



Data on resettlement activities in 2021¹

The information presented in this fact sheet complements the chapter on resettlement and humanitarian admissions in the [Asylum Report 2022](#).

Based on UNHCR's definition, resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought protection to a third country which has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status.¹ It is an expression of international solidarity by helping to alleviate the pressure on countries which have received a large number of people in need of international protection.²

In the EU context, resettlement programmes are voluntary and organised through national or multilateral programmes. An EU-level legal framework does not exist for these activities,³ and the proposed Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union Resettlement Framework is still not adopted.⁴



¹ This document is produced on the basis of validated data submitted to Eurostat (according to Regulation (EU) 2020/851 amending Regulation (EC) No 862/2007) by all 31 EU+ countries. Data from Eurostat on resettled refugees covers "persons who have been granted an authorisation to reside in a Member State within the framework of a national or community resettlement scheme". This means that for some countries humanitarian admissions are included in the data on resettled refugees, while for other countries the data do not include people arriving under humanitarian corridors, evacuations or any other programmes based on humanitarian grounds. In this context, the current document partially reflects the arrival of Afghans under these programmes.



Key developments in 2021

There has been more than a six-fold increase in the number of resettled refugees between 2008 and 2021. Between this period, the total annual number rose from 4,200 to 27,200 refugees being resettled in the EU+, reaching a record high in 2021.²

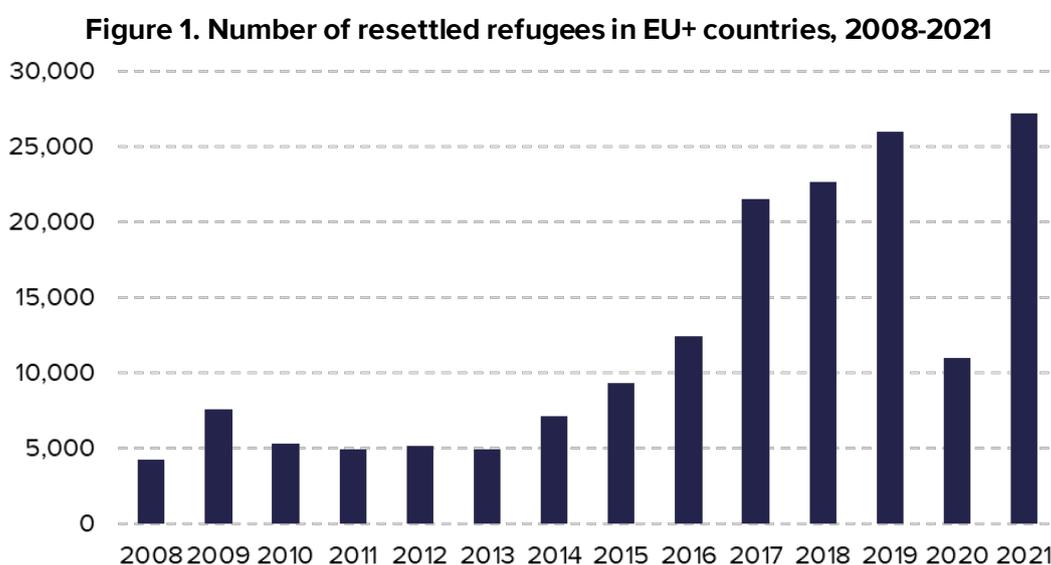
While this increase has been steady year over year, in 2020 there was a sharp drop in resettlements, decreasing by 58 % compared to 2019, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures.

When many COVID-19 restrictions were removed in 2021, the number of refugees resettled in EU+ countries more than doubled (see *Figure 1*) compared to 2020. There were increases in all EU+ countries with resettlement programmes, with the exception of Portugal (15 resettled in 2021, compared to 200 in 2020) and Luxembourg (0 in 2021 compared to 15 in 2020). As a result, the number of resettled refugees in 2021 not only exceeded the pre-pandemic level of 2019, but also represented the most on record.³

Activities quickly geared up in 2021, as several countries resettled more persons than in 2019, including Sweden (with 6,400 resettled refugees), Germany (5,400), Italy (5,300), Norway (3,700), Switzerland (1,100) and Belgium (950). At a lower level, Denmark (55) and Lithuania (15). Finland (900) and Romania (75) recorded the same number as in 2019. The remaining EU+ countries with resettlement programmes were not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.



