

A total of 4,090 applications for international protection were received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2019 – an increase of 92 per cent over the preceding year.

## World Refugee Day: 20 June 2020

During 2019, 43 boat landings (including persons air lifted from sea) were recorded in Malta with 3,405 persons being brought to Maltese shores – an increase of 1,960 persons when compared to the previous year (Table 1). Almost 93 per cent of persons brought to shore were citizens of African countries while the remaining 7 per cent were citizens of Asian countries (Table 2). The highest number of persons on board were recorded during August with a total of 662 individuals, followed by arrivals in June and September, with 599 and 508 individuals respectively (Table 3).

A total of 4,090 applications were lodged with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2019 – an increase of 92 per cent over the previous year (Table 4). When analysing asylum applications in the context of the European Union, Malta ranked second after Cyprus when considering applicants per million population (Chart 3). Most of the applicants were citizens of African countries (80 per cent) with the largest proportion of the total applicants being Sudanese citizens (26 per cent). A further 11 per cent and 6 per cent were Syrian and Libyan citizens respectively. A large proportion of the applicants (71 per cent) were males aged between 18 and 34 (Table 6).

During 2019, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner processed a total of 1,040 applications: 39 per cent were granted a positive decision at first instance, while the remaining applications were rejected (Table 8). The majority of the applicants who were granted a form of protection status during the year under review were citizens of Asian countries (72 per cent), while a further 27 per cent were citizens of African countries. Of all the applicants granted a form of protection status during 2019, 70 per cent were of Syrian citizenship followed by 15 per cent who were of Libyan citizenship (Table 9).

An increase of 38 per cent was registered in the resident population of open centres and other institutional households when compared to the preceding year. Just over three quarters of these persons were residing in Hal Far. A further 213 persons were residing in other institutional households, excluding open centres (Table 11). Over 85 per cent were males (Table 12) whereas 33 per cent and 16 per cent were Sudanese and Eritrean respectively (Table 13).

During the year under review, 619 persons were relocated from Malta to another EU+ country, while a further 16 third-country nationals were resettled to countries outside the EU+ group of countries (Table 14). The majority of those persons relocated were shared between Germany and France with them hosting 42 per cent and 41 per cent of persons respectively (Table 15) ■

**Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2008-2019**

Year	Total number of boat landings <sup>1</sup>	Number of persons on board <sup>2</sup>
2008	84	2,775
2009	17	1,475
2010	2	47
2011	9	1,579
2012	27	1,890
2013	24	2,008
2014	5	569
2015	1	106
2016	-	24
2017	-	20
2018	16	1,445
2019	43	3,405

<sup>1</sup> Figures referring to number of boat landings may also include landings involving more than one boat.

<sup>2</sup> Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by sea, also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.

Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

**Table 2. Irregular immigrants arriving by sea<sup>1</sup> by country of citizenship: 2019**

Country of citizenship	Number of irregular immigrants	% total
<b>Africa</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>92.8</b>
Algeria	30	0.9
Cameroon	68	2.0
Chad	83	2.4
Cote d'Ivoire	163	4.8
Egypt	84	2.5
Eritrea	242	7.1
Gambia	24	0.7
Ghana	22	0.6
Guinea	109	3.2
Libya	81	2.4
Mali	149	4.4
Morocco	173	5.1
Nigeria	190	5.6
Senegal	65	1.9
Sierra Leone	21	0.6
Somalia	147	4.3
South Sudan	92	2.7
Sudan	1,317	38.7
Tunisia	36	1.1
Other African countries	64	1.9
<b>Asia</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>7.2</b>
Bangladesh	149	4.4
Pakistan	40	1.2
Syria	45	1.3
Other Asian countries	11	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,405</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by sea, also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.

Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

**Table 3. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants by month: 2019**

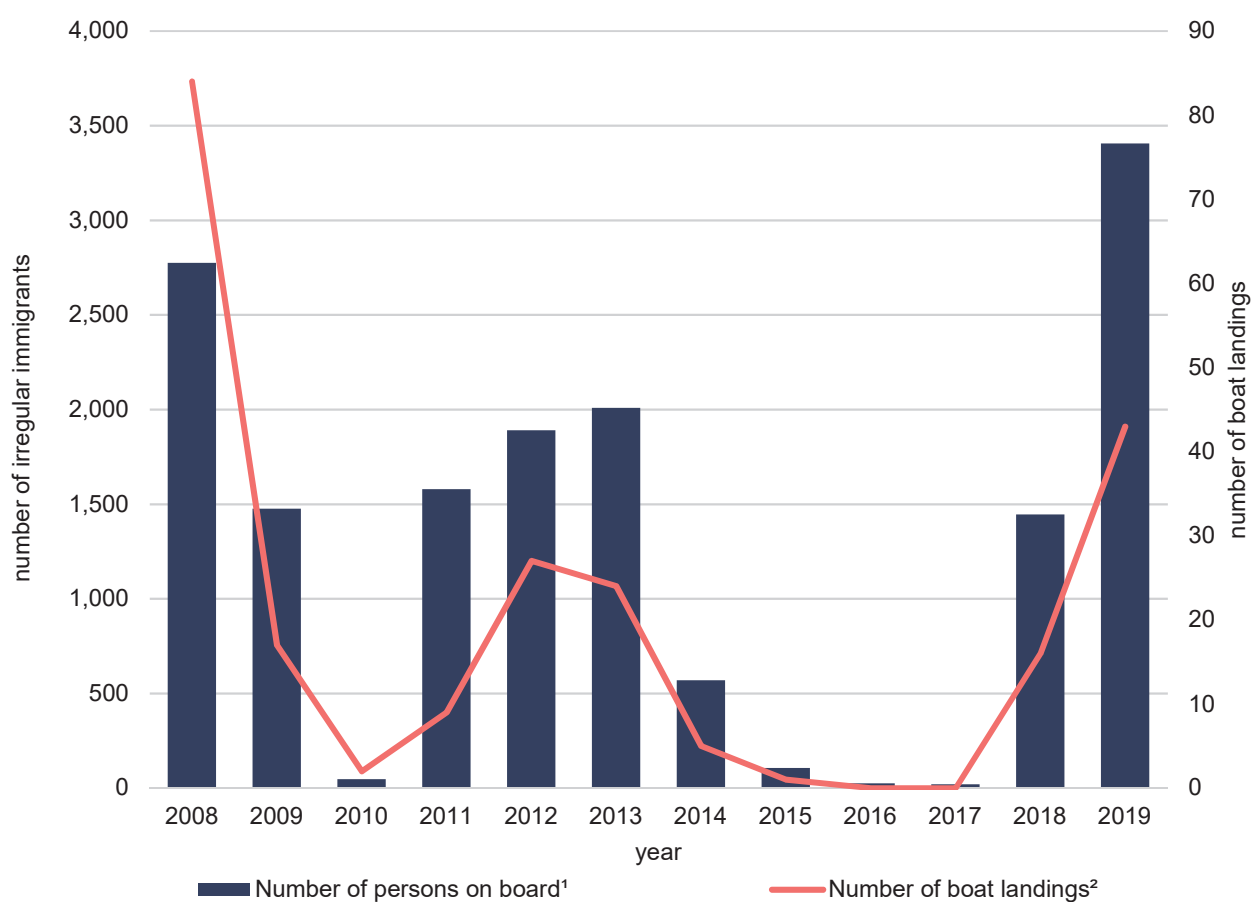
Month	Number of boat landings <sup>1</sup>	Number of persons on board <sup>2</sup>
January	1	49
February	-	-
March	2	188
April	1	64
May	3	376
June	7	599
July	5	307
August	7	662
September	6	508
October	6	362
November	4	193
December	1	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3,405</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures refer to number of boat landings that may include landings involving more than one boat.

<sup>2</sup> Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by sea also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.

Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

**Chart 1. Boats landing in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2008-2019**



<sup>1</sup> Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by sea also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.

<sup>2</sup> Figures refer to number of boat landings that may include landings involving more than one boat.

Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

**Table 4. Total applications for asylum and annual percentage change in applications filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2008-2019**

Year	Number of asylum applications	% annual change
2008	2,608	-
2009	2,387	-8.5
2010	176	-92.6
2011	1,891	974.4
2012	2,080	10.0
2013	2,246	8.0
2014	1,352	-39.8
2015	1,844	36.4
2016	1,928	4.6
2017	1,839	-4.6
2018	2,131	15.9
2019	4,090	91.9

