of state support provided to enterprises, or to exclude them from taking part in public procurement procedures. The clauses of engaging in trafficking in human beings or providing employment for TCNs who do not have a legal basis to stay in Estonia, will be further added to the Penal Code provision on the prohibition for employers to engage in enterprise up to five years if convicted of these crimes. Finally, the amendments also include a provision on due diligence for subcontractors (to avoid illegal employment of TCNs through subcontracting).

6. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

In Estonia, prevention of THB is part of the policy on preventing all forms of violence and **a new strategy covering the period 2015-2020 was submitted** for approval during 2014. In addition, in December 2014 Estonia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Although during the year there were no cases of THB involving third country nationals (TCNs), the services provided to THB victims throughout 2013, under the transposition of the THB Directive 2011/36/EU, continued to be implemented. During the first 10 months of 2014, there were four offences registered for THB; no offences were registered for supporting such activities.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

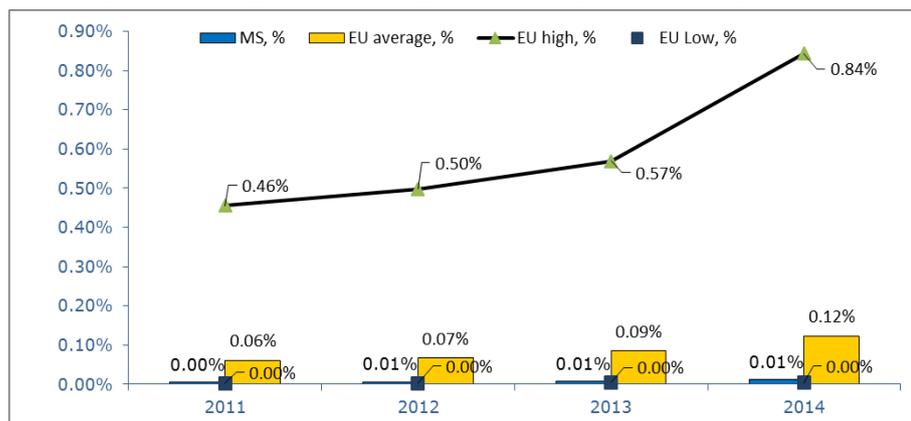
The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Estonia on aspects of migration and asylum (2011-2014), including residence, asylum, UAMs, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as "**N/I**" and when statistics are not applicable, this is indicated as "**N/A**".

¹ "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

Statistical Annex: Immigration and Asylum in Estonia (2011-2014)

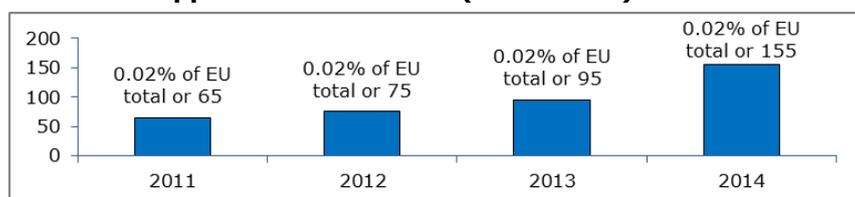
1. COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Estonia, EU average and EU high and low (2011-2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 20/07/2015

Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2011-2014)



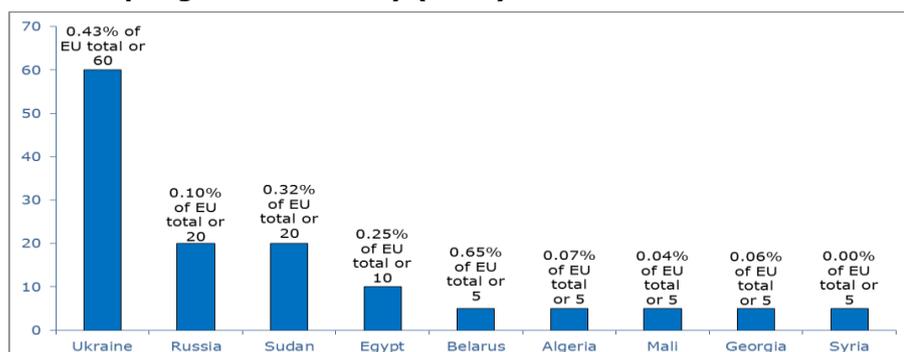
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015

Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2011-2014)

2011			2012			2013			2014		
Nationality	No	% of total	Nationality	No	% of total	Nationality	No	% of total	Nationality	No	% of total
Congo, Afghanistan	10	15%	Georgia	35	47%	Vietnam	25	26%	Ukraine	60	39%
Belarus, Russia, Cameroon, Somalia, Libya, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Stateless	5	8%	Russia	10	13%	Russia, Syria	15	16%	Russia, Sudan	20	13%
			Turkey, Belarus, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Vietnam, Armenia, Syria	5	7%	Pakistan, Georgia	10	11%	Egypt	10	6%
						Albania, Belarus, Sudan, Iran	5	5%	Belarus, Algeria, Mali, Georgia, Syria	5	3%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015

Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2014)



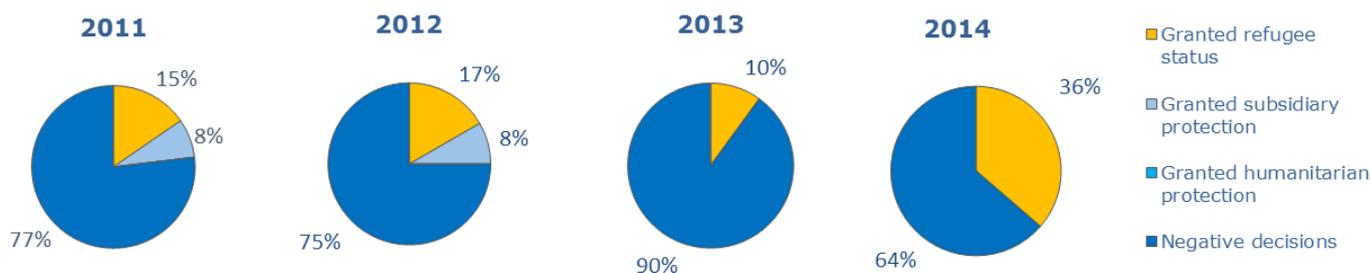
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 21/07/2015

Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2011-2014)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons ²	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2011	60	10	10	5	N/A	50
2012	55	10	10	5	N/A	45
2013	55	10	5	0	N/A	45
2014	55	20	20	0	N/A	35

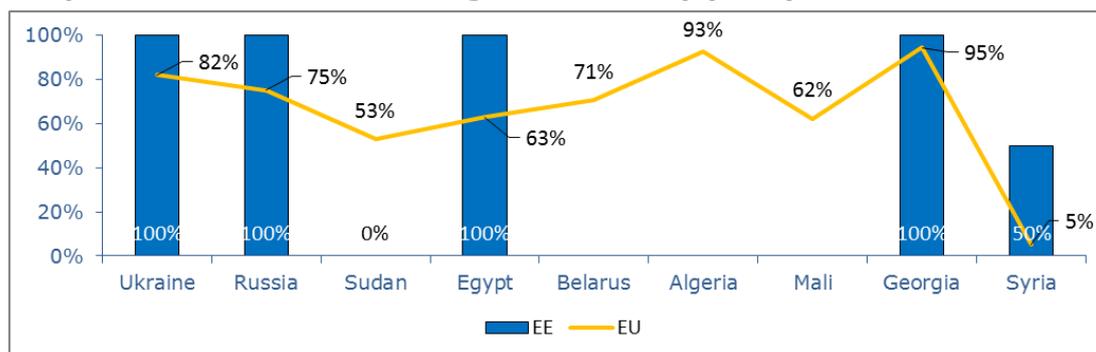
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 22/07/2015.

Figures 4-7: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2011-2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 22/07/2015

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 (2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 23/07/2015

Figure 9: Third-country nationals resettled



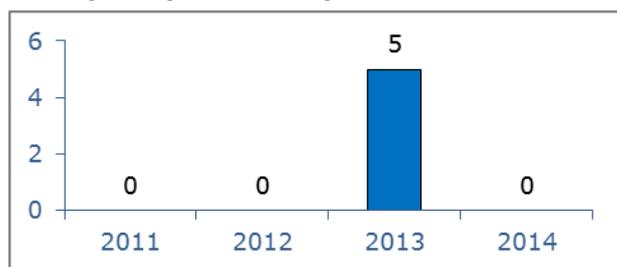
Note: Estonia does not take part in resettlement activities

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyresa), data extracted 23/07/2015- Please note that Estonia does not carry out any resettlement or relocation activities.