Record number of resettled refugees in 2021 despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyresa](#)] as of 31 October 2022.

² Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.

³ Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.

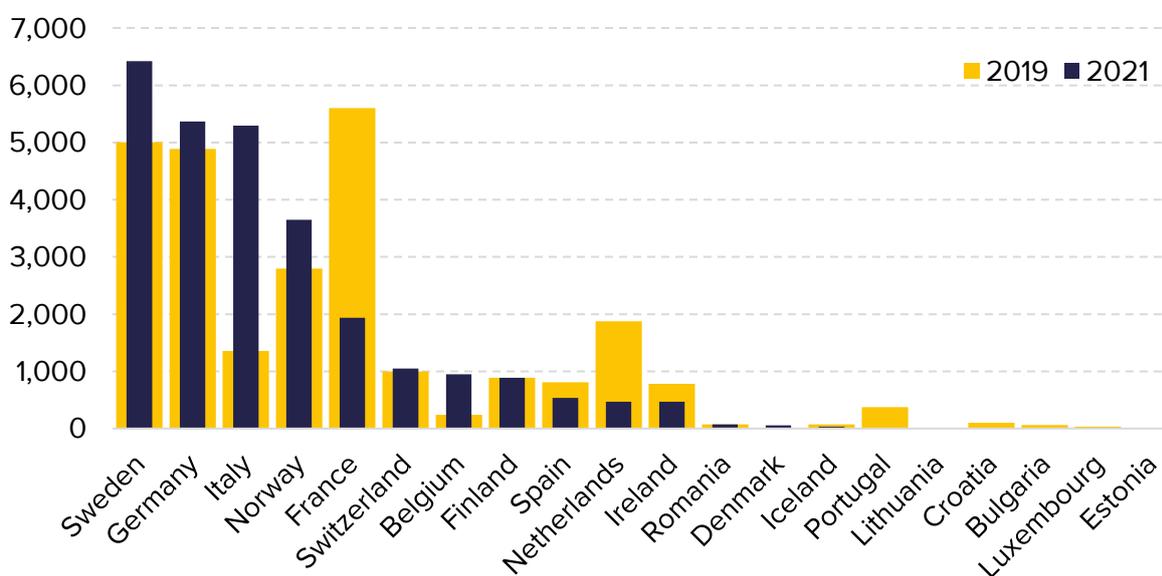
Combined, Germany, Italy, Norway and Sweden implemented the most transfers, accounting for 76% of all resettled refugees in EU+ countries (see Figure 2). Each of these countries recorded record high levels of transfers.⁴ For example, in Sweden, the number of resettled refugees increased by 28% compared to 2019, with more transfers of nationals of Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan.

Germany recorded an increase by 10% due to more transfers of Syrians and Congolese. In Italy, the number of transfers nearly quadrupled (+ 291%) because many more Afghans were transferred (this figure includes Afghan citizens who arrived from Afghanistan as part of humanitarian corridor programmes). In Norway, the overall figure rose by one-third (+ 31%) as more Afghans, Eritreans and Syrians were resettled. Albeit on a smaller scale, the number of resettled refugees in Belgium also increased four-fold (+ 296%), linked to the transfer of more Syrians.



Sweden, Germany, Italy and Norway received the vast majority of transferred refugees in the EU+

Figure 2. Number of resettled refugees in EU+ countries, 2021 compared to 2019



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyresa](#)] as of 31 October 2022.

Note: Countries that did not undertake any resettlement activities in both 2019 and 2021 are not included in the figure.

⁴ Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.

In contrast, resettlement figures in France (1,900, - 65%) and the Netherlands (500, - 75%) slumped as fewer Syrians were transferred to both countries, in addition to Sudanese to France. On a smaller scale, almost entirely because of fewer Syrians, there were declines in Spain (500, - 34%), Ireland (500, - 40%), Iceland (35, - 53%) and Portugal (15, - 96%).