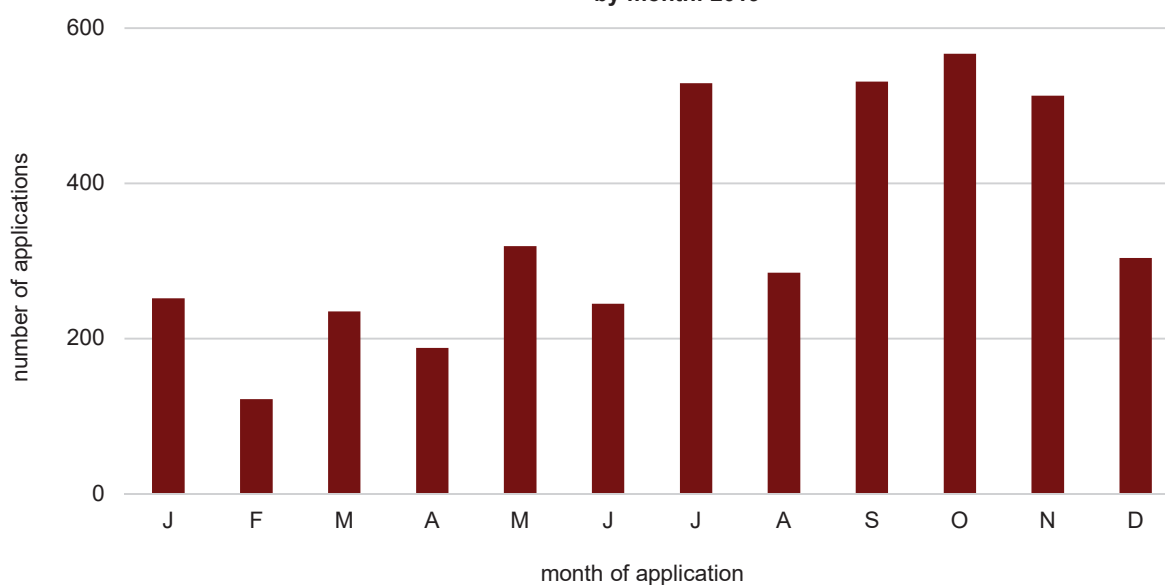
Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Table 5. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2019**

Month	Number of asylum applications	% total
January	252	6.2
February	122	3.0
March	235	5.7
April	188	4.6
May	319	7.8
June	245	6.0
July	529	12.9
August	285	7.0
September	531	13.0
October	567	13.9
November	513	12.5
December	304	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,090</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Chart 2. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2019**



Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 6. Total applications for asylum by country of citizenship, age and sex: 2019

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
<b>Europe</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>46</b>
Ukraine	22	19	41
Other European countries	5	-	5
<b>Africa</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>3,265</b>
Algeria	22	3	25
Cameroon	33	16	49
Chad	55	-	55
Egypt	68	5	73
Eritrea	182	36	218
Ethiopia	9	7	16
Gambia	211	3	214
Ghana	47	4	51
Guinea	73	18	91
Ivory Coast	110	54	164
Libya	175	86	261
Mali	121	16	137
Morocco	103	16	119
Nigeria	176	44	220
Senegal	93	-	93
Sierra Leone	17	5	22
Somalia	217	22	239
South Sudan	83	1	84
Sudan	1,046	8	1,054
Tunisia	20	2	22
Other African countries	52	6	58
<b>America</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>46</b>
Colombia	6	3	9
Venezuela	15	16	31
Other American countries	3	3	6
<b>Asia</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>730</b>
Bangladesh	147	1	148
Georgia	7	2	9
Iran	9	2	11
Iraq	7	2	9
Nepal	13	6	19
Pakistan	61	4	65
Palestine	7	1	8
Syria	289	159	448
Other Asian countries	10	3	13
<b>Stateless</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>4,090</b>
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	296	207	503
18-34	2,904	290	3,194
35 or more	317	76	393
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>4,090</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 7. Total asylum applicants by EU reporting countries: 2019

