



COUNTRY FACTSHEET: Norway 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 Norway during 2015, including latest statistics.

2. Common European Asylum System

In December 2015 a **Minister of Immigration and Integration** was appointed for the first time. The immigration field was previously placed under the Minister of Justice and Public Security, while the integration field was placed under the Minister of Children and Equality. The new Minister of Immigration and Integration is part of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, which **now has two ministers**.

To ensure better political control of the influx of asylum applicants, an **amendment to the Immigration Act** entered into force on 20 November 2015, authorizing the Ministry of Justice and Public Security to instruct the Immigration Appeals Board. Under the previous legislation, the Ministry could not instruct the Immigration Appeals Board in matters concerning the interpretation of the law or the exercise of discretionary judgment. The same amendments to **the Act allows** the Norwegian authorities **to reject processing an asylum application in substance when the seeker has stayed in a safe third country**. The abovementioned legislative amendments will initially be applicable until 31st December 2017.

On 25 November 2015, the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security instructed the asylum adjudicating bodies, the Directorate of Immigration and the Immigration Appeals Board, to reject applications from asylum seekers arriving in Norway after having resided in the Russian Federation, without assessments on the substance of the applications. The intention was that asylum seekers who do not get an assessment on the substance of their cases might be returned to the Russian Federation rapidly.

On 3 July 2015 the Ministry of Justice and Public Security issued a **circular modifying the criteria for selecting refugees** to be offered resettlement in Norway. The needs for international protection and a durable solution remain the basic criteria, and women and child families are given priority as well as refugees with relevant education and professional experience. More specifically, the integration perspective will be taken into consideration when the protection and solution needs are similar.

The Norwegian **resettlement programme** is implemented in co-operation with UNHCR and **in 2015 a total of 2,620 places were available**. The largest refugee groups offered resettlement in 2015 were Syrian (1,624), Afghan (321) and Congolese (153). At the same time on 20 July 2015, **Norway pledged to resettle 3,500 refugees over two years** as part of the EU joint resettlement effort.

In December 2015 the Parliament endorsed a proposal submitted by the Government, for Norway to voluntarily participate in the **EU provisional relocation mechanism** and provided funding for the relocation of 750 asylum seekers in 2016. A similar offer is foreseen for 2017.

In 2015 Norway contributed **six experts to the Asylum Support Teams** managed by EASO, including experts to hotspots in Italy and Greece. The experts were sent to Italy (3), Cyprus (1), Greece (1) and UK (1).

By the end of 2015 Norway made a **funding contribution to the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for North Africa** and pledged a similar contribution to the RDPP for the Horn of Africa. The latter contribution will be in the form of an earmarked contribution to the EU Trust Fund (for the implementation of the Valletta Plan of Action).

3. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

The Norwegian Government decided in 2015 to **resume activities to establish care centres** for unaccompanied minors in their countries of origin. The centres must be operated in accordance with appropriate standards for care. The aim is to facilitate return of unaccompanied minors without a need for international protection, and through this, to reduce the number of unaccompanied minors who embark on a high-risk journey to Europe.

On 15 June 2015 **amendments to the Norwegian Immigration Regulations** entered into force. The changes apply to children who were deported between 1 July 2014 and 18 March 2015, and at the time of deportation had stayed in Norway for four years or more. The families covered by these changes were given the opportunity to request a reversal of previous decisions, and get their case assessed according to the new provision on residence permit on the basis of children's connection to Norway, which entered into force on 8 December 2014.

4. European Policy on Legal migration and Integration

4.1. PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

Norway experienced a mixed migratory influx over its external Schengen border with the Russian Federation in autumn 2015 and as a result **launched an information campaign in the Russian media** and social media on the rules regulating legal entry to Norway. The campaign explained that irregular migrants risked being returned to the Russian Federation or their countries of origin. By November 2015 the influx came to an end.

In the same period, Norway established **new reception centres for asylum seekers** in municipalities that did not have such centres before. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration informed the public about these new measures using local and national media channels and created web pages containing extensive information about immigration to Norway which are available to the public.

4.2. ECONOMIC MIGRATION

As of 15 January 2015, **Norway introduced several changes** that allow skilled workers who do not need a visa to enter Norway to receive a permit to remain in the country as job-seekers for 6 months. At the same time workers on permanent off-shore installations can be allowed to work on the mainland for the same employer, and the duration of permits for self-employed contractors was extended from 4 to 6 years.