In 2021, 15 out of 31 EU+ countries did not report any resettlement activities. Many of these countries have carried out resettlement activities in the past but not in 2021 (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia). However, a few countries – for example Cyprus, Greece, Poland and Slovakia – did not have resettlement programmes in place in 2021 and did not carry out any activities in this field from 2008 - 2021.^v

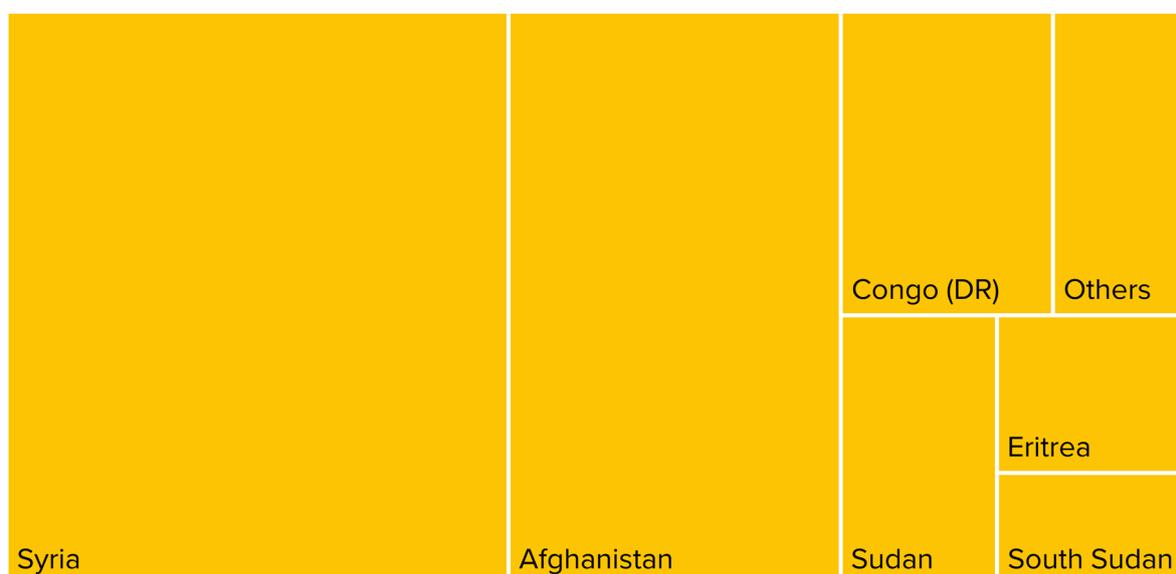
The main countries of origin of resettled refugees were Syria (11,500) and Afghanistan (7,600), jointly accounting for 70% of all transfers to the EU+ (see *Figure 3*). In 2021, the number of resettled Afghans reached the most on record,⁵ with 7,200 more transfers than in 2019. This was a seven-fold increase compared to the previous high of 1,100 refugees in 2012.

This surge was at least partially linked to the use of the resettlement scheme in some countries – including Norway^{vi} and Sweden^{vii} – for evacuated Afghans following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. In contrast, there has been a notable declining trend in resettling Syrians, with 6,800 in 2021, representing a 37 % drop from the highest level registered in 2017 (18,300).



70% of resettled refugees were from Afghanistan or Syria

Figure 3. Main countries of origin of resettled persons, 2021



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyresa](#)] as of 31 October 2022.

⁵ Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.

The main countries of origin were followed at some distance by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (with 2,600 resettled refugees), Sudan (1,700), Eritrea (1,200) and South Sudan (900). In fact, the numbers were the highest on record for nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (+ 600 compared to 2019) and South Sudan (+ 100 compared to 2019).⁶ On a lower scale, there was a record high number of resettled nationals from Burundi (100) and Yemen (100).

Substantial decreases in the number of resettled persons, compared to 2019, were recorded for Syrians (- 3,900), Sudanese (- 400), Eritreans (- 400), Somalis (400 in 2021, - 800 compared to 2019), Ethiopians (300 in 2021, -100 compared to 2019) and Iraqis (100 in 2021, - 500 compared to 2019).

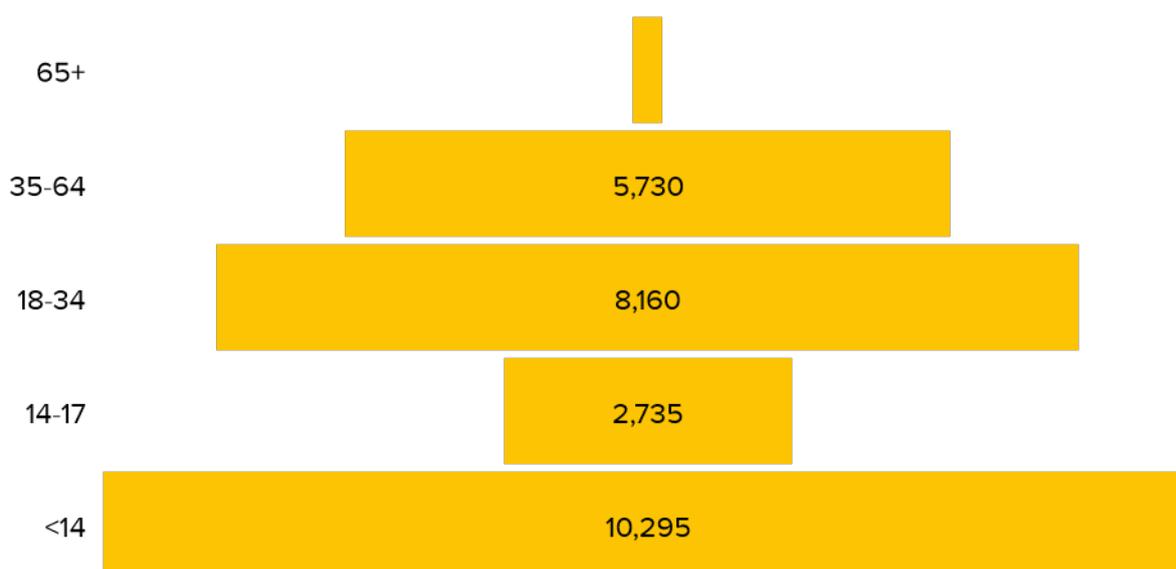
As seen in previous years, one-half of all resettled refugees were minors (13,000 in total), reaching almost the highest number on record⁷ (see *Figure 4*). The majority of the children were under 14 years old (10,300) and primarily came from Syria (6,000) and Afghanistan (3,300), followed at some distance by nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1,400), Sudan (800) and South Sudan (500).

Approximately 8,200 resettled refugees were aged between 18-34 years, and 5,700 were aged between 35-64 years. Just 300 resettled people were older than 65 years.



One-half of all resettled persons were minors

Figure 4. Age of resettled persons, 2021



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyresa](#)] as of 31 October 2022.

⁶ Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.

⁷ Since the start of Eurostat harmonised data exchange in 2008.



Slightly more men were resettled than women

While the shares are quite similar, there were 14,100 men resettled in 2021, compared to 13,200 women. For the period 2017 - 2021, there has been a steady trend since 2017 with men being more prominent in the profile of resettled refugees in EU+ countries. In contrast, during the period 2008-2016, resettled women outnumbered men.



To search for more developments by topic, country or year, consult the [EUAA National Asylum Developments Database](#)

Annex 1: Resettled persons in EU+ countries by reporting country and main citizenship, 2016-2021

Reporting country						2021		Share in EU+	Highest share	Sparkline
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% chg. on last year			
Reporting country									Citizenship	
Sweden	2 155	3 410	4 950	5 005	3 590	6 420	⬆️ +79	24%	Syria (30%)	
Germany	1 240	3 015	3 200	4 890	1 395	5 370	⬆️ +285	20%	Syria (77%)	
Italy	1 045	1 515	1 180	1 355	350	5 295	⬆️ +1 413	19%	Afghanistan (90%)	
Norway	3 290	2 815	2 480	2 795	1 525	3 650	⬆️ +139	13%	Syria (36%)	
France	600	2 620	5 565	5 600	1 340	1 935	⬆️ +44	7%	Syria (54%)	
Switzerland	620	665	1 080	1 000	615	1 050	⬆️ +71	4%	Syria (42%)	
Belgium	450	1 310	880	240	175	950	⬆️ +443	3%	Syria (96%)	
Finland	945	1 090	605	890	660	890	⬆️ +35	3%	Syria (74%)	
Spain	375	1 490	830	810	365	535	⬆️ +47	2%	Syria (77%)	
Ireland	355	275	340	785	195	470	⬆️ +141	2%	Afghanistan (82%)	
Netherlands	695	2 265	1 225	1 875	425	470	⬆️ +11	2%	Syria (81%)	
Romania	0	45	0	75	35	75	⬆️ +114	0%	Syria (100%)	
Denmark	310	5	0	0	30	55	⬆️ +83	0%	Congo (DR) (92%)	
Iceland	55	45	50	75	0	35	n.a.	0%	Afghanistan (100%)	
Portugal	10	170	35	375	220	15	⬇️ -93	0%	Syria (100%)	
Lithuania	25	60	20	0	0	15	n.a.	0%	Eritrea (100%)	
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Luxembourg	50	180	0	35	15	0	⬇️ -100	0%	n.a.	
Malta	0	15	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Czechia	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Slovenia	0	0	35	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Bulgaria	0	0	20	65	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Estonia	10	20	30	5	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Croatia	0	40	110	100	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Croatia	200	380	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Latvia	5	40	0	0	0	0	n.a.	0%	n.a.	
Citizenship									Reporting country	
Syria	9 720	18 305	16 970	15 420	6 505	11 500	⬆️ +77	42%	Germany (36%)	
Afghanistan	475	280	305	395	105	7 615	⬆️ +7 152	28%	Italy (63%)	
Congo (DR)	610	775	1 530	1 970	1 255	2 575	⬆️ +105	9%	Sweden (44%)	
Sudan	90	220	685	2 085	705	1 680	⬆️ +138	6%	Sweden (44%)	
Eritrea	585	625	1 325	1 580	965	1 230	⬆️ +27	5%	Sweden (38%)	
South Sudan	15	40	145	750	295	875	⬆️ +197	3%	Norway (32%)	
Somalia	255	135	230	1 155	255	350	⬆️ +37	1%	Germany (46%)	
Ethiopia	140	265	245	415	205	300	⬆️ +46	1%	Sweden (77%)	
Central African Republic	15	40	195	405	105	210	⬆️ +100	1%	France (88%)	
Iraq	100	185	200	600	15	135	⬆️ +800	0%	Germany (44%)	
Yemen	0	5	20	60	10	120	⬆️ +1 100	0%	Germany (46%)	
Burundi	40	60	50	90	90	110	⬆️ +22	0%	Sweden (50%)	
Iran	30	25	30	85	110	105	⬆️ -5	0%	Spain (81%)	
Turkey	10	20	35	20	75	70	⬆️ -7	0%	Sweden (50%)	
Unknown	10	80	105	270	30	30	⬆️ +0	0%	Netherlands (100%)	
Other	340	410	565	675	210	325	⬆️ +55	1%	Sweden (54%)	
EU+	12 435	21 470	22 635	25 975	10 935	27 230	⬆️ +149		Syria (42%)	

!:" Data not available

Source: Eurostat [migr_asyresa] as of 5 October 2022, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyresa&lang=en

Sources

Please see [Sources on Asylum 2022](#) for the full list of over 1,200 references which were consulted for the Asylum Report 2022.

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (April 2018). *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and Country Chapters*. <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html>

² UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, July 2011, accessed on 19 October 2022.

³ Prantl Janine, *Shaping the Future Towards a Solidary Refugee Resettlement in the European Union*, 2021, accessed on 19 October 2022.

⁴ European Parliament, *Legislative Train Schedule*, 20 September 2022, accessed on 19 October 2022.

^v EUAA, *Resettlement and humanitarian admissions*, 2022, accessed 18 November 2022.

^{vi} Norwegian Directorate of Immigration | Utlendingsdirektoratet. (2021, September 1). Norge evakuerte 860 afghanere [Norway evacuated 860 Afghans] [Press release]. <https://www.udi.no/aktuelt/evakuerte-afghanere/>

^{vii} Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (2021, August 26). Migrationsverket arbetar intensivt med att ta emot evakuerade afghaner [The Swedish Migration Agency works intensively to receive evacuated Afghans] [Press release]. <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Pressrum/Nyhetsarkiv/Nyhetsarkiv-2021/2021-08-26-Migrationsverket-arbetar-intensivt-med-att-ta-emot-evakuerade-afghaner.html>