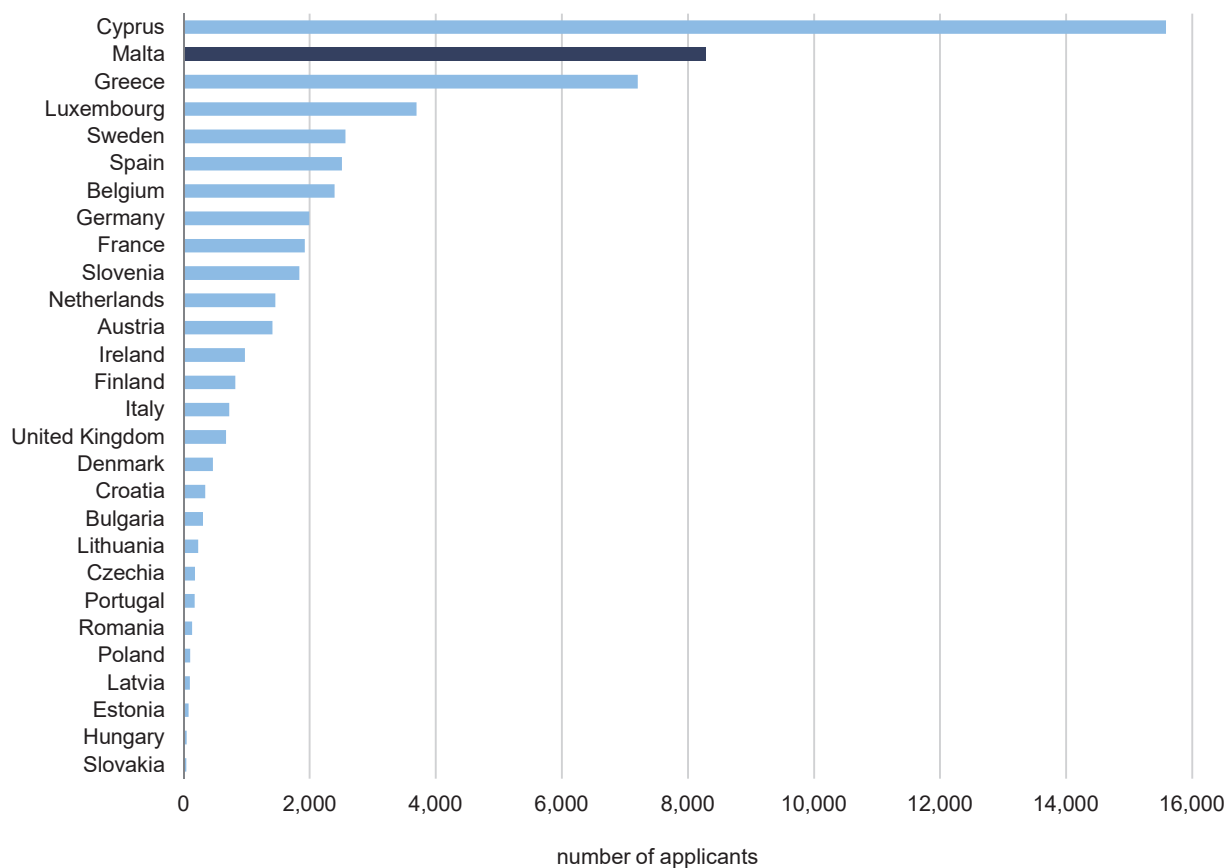
Reporting country	Total asylum applicants		
	Absolute <sup>1</sup> (rounded)	Per million population <sup>2</sup>	Share in EU total (%)
Austria	12,490	1,409.9	1.7
Belgium	27,460	2,397.1	3.8
Bulgaria	2,150	307.1	0.3
Croatia	1,400	343.5	0.2
Cyprus	13,650	15,584.0	1.9
Czechia	1,915	179.8	0.3
Denmark	2,700	465.0	0.4
Estonia	105	79.3	0.0
Finland	4,520	819.1	0.6
France	128,940	1,924.1	17.9
Germany	165,615	1,994.9	23.0
Greece	77,275	7,205.4	10.7
Hungary	500	51.2	0.1
Ireland	4,780	974.7	0.7
Italy	43,770	725.2	6.1
Latvia	195	101.6	0.0
Lithuania	645	230.8	0.1
Luxembourg	2,270	3,697.7	0.3
Malta	4,090	8,286.7	0.6
Netherlands	25,200	1,458.2	3.5
Poland	4,070	107.2	0.6
Portugal	1,820	177.1	0.3
Romania	2,590	133.4	0.4
Slovakia	230	42.2	0.0
Slovenia	3,820	1,835.7	0.5
Spain	117,800	2,509.7	16.3
Sweden	26,255	2,566.4	3.6
United Kingdom	44,835	672.7	6.2

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat [migr\_asyappctza] - extracted on 11.06.2020

<sup>2</sup> Source: Based on Population on 1 January 2019. Eurostat [demo\_pjan] - extracted on 01.06.2020

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Chart 3. Total asylum applicants by EU reporting countries per million population: 2019



Source: Eurostat

Table 8. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2008-2019

Year	Positive decisions				Rejections		Total
	Granted refugee status	Other forms of protection status	Total		Absolute	%	
			Absolute	%			
2008	19	1,397	1,416	52.5	1,281	47.5	2,697
2009	20	1,671	1,691	65.7	884	34.3	2,575
2010	43	179	222	63.8	126	36.2	348
2011	70	814	884	55.0	722	45.0	1,606
2012	35	1,398	1,433	90.1	157	9.9	1,590
2013	43	1,563	1,606	84.3	299	15.7	1,905
2014	191	1,068	1,259	72.6	476	27.4	1,735
2015	263	987	1,250	83.8	241	16.2	1,491
2016	167	1,025	1,192	83.1	243	16.9	1,435
2017	167	595	762	68.7	347	31.3	1,109
2018	150	496	646	43.1	854	56.9	1,500
2019	48	359	407	39.1	633	60.9	1,040

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Table 9. Positive decisions (Refugee status, subsidiary status or equivalent decisions) taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by citizenship, age at decision and sex: 2019**

Citizenship	Males	Females	Total
<b>Europe</b>	2	3	5
Ukraine	2	3	5
<b>Africa</b>	73	35	108
Eritrea	17	5	22
Libya	39	21	60
Somalia	5	4	9
Sudan	6	-	6
Other African countries	6	5	11
<b>Asia</b>	158	136	294
Iraq	3	2	5
Syria	150	134	284
Other Asian countries	5	-	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>407</b>

Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	95	101	196
18-34	105	56	161
35 or more	33	17	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>407</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Chart 4. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2008-2019**

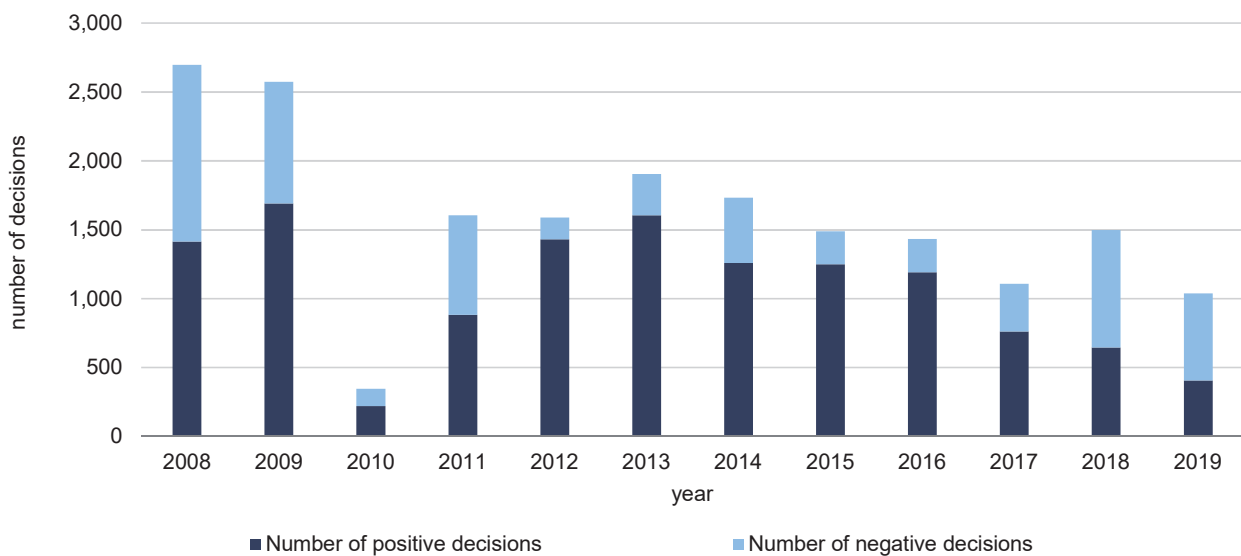




Table 10. First instance decisions on applications by EU reporting countries: 2019