Due to an increase in **illegal workplace practices**, in January 2015, Norway launched a **national strategy to combat such practices**. Some of the measures included better cooperation between public authorities and labour market organisations, **stricter rules** for businesses providing services and goods to public entities and more effective information provided to workers and customers (including their rights) because foreign workers are entitled to receive wages and working conditions equivalent to those of Norwegian workers. These measures also aimed at **preventing competition based on unacceptable working conditions** in the Norwegian labour market.

4.3. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In December 2015 the Ministry of Justice and Public Security proposed **changes to the Immigration Act** concerning family reunification. Among the measures proposed was refusal of family reunification if such is possible in another state with which the family's overall connection is stronger. Another proposal was that both parties must be at least 24 years old for family establishment cases. The purpose was to combat forced marriage. The Ministry also proposed the introduction of a subsistence requirement and a four year of work or study requirement before family reunification can be granted to refugees. These changes were presented before Parliament in April 2016. (The subsistence requirement for refugees and the work/study requirement were rejected).

No further policy developments were reported under this policy area in 2015.

4.4. INTEGRATION

As a result of a series of targeted pilot projects from 2014 implementing programmes for **free core time in kindergarten**, starting with August 2015, all four and five-years old children, living in families with low income, have a right to receive free core time in kindergarten in Norway.

The Norwegian central government and the municipality of Oslo have been cooperating to **improve the living conditions** in several areas of Oslo in order to promote local development in areas with difficult living conditions. The central government and local authorities have recently agreed to continue this cooperation for ten more years in the period 2017-2027. Similar initiatives were reported in the cities of Bergen and Trondheim.

The level of **home ownership in the Norwegian population is approximately 77%** and among immigrants the level is at about 60%, both being **higher than in most European countries**. There are substantial differences between immigrant groups, depending on country of origin and the average length of residence in Norway.

In 2015, Norway reported that the national programmes concerning immigrant health (2013-2017) and social housing (2014-2020) were ongoing as well as the implementation of the action plan '**We need the competence of immigrants**' (2013-2016) aiming to make better use of the competence of immigrants in the labour market.

The Norwegian Government has decided in 2015 to draft a **new Interpretation Act** which will clarify the obligations of the public sector when using qualified interpreters and ensure that there are sufficient interpreters to meet requirements.

In December 2015, the Prime Minister of Norway launched a **government declaration against hate speech and a strategy against hate speech** which involves several ministries. The strategy is expected to be launched in 2016 and an action plan against anti-Semitism will be developed. As part of the Norwegian Action Plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism launched in June 2014, the government has taken action to establish a **Norwegian Research Centre on right-wing extremism and related issues**, such as how to prevent hate crime.

Currently, Norway has four equality and anti-discrimination acts and the Government has proposed to replace these acts with **one comprehensive Equality and Non-Discrimination Act**, resulting in a less fragmented legal system. The new bill is expected to be submitted to Parliament in 2016.

4.5. MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY¹

In 2015, the Visa Information System (**VIS**) has been **fully rolled out by Norway** and all visas are biometric and registered in VIS.

On 25 November 2015, the Norwegian Government decided to **temporary reintroduce border controls** at the Norwegian internal Schengen borders. This measure was prolonged so far until November 2016. The decision was taken in order to tackle the serious threat to the internal security of Norway which came as a result of the unpredictable migratory pressure and associated challenges. Since the re-introduction of internal Schengen border controls, there has been a significant decrease in the number of asylum seekers to Norway.

The Norwegian authorities have taken additional measures due to the **unexpected influx of asylum seekers in autumn 2015**, namely: establishing new reception facilities for asylum seekers, a simplified registration procedure during peak times and strengthened the processing capacity of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

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

Due to these measures, Norwegian authorities are better prepared to manage possible new extraordinary high numbers of asylum seekers in the future.

4.6. EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF MIGRATION POLICY

No developments were reported under this policy area in 2015.

5. Irregular Migration and Return

5.1. THE FIGHT AGAINST FACILITATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In 2015, **police services in Norway were reinforced** and focus has been strengthened on false travel documents. During the high influx in late autumn 2015, Norway temporarily reinforced its border with Russia by adding more border control staff. In support of these activities Norway is planning to implement better information exchange systems between the police and immigration authorities.

In recent years the number of permits rejected on the basis of a marriage of convenience has continued to drop from 89 cases in 2014 to 60 cases in 2015. Most rejections concern applicants from Somalia, Morocco, Turkey and Pakistan.

In October 2015 and June 2015 Norway concluded its second rounds of negotiations that were started in 2014 on a readmission agreement with **Pakistan and Turkey** respectively. The agreements with Turkey was signed in the late spring of 2016.

In 2015, the reintegration programmes for returnees to Afghanistan, Iraq and Ethiopia continued.

6. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

No developments were reported under this policy area in 2015.

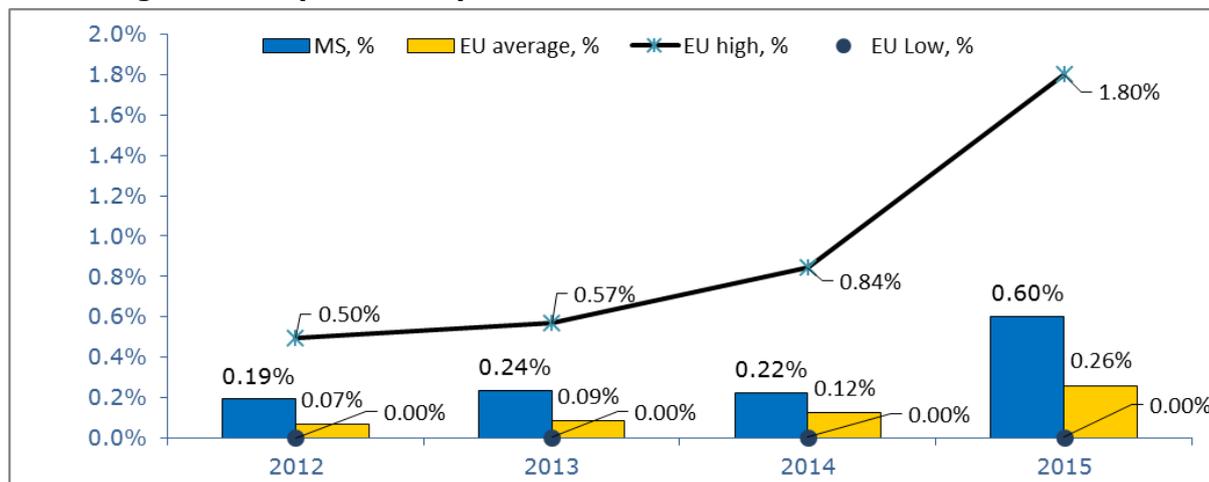
STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Norway on aspects of migration and asylum (2012-2015), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available at Eurostat or not applicable, this is indicated in the Annex as "N/A".

Statistical Annex: Immigration and Asylum in Norway (2012-2015)

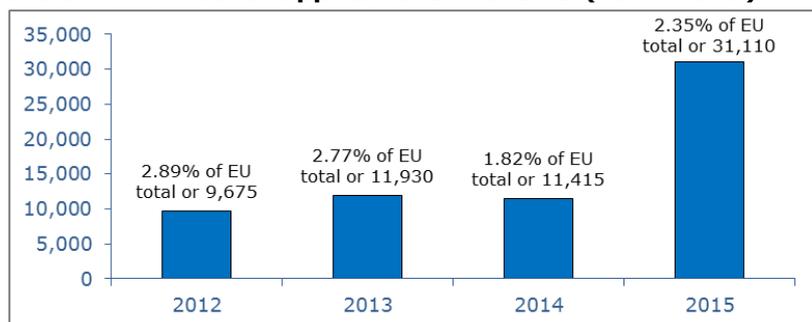
1. COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Norway, 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)



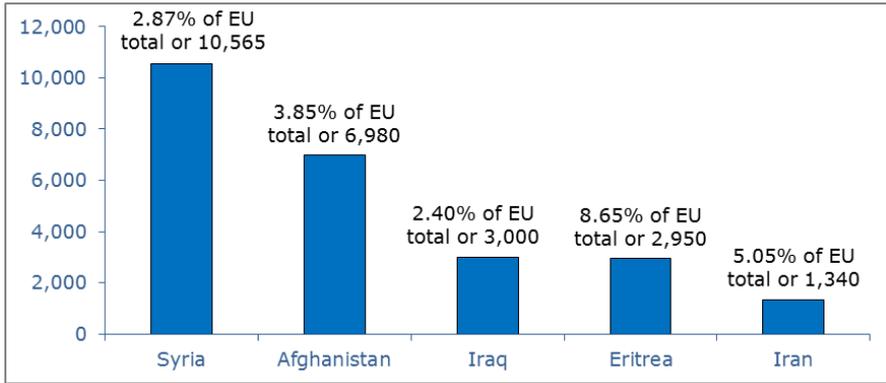
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza), data extracted 04/07/2016

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
Somalia	2,180	23%	Eritrea	3,250	27%	Eritrea	2,880	25%	Syria	10,565	34%
Eritrea	1,185	12%	Somalia	1,695	14%	Syria	2,000	18%	Afghanistan	6,980	22%
Afghanistan	985	10%	Syria	865	7%	Somalia	835	7%	Iraq	3,000	10%
Sudan	470	5%	Afghanistan	725	6%	Sudan	805	7%	Eritrea	2,950	9%
Iran	440	5%	Sudan	600	5%	Stateless	800	7%	Iran	1,340	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

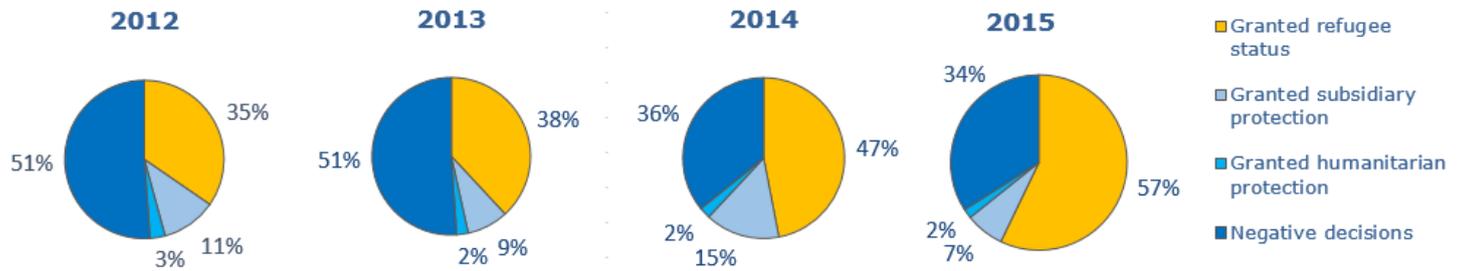
Note: the figure reads as: Norway received 10,565 asylum applications from Syrians or 2.87% of all asylum applications lodged by Syrians in EU in 2015

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	10,605	5,180	3,675	1,185	325	5,425
2013	11,785	5,770	4,490	995	280	6,015
2014	7,640	4,905	3,590	1,140	175	2,735
2015	9,475	6,250	5,410	675	165	3,225

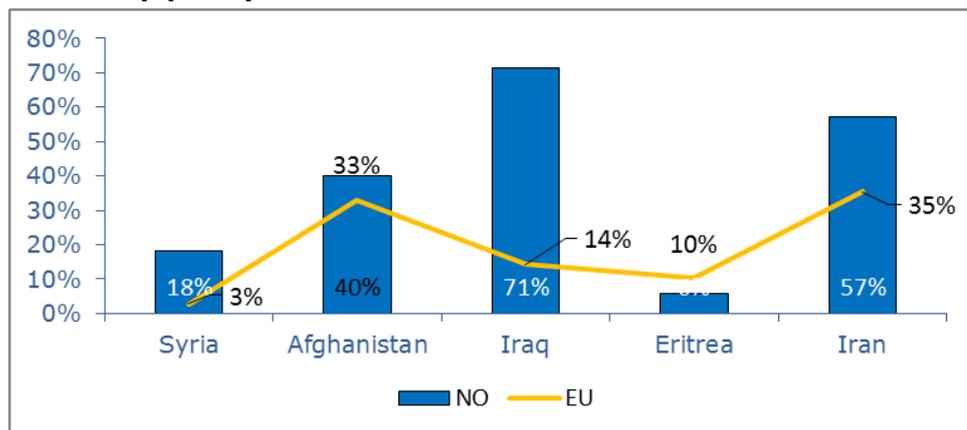
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 04/07/2016