² Estonia also does not grant asylum for humanitarian reasons

2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 10: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2011-2014)



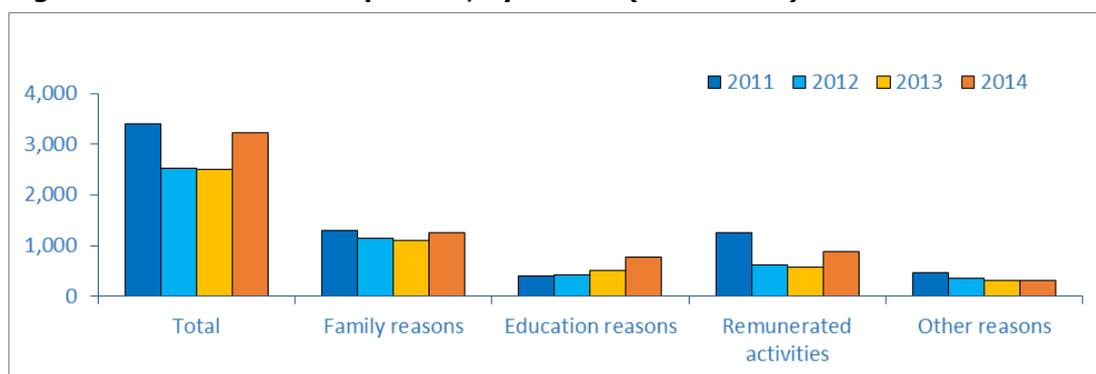
Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) [migr_asyunaa], data extracted 23/07/2015

Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2011-2014)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unaccompanied minors (total)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	0	0	5	0

3. EUROPEAN POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Figure 11: First residence permits, by reason (2011-2014)



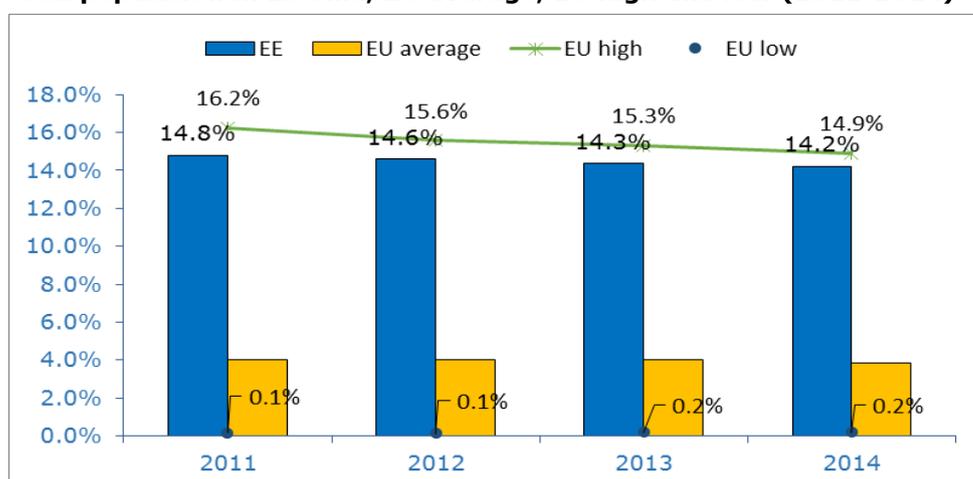
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst), data extracted 26/08/2015

Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2011 – 2014)

2011	2012	2013	2014
1. Russia – 1,445	1. Russia – 940	1. Russia – 842	1. Russia – 908
2. Ukraine – 645	2. Ukraine – 403	2. Ukraine – 440	2. Ukraine – 853
3. Recognised Non-Citizens – 451	3. Recognised Non-Citizens – 140	3. Recognised Non-Citizens – 303	3. Recognised Non-Citizens – 243
4. USA – 143	4. USA – 65	4. USA – 139	4. USA – 150
5. Belarus – 119	5. Belarus – 58	5. China – 69	5. India – 112

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_resfirst), data extracted 26/08/2015

Figure 12: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Estonia, EU average, EU high and low (2011-2014)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_pop1ctz), data extracted 23/07/2015

4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2011 – 2014)

Third country nationals:	2011	2012	2013	2014
Refused entry at external borders	2,205	1,915	1,400	695
Found to be illegally present	1,020	905	910	720
Ordered to leave	480	580	600	475
Returned following an order to leave	415	480	575	445

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eirfs)(migr_eipre)(migr_eiord)(migr_eirtn), data extracted 24/07/2015

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2011-2014)

	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2011	85	78	8
2012	116	89	29
2013	214	105	17
2014	117	313	22

Source: EMN Country Factsheet 2013 and *EMN Annual Policy Report on Immigration and Asylum 2014, Statistic Annex

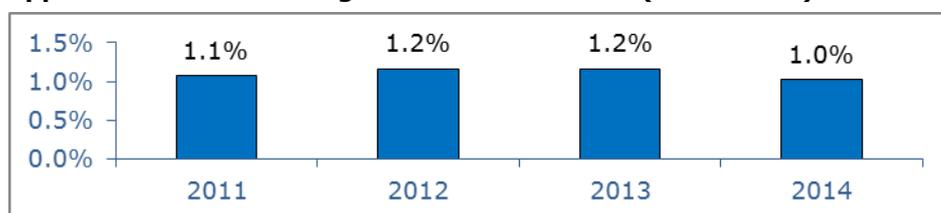
5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of Schengen visas applications (2011 – 2014)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	144,567	175,360	201,056	170,731

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

Figure 13: Uniform visa applications received in Estonia as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2011-2014)



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 Estonia was lodged

2011		2012		2013		2014	
Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number
Russia	107,717	Russia	129,666	Russia	140,041	Russia	109,208
Belarus	20,250	Belarus	26,771	Belarus	37,662	Belarus	41,874
Ukraine	10,870	Ukraine	13,574	Ukraine	17,576	Ukraine	14,993
China	2,157	Georgia	2,176	Georgia	2,461	Georgia	1,651
Georgia	1,770	China	1,252	China	1,422	China	929

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

6. ACTIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Table 9: Number of traffickers arrested as suspects and traffickers convicted

	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Convictions	N/I	N/I	N/I	46 ³
Arrested / otherwise involved in a criminal proceeding	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I

Source: *EMN Annual Policy Report on Immigration and Asylum 2014, Statistic Annex

³ Statistics on convictions includes total number of convictions for trafficking (not only for TCNs). There is not separate data for convictions for TCNs only.

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

Table 10: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) allocation to Estonia in euro per area

Areas	AMIF 2014-2020
Asylum	2,564,087
Legal Migration and Integration	2,744,248
Return	3,289,630
Technical Assistance	1,558,611
Special cases (resettlement/transfer)	-
TOTAL	10,156,577

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 11: Internal Security Fund (ISF) allocation to Estonia in euro per area

Areas	ISF 2014-2020
ISF Borders	21,781,752
ISF SA Frontex	-
ISF SA Consular cooperation	-
ISF Borders Emergency Assistance	-
ISF Police	13,480,269
TOTAL	35,262,021

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

Table 12: SOLID funds allocation in euro and share of total funds allocated to Estonia (2007-2013)

SOLID FUNDS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
European Refugee Fund (ERF)	N/A	501,802 (0.7%)	502,459 (0.5%)	503,518 (0.5%)	506,424 (0.5%)	509,126 (0.5%)	514,236 (0.5%)	3,037,566 (0.5%)
European Return Fund (RF)	N/A	510,306 (0.9%)	515,510 (0.8%)	521,215 (0.6%)	536,691 (0.5%)	546,222 (0.4%)	609,607 (0.4%)	3,239,550 (0.5%)
European Fund for the Integration of TCN (EIF)	827,225 (1.3%)	882,021 (1.1%)	12,388,883 (12.7%)	1,020,371 (0.9%)	1,123,399 (0.9%)	1,292,206 (0.8%)	1,394,962 (0.8%)	18,929,068 (2.3%)
External Borders Fund (EBF)	2,407,533 (1.7%)	2,708,472 (2%)	3,608,410 (2.3%)	3,417,428 (1.8%)	3,452,677 (1.5%)	4,860,920 (1.5%)	6,673,751 (1.6%)	27,129,191 (1.7%)

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs