



WHAT WERE THE NEW TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND ASYLUM ACROSS THE EU, NORWAY, GEORGIA, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND ARMENIA IN 2022?

EMN FLASH #1 - 2023

Background



The European Migration Network (EMN) Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022 provides a comprehensive overview of EU and national developments across a wide range of migration and asylum topics, including the response to the influx of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine, legal migration, international protection, minors and vulnerable groups, integration, citizenship and statelessness,

borders, visa and Schengen area, irregular migration including smuggling; trafficking in human beings; return and readmission; and migration and development cooperation. What were common trends in migration and asylum at EU and national level in 2022? At a glance, the main drivers and findings are introduced below.

Key trends and findings



- Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022, the European Migration Network (EMN) Member and Observer Countries focused their responses on providing safe shelter to people from Ukraine fleeing the war. European Union (EU) Member States implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) (2001/55/EC), which was activated on 4 March 2022 for the first time since its adoption in 2001. Norway activated a national framework – temporary collective protection from 11 March 2022, while Moldova and Georgia each implemented national measures to support people fleeing the war. In 2022, a total of 4 331 200 temporary protection statuses were granted by EU Member States. On 31 December 2022, 3 826 600 non-EU citizens benefitted from temporary protection in the EU.
- 2022 was the first ‘post-COVID-19 year’, as the spread of the virus was less severe compared to 2020 and 2021. This resulted in the lifting of restrictions at borders, as well as for return operations. Extensions of stay on EU Member States’ territory due to travel restrictions were also phased out during the year. The improved epidemiological situation allowed health measures in reception and detention centres to be relaxed, freeing capacity.
- In 2022, several EMN Member and Observer Countries saw overarching strategic developments in migration and asylum. Changes in government in Sweden prompted new approaches to migration management, whilst in Latvia it was due to crises at the border with Belarus. Belgium audited its asylum and migration services. Georgia adopted a comprehensive policy document ‘Vision 2030 – Development Strategy of Georgia’, including measures to facilitate labour migration and strengthen the Georgian diaspora abroad.
- Pressures at external borders from the Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Eastern routes continued to impact on the migration and asylum systems of EMN Member Countries in 2022. The number of irregular border crossings increased noticeably from 2021 by 64%, and the resulting security risks prompted several EU Member States to reintroduce internal border controls.
- The rise in asylum applications (first-time asylum applications were up by 65% compared with 2021) put pressure on the asylum systems of Member States and Norway. This was the first increase since 2019, as applications had dipped during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Syria and Afghanistan were once again the top nationalities of asylum applicants in the 27 EU Member States (EU-27) and Norway, as had been the case since 2018. The activation of the TPD ensured that asylum systems across EU Member States would not be overwhelmed with protection requests. Nevertheless, Ukrainian nationals were still the eleventh largest group to apply for international protection during 2022 (25 460).
- Some EU Member States reported that the large inflows of people fleeing the war in Ukraine put additional strain