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



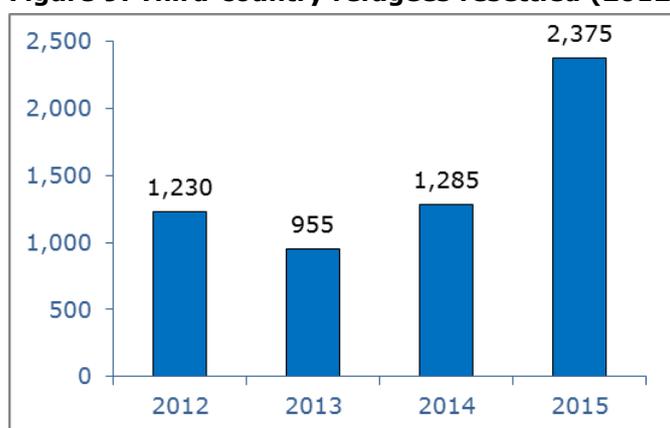
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta), data extracted 04/07/2016

Figure 8: Rejection rates for the top five nationalities of applicants for asylum at the first instance, in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2015)



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

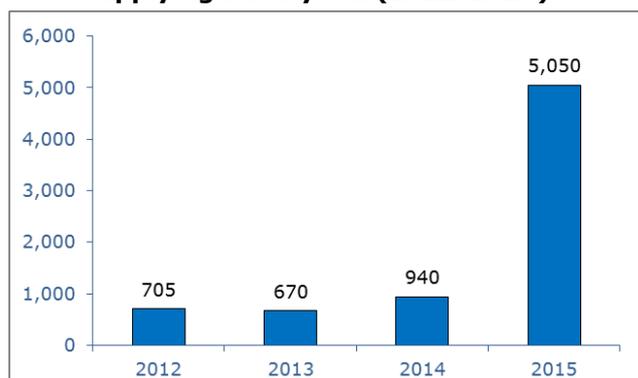
Figure 9: Third-country refugees resettled (2012-2015)



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

2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

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



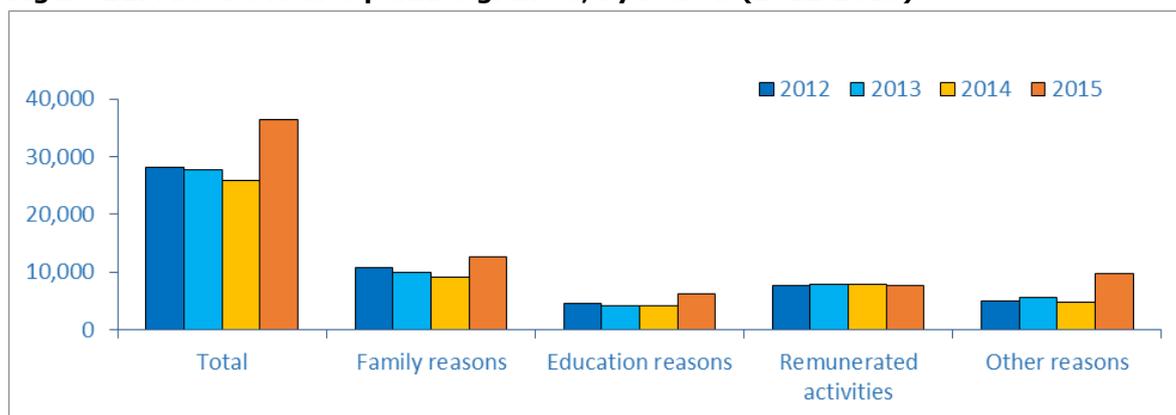
Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) [migr_asyunaa], data extracted 04/07/2016; EMN NCPs

Table 3: Claimed Unaccompanied minors (2012-2015)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Claimed Unaccompanied minors (total)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Claimed Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	705	670	940	5,050

3. EUROPEAN POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

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



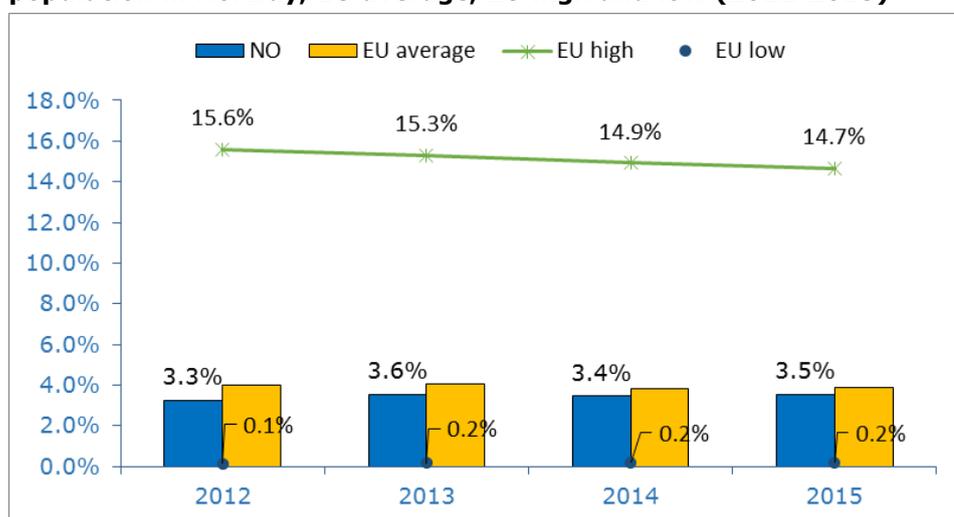
Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst), data extracted 04/07/2016

Table 4: First residence permits granted: Top five third-country nationalities (2012-2014)

2012		2013		2014		2015	
Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number
Philippines	2,966	Philippines	2,689	Philippines	2,417	Eritrea	3,496
Somalia	2,730	Eritrea	2,685	India	2,382	Philippines	2,488
India	2,087	Somalia	2,317	Eritrea	2,312	India	2,266
Eritrea	1,652	India	2,097	Somalia	1,676	Syria	2,165
United States	1,411	United States	1,387	Syria	1,363	Somalia	1,756

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 Norway, 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	175	235	250	465
Found to be illegally present	2,760	3,180	3,720	5,455

Third country nationals:	2012	2013	2014	2015
Ordered to leave	17,120	14,245	15,355	14,990
Returned following an order to leave	4,255	5,050	6,350	6,805

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

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2012-2015)

	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2012	4,905	NA	1,750
2013	5,935	NA	1,890
2014	2,547	NA	1,622
2015	3,180	NA	1,159

Source: EMN NCPs

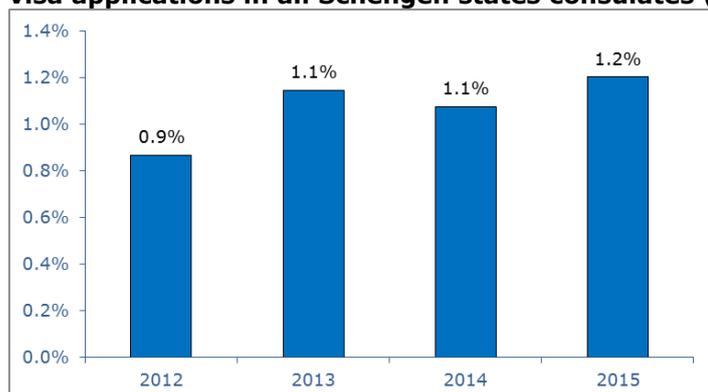
5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Table 7: Number of Schengen visas applications (2012-2015)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	130,933	197,826	179,550	185,557

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

Figure 13: Uniform visa applications received in Norway as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2012-2015)



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 Norway was lodged

2012		2013		2014		2015	
Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number
Russia	47,651	Russia	60,766	China	50,231	China	58,583
China	20,733	China	57,195	Russia	46,894	Turkey	57,938
Philippines	7,508	Philippines	14,147	Philippines	15,685	Russia	51,877
Thailand	6,979	Thailand	8,707	Thailand	9,721	India	44,717
Ukraine	6,623	India	8,201	India	8,994	Indonesia	31,432

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	N/A
Legal Migration and Integration	N/A
Return	N/A

Areas	AMIF 2014-2020
Technical Assistance	N/A
Special cases (resettlement/transfer)	N/A
TOTAL	N/A

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

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

Areas	ISF 2014-2020
ISF Borders	14,317,819
ISF SA Frontex	NA
ISF SA Consular cooperation	NA
ISF Borders Emergency Assistance	NA
ISF Police	NA
TOTAL	14,317,819

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs

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

SOLID FUNDS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
European Refugee Fund (ERF)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
European Return Fund (RF)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
European Fund for the Integration of TCN (EIF)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
External Borders Fund (EBF)	NA	NA	1,611,049 (1.0%)	1,572,108 (0.8%)	2,102,826 (0.9%)	2,838,543 (0.9%)	3,354,773 (0.8%)	11,479,299 (0.7)

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.	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	NA	NA	296	2.96
Construction	NA	NA	129	0.50
Accommodation and food service activities	NA	NA	1,371	4.66

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
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	NA	NA	NA	3,157
Construction	NA	NA	NA	1,710
Accommodation and food service activities	NA	NA	NA	6,951

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs