

Residence permits statistics

Data extracted in October 2015. Most recent data: Further Eurostat information, Main tables and Database. Planned article update: January 2016.

This article presents European Union (EU) statistics on first residence permits issued to non-EU citizens. Data are based on the regulatory framework of the Article 6 of the Regulation 862/2007 on migration and international protection statistics.

Residence permit represents an authorization issued by the competent authorities of a country allowing third-country national (non-EU citizens) to stay legally on its territory. Data on residence permits are collected by reasons for issuing such permit. The main such reasons are: education, family, employment and other reasons (including stay without right to work, international protection, etc.). Among the main categories of reasons specific categories of reasons are distinguished (e.g. students, researchers, highly-skilled workers etc.). National administrative registers and databases are the main sources for these statistics, with the exception of the United Kingdom ^[1].

The evolution of residence permits at the country level reflects the national migration's systems diversity and the influence of European immigration policy. Other factors such as: characteristics of third-country nationals, legal framework and characteristics of countries involved in the immigration process like the geographical proximity or language ties can be also important.

Main statistical findings

In 2014, EU Member States issued around 2.3 million first residence permits to third country nationals. This represents an decrease of 2 % permits compared to the previous year (around 50 thousand less permits).

The United Kingdom (see Note 1) issued the highest number of first permits in the EU in 2014 with 568 thousand, followed by Poland with 355 thousand, Germany with 238 thousand, France with 218 thousand, Italy with 204 thousand and Spain with 189 thousand. These six countries represented more than 75 % of all first permits issued in the EU to non-EU citizens. However, if we consider the ratio between the number of permits issued and the size of the resident population (see Table 1), the highest number of permits was granted by Malta (23 permits for 1000 average resident population) followed by the Cyprus (16) Sweden (11) and Poland (10).

The highest number of first permits was observed for family reasons with 680 thousand, followed by other related reasons with 577 thousand of permits; 572 thousand of permits were issued for employment reasons while less than a half a million permits were issued for education reasons (see Table 1). As in the previous years (2008-2013), the distribution of the total first residence permits in 2014 was to some extent balanced between the main reasons, counting between 21 % and 29 % from all first permits issued in the EU: family related reasons 29 %, education reasons 21 %, occupation reasons and other reasons 25 % each one.

Compared with 2013, the number of permits issued for other reasons decreased by 110 thousand. The number of first permits issued for employment increased by 38 thousand and for education reasons



Figure 1: First residence permits issued in the EU-28 by reasons, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Country	Permits issued	Average resident population	Ratio (Permits/1000 pop)
Malta	23	1000	23
Cyprus	16	1000	16
Sweden	11	1000	11
Poland	10	1000	10

Table 1: Total number of first residence permits issued by reason, in 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

increased by 13 thousand while the number for family related reasons increased slightly by 8.5 thousand (see Figure 1).

Ukrainians were the top non-EU citizens granted first residence permit in the EU in 2014, counting about 0.3 millions first residence permits (28 % more than in 2013); large majority arrived for work reasons in Poland.

Residence permits by reason

With around 206 thousand permits, Poland is the member state with the highest number of permits issued for employment reasons, followed by the United Kingdom (117 thousand) and Italy (53 thousand). Likewise in Lithuania and Poland in some other countries permits issued for employment reasons represented the largest share of all permits issued: Czech Republic, Denmark, Cyprus and Slovakia (see Table 1).

The highest number of permits for family reasons (i.e. family reunification and formation) was issued in Italy and Spain with about 100 thousand each, followed by the United Kingdom (97 thousand) and France (92 thousand). Family reason was the main reason for issuing residence permits in more than half of the EU Member States (18 out of 28) and in all EFTA countries for which data are available: Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (see Table 1). In seven countries (Belgium, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Luxembourg, Austria and Slovenia) family reasons accounted for more than 50 % of all first permits issued.

As in the previous years, the United Kingdom is by far the most popular destination in the EU for the students from third countries. In 2014 about 177 thousand of education related permits were issued in this country, what represents nearly 37 % of all first permits issued for education reasons in the EU (see Table 1).

Table 1 also shows the number of first permits issued for other reasons, such as international protection, residence without the right to work (e.g. for pensioners), diplomatic duties, and people in the intermediate stages of a regularisation process. A cross-country comparison based on this miscellaneous category is hampered by the differences that exist in the national administrative and legislative systems. In Bulgaria this category of permits accounted for more than 45 % of total permits issued, while in countries like Slovenia and Lithuania, this share was considerably lower (below 5 %).