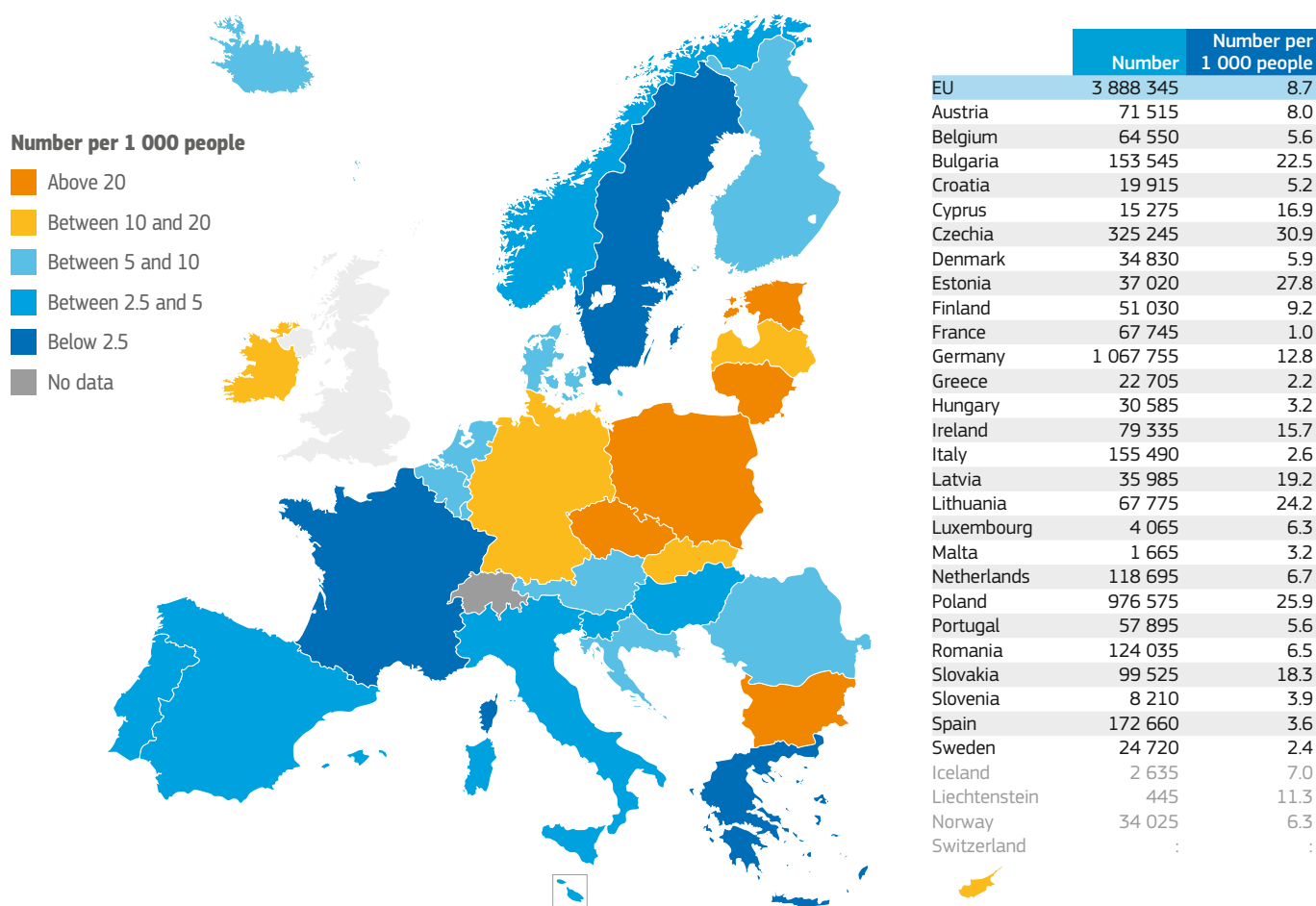
on migration management (e.g. leading to processing delays) and on reception systems.

- 2022 saw a number of developments in solidarity and cooperation measures on migration in the EU. Key developments included the adoption of a joint roadmap between the European Parliament and five rotating Presidencies of the Council of the EU to work together to adopt the reform of the EU migration and asylum legislative framework before the 2024 EU elections and a Declaration on Solidarity establishing a Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM), endorsed by 23 European countries to support cooperation with the EU Member States most affected by migratory flows in the Mediterranean. Croatia acceded to the Schengen area, with full application of the *acquis* and removal of internal border controls.
- Attracting and retaining talent, including qualified workers to meet labour market needs, and addressing demographic change continued to be a significant priority at EU and national level. In April 2022, the European Commission adopted an ambitious policy for legal migration, the 'Skills and Talents Package' to attract

talent and facilitate the EU's transition to a green and digital economy. In response to increasing labour shortages, several EU Member States introduced major reforms to attract qualified workers. While a Talent Pool Pilot for Ukraine was launched on the European Employment Services Network (EURES) platform in October 2022, plans to establish a fully-fledged 'EU Talent Pool' for facilitating job-matching began in 2022. Talent Partnerships, as a tool for cooperation on legal migration between EU Member States and partner countries, as well as strategic engagement on migration management, were also announced in 2022. At national level, Skills Mobility Partnerships promoting a sustainable approach to skilled migration and mobility were carried out by several EU Member States.

- The protection of migrants and asylum seekers, including minors and other vulnerable groups, remained an important area of legislative and policy development. At national level, measures to protect vulnerable groups in reception centres were strengthened, including the opening of new dedicated centres for vulnerable groups and/or the creation of special places in mainstream reception centres.

Third-country nationals who fled Ukraine and were granted temporary protection, 31 March 2023



Source: Eurostat (*migr_asytpsm* and *migr_pop1ctz*), extracted on 8 June.

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