

DROI: Committee on Human Rights, Freedom and Democracy

Fact Sheet

The question of how the EU should handle young refugees and immigrants:

In the wake of recent crises, one of the pressing challenges faced by the European Union (EU) is how to effectively manage young refugees and immigrants. To protect the welfare and proper integration of such vulnerable individuals, this complex issue necessitates careful thought and practical solutions. How can the EU contribute significantly to finding a cooperative and tolerant remedy to this problem?

Brief description of the issue

Amidst the Russo-Ukrainian war, Europe faces an escalating refugee crisis with 8 million Ukrainian refugees. Mediterranean migrant arrivals doubled in early 2023. Young refugees, fleeing conflict, encounter issues like education barriers, healthcare access, social exclusion, and legal challenges. Our committee must create inclusive policies to protect and uphold the rights of these vulnerable individuals, fostering their well-being and human rights.

Key terms

1. **Refugee:** A person forced to flee their country because of persecution, hostilities or violence caused by characteristics such as religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.
2. **Immigrant:** A non-resident (domestic or foreign) who enters a state with the intent to stay there longer than one year.
3. **Asylum seeker:** A person who has fled their country due to any kind of danger, that seeks protection but has not yet been officially recognised as a refugee (awaiting asylum application).
4. **Non-refoulement:** An international law that forbids returning, deporting, or expelling someone to a nation where their safety or freedom would be in jeopardy.

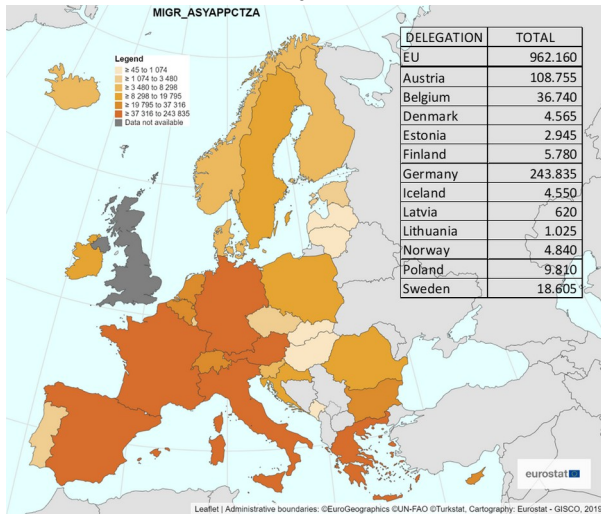
Main stakeholders and actors

1. **European Union:** The EU plays a crucial role by establishing legal frameworks, formulating policies, offering financial support, and encouraging cooperation among the member states. The European Council also plays an important role by providing actions and mandates for negotiations with non-EU countries, allowing it to respond forcefully to migration pressures.
2. **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** UNHCR provides protection and assistance to nearly 59 million refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. Most of their staff are stationed in Asia and Africa, where both the largest refugee populations and displacement crises occur.
3. **The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC):** Accountable for the EU's external action, which includes trade, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, defence and security, and foreign policy.

- 4. **EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA):** The European Union Asylum Agency provides operational and technical support, as well as training to national authorities of EU countries. This helps them to implement EU legislation on asylum and better align asylum procedures and reception conditions.

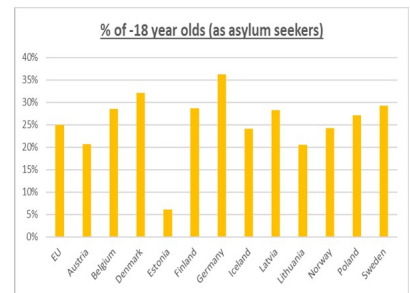
Statistics (2022) applied to the attending delegations of MEP BSR 2023

- Amount of Asylum Applications (per delegation)

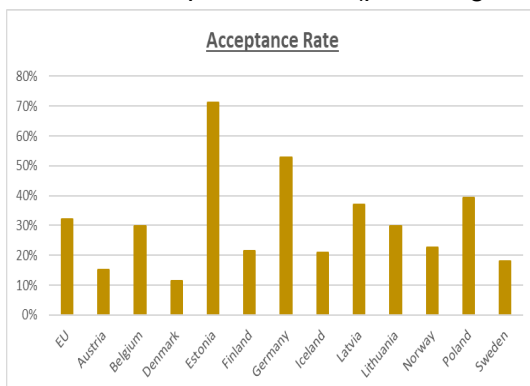


- Specifically for -18 year olds (youth)

DELEGATION	-18 year olds	% of -18 year olds
EU	239.535	25%
Austria	22.530	21%
Belgium	10.480	29%
Denmark	1.465	32%
Estonia	180	6%
Finland	1.655	29%
Germany	88.420	36%
Iceland	1.095	24%
Latvia	175	28%
Lithuania	210	20%
Norway	1.170	24%
Poland	2.650	27%
Sweden	5.435	29%

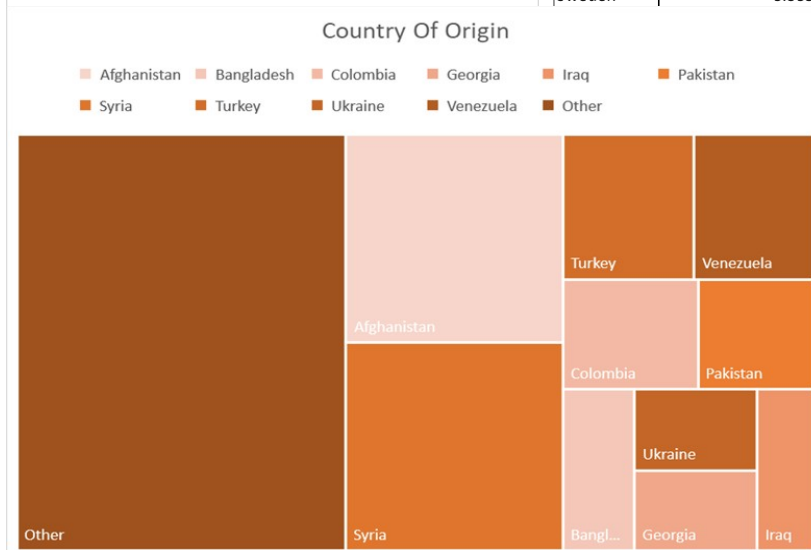


- Acceptance Rate (per delegation)



DELEGATION	Acceptance amount	Acceptance rate
EU	310.400	32%
Austria	16.560	15%
Belgium	10.920	30%
Denmark	515	11%
Estonia	2.100	71%
Finland	1.235	21%
Germany	128.460	53%
Iceland	950	21%
Latvia	230	37%
Lithuania	305	30%
Norway	1.100	23%
Poland	3.870	39%
Sweden	3.335	18%

- Country of origin (asylum seekers in EU+)



Note that there are even more refugees that seek shelter inside of EU+ borders.
E.g.: ca. 4 million Ukrainian refugees

Measures already taken

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS):

- To ensure the equal treatment of asylum seekers wherever they report, the Common European Asylum System lays down common standards and cooperation practices. There are five pieces of legislation and one agency that control the system:
 - **The Asylum Procedures Directive:** seeks to set out the requirements for correct, efficient and effective asylum decisions. Asylum seekers with special needs are given the assistance they need to support their applications, and the protection of unaccompanied minors and victims of torture is especially ensured.
 - **The Reception Conditions Directive:** This directive aims at providing reception conditions (clothes, food, housing, health care,...) for asylum applicants throughout the EU. Particular attention for vulnerable persons (such as unaccompanied minors).
 - **The Qualification Directive:** Brightens the grounds for international protection, strengthening asylum decisions. Additionally, it gives recipients of international protection access to rights and integration strategies.
 - **The Dublin Regulation:** Its purpose is to ensure quick access to asylum procedures and to identify who (Member State/EU/...) is responsible for processing the asylum application at what point. Note that this regulation (especially its latter part) has undergone a lot of evolution and still is.
 - **The EURODAC Regulation:** supports the determination of the responsible Member State under the Dublin Regulation and gives law enforcement agencies access to the EU asylum-seeker fingerprints database under strictly limited circumstances to prevent, detect or investigate the most serious crimes, such as murder and terrorism.
 - **EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA):** See “Main stakeholders and actors”

New Pact on Migration and Asylum:

- The New Pact on Migration and Asylum is a set of rules and policies to create an efficient and sustainable migration and asylum process for the EU and between member states. The pact also seeks a common approach to migration and asylum based on solidarity, responsibility and respect for human rights. A timeframe has been agreed for the set goals: conclusion of negotiations by February 2024.

Temporary Protection Directive (TPD):

- The Temporary Protection Directive was first triggered after the Russian invasion of Ukraine to provide rapid and effective help to people fleeing war. First applied because it was decided by the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, that there would be a mass influx, especially one that risked the normal asylum system being unable to cope.
The Temporary Protection Directive defines the decision-making procedure required to initiate, extend or terminate temporary protection. It also lists the rights of beneficiaries of temporary protection: residence permit, employment,... The TPD also provides guidelines for Member states whose purpose is to help the EU Member States in implementing the Directive and the Council implementing Decision.

EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027):

- The main actions of this plan include:

- Inclusive education and training with easier qualification recognition and ongoing language learning, supported by EU funds.
- Improving employment opportunities and skills recognition, particularly for migrant communities and women, through collaboration with stakeholders, promoting labour market integration and supporting entrepreneurship.
- Promoting access to health services, including mental healthcare, for people with a migrant background, informed rights awareness, and addressing specific challenges faced by women, especially during and after pregnancy.
- Access to adequate and affordable housing is funded through various EU funds, such as ERDF, ESF+, AMF, and Invest EU, as well as funding platforms for the exchange of experiences at local and regional level on tackling housing market discrimination and segregation.

EU-Turkey deal:

- It refers to the 'Statement of cooperation' between EU member states and the Turkish government, which was signed in March 2016. It agreed on three key points: Turkey would take any measures necessary to stop people travelling irregularly from Turkey to the Greek islands; anyone who arrived on the Greek islands irregularly from Turkey could be returned there; for every Syrian returned from the islands, EU Member States would accept one Syrian refugee who had waited inside Turkey.
- The results of the EU-Turkey declaration vary. Conditions for those reaching the EU are miserable, although fewer are travelling to Greece. Only 2,140 returned from Greece, insignificant returns to Turkey. Turkish unfitness for return recognised by Greek courts. COVID-19 worsened the situation; Turkey stopped returning Greek refugees in March 2020. No significant returns between Greece-Turkey, but 32,472 Syrian refugees Turkey-EU.

The EMPACT:

- Migrants and refugees are trying to reach Europe in every way imaginable, often with life-threatening journeys. Smugglers have used increasingly dangerous methods to cross the Mediterranean or EU-borders. To tackle those threats, the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threat (EMPACT) fights against criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling.

The AMMR:

- The asylum and migration management regulation (AMMR) should replace the current Dublin regulation. The AMMR will streamline these rules and shorten time limits to make the asylum sector as efficient as possible. (Note that this isn't yet agreed upon. This is an agreement made by The Council.)