Residence permits by citizenship

The highest number of first residence permits in the EU was issued to the citizens of the Ukraine (303 thousand), followed by United States (199 thousand), Chinese (170 thousand), Indians (135 thousand), and Moroccans (96 thousand). These five citizenships account for about 40 % of all permits issued in the EU. Being

Table 2: Main groups of citizenship granted a first residence permit in the EU-28 and main EU Member States issuing the permit, in 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

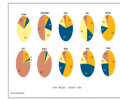


Figure 2: Main groups of citizenship granted a first residence permit in the EU-28, distribution by reason, 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Table 3: Main citizenships of persons granted first residence permits, in 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

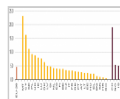


Figure 3: Total first residence permits issued per 1000 inhabitants, in 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst,demo_r_gir)

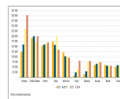


Figure 4: Last four years evolution of main groups of citizenship granted a first residence permit in the EU-28 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

the largest citizenship category of non-EU immigrants receiving residence permits in the EU in 2014, most of Ukrainians received an employment related permit and the principal destination country was Poland (81 % from all Ukrainians receiving permits in 2014) with about 30 % more than in 2013.

Various factors or even combinations of such factors influence the choice of the destination EU Member State for the third-country citizens. Among these factors are the language ties (e.g. the United States citizens in the United Kingdom), geographical proximity of the country of destination (Ukrainians in Poland), historical links (e.g. Algerians in France) and established migrant networks (e.g. Turkish citizens in Germany) (Table 3).

The distribution of citizenships granted first permit may also vary depending on the reason considered. Moroccans represent the largest group granted permit for family reasons (64 thousand), followed by Indians (46 thousand) and Chinese (36 thousand). On the other hand Chinese (101 thousand), the United States citizens (37 thousand) and Brazil (27 thousand) are the largest groups receiving a permit for education purposes, while Ukrainians (206 thousand), Indians (55 thousand) and the United States citizens (41 thousand) are the top citizenships granted employment related permit (Table 4).

For some citizenships the reasons for immigration to the EU are mixed. For certain citizenships specific migration patterns meaning reasons for immigration can be observed. While family related reasons are predominant among Moroccans, Russians and Turks granted residence permit in the EU, more than two thirds of Syrians and Belorussians are issued with other reasons related permit. For Ukraine and India the main reason is employment while education reason is predominant for China and Brasil. (Figure 4).

The following of such immigration patterns may in addition depend on the destination EU Member State. For example, while most of the Chinese granted permission to reside in the United Kingdom (about 64 thousand) were granted education related permit, large majority of those authorized to stay in Italy received permits for family reasons (about 7 thousand). Similarly, while most of Turks permitted to stay in Germany were issued with family related permit, majority of Turks arriving to the United Kingdom arrived for education reasons.

Data sources and availability

The statistics used for this publication are provided to Eurostat by the national responsible authorities, mainly Ministries of Interior or Immigration Agencies of the EU Member States and EFTA countries. Data are based entirely on relevant administrative sources. These data are supplied by Member States as part of the annual Residence Permits Data Collection conducted by Eurostat according to the provisions of Article 6 of Regulation 862/2007 on statistics on migration and international protection.

The evolution of residence permits statistics is linked to European immigration policy as well as the national immigration policy. It is also influenced by different factors: characteristics of immigrants, legal framework and characteristics of countries involved in the immigration process.

The main dimensions for residence permits data collection are: the reporting country, the citizenship of the permit holder, the reason for the permit being issued and the length of validity of the permits issued. Since 2010 reference year, on voluntary basis, permit data are also collected with age and sex breakdown. The dimensions may differ from one to other dataset and can be consulted in the "Database" sub-section of this article.

Table 4: Main groups of citizenship granted a first residence permit in the EU-28 and main EU Member States issuing the permit, by reason, in 2014 - Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Certain methodological aspects are not fully harmonized between the reporting countries due to the different legal or IT systems. Therefore, the data availability may differ between countries and the interpretation of the figures resulted should be done with the help of metadata file related to Residence Permits Statistics.

Due to the recent implementation of the Residence Permits Data Collection, some methodological and administrative differences exist between the Member States. Namely, data for France relate to permits which were issued after at least 12 months since the expiry of the previous permit. No data are available for Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The UK has not established residence permits register. Statistics are provided by the Home Office and mainly based on passengers given leave to enter the UK in selected categories. For further details see: Home Office.

Resident permits statistics are available as both, flows and stocks statistics:

1. Datasets related to residence permits granted during the reference year. Data published on this category contains information about first residence permits issued during the reference year and information about change of resident status of immigrants during the reference year;
2. Datasets related to permits valid at the end of the reference year (stock of permits). Data published on this category contains information about number of valid permissions to stay at the end of reference year and long-term legal resident status at the end of the reference year.

A subset of resident permits data - statistics on EU Blue Cards, are now collected since 2012 on the basis of the Article 20 of Directive 50/2009 - Conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment.

Context

Migration policies within the EU are built upon solidarity and responsibility, considering valuable contribution of immigrants to the EU's economic development and performance. Within the European Commission, the Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs is responsible for immigration policy. The EU measures on legal immigration cover the conditions of entry and residence for certain categories of immigrants, such as highly qualified workers subject to the 'EU Blue Card Directive', students and researchers. Family reunification and long-term residents are also provided for^[2].

Statistics on residence permits is collected on the basis of the Article 6 of the Migration Statistics Regulation:

- Regulation 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection;

The list of categories of reasons for issuing residence permit is provided by the Commission Regulation:

- Commission Regulation (EU) No 216/2010 on Community statistics on migration and international protection as regards the definitions of categories of reasons for the residence permits

All relevant legal acts and information regarding the EU immigration policy can be accessed on DG HOME website.

See also

- Asylum statistics

- Dublin statistics on countries responsible for asylum application
- Statistics on enforcement of immigration legislation
- Migration and migrant population statistics
- Migrant integration statistics

Further Eurostat information

Publications

- More than 2.3 million first residence permits issued in the EU28 in 2013 - News release
- Residence permits issued to non-EU citizens in 2009 - Statistics in Focus

Database

- Population, see:

International Migration and Asylum (migr)
 Residence permits (migr_res)
 Residence permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship (migr_resval)

First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resfirst)
 First permits issued for family reasons by reason, length of validity and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resfam)
 First permits issued for education reasons by reason, length of validity and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resedu)
 First permits issued for remunerated activities by reason, length of validity and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resocc)
 First permits issued for other reasons by reason, length of validity and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resoth)
 All valid permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship on 31 December of each year (migr_resvalid)
 Long-term residents by citizenship on 31. December of each year - Annual data (migr_reslong)
 Single Permits issued by type of decision, length of validity and citizenship (migr_ressing)
 Long-term residents among all non-EU citizens holding residence permits by citizenship on 31 December (%) (migr_resshare)

Residence permits by reason, age, sex and citizenship (migr_resage)
 First permits by reason, age, sex and citizenship - Annual data (migr_resfas)
 All valid permits by age, sex and citizenship on 31 December of each year (migr_resvas)
 Long-term residents by age, sex and citizenship on 31 December of each year (migr_reslas)

EU Blue cards (migr_resbcard)
 EU Blue Cards by type of decision, occupation and citizenship (migr_resbc1)
 Admitted family members of EU Blue Cards holders by type of decision and citizenship (migr_resbc2)
 EU Blue Cards holders and family members by Member State of previous residence (migr_resbc3)


Dedicated section

- Population

Methodology / Metadata

- Residence permits statistics (ESMS metadata file — migr_res_esms)

Source data for tables and figures (MS Excel)

-  Residence permits statistics: tables and figures

External links

- European Commission - DG Migration and Home Affairs - Immigration
- EU Immigration Portal (EUIP)
- European Migration Network (EMN)
- European Web Site on Integration
- OECD - Migration
- International Migration Outlook 2015 (also in French)

Notes

1. ↑ Please note that the statistics for the United Kingdom use different data sources to those used in other Member States. For that reason, statistics for the UK presented in this article may not be fully comparable with other statistics presented here. Statistics for the United Kingdom are not based on records of residence permits issued (as the United Kingdom does not operate a system of residence permits), but instead relate to the numbers of arriving non-EU citizens permitted to enter the country under selected immigration categories. According to the United Kingdom authorities, data are estimated from a combination of information due to be published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom' and unpublished management information. The 'Other reasons' category includes: diplomat, consular officer treated as exempt from control; retired persons of independent means; all other passengers given limited leave to enter who are not included in any other category; non-asylum discretionary permissions.
2. ↑ DG HOME - Towards a common European Union migration policy

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