



# Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection in V4 Countries (Updated Report)



**NIEM**  
ALL IN FOR INTEGRATION

V4NIEM: Visegrad Countries National Integration  
Evaluation Mechanism Report 2019



**MENEDÉK**  
HUNGARIAN  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR MIGRANTS

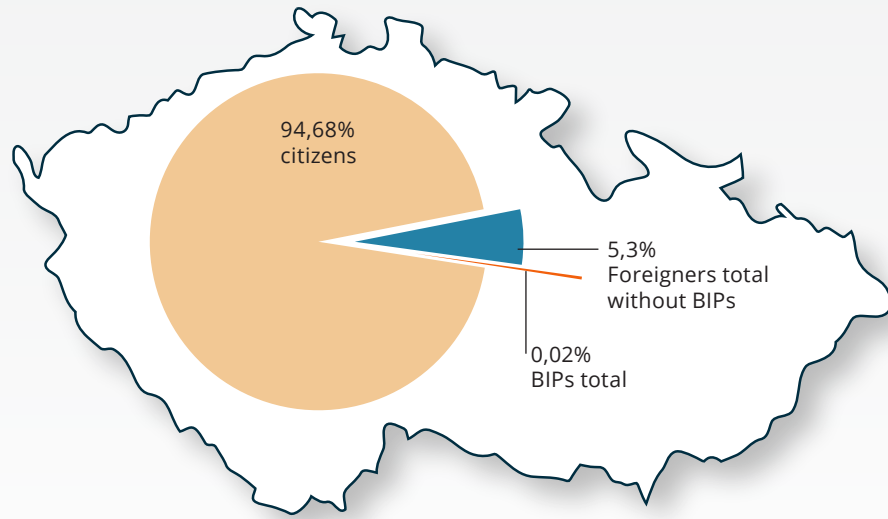


EUROPEAN UNION  
Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund

SAFE HARBOUR

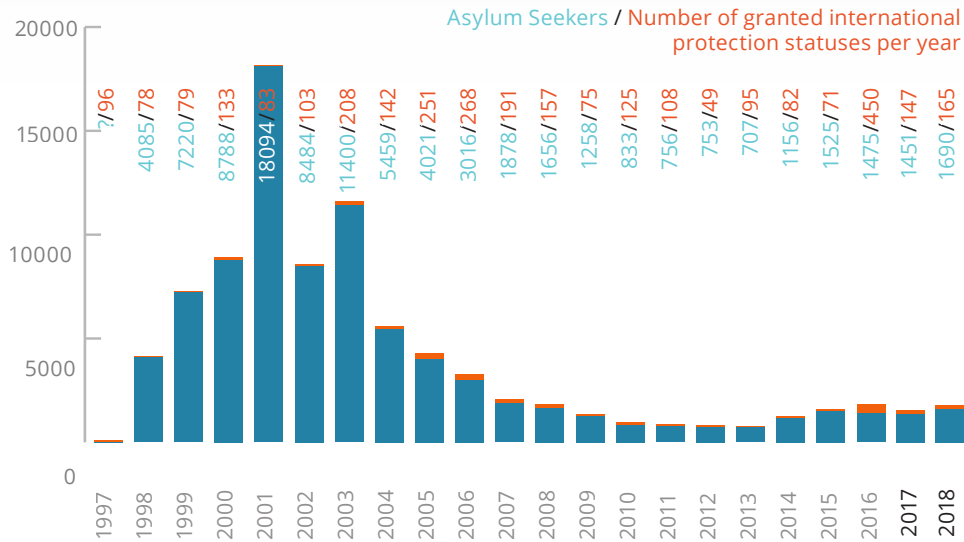
## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

OAMP MV ČR, ČSÚ - 31. 12. 2018



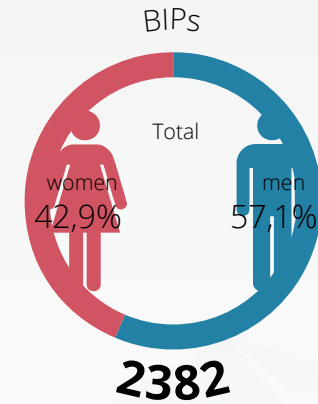
## DEVELOPMENT OF NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND BIPs IN CZECHIA

ČSÚ, OAMP MV ČR, Eurostat



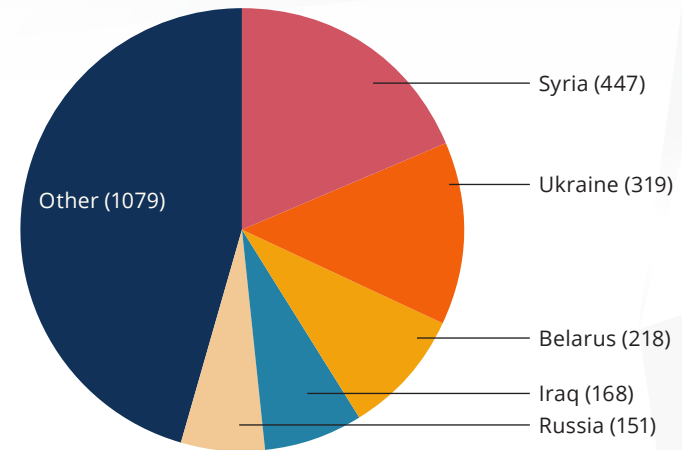
## BIPs IN CZECHIA IN 2018

OAMP MV ČR - 31. 12. 2018



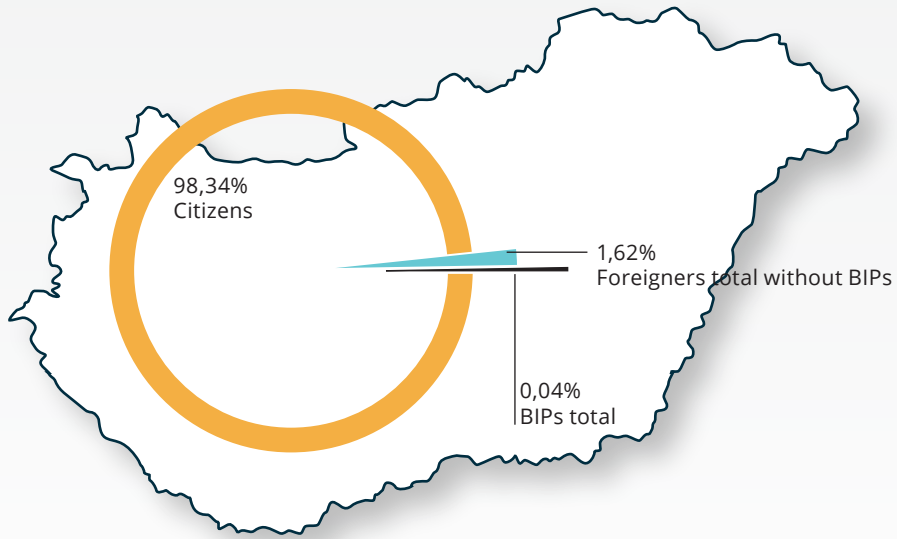
## MOST FREQUENT CITIZENSHIP OF BIPs

OAMP MV ČR - 31. 12. 2018



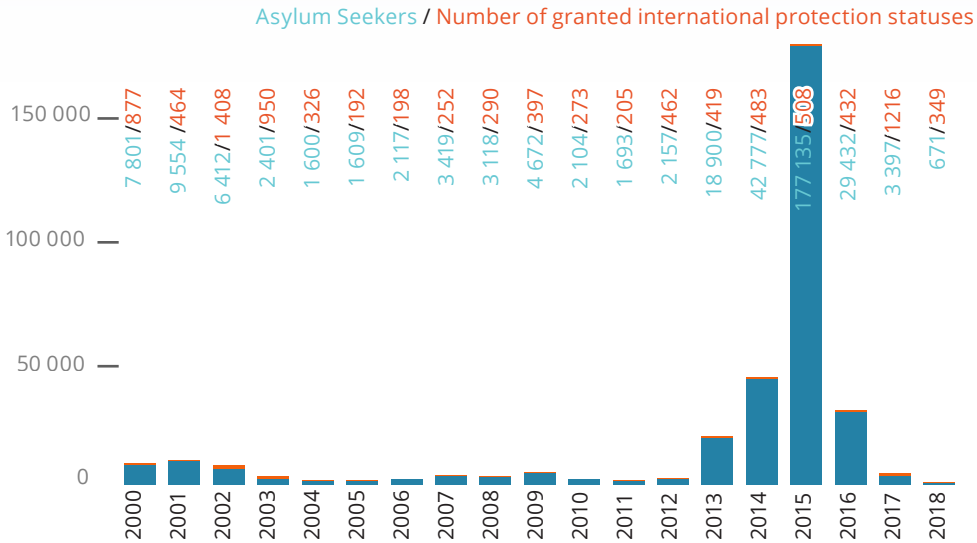
## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

KSH, BMH, BM - 2018



## DEVELOPMENT OF NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND BIPs IN HUNGARY

KSH - 2018



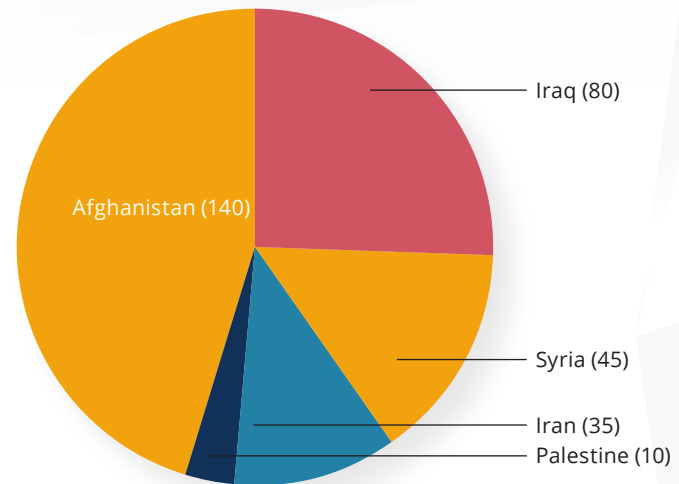
## BIPs IN HUNGARY IN 2018

KSH, BMH, BM - 2018



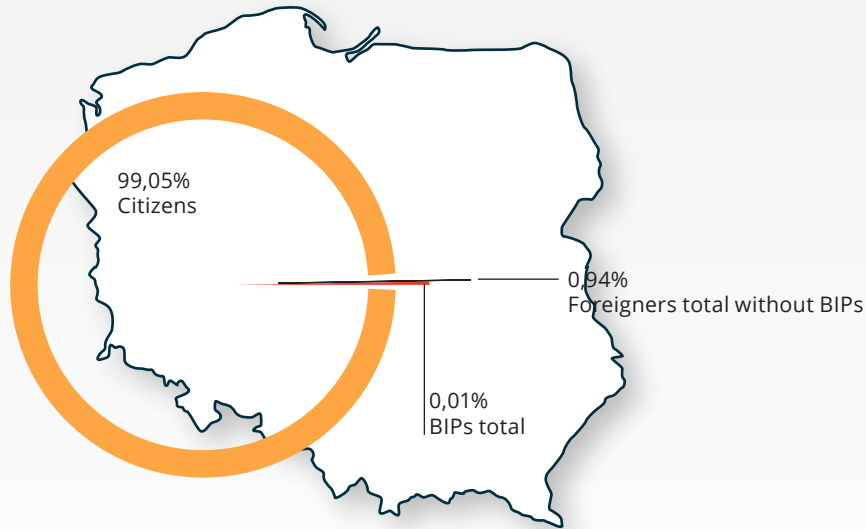
## MOST FREQUENT CITIZENSHIP OF BIPs GRANTED PROTECTION IN 2018

Eurostat



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

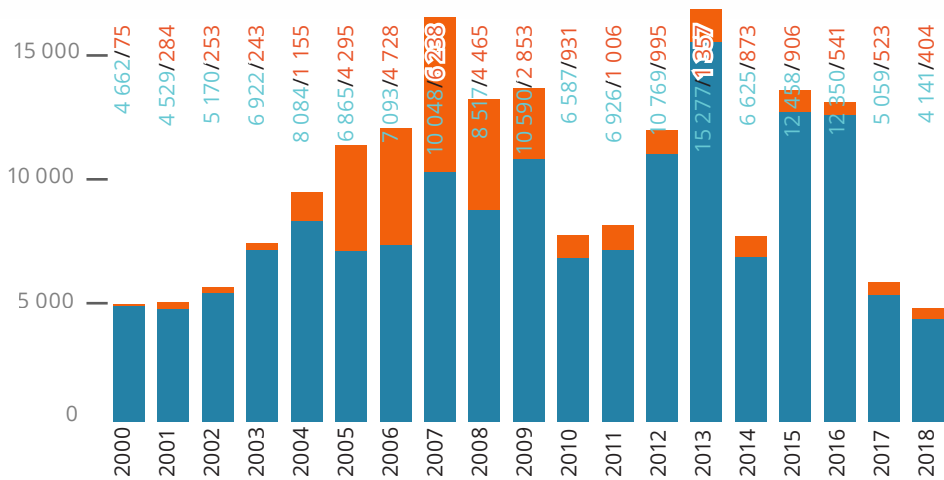
GUS, UDSC - 2018



## DEVELOPMENT OF NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND BIPS IN POLAND

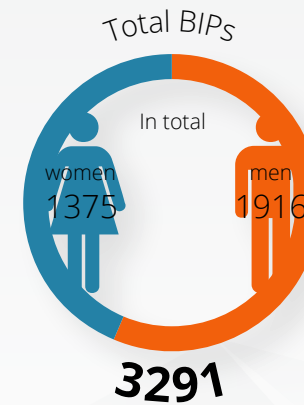
UDSC 2018, Data accessed on 14. 5. 2019

Asylum Seekers / Number of granted international protection statuses



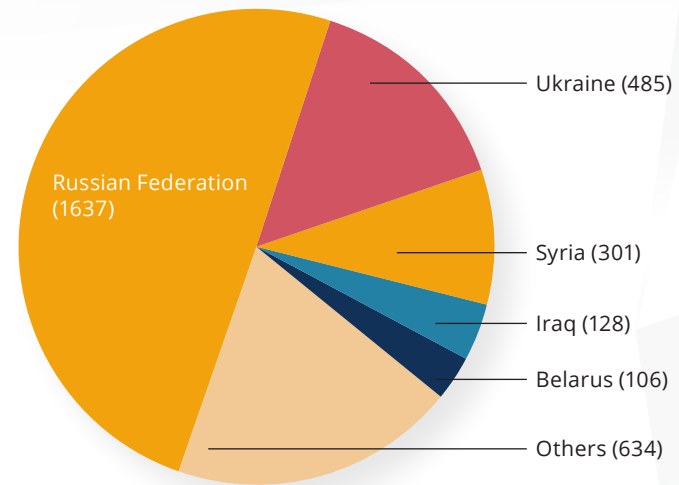
## BIPS IN POLAND IN 2018

UDSC 2018, Data accessed on 14. 5. 2019



## MOST FREQUENT CITIZENSHIP OF BIPS

UDSC 2018, Data accessed on 14. 5. 2019

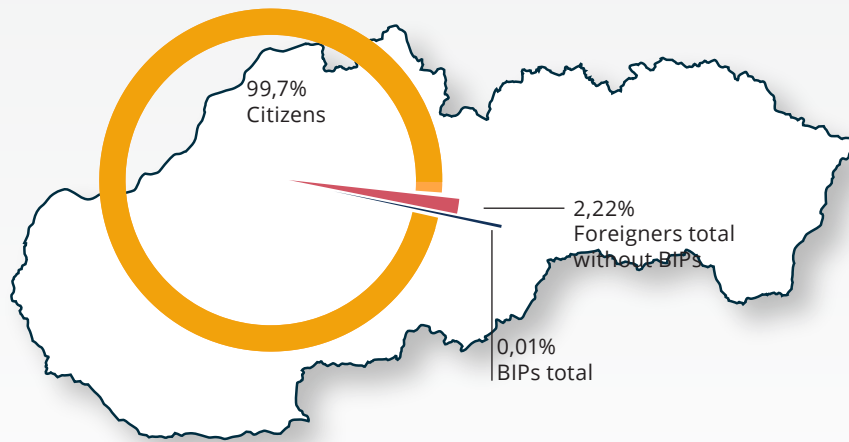






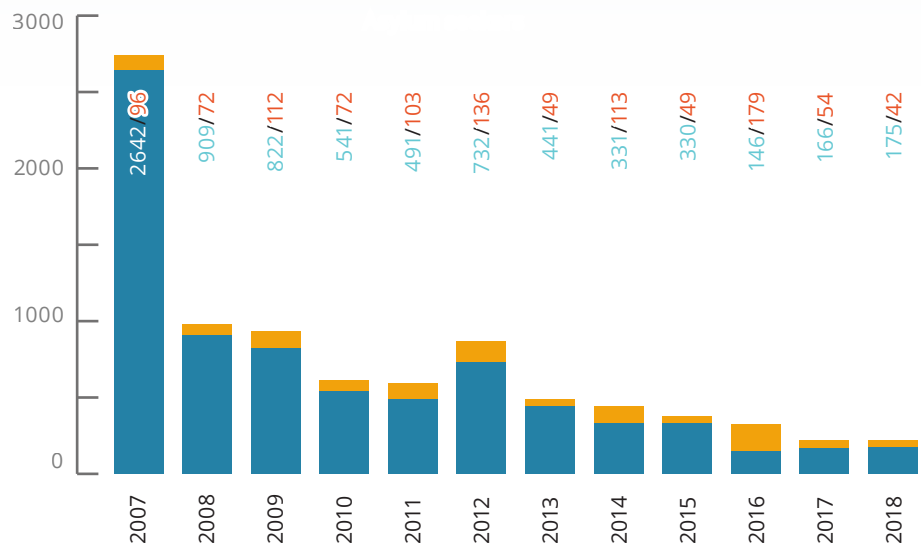
# INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

MV SR 2018



## DEVELOPMENT OF NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND BIPS IN SLOVAKIA

MV SR 2018, Eurostat



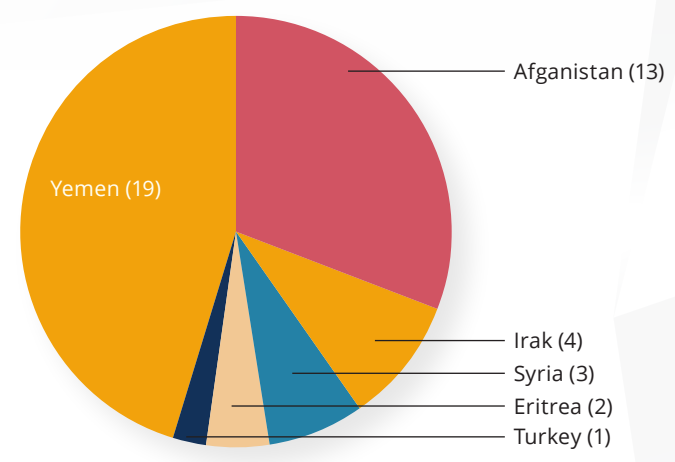
# BIPS IN SLOVAKIA IN 2018

MV SR 2018



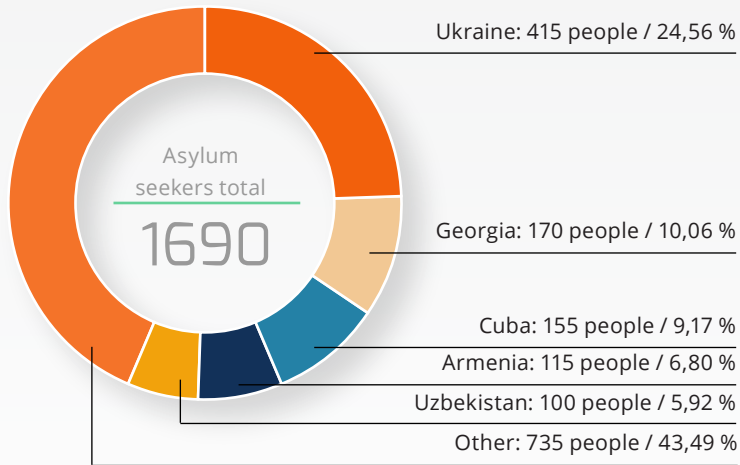
## MOST FREQUENT CITIZENSHIP OF BIPS GRANTED PROTECTION IN 2018

MV SR 2018

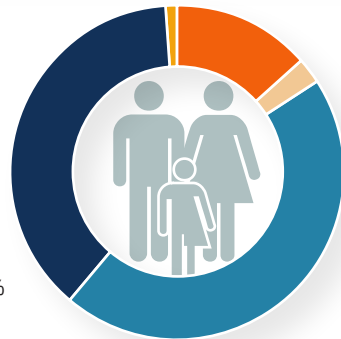


## WHO WERE THE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN CZECHIA IN 2018?

Eurostat



- 0 - 13 y.o.: 230 people / 13,6%
- 14 - 17 y.o.: 40 people / 2,4%
- 18 - 34 y.o.: 765 people / 45,3%
- 35 - 64 y.o.: 640 people / 37,9%
- more than 65 y.o.: 15 people / 0,8%



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REFUGEE STATUS AND SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION?

### ASYLUM

is granted to a foreigner persecuted for exercising political rights and freedoms, or a legitimate fear of being persecuted because of race, gender, religion, nationality, belonging to a social group or for holding political opinions in the state of which he/ she is a citizen.

Asylum can also be granted to relatives of an asylee (asylum for family reunification) or for humanitarian reasons.

Asylum is granted for an indefinite period. Asylees have access to the labour market, health care system, welfare system, schooling, etc. under the same conditions as citizens.

### SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION (SP)

is granted to a foreign who does not meet the criteria for asylum, however there exists a legitimate concern that if the applicant is returned to the country of origin, he/she would face a genuine risk of serious harm (death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, serious threat to life or human dignity), and he/she is unable or unwilling, due to such risk, to accept the protection of the country of origin.

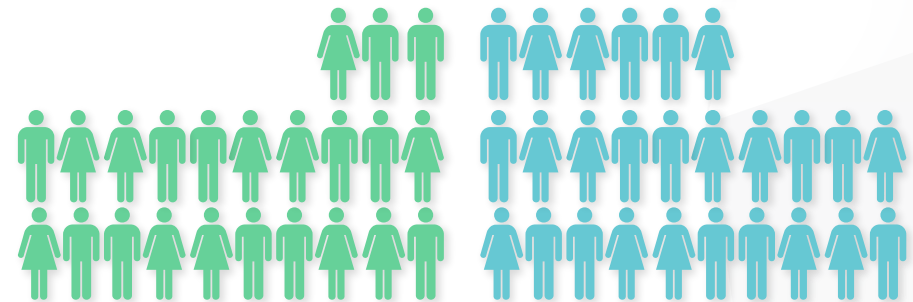
SP is granted for a limited period (1-2 years) and must be renewed – the reasons for protection are always re-examined. Beneficiaries of SP have access to the labour market, health care system, welfare system, schooling, etc. under the same conditions as citizens.

## NUMBER OF BIPS ACCORDING TO A TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN 2018

OAMP MV ČR - 31. 12. 2018

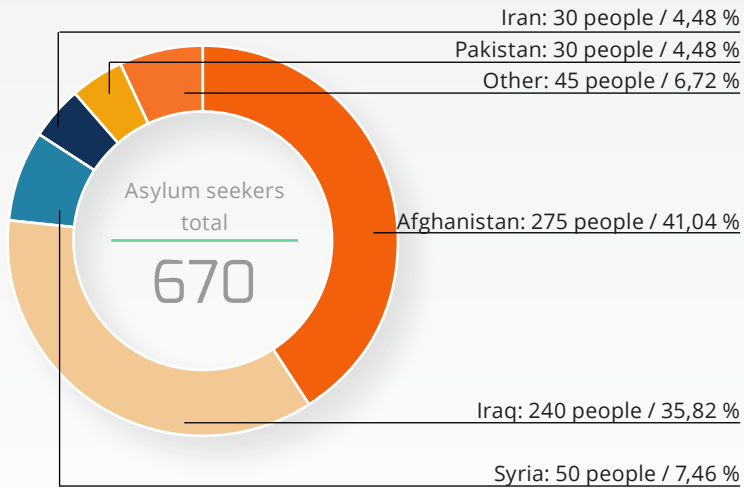
1152 people

1230 people

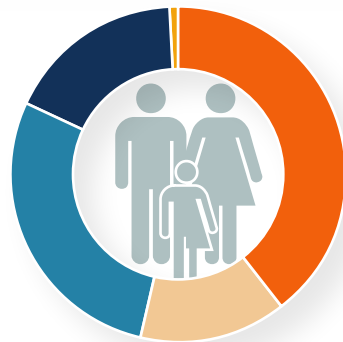


## WHO WERE THE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN HUNGARY IN 2018?

Eurostat



- 0 - 13: 265 people / 39,56%
- 14 - 17: 95 people / 14,18%
- 18 - 34: 190 people / 28,36%
- 35 - 64: 115 people / 17,16%
- 65+ : 5 people / 1,74%



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REFUGEE STATUS AND SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION?

### ASYLUM

Refugee status is for those who, in their country of origin/usual residence, are subject to persecution due to race or nationality, membership in a specific social group, religious or political conviction, or whose fear of persecution is well-founded. Refugee status can be granted

- to family members of refugees and to children born to refugees in Hungary,
- in exceptional circumstances in the absence of conditions
- to refugees recognised by another state or UNHCR.

It is granted for an indefinite period – mandatory status review every 3 years. As a general rule, refugees are entitled to the same rights as HU nationals, except for participation in (general) elections and employment confined to HU nationals.

### SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION (SP)

Subsidiary protection is for those who do not qualify as refugees but are at risk of serious harm if they return to their country of origin and are unable/unwilling to seek protection there.

SP can be granted to

- / children born to beneficiaries of SP in HU
- / family members of beneficiaries of SP, if they applied together/the family member applied with the consent of the beneficiary of SP, before SP was granted.

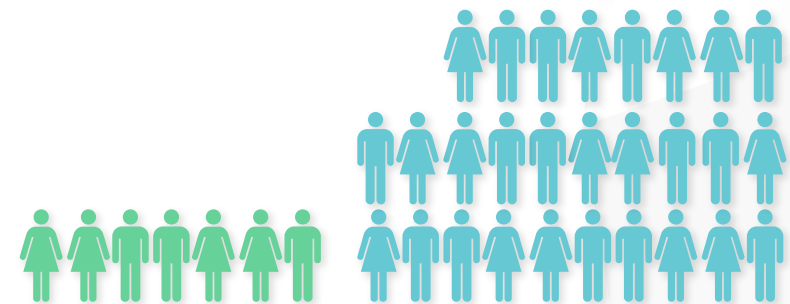
The status is for an indefinite period – mandatory status review every 3 years. Beneficiaries of SP are entitled to the same rights as refugees. The main differences: no access to facilitated family reunification or naturalisation.

## NUMBER OF BIPS ACCORDING TO TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION GRANTED IN 2018

KSH - 2018

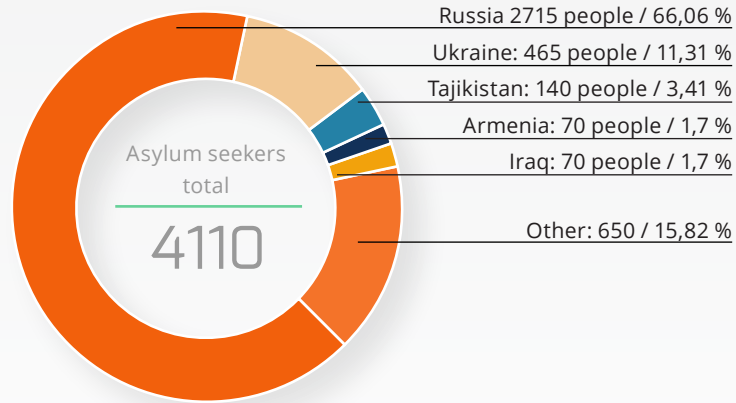
68  
people

281  
people

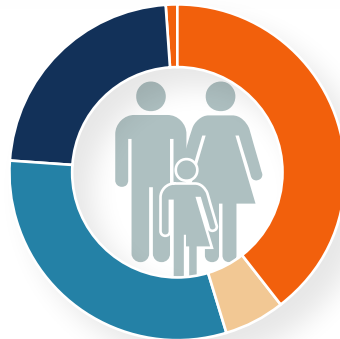


## WHO WERE THE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN POLAND IN 2018?

Eurostat



- 0 - 13: 1625 people / 39,49%
- 14 - 17: 245 people / 5,95%
- 18 - 34: 1265 people / 30,75%
- 35 - 64: 935 people / 22,72%
- 65+ : 45 people / 1,09%



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REFUGEE STATUS AND SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION?

In order to obtain the refugee status, the legitimate fear of prosecution for reasons listed in the Geneva Convention has to be demonstrated. Foreigners who are not eligible to be granted the refugee status can receive subsidiary protection.

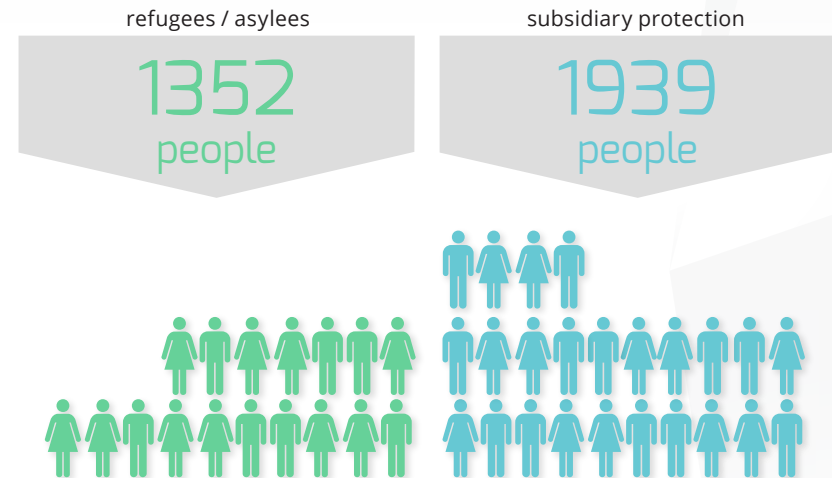
Subsidiary protection is granted if a foreigner faces a real risk of suffering serious harm related to death penalty or execution, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or serious and individual threat to a life or health arising of the widespread use of violence against civilians in an international or internal armed conflict, and thus is unwilling to return to the country of origin.

There are also three other national forms of protection of foreigners in Poland.

For example, if a foreigner's return obligation would be contrary to the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (e.g. with his/her, freedom from torture, the right to respect for private or family life would be threatened) or the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, a foreigner may be granted a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. If a foreigner cannot be granted with a stay for humanitarian reasons, he/she can be granted with a tolerated stay in cases when his/her expulsion is not possible due to the risk of violation of basic human rights. Additionally, a foreigner might be granted asylum when it is necessary to protect him/her and when it is in favor of the important interest of Poland.

## NUMBER OF BIPS ACCORDING TO A TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN 2018

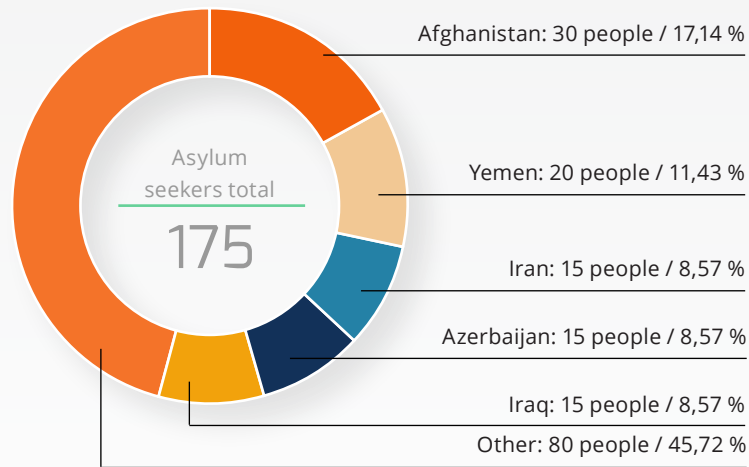
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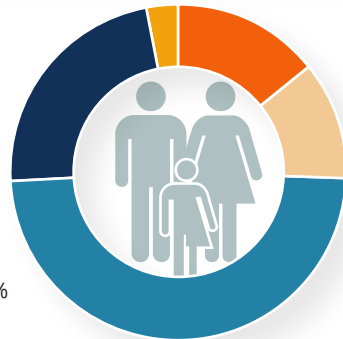


# WHO WERE THE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SLOVAKIA IN 2018?

Eurostat



- 0 - 13 y.o.: 25 people / 14,26%
- 14 - 17 y.o.: 20 people / 11,43%
- 18 - 34 y.o.: 85 people / 48,58%
- 35 - 64 y.o.: 40 people / 22,87%
- more than 65 y.o.: 5 people / 2,86%



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REFUGEE STATUS AND SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION?

## ASYLUM

Is granted to a foreigner who is persecuted in his/her country of origin for reasons of race, ethnic origin or religion, political opinion or membership of a particular social group or is persecuted for exercise of political rights and freedoms.

Asylum can be also granted to relatives of an asylee or because of humanitarian reasons.

Asylum is granted for an indefinite period. Asylum means permanent residence. Asylees have access to the labour market, health care system, welfare system, education etc. under same conditions as citizens.

## SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION (SP)

Is granted to whom was not granted asylum and claims that would face a real risk of serious harm if returned to his/her country of origin (death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, serious threat to life or human dignity). SP can be also granted to relatives of persons with SP.

SP is granted for one year; then can be prolonged for two years repeatedly. SP means temporary residence.

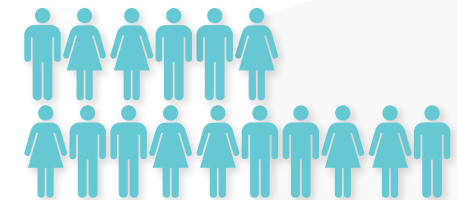
Beneficiaries of SP have the access to the labour market, education under same conditions as citizens, but concerning the health care there is a problem because of different regime of reimbursement the expenses and welfare system is limited.

# NUMBER OF BIPS ACCORDING TO A TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN 2018

MV SR 2018

289 people

159 people



WHO WERE ASYLUM SEEKERS? SLOVAKIA

## INTEGRATION OF BIPS IN CZECHIA IN 2018

MV ČR

Title of the programme	State Integration Programme (SIP)
Responsible authorities	Ministry of Interior, asylum and migration policy department
Implementors	Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior and subcontractors
Conceptual documents	November 2015, No. 954 of the State Integration Programme for Persons granted International Protection in 2016 and the following: Annex to Resolution No. 954 "Principles for the provision of funds from budget chapter 314"
Budget	200 mil CZK (7.7 mil. EUR) in total, max. 173.5 mil. CZK for the general provider of services, max 15 mil. CZK on education (Czech language courses and courses on basics of culture and democracy), max 10 mil. CZK for support of rental housing, max 1.5 mil. CZK for support of social assistance facilities.
Spending	25 836 903 CZK (1 003 420 EUR)

The main tool for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIP) in Czech Republic is the state integration programme (SIP) which has been in operation since 1994. Its core mission is to assist asylees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection with a smooth and swift integration into society: learning Czech, finding a job and a place to live, and becoming self-sufficient overall. Each BIP has the right to be a part of the programme for up to twelve months. During this time,

they work closely with an assigned social worker and fulfil a tailored integration plan. While participating in the program, each BIP has the option to reside in one of the Integration Asylum Centres, of which there are four in Czechia (Brno, Havířov, Jaroměř, and Přebuz). In 2018, a total of 121 persons entered the SIP, 74 integration plans for 97 BIPs were concluded, and 354 people attended free Czech language courses.

## EUROPEAN COMPARISON OF INTEGRATION

A comprehensive comparison of European integration mechanisms for the beneficiaries of international protection provides an important overview of gaps in each state integration regime. Each gap is an opportunity for further development and thereby improvement for the prospects of successful integration, the core of which lies in the simple outcome that foreigners can lead normal lives and coexist with the majority society without any undue conflicts. The six-year-long research project NIEM (2016–2021), which has been underway in fourteen EU Member States, including three from the Visegrád Group (V4), tries to identify these gaps. The discussed comparison here corresponds with the state of affairs in 2017, which has not changed much since.

If the first V4 NIEM report from 2017 showed that the Czech integration mechanism in comparison with those in other V4 states is the most advanced one, today we know that as a whole it can hold its own even within a European comparison. The primary reason for this is the existence of the Czech State Integration Programme (SIP)—a similar provision in the form of a comprehensive strategy with a specific national budget which can be found in only six other analysed states. The Czech system also stands out thanks to the general

legislative environment that treats BIPs as equals to citizens in a number of important areas, such as access to property, employment, and healthcare, without burdening them with additional limitations or conditions.

Given that one of the major integration outcomes should be a coexistence of foreigners with the majority of society largely free of conflict, recent results of the Eurobarometer (presented in this report below) show that integration in Czechia is not exactly working smoothly. This is because Czech society, as a whole, holds negative feelings towards foreigners, and in the case of migrants from outside of the European Union, attitudes in Czechia are currently the most negative in the entire Union. The acceptance of foreigners by the majority is however an important part of integration, which cannot be understood only as a one-way process. A systematic, comprehensible, and consistent awareness elevation amongst the public regarding the issues of migration and integration is therefore a crucial integration tool.

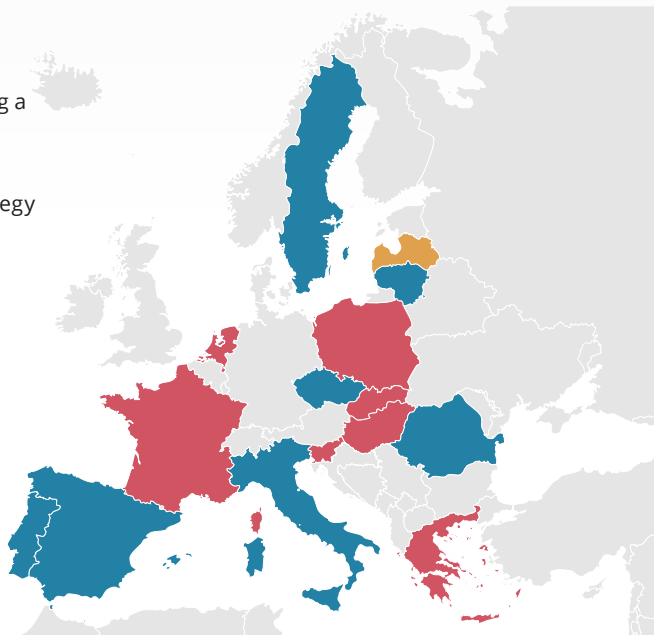
Even though only a small number of BIPs live in the Czech Republic, and the annual numbers of asylum seekers are low as well, the impact of public opinion regarding this specific group is essential for shaping the public image of



foreigners living in Czechia. That is why special attention should be given to BIPs in awareness-raising campaigns. A robust and coordinated public communication strategy which would cover the issues of BIPs and any other group of foreigners is, however, still missing in Czechia. The European comparison showed that to be the case in most of the analysed countries; the majority of which, however, do not have to deal with the degree of resentment towards foreigners evident in the Czech Republic. If the public at large is not willing to accept foreigners, then equality before the law as well as targeted facilitation programmes such as the SIP lose much of their integrating effectiveness.

### National strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

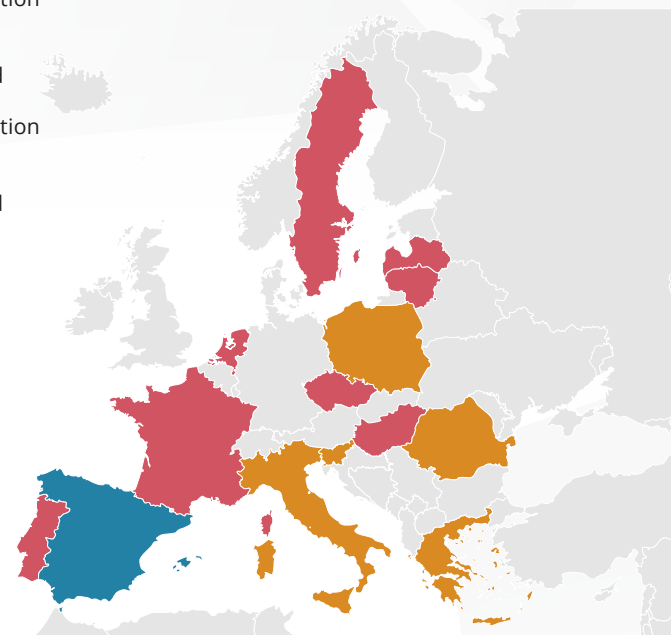
- National strategy on the integration of BIPs with a specific national budget
- National strategy on the integration of BIPs lacking a specific national budget
- Absence of national strategy



Another consequence of insufficient awareness is the subsequent uncertainties and restraint of various service providers, such as property owners when they consider providing services to BIPs, as they are unsure about the specifics of their legal position. In this sense, the formal rights of BIPs might once again lose their de facto strength, and the solution lies again with a targeted awareness strategy. The European-wide comparison however showed that most of the analysed countries suffer from underdevelopment of such strategies.

### Awareness raising on the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection

- Regular publicly funded campaigns to sensitize society about the situation of BIPs
- Ad-hoc publicly funded campaigns to sensitize society about the situation of BIPs
- Lack of publicly funded campaigns



*2018 saw the last elements of state activities involved with the integration of BIPs disappear. In 2016, within the framework of dismantling the asylum system, the Asylum Act was amended, eliminating the integration contract and integration support; thus, there are no state integration measures provided anymore. The contracts already concluded before 1 June 2016 were in force until 31 May 2018 (in some cases, where integration support was suspended by the refugee authority, the support was able to be provided even after 31 May 2018).*

In the absence of a specific integration strategy and the termination of the integration contract in 2016, the integration of BIPs in Hungary is based on legislation granting equal rights as nationals and on an 'informal social contract' between state authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs).

According to the 'informal social contract, the refugee authority grants international protection and CSOs implement programmes facilitating the integration of BIPs in Hungary. CSOs assist in the most important fields of integration: housing, labour

market, access to social assistance, health care, etc. There are no state-financed Hungarian language courses, but CSOs also provide them free of charge.

The activities of CSOs were mostly financed through EU funds, mainly from AMIF. In January 2018, the government withdrew all calls for tender in the AMIF National Programme without any justification. It has not issued new calls ever since; thus, since July 2018 no EU-funded projects supporting the integration of BIPs were implemented in Hungary.

In Hungary, BIPs are not just encouraged but forced by the characteristics of the Hungarian integration system to become independent and self-reliant as soon as possible. Finding housing and employment are essential to this process, and concerning opportunities for BIPs, there are big differences in these areas within the country.

### Housing

In Hungary, just like in many Eastern European EU Member States, housing policies are determined by the dominance of the share of the owner-occupied sector as a consequence of mass privatisation before EU accession. Neither the central nor the regional/local governments have started social housing projects, the margin for manoeuvre in social housing is extremely limited, constrained to a small share of flats (still) owned by municipalities or project-based housing programmes implemented by municipalities or CSOs.

This means that newcomers, especially new BIPs face extreme difficulties in obtaining adequate housing. Following their recognition, BIPs may spend thirty days in an open reception centre, during which time—among other tasks, such as obtaining necessary ID, health insurance, and tax documents—they need to find housing opportunities.

Though legislation provides for equal rights and obligations in the field of housing as well, the scarcity of social

housing opportunities and the fact that many local governments require a minimum residence period in their territory so as to access these scarce opportunities result in BIPs leaving the reception centres with only access to homeless shelters.

After the termination of the integration contract in 2016, no state activities remained in the field of housing assistance. Between 2016–18, CSOs and the municipality of Budapest implemented projects co-financed with EU funds (AMIF in particular), the Norway Grants, or other (e.g. church) funds: CSOs provided assistance in finding housing, financial assistance to BIPs, or housing facilities.

### Employment

In stark contrast to housing, employment is a field where BIPs can find opportunities to accelerate their integration in Hungary.

In line with EU legislation, beneficiaries of international protection—with the exception of the core public sector—enjoy equal rights with Hungarian nationals in employment (access to employment, working conditions, etc.). BIPs may be employed without a work permit; the only additional task required from the employee is to provide statistical information to the labour authority on the number of BIPs employed.

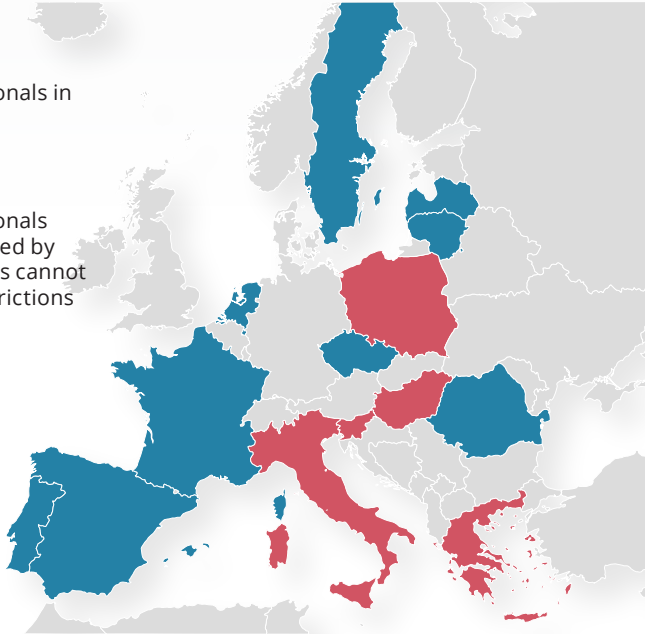


Nevertheless, it is mainly the characteristics of the Hungarian labour market that facilitates their access to employment. From 2011 on (following the abolition of remaining restrictions concerning the free movement of citizens of 'new member states' in Western Europe), the mobility of Hungarian nationals in the European Union increased dramatically, which resulted in a large labour demand in Hungary. According to statistics, the number of vacant posts doubled from 2015 to 2018. Unfortunately, there is no statistical data on the number of BIPs employed; however, the experience of CSOs providing BIPs assistance in accessing the labour market underlines that they are able to find employment in a short time.

Despite the opportunities offered by the labour shortage, BIPs face challenges due to their circumstances: They do not speak Hungarian and the majority of Hungarians do not speak foreign languages either. In addition, employees do not have adequate information on the conditions of employing foreigners (including BIPs) or are discouraged by the intercultural difficulties which may emerge in the workplace.

**Access to housing and housing benefits**

- Equal treatment with nationals in housing benefits
- Equal treatment with nationals in housing benefits inhibited by conditions that newcomers cannot meet or by additional restrictions

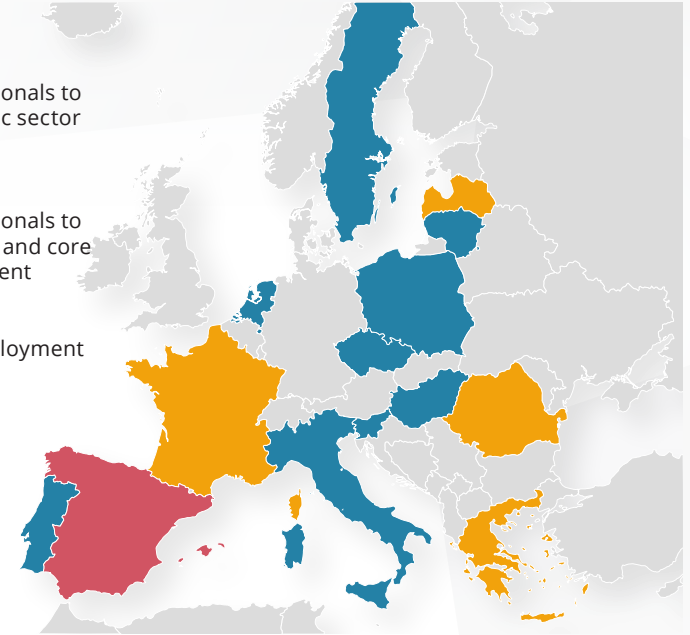


Many projects implemented by CSOs are aimed at reducing these challenges: BIPs receive training, social and legal counselling, as well as tutoring and competence development in Hungarian, facilitating their entry to the labour market. CSOs also initiated and managed internship programmes for BIPs at Hungarian companies.

A good example is the MentoHRing project, implemented by the Menedék Association, and which included social and legal assistance, mentoring, occupational group therapy, internship programmes, and an information campaign targeting employees on the legal and practical requirements of the employment of foreigners.

**Access to employment**

- Equal access as for nationals to private and wider public sector employment
- Equal access as for nationals to private and both wider and core public sector employment
- Unequal access to employment



## INTEGRATION OF BIPS IN POLAND IN 2017

Title of the programme	Individual Integration Programme
Responsible authorities	The Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy
Implementors	Poviat Family Support Centers
Conceptual documents	Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance
Budget	2 952 869 PLN (685 578 EUR)
Spending	2 879 130 PLN (668 457 EUR)

Poland has not, as of yet, adopted any integration strategy or policy document. In Poland, there are two separate institutions responsible for the integration of people applying for international protection and those who have already been granted such status—the Office for Foreigners, which is accountable to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, is in charge of pre-integration activities throughout the course of the asylum procedure, whereas the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is responsible for the integration process after protection status has been granted. Both institutions act on the basis of two separate acts of law, which

is a source of difficulty in the coordination of integration activities and responsibility for the integration process. Regional voivodeship offices are responsible for coordinating action with regard to the integration of people who have obtained refugee and subsidiary protection status. The main integration tool for BIPs is the individual integration programme (IIP) agreed to between a poviat (district) family support centre and the foreigner. The IIP has a duration of up to twelve months and covers the following: payment of cash benefits for support and expenses related to learning Polish, payment of health insurance premiums, and specialist social counselling.

## EUROPEAN COMPARISON OF INTEGRATION

In Poland there is insufficient data concerning the beneficiaries of international protection in order to make it possible to develop appropriate and effective integration policies and evaluate them properly. This is one of the main conclusions from the integration policy assessment carried out under the 'National Integration Evaluation Mechanism. Measuring and improving integration of beneficiaries of international protection' (NIEM). A comparative evaluation study has covered, apart from Poland, fourteen European Union Member States, including three Visegrád (V4) countries—Czechia, Poland, and Hungary—providing material for comparison of the implementation of integration policies in the European Union and in the V4.

Four general fields of integration, with some more detailed areas specified, have undergone evaluation: (1) general conditions, including reception and mainstreaming; (2) legal integration, including residency right, family unity, and access to effective nationality; (3) socio-economic integration, including housing, employment, vocational qualifications, health, public relief, and social security; and (4) socio-cultural integration, including children's education, language learning and social orientation, and building bridges between the receiving society and the beneficiaries of international protection. These areas have been submitted to a comparative analysis of the three stages of integration policy development: establishing the legal framework, policy development, and implementation and cooperation.

Similar to other EU Member States, Poland is much better at establishing the legal framework in the areas listed above than in developing and (especially) implementing integration policies. In the case of Poland, there is a clear, visible discrepancy between the legal framework designing the systemic solution, which is assessed relatively well, and the implementation, where the assessment is very low.

In the areas pertaining to socio-economic integration, BIPs are treated in the same way as people with Polish citizenship. While taking advantage on equal terms of social services provided by the system at the national level, BIPs face the same problems as Polish citizens with respect to the deficit areas, e.g. housing (access to municipal housing) or healthcare. At the same time, the specific and vulnerable situation of BIPs, requiring some proactive support action (such as providing services at the employment office or a hospital in a language which such a person can understand), is not taken into account. As the comparative analysis shows, this very narrow interpretation of the principle of equal treatment is not, however, something specific to Poland.

The above-mentioned difficulty in obtaining information about people with international protection status in Poland is also related to the fact that, so far, there has been no national strategy adopted in Poland for integration of this specific group of people. Therefore, the implementation of integration policies has not been covered by the monitoring and evaluation system. Even though most of the countries

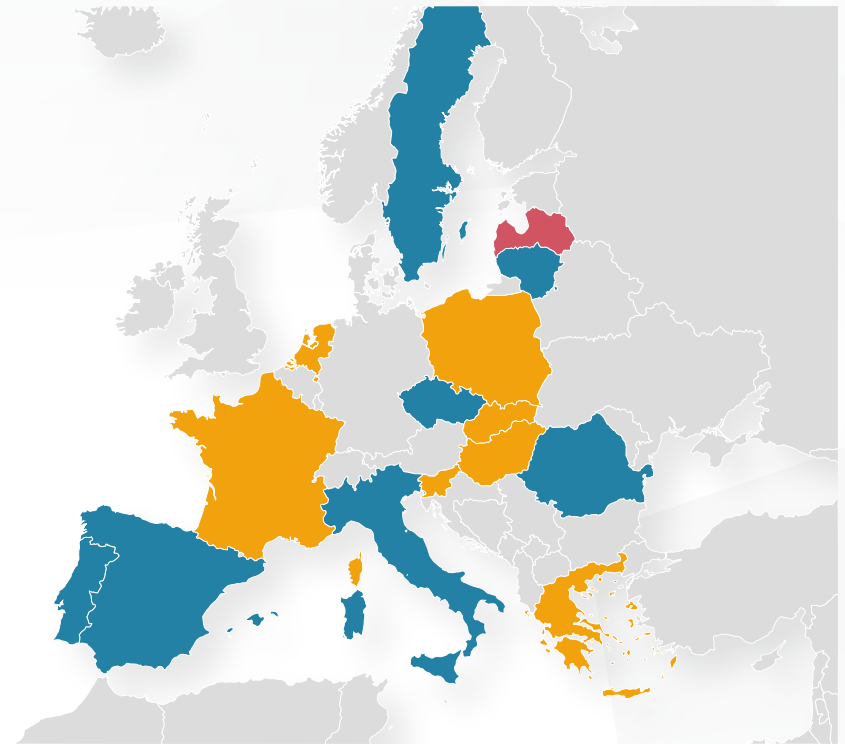
where the analysis has been conducted have poor results as regards the integration of refugee groups into mainstream policies (mainstreaming), it should be noted that Poland and France (during the analysis period), Slovenia, and Hungary have been the worst at implementing policies in this area, not offering any national tools for the strategic management of integration.

Compared to the other V4 countries under analysis, Poland has ranked average in all the evaluated areas; with scores obtained for individual areas, it ranks between Czechia—evaluated higher in practically all areas—and Hungary, which received generally poorer scores (the NIEM analysis is not carried out in Slovakia). The greater distance between Poland and Czechia, with Czechia scoring much higher, and between Poland and Hungary, with Hungary getting a much lower assessment, can be observed in areas such as housing,

vocational qualifications, and employment. A clear difference can also be seen between Czechia, on the one hand, and Poland and Hungary, on the other, in the area of education, despite the existing legal solutions in Poland supporting the education of children with migration experience, including refugees (a teacher assistance function, preparatory classes, additional Polish language lessons, and remedial classes). This is a consequence of the already mentioned gap between the legal framework and implementation. While Poland is getting closer to the Czech Republic in the assessment of its legal framework, with regard to the stages of policy development, and, in particular, the implementation and cooperation stage, it lags far behind. In addition, among the V4 countries under analysis, only Czechia has a strategy for the integration of BIPs in place. There are no such strategies in Poland or Hungary.

#### National strategy on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

- National strategy on the integration of BIPs with a specific national budget
- National strategy on the integration of BIPs lacking a specific national budget
- Absence of national strategy





# INTEGRATION OF BIPS IN SLOVAKIA IN 2018

MV ČR

Title of the programme	Project STEP 3
Reponsible authorities	Ministry of the Interior
Implementors	Marginal (NGO)
Conceptual documents	Project STEP 3
Budget	1 167 999, 5 EUR (1/12/2016 – 31/12/2019)

The integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) is provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) based on a project co-financed by the state budget and the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). NGOs provide financial support and services—social, psychological, and legal help to BIPs. Participation in the project is voluntary, but BIPs participate because in Slovakia there is no existing state integration programme. BIPs are usually accommodated at hotels and pensions, with vulnerable persons (families

and elderly people) in private flats. In Slovakia, there are no operational integration centres for BIPs. The project covers financial support (for example, medicine, requalification courses, school needs, leisure activities) for some time. BIPs are also entitled to some state social benefits. Asylees have the same access to health care as citizens. BIPs have the same rights and access to education as Slovak nationals from kindergarten to high school and universities. BIPs have free access to the labour market. They do not need work permission.

# EUROPEAN COMPARISON OF INTEGRATION

The integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) in Slovakia remained almost unchanged compared to the previous year. The state integration programme, which was expected to be implemented in early 2017, has not yet been accepted. Slovakia's integration policy, which has been in force since 2014 and which imposes integration measures in various areas of third-country national (including BIP) integration, should be revised this year. Last year, the Strategy for Labour Mobility of Foreigners was approved, pointing to the need for foreign labour inflows and including a partial focus on the integration of third-country nationals in general.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue to ensure the integration of BIPs in Slovakia through projects. The Czech Republic is the only country in the V4 region which has approved a functioning State Integration Programme aimed specifically at the integration of BIPs fully funded by the state budget.

The most important and, at the same time, the most complicated areas of BIP integration in terms of the Slovak Republic seem to be the provision of suitable housing and the social security system, especially for the most vulnerable BIP groups.

Pursuant to the Asylum Act, recognised refugees should be temporarily accommodated in an integration centre, but the only facility established for these

purposes is not used. The Asylum Act also stipulates that the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic will provide the municipality, which provides accommodation to recognised refugees, a subsidy for accommodation or a contribution to the development of the municipality's infrastructure under conditions defined by a comprehensive integration programme approved by the government in the proposal of the Ministry of Interior. This provision also does not apply.

In practice, NGOs which implement integration projects provide accommodation for BIPs at the beginning of their integration. The stay of BIPs in the territory of the Slovak Republic is justified, their free movement within the territory is not limited, and they can also acquire real estate or lease contracts without restrictions. However, BIPs have very few possibilities and options at the initial stage of integration (as they do not have sufficient contacts and funds) in terms of their place of integration. Although BIPs have the right to apply for a state housing allowance, and it is a part of their material need benefits, a housing allowance cannot be applied for separately. As a rule, they rely on the financial support and capacities (accommodation, but also personnel) of the NGOs implementing the integration project.

Usually, individuals stay in lodging houses or college dormitories, while families with children and older people stay in private dwellings where commercial rent is high.



According to the integration policy of the Slovak Republic, towns and municipalities are to focus on ensuring adequate housing with regard to preventing the segregation of foreigners in the implementation of social inclusion and integration programmes. The State Housing Policy Concept to 2020 includes foreigners and migrants among disadvantaged groups in the housing market. However, BIPs do not have access to the public housing system at an early stage of integration because they do not meet the basic conditions laid down in the general binding regulations of cities (e.g. a certain level of income, residence in the city for a certain period of time). Unfortunately, the share of public housing is insufficient. Overall, local authorities in Slovakia participate very little in the process of BIP integration. Exceptionally, the City of Košice has provided five two-room social flats for BIPs to an NGO. Contrary to the Slovak practice, Sweden and the Netherlands have entrusted the main role of BIP integration to local governments.

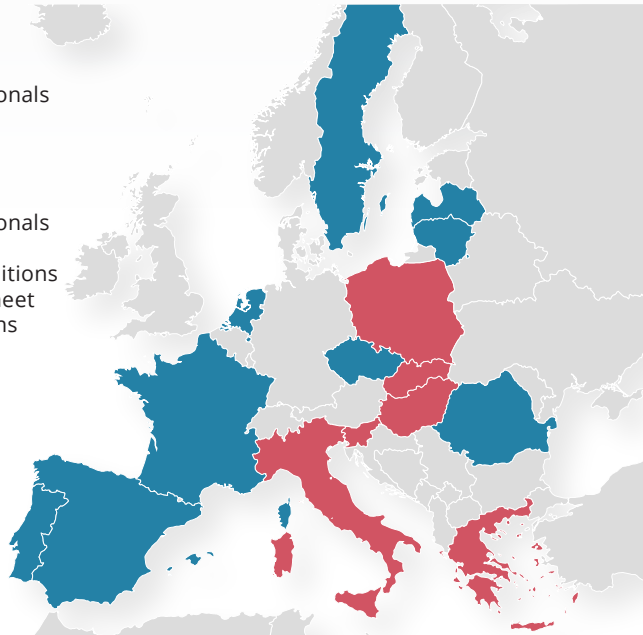
In the capital, Bratislava, NGOs established cooperation in housing with a local church. In the private sector, property owners are reluctant to rent apartments to foreigners,

especially refugees. The reasons are different—xenophobic attitudes, concerns about not paying rent, or short-term stays.

The biggest challenge in Slovakia, like many other EU countries, remains the social security system for the most vulnerable groups of BIPs, i.e. widows, the disabled, and the elderly. BIPs must meet the same conditions as Slovak nationals to be eligible for widow payments, disability compensation, and pensions. This is virtually impossible for newcomers given their situation. If BIPs do not meet the requirements and do not have any other income, they are dependent on state for their material need benefits. These benefits are insufficient and lead to poverty. On the positive side, BIPs are considered disadvantaged persons in the labour market, which entitles them to benefits in the field of their employment. They also have access to social services, compensation for disabled persons, and state family benefits (except the childbirth allowance, which only belongs to asylees, not persons with subsidiary protection to the same extent as Slovak citizens.

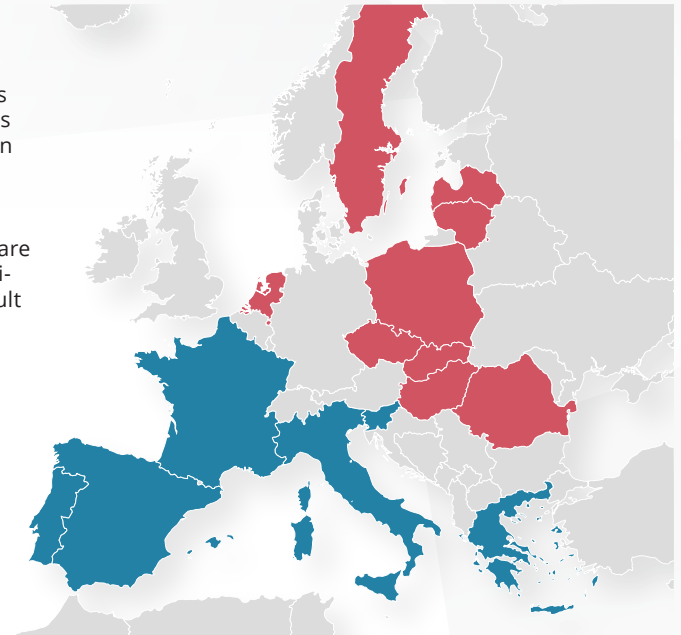
**Access to housing and housing benefits**

- Equal treatment with nationals in housing and housing benefits
- Equal treatment with nationals in housing and housing benefits inhibited by conditions that newcomers cannot meet or by additional restrictions



**Inclusion in a system of social security**

- Same general conditions as for nationals to access social security, which can be met by newcomers
- BIPs are excluded from certain benefits and/or are required to meet conditions, which can be difficult for newcomers





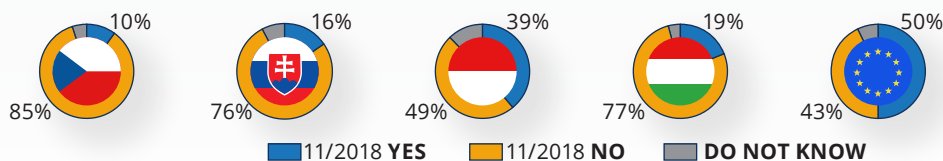
## ATTITUDES TO MIGRATION IN V4 ACCORDING TO THE STANDARD EUROBAROMETER

Eurobarometer 84 (11/2015), 87 (05/2017), 90 (11/2018)

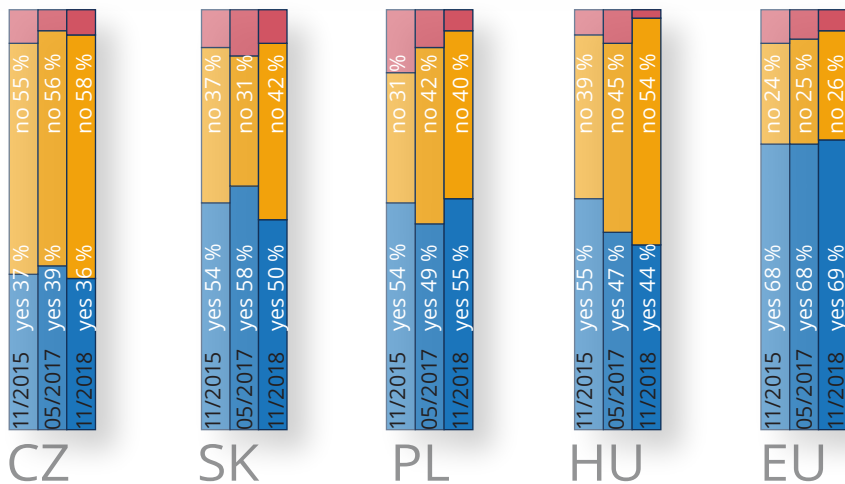
Three years after negative attitudes to migration erupted in the V4 countries, often fuelled by unrealised fears, the Eurobarometer still does not show much change, especially concerning immigration from outside the European Union. Attitudes in the V4 contrast with higher and growing numbers of positively attuned citizens in the majority of EU countries, including those with the highest numbers of asylum seekers. Since 2015, Italy has seen an increase in the share of respondents who see immigration from outside the European Union as positive by 4 percentage points (Germany by 5 pp,

and France by 8 pp). Within the V4, a partial change has occurred in Poland and Hungary. It stems mostly from the more positive views of immigration in the European Union, and in the case of Hungary, also from the change in attitudes following the closure of the Balkan route. On the other hand, the survey shows the attitudes of Czechs getting more negative to all types of migration. Citizens of the V4 also have more negative attitudes than ever to the common European policy on migration despite the end of the mandatory refugee relocation scheme.

### DO YOU THINK MIGRANTS CONTRIBUTE A LOT TO YOUR COUNTRY?



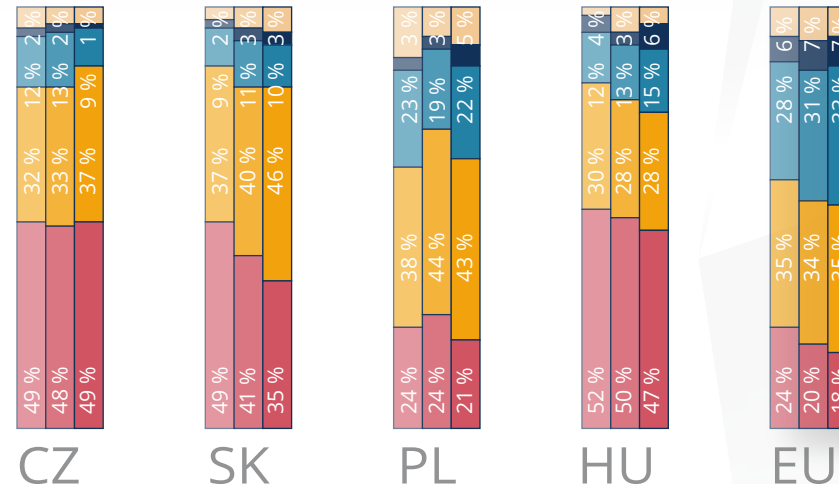
### DO YOU AGREE WITH A COMMON EUROPEAN POLICY ON MIGRATION?



## WHAT FEELINGS DO THE IMMIGRATION OF PEOPLE FROM OTHER EU COUNTRIES EVOKE FOR YOU?



## WHAT FEELINGS DO THE IMMIGRATION OF PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE EU EVOKE FOR YOU?



## HOW WELL ARE PEOPLE IN THE V4 INFORMED ABOUT MIGRATION?

Special Eurobarometer 469 (12/2017)

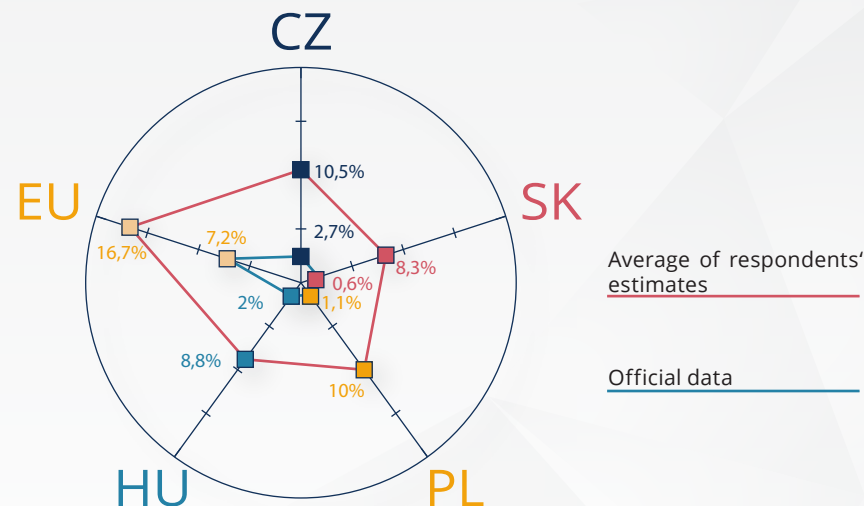
One of the conditions for society's ability to take qualified political positions is the level of its awareness. Therefore, a special Eurobarometer survey that placed its focus on migration awareness levels among European citizens was conducted. In an answer to a self-assessment question regarding knowledge of immigration and integration related matters, citizens of the V4 (except Poland) admitted to a lower degree of knowledge than the EU average. The relative lack of knowledge showed itself in the inability of respondents to estimate the correct proportion of non-EU immigrants in the total population within their respective countries. The least accurate response came from the citizens of Poland and Slovakia whose estimate exceeded reality by ten times. Lower rates of awareness also lead to overestima-

ting the ratio of irregular to regular migrants (SE/469 - QA1).

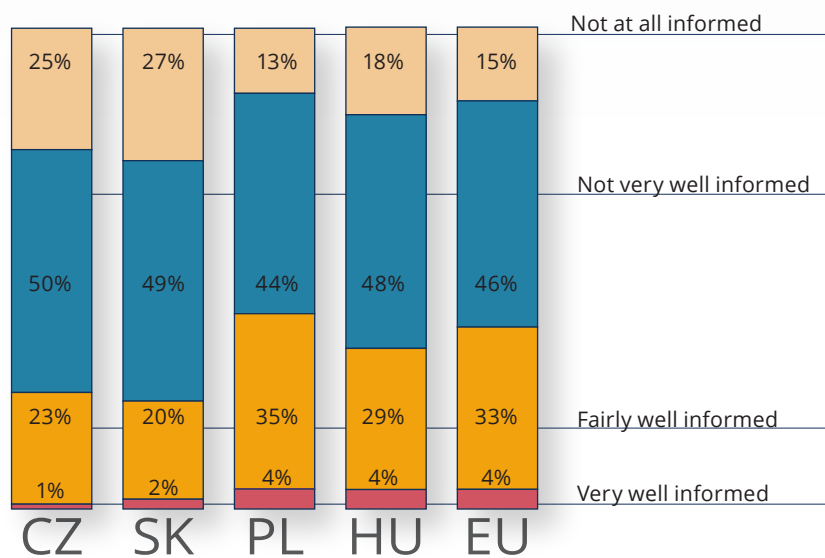
One way towards awareness is regular interaction with foreigners in multiple contexts of everyday life. It is the countries in which interactions are the scarcest where the estimates are the least accurate; instead, opinions are formed by the media and a political environment which tend to overemphasise migration and often in negative contexts, thus feeding the prejudice of a connection between migration and illegality or crime. The surveys also showed that the countries which have the most negative attitudes to immigration from outside the European Union are also the ones with a low intensity of contact between the majority population and immigrants.

## TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, WHAT IS THE PROPORTION OF IMMIGRANTS\* IN THE TOTAL POPULATION IN YOUR COUNTRY?

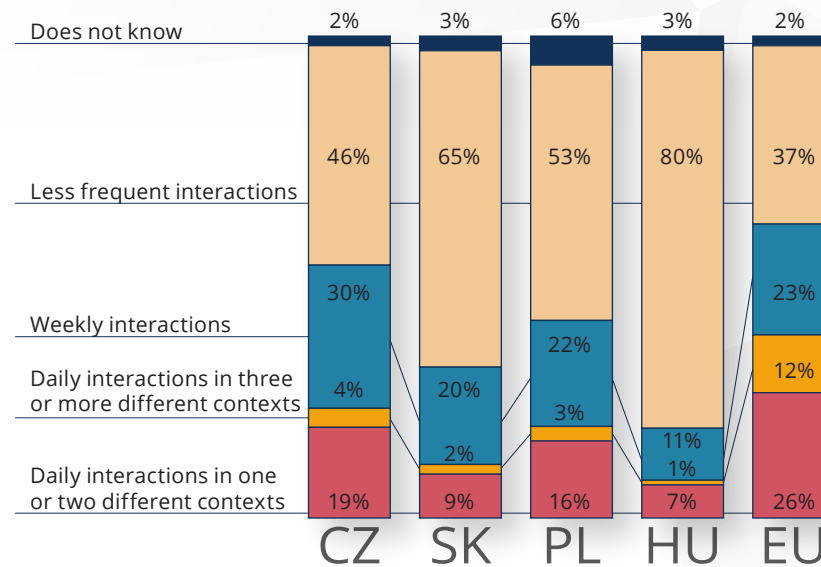
Eurostat / \*non-EU immigrants



## TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE INFORMED ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION RELATED MATTERS?



## ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU INTERACT WITH IMMIGRANTS?



## BEYOND QUOTAS...

The mandatory refugee relocation scheme, introduced to EU Member States in 2015, officially ended in September 2017. Even though debates at the European Commission and among the European heads of states regarding the new EU migration policy are far from being concluded, it already seems clear that mandatory refugee relocation quotas will not be a part of it (European Council conclusions 6/2018). Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš saw their de facto abandonment as a victory and a result of negotiations and sustained pressure from the V4 states. At the time, Babiš identified an alternative scheme, based on the principle of so-called flexible solidarity and characterised by voluntary participation, as a viable way forward despite the uncertainties it would create for EU border states whose assistance such a scheme should primarily serve.

With the quotas issue being ‘solved’—the first specifically articulated problem in the text of the Policy Statement of the Government of the Czech Republic from June 2018—the spotlight has shifted to other European or foreign policy themes regarding migration and the refugee agenda to gradually take its place. Czech Government policy has

therefore moved its focus primarily to two areas: protection of external EU borders and managing the causes of migration outside EU territory. At the same time, the corresponding rhetorics have been focusing on the African and Middle East regions, while obfuscating the line between refugee and economic migration issues.

Both areas (border protection and migration management) intertwine: A portion of material, personnel, and financial assistance to extra-EU countries is directed towards reinforcing local instruments for protection of ‘advanced’ borders of European space within the territory of transit countries such as Libya, the states of the Balkan Peninsula, and even the countries of the African Sahel. The focus on border protection is also expressed in the official support for the EU-Turkey deal and similar agreements with non-European transit countries which effectively serve to block migration routes to Europe. Another expression of the same tendency can be observed in the Czech Prime Minister’s call for the transformation of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) so that it directly assists the Libyan coast guard in returning migrants to the

shores of Africa. Such a proposition accentuates another theme of the Czech government’s agenda: a restrictive disembark and return policy.

This form of policy, which justifies itself by pointing to the necessity of managing migration flows and of breaking up smuggling networks, rarely pays attention however to the rights and basic needs of migrants and refugees or the need to set up a system of safe legal routes to Europe. The lack of concern shows itself in the disregard with which the dire living situation of migrants and refugees trapped in Libya or Turkey are treated, especially when the migrants and refugees in Libyan detention facilities, according to Human Rights Watch, suffer grave human rights violations. The same attitude is apparent in the Czech government position on the non-binding UN Global Compact for Migration. The purpose of the Compact is sustainable regulation of migratory flows which pays attention to the rights and legitimate concerns of all involved parties, including migrants. In December 2018, the Czech Republic was one of only five countries which were against it (152 countries were for the Compact; three out of five against it were from the V4).

The Czech government also aims to deal with the issue of managing the causes of migration in countries of origin via development assistance, which it understands in the wording of its Policy Statement as an instrument of security policy. The key indicator of official development assistance (ODA) is its ratio to gross national product (GNP). In 2015, Czechia pledged at the UN conference in Addis Ababa to reach a ratio of 0.33% GNP by 2030. OECD data shows that in 2018 the actual ratio stood at 0.014% GNP which is the same as in 2016—a 0.01 pp less than in 2017. It is necessary to add that in 2018 the average ratio of ODA to GNP in OECD countries was 0.31%.

However, in 2017 the government of Bohuslav Sobotka adopted the Development Cooperation Strategy for the period 2018–2030 which takes aim at accomplishing the Addis Ababa commitments in order to ‘promote stability in partner countries, and to foster their potential for sustainable economic and social development and prosperity’. Implementation of this strategy remains both an opportunity and a challenge for current and future Czech governments.



## BEYOND QUOTAS...

*Controversies in the Hungarian migration policy*

HUNGARY

BEYOND QUOTAS...

2018 was an election year in Hungary, and migration was a central topic in the election campaign. Fidesz-KDNP, with a newly reinforced two-thirds power in parliament, amended inter alia the asylum legislation, introducing a new justification for inadmissibility, which is a hybrid of the first country of asylum and the safe third country concepts. This resulted in dramatically reducing access to asylum—as of July 2018, all applications (except for the application of the former Prime Minister of North Macedonia) have been rejected on inadmissibility grounds. Following the adoption of the amendments, the European Commission started a new phase in the infringement procedure, launched originally in 2015, and referred the case to the European Court of Justice.

In addition, despite strong concerns voiced by civil society and international organisations, the parliament adopted another set of rules within the framework of the 'Stop Soros' package. The amendments introduce a new offence in the Criminal Code on 'facilitating illegal immigration',

including activities such as assisting an asylum seeker in submitting an asylum claim, conducting border monitoring activities, issuing or distributing information leaflets about asylum procedure, or organising a network. The amendments also introduced a special immigration tax with a 25 percent levy targeting entities supporting CSOs by providing financial support for 'an act which supports immigration'. Though, as of this writing, no criminal procedure has been launched nor has the special immigration tax been levied, the European Commission started an infringement procedure against Hungary due to the incompatibility of the new provisions with European legislation.

The public discourse on migration also focused on strengthening border management; nevertheless, the government position was controversial in this regard. The government implemented and strongly supported all activities aimed at strengthening the protection of Hungary's external borders (through the development of a technical border protection device; in

other words, a fence along Hungary's southern borders), as well as those in the European Union and Western Balkan countries (for example, by providing officials and equipment to the Hungarian border police in order to assist the management of North Macedonia's border). Nevertheless, following the adoption of a European Parliament report on the situation in Hungary (the Sargentini Report), the government argued that 'Brussels wants to take away the right of border protection from the Member States' (PM Viktor Orbán, 14 September 2018, Kossuth Radio). For this reason, the Hungarian government was reluctant to support the Commission's proposal concerning the European Border and Coast Guard Agency until the very final stages of the negotiations. In addition, the Hungarian government strongly opposed the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, joining the United States as the second country to refuse both documents.

Putting migration at the centre of political discourse had more progressive results

as well. Already during the 2015 refugee crisis, the government had highlighted the importance of providing support as close to the crisis areas as possible. For several years this has been a priority only in words. In 2017, however, the government started the Hungary Helps Programme, a framework programme centralising Hungary's international humanitarian activities addressing poverty reduction, promoting human and minority rights, and strengthening international stability. The principles of the programme are identifying the root causes of the problems, creating conditions to remain in the country of origin, maintaining the religious and ethnic diversity of crisis regions, and more controversially, supporting Christian communities. The Stipendium Hungaricum (Hungarian scholarship) programme is also implemented within the Hungary Helps framework, awarding scholarships in Hungary for more than 4,100 students from fifty one countries in the 2018-19 academic year. According to the OECD, in 2018, Hungary (after New Zealand) was the country with the biggest increase in official development assistance outflows (up 20.7 percent).

## RHETORIC AND PRACTICE

In spite of the action brought by the European Commission before the European Court of Justice in December 2017 against Poland, Czechia, and Hungary for failing to fulfil their obligations under the 2015 decision concerning the relocation of refugees from Greece and Italy on the basis of the quota system, the government in Poland (the Law and Justice government, albeit with new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki) in 2018 sustained its position against relocation and used two lines of argument with regard to the issue of receiving refugees in Poland. First, the concept of 'assistance in the place of origin' was promoted in the origin countries of the refugees (Syria) and in the regional countries where there are groups of refugees, especially Syria (Turkey, Jordan). In January, the Humanitarian Aid Department (DPH) was established at the Prime Minister's Chancellery, headed by one of the lead politicians of the Law and Justice party Beata Kempa. In their external communications, DPH presented trips made by Minister Kempa to places where assistance was provided and made available information about the amounts of assistance spending.

In another line of argument, the government emphasised the role of Poland in receiving people from the Donbas region of the Ukraine, where war was still underway, people who

were 'treated as refugees' (1). From the viewpoint of Prime Minister Morawiecki, in this way Poland 'was making a great contribution to calming down the tensions on the EU's eastern border' (2). The scale referred to by PM Morawiecki can be illustrated by data from the Office for Foreigners regarding applications for international protection and decisions granting protection to citizens of Ukraine. In practice, it has only been since 2016 that people from this group began to receive decisions granting them international protection: Before 2015, only two people had received refugee status; in 2016 it had increased to sixteen people; fifty six in 2017; and eleven in 2018. As regards subsidiary protection, twenty people had received it prior to 2015 and a total of 323 individuals were granted this protection in the years 2016–18. It is worth noting that the change in positions took place only after a public statement by the previous Prime Minister, Beata Szydło, who in January 2016, stated in the European Parliament that Poland had allegedly accepted 'a million refugees from Ukraine'.

Political discourse analyses show that there was a tendency towards increasing restrictions and securitisation in Polish migration policy (3). Apart from promoting assistance to refugee groups far from Polish

borders by providing 'assistance in the place of origin', the Border Guard on the border crossing with Belarus in Terespol continued the practice of selective acceptance of applications for international protection. Work was also in progress on an amendment to the act on granting international protection to foreigners that, according to the Commissioner for Human Rights and watchdog organisations, may have had a negative impact on the rights of people applying for protection. The conclusions of the summit in Brussels on 28–29 June 2018, during which the implementation of the relocation quotas system based on the principles of solidarity and responsibility was abandoned, were hailed by the Polish government as a success of the government's policy.

At the same time as this rhetoric of not accepting refugees, the majority of whom were considered immigrants, the government was also working on socio-economic priorities for its migration policy. The needs of the labour market guided this document and it practically ignored those people with international protection status, providing for some integration measures to a limited extent only. It could, however, become the long-awaited document outlining Polish migration policy. Work on that document coincided with

the campaign preceding the October local government elections. When the plans for the migration policy were presented in public by an official responsible for the preparation of the document during a university discussion meeting, criticism from supporters of the Law and Justice party with strong anti-immigrant views led to his dismissal and the work on the policy stopped.

However, Law and Justice's attempt to play on anti-immigrant sentiments at the end of the electoral campaign, with a campaign commercial presenting the future of Poland after 'the invasion of refugees/immigrants', proved counterproductive. Some supporters of the Law and Justice party strongly criticised the commercial message or considered it not credible in light of previous actions. Eventually, Law and Justice would lose the local elections at the national scale. Generally, according to monitoring of the local government campaign looking at the xenophobic dimension and the issue of migration and integration, the strategy of 'scaring people with refugees' turned out ineffective (4).

At the end of the year, Poland joined the countries which have refused to adopt the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Migration.

1) Interview with PM Mateusz Morawiecki for CNN on 25 January 2018.

2) Ibid.

3) See: Fomina J., Kucharczyk J., *From politics of fear to securitisation policies? Poland in the face of migration crisis* [in:] Kucharczyk J., Mesežnikov G. (ed.) *Phantom Menace. The Politics and Policies of*

*Migration in Central Europe, Prague 2019.*

4) See: Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights, *Migranci, uchodźcy i ksenofobia w kampanii wyborczej 2018 – raport z monitoringu, Warsaw 2018.*



# THE PERIOD OF MANDATORY QUOTAS IS OVER

The system of mandatory quotas for the relocation of refugees, which the European Commission presented on 13 May 2015, officially ended in September 2017. From the beginning, Slovakia did not agree with the mandatory quotas system as much as other Visegrád Group (V4) countries. These countries actively supported reform of the current asylum system and rejected most of the supranational solutions.

Slovakia had to relocate 902 people from Greece and Italy under the mandatory quotas. In the end, only sixteen refugees were accepted. At the same time, Slovakia pledged to place one hundred refugees under a voluntary resettlement scheme. This did not happen. However, in December 2015, 145 Assyrian Christians were accepted from Iraq voluntarily, not under the mandatory quotas system. The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland have been brought before the EU Court of Justice for 'failing to comply with their legal obligations' on relocating refugees. The Commission has not brought action against Slovakia because of the sixteen admitted refugees under mandatory quotas.

The European Council reached a major migration agreement at the June 2018

summit. The conclusions of the Council revealed a willingness of Member States to set up centres within their territories with the support of EU, where it could be quickly distinguished whether a person is entitled to international protection.

According to the conclusions of the summit, relocation should take place exclusively on a basis of voluntary decision by receiving states—thus, there would be no compulsory redistribution.

The V4 countries were quite satisfied after the summit. Many of ideas they had promoted were incorporated into the summit conclusions, including the need to strengthen external borders and changes relating to Frontex's competences and personnel. At the same time, the V4 countries achieved a great deal in that they will not have to retreat from other Member States under threat of a lawsuit, a reduction in EU funds, or other sanctions.

A statement from the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic from November 2018 at a Salzburg forum confirms Slovakia's clear position in this area: 'We will make sure that external border protection is highly effective. We also want readmission

agreements and return policies to be 100% fulfilled. At the same time, we agreed that causes of migration must always be solved in countries of origin and where appropriate, in transit countries, not only in countries where migrants are seeking asylum.'

Despite the decreasing number of asylum applications in Slovakia and the decreasing number of international protections granted, it is still a major political issue. Even during the presidential elections in March 2019, a refugee theme was used and abused by some of the candidates during the election campaign. It is very important that politicians and media also start to talk about this topic objectively, use the correct terminology and facts, and not confuse the terms migrant and refugee.

Recently, two major documents on migration and refugee issues were voted on at the United Nations: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a Global Compact on Refugees. Regarding the attitude of the Slovak Republic to the Global Compact for Migration, among the V4 countries, by deciding not to participate in the vote, it chose the most modest way to express its reservations concerning

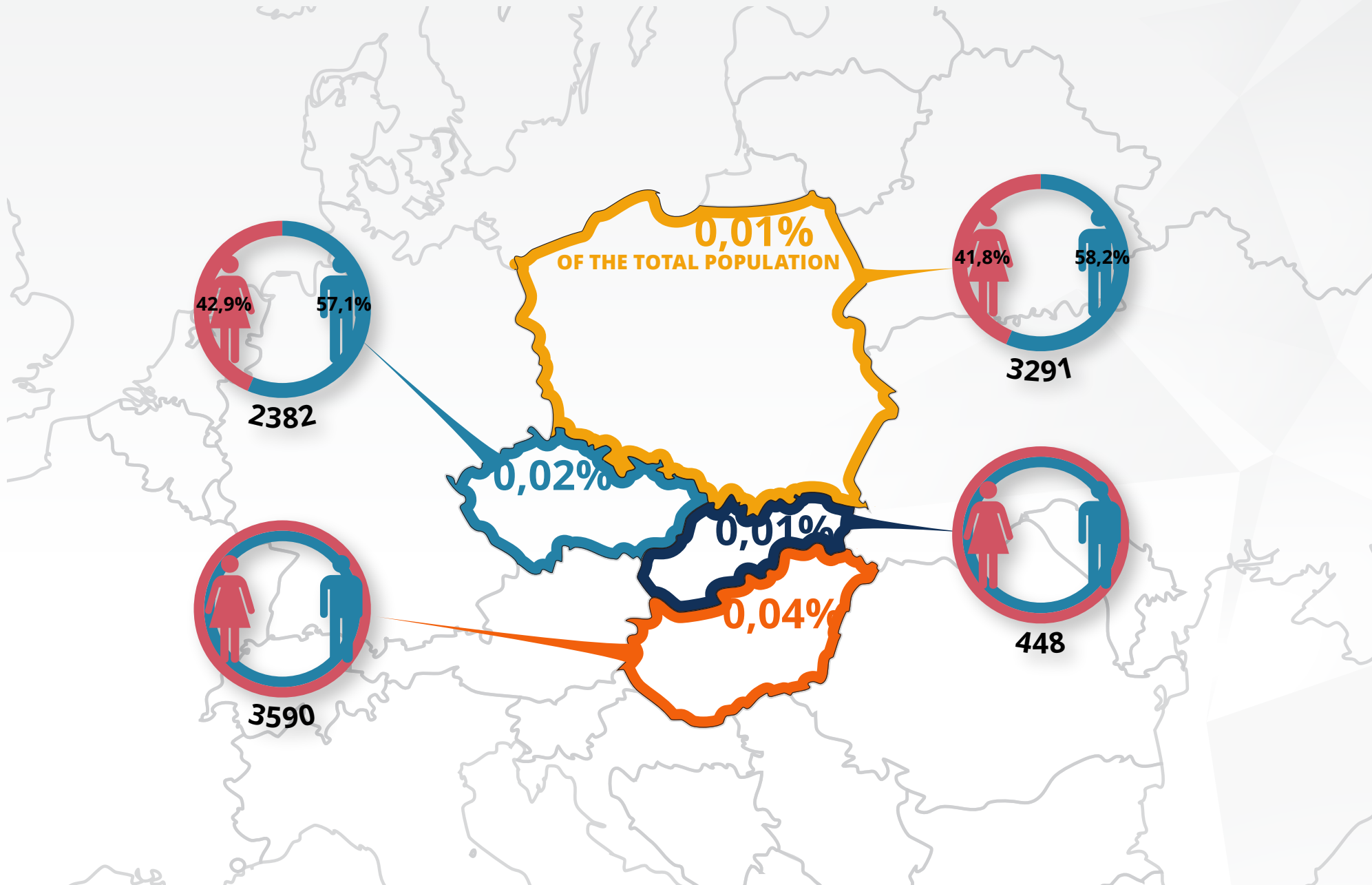
the migration pact. However, it is interesting that in the autumn of 2018, Slovakia approved another important national document, the 'Strategy for Labour Mobility of Foreigners', which aims to propose measures resolving labour market shortages in certain areas through directed and targeted mobility of foreigners. As stated in the strategy itself, it has been developed in accordance with the key principles of the Global Compact on Migration.

The Slovak Republic has decided to support the second UN document, the Global Compact on Refugees, as did twenty-five other EU countries. Of the 193 UN member countries, only the United States and Hungary voted against the agreement. Three countries abstained.

# BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN V4 COUNTRIES IN 2018

MV ČR, ČSÚ (CZ); MV SR (SK); GUS, UDSC (PL); KSH, BMH, BM (HU) - 2018

V4





PUBLISHED BY



WITH SUPPORT FROM



• Visegrad Fund



EUROPEAN UNION  
Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund

SAFE HARBOUR

The publication was financed through the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund under the project „NIEM: National Integration Evaluation Mechanism. Measuring and Enhancing the Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection“, and through the International Visegrad Fund under the project „V4NIEM: Visegrad Countries National Integration Evaluation Mechanism“.

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June 2019  
ISBN 978-80-7591-018-9 (online ; pdf)