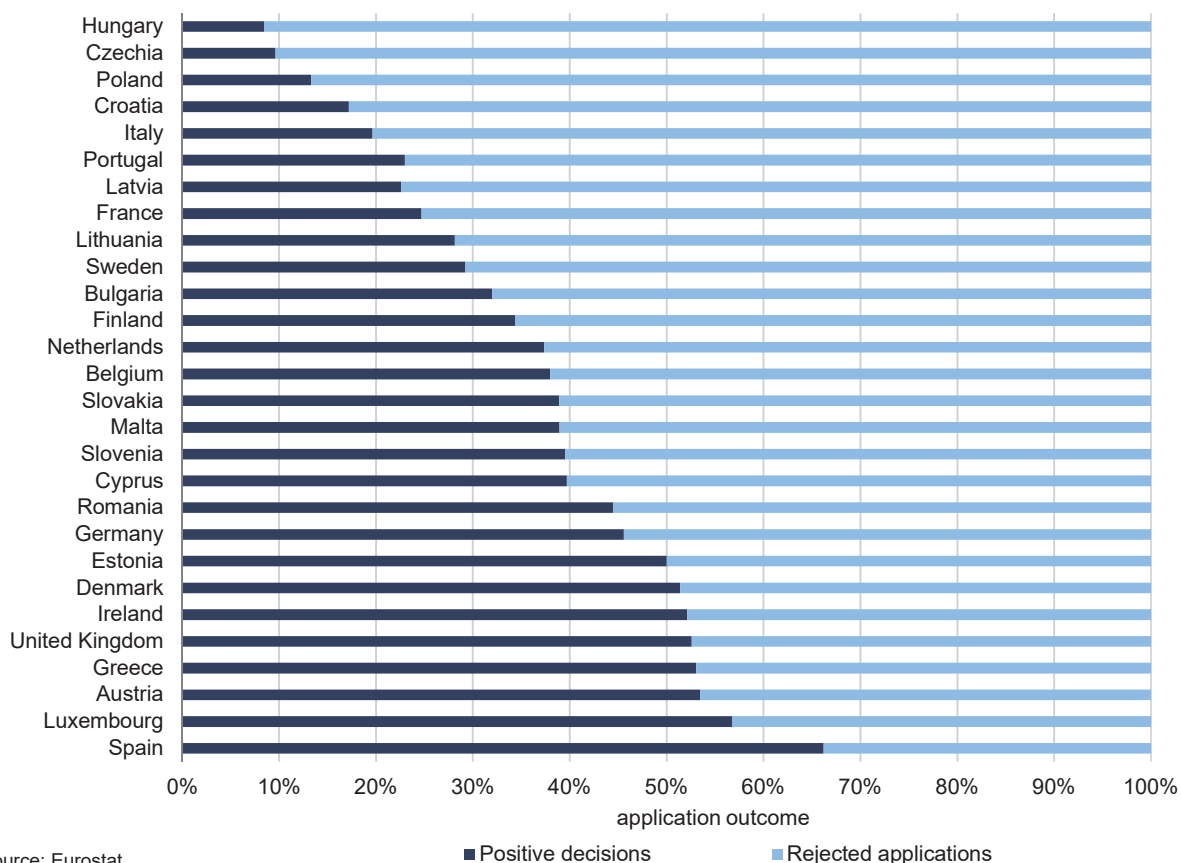
Reporting country	First instance decisions (rounded) <sup>1</sup>			Positive decisions per million population <sup>2</sup>
	Total	Positive decisions	Rejected applications	
Austria	13,890	7,425	6,465	838.2
Belgium	17,195	6,530	10,665	570.0
Bulgaria	1,250	400	850	57.1
Croatia	320	55	265	13.5
Cyprus	3,275	1,300	1,975	1,484.2
Czechia	1,400	135	1,265	12.7
Denmark	3,065	1,575	1,490	271.3
Estonia	90	45	45	34.0
Finland	4,850	1,665	3,185	301.7
France	113,890	28,140	85,750	419.9
Germany	154,255	70,320	83,935	847.0
Greece	32,705	17,350	15,355	1,617.8
Hungary	710	60	650	6.1
Ireland	1,870	975	895	198.8
Italy	93,495	18,375	75,120	304.4
Latvia	150	35	120	18.2
Lithuania	325	90	230	32.2
Luxembourg	1,180	670	510	1,091.4
Malta	1,040	405	635	820.6
Netherlands	12,975	4,845	8,130	280.3
Poland	1,995	265	1,730	7.0
Portugal	745	170	570	16.5
Romania	1,315	585	730	30.1
Slovakia	90	35	55	6.4
Slovenia	215	85	130	40.8
Spain	58,035	38,420	19,620	818.5
Sweden	20,755	6,065	14,690	592.9
United Kingdom	28,535	15,005	13,525	225.1

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat [migr\_asydcfsta] - extracted on 01.06.2020

<sup>2</sup> Source: Based on Population on 1 January 2019. Eurostat [demo\_pjan] - extracted on 01.06.2020

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

**Chart 5. First instance decisions percentage outcomes by EU reporting countries: 2019**



Source: Eurostat

**Table 11. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households by locality as at end of year: 2017-2019**

Locality	2017	2018	2019
<b>Open centres</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1,408</b>
Fgura	33	40	50
Floriana	69	73	-
Hal Far	517	847	1,238
Marsa <sup>1</sup>	25	-	120
<b>Other institutional households</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,621</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excludes persons residing in the Marsa Reception Centre.

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 12. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households as at end of year by sex: 2013-2019**

Year	Males	Females	Total
2013	1,156	343	1,499
2014	649	115	764
2015	442	162	604
2016	486	187	673
2017	657	246	903
2018	907	271	1,178
2019	1,389	232	1,621

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 13. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households as at end of year by country of citizenship: 2019**

<b>Country of citizenship</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>21</b>
Turkey	20
Other European countries	1
<b>Africa</b>	<b>1,482</b>
Cameroon	9
Chad	43
Egypt	10
Eritrea	251
Ethiopia	86
Gambia	66
Ghana	7
Guinea	39
Ivory Coast	59
Libya	49
Mali	40
Morocco	6
Niger	8
Nigeria	74
Senegal	36
Sierra Leone	6
Somalia	90
South Sudan	32
Sudan	538
Tunisia	17
Other African countries	16
<b>Asia</b>	<b>118</b>
Bangladesh	20
Iran	5
Iraq	5
Pakistan	35
Syria	37
Other Asian countries	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,621</b>

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 14. Persons benefitting from resettlement, assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes and relocation measures: 2010-2019**

Year of departure	Number of persons resettled <sup>1</sup>	Number of persons returned	Number of persons relocated <sup>2</sup>
2010	244	42	221
2011	180	31	164
2012	315	39	105
2013	412	55	16
2014	579	75	-
2015	570	12	-
2016	461	14	-
2017	173	19	-
2018	81	22	423
2019	16	16	619

<sup>1</sup> Persons benefitting from resettlement programmes to countries outside of the EU+ States

<sup>2</sup> Persons benefitting from relocation measures to EU+ Countries

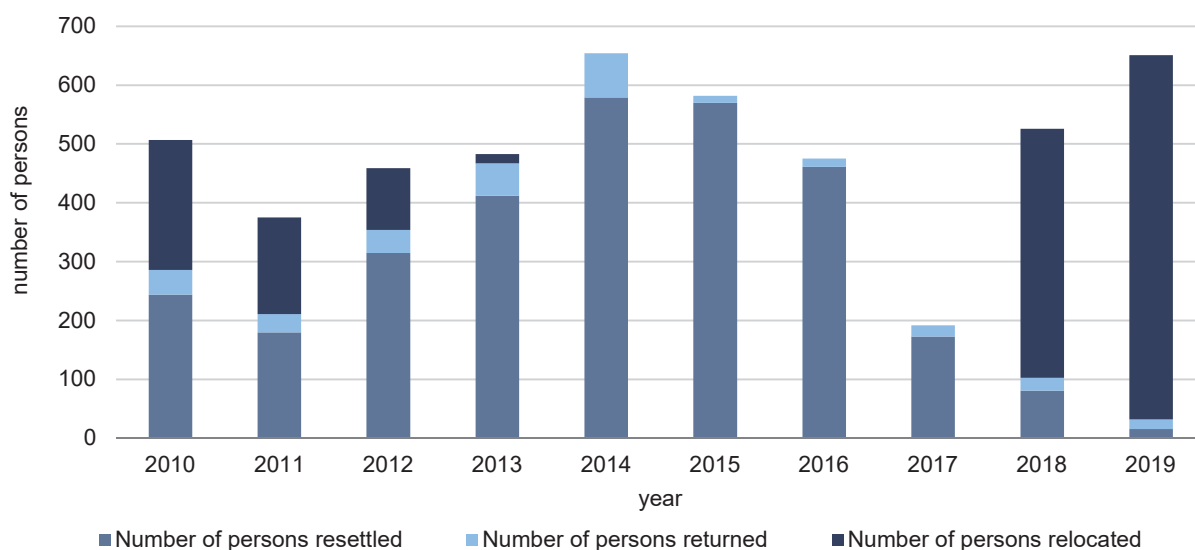
Source: Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

**Table 15. Persons benefitting from relocation programmes by country of relocation: 2019**

Country of relocation	Number of persons
Finland	5
France	256
Germany	261
Ireland	11
Lithuania	3
Luxembourg	19
Netherlands	6
Portugal	51
Romania	3
Slovenia	2
Spain	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>

Source: Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

**Chart 6. Persons benefitting from resettlements, assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes and relocation measures: 2010-2019**



## Methodological Notes

1. This news release makes reference to various sources available to the NSO, including:
  - **Office of the Refugee Commissioner:** the main source of data related to applications for asylum and asylum decisions at first instance in Malta.
  - **Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS):** the main source for data related to open centres.
  - **Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section:** the main source of statistics on boat arrivals.
  - **Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security:** the main source of statistics on resettlements, relocations and assisted voluntary returns.
2. Asylum data are being presented in alignment with Eurostat guidelines and definitions provided in relation to Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007. Methodological information regarding applications can be accessed at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr\\_asyapp\\_esms.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asyapp_esms.htm) and information regarding decisions can be accessed at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr\\_asydec\\_esms.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asydec_esms.htm).

### 3. Definitions

- **Asylum seeker:** A person who has requested asylum in a country and is awaiting a decision on the application under relevant national and international processes. This definition generally refers to all who apply for protection on an individual basis, irrespective of whether they lodge their application on arrival at an airport or land border, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether they entered the territory legally or illegally (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
- **Asylum applicant:** A person having submitted an application for international protection.
- **Application for asylum:** The application made by a third-country national or a stateless person which can be understood as a request for international protection from a Member State under the Geneva Convention. Any application for international protection is presumed to be an application for asylum unless a third-country national or a stateless person explicitly requests another kind of protection that can be applied for separately. An application for asylum is deemed to have been lodged once a form is submitted by the applicant for asylum or a report prepared by the authorities has reached the competent authorities.
- **Assisted voluntary returns (AVR):** Programmes which provide administrative and financial support to non-nationals residing in the country who wish to return permanently to their country of origin. Such support also ensures that their return is sustainable.
- **Geneva Convention status:** Refugee status granted within the meaning of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28th July 1951 to a person "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
- **Open centre population:** The Open Centre population includes persons residing in Hal Far Tent Village, Hal Far Open Centre, Hal Far Family Centre, Dar il-Liedna, Peace Lab, Marsa Open Centre and persons residing in residences run by the Malta Emigrants' Commission.
- **Person granted authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons:** A person covered by a decision granting authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons under national law concerning international protection. It includes persons who are not eligible for international protection but are nonetheless protected against removal.
- **Person granted subsidiary protection status:** A person who is eligible for subsidiary protection is a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his/her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his/her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country (Art.2(e), Directive 2004/83/EC).
- **Refugee:** A third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reason as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (Art.2(d), Directive 2004/83/EC).
- **Rejected applicant:** A person covered by a decision rejecting an application for international protection under consideration by the responsible national authority.

- **Relocation:** Relocation is the transfer of third-country nationals or stateless person from one EU+ State to another, where they are permitted to reside with a secure legal status.
- **Resettlement:** The transfer of third-country nationals or stateless person to a country outside of the EU+ States, where they are permitted to reside with a secure legal status.
- **Stateless:** A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law, as set out in Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- **Third-country national:** Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union.
- **Unaccompanied minor:** An asylum applicant considered to be an unaccompanied minor is a minor (aged less than 18) who arrives unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him/her. It includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he has entered the country. In the case that an age assessment procedure is required, the age reported shall be the age determined by the mentioned procedure.

#### 4. Geographical information

- The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
- The **European Union+** (EU+) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

#### 5. Other information

- Past News Releases can be accessed at: [https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/View\\_by\\_Unit/Unit\\_C5/Population\\_and\\_Migration\\_Statistics/Pages/World-Refugee-Day.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration_Statistics/Pages/World-Refugee-Day.aspx).
- Metadata can be accessed at: <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/reports.aspx?id=38>.

6. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:

Statistical concept: <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/concepts.aspx>

Sources and methods:

[https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources\\_and\\_Methods/Unit\\_C5/Population\\_and\\_Migration/Pages/Migration-Statistics.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration/Pages/Migration-Statistics.aspx)

7. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

8. A detailed news release calendar is available on:

[https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/Release\\_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx)