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COUNTRY OF DESTINATION: GERMANY

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## INTRODUCTION

Germany is the most populous country in the European Union with 83 155 031 inhabitants, the majority of which of German nationality, constituting 6,7% of EU population (Tables 1 and 2)<sup>1</sup>.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has become one of the major destination countries for international migrants both from European countries and from more distant regions of origin. Some of the reasons behind the attractiveness of the country include the increased labour mobility following the enlargement of the European Union, the severe economic decline after the global financial crisis in 2008 in many Southern European countries and the political crises and civil wars, particularly in some Middle Eastern countries.

Most recently, in 2015, Germany became the main EU country of destination for migrants and refugees from Syria and Iraq, leading to an outstanding increase in population<sup>2</sup>.

However, similar to many other countries of the global north, Germany has long suffered from demographic change and a shrinking domestic population. Some scholars argue that net immigration has, therefore, become one of the major sources of population growth and an indispensable factor affecting future demographic and economic stability<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, without the net migration surplus, the population in Germany would have fallen since 1972 because more people died than were born in each year ever since.

It is, therefore, a concern of the country the most recent data of the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), showing lower net immigration, higher mortality and a slow growth in number of births since the end of 2020<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, it is expected that the number of people aged 67 or over will rise by 22% from 16 million to an expected 20 million between 2020 and 2035<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Eurostat, 72 569 978 inhabitants, ie. 87.3% of the population in Germany, are nationals, whereas the remaining 12,7% is made of non-EU (7,4%, 6 124 000) and EU mobiles (5,3%, 4 461 000).

<sup>2</sup> IOM, UN Migration, *Migration, Asylum and Refugees in Germany: Understanding the Data*, [https://www.iom.int/news/migration-asylum-and-refugees-germany-understanding-data#:~:text=This%20is%20because%20Germany%C2%B4,asylum%2Dseekers%20among%20German%20states](https://www.iom.int/news/migration-asylum-and-refugees-germany-understanding-data#:~:text=This%20is%20because%20Germany%C2%B4,asylum%2Dseekers%20among%20German%20states.). Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Destatis, Statistisches Bundesamt, *No population growth expected for 2020*, [https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/01/PE21\\_016\\_12411.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/01/PE21_016_12411.html). Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Destatis, Statistisches Bundesamt, *Number of people aged 67 or over will grow 22% by 2035*, [https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/09/PE21\\_459\\_12411.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/09/PE21_459_12411.html). Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

To contrast the ageing of the population and the consequent skills shortage, the German Federal Labour Agency is now encouraging the recruitment of highly skilled workers. Some measures, such as the EU Blue Card and Act to Improve the Assessment and Recognition of Professional Qualifications Acquired Abroad, have already made Germany one of the OECD countries with the least restrictions on migration of university graduates for the purpose of work<sup>6</sup>.

However, more policies will have to be implemented by the Government to tackle the population shrinkage. In the meantime, it is important to recognise the role played by migration and this is why this report will analyse some of the crucial characteristics of migration in Germany.

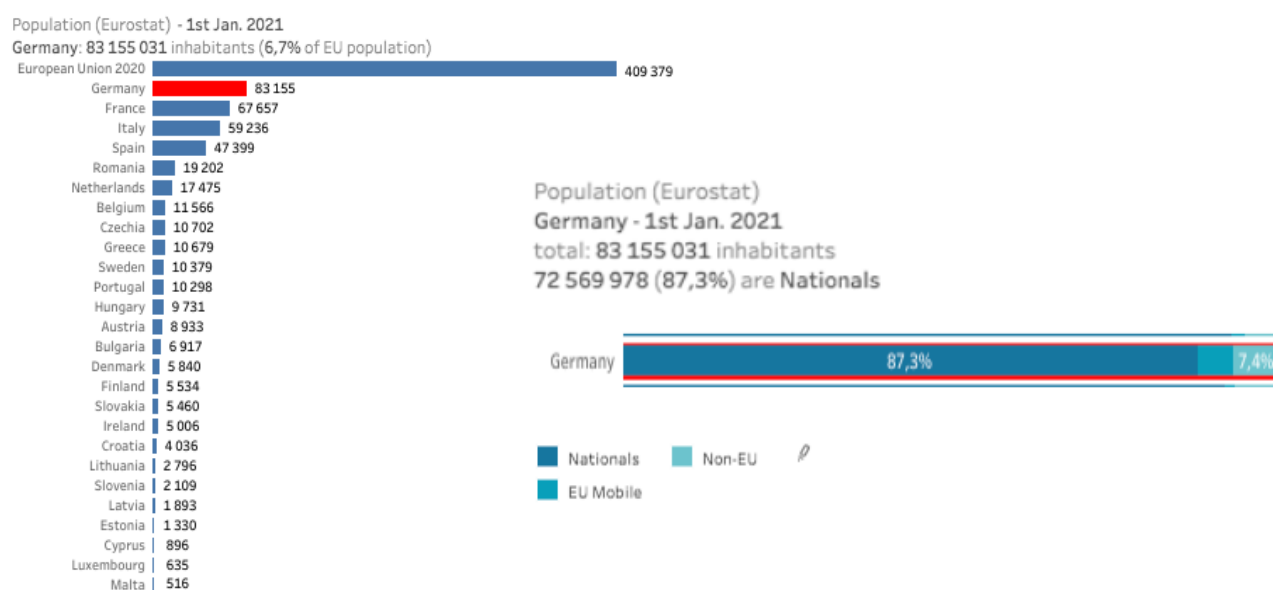


Table 1. Source EUROSTAT via Atlas of Migration

Table 2. Source EUROSTAT via Atlas of Migration

<sup>6</sup> German Federal Government, *Immigration of skilled workers: The current situation in Germany*, <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/immigration-of-skilled-workers-the-current-situation-in-germany>. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## 1. STOCK TOTAL POPULATION

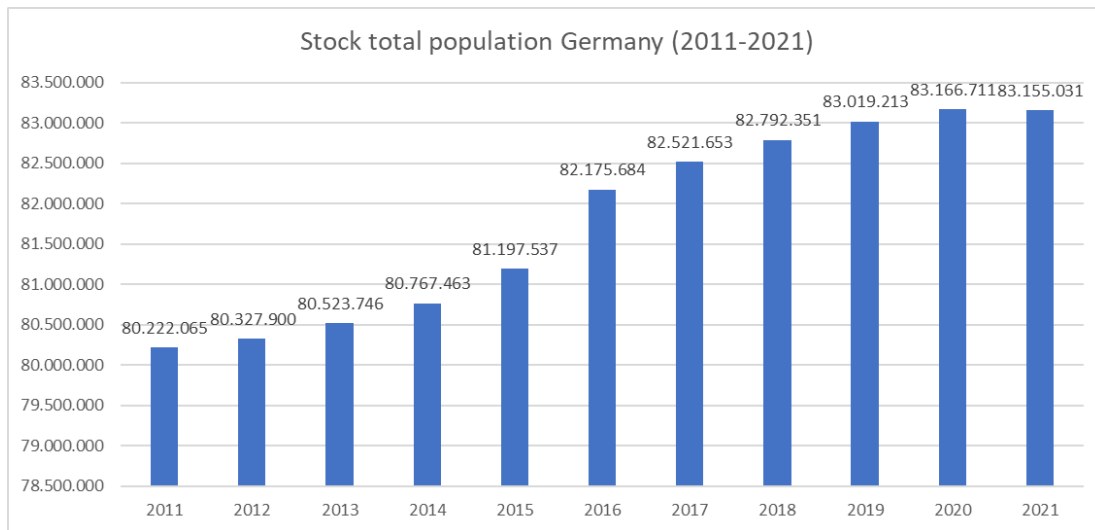
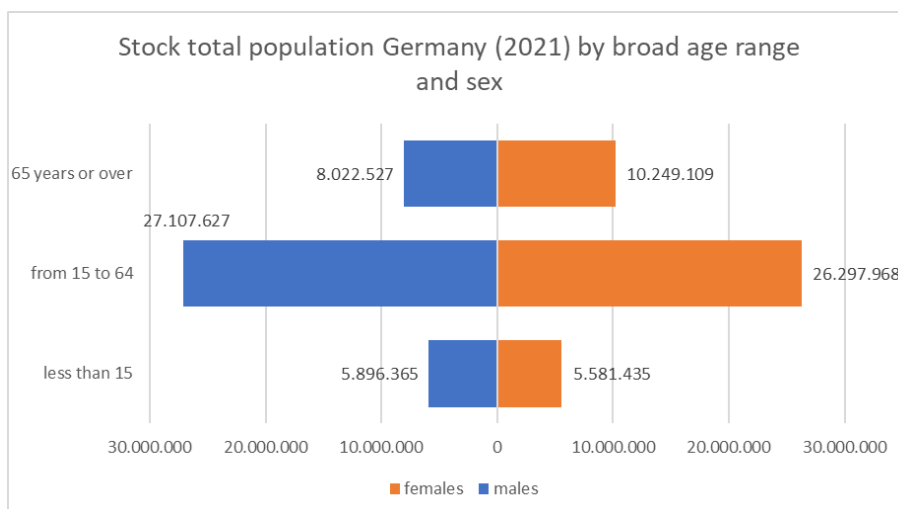


Table 3. Source : EUROSTAT [demo \_pjan]

Table 3 shows that the stock total population in Germany has been steadily increasing since 2011; an abrupt peak can be noted in 2016 with the stock total population increasing by more than one million people due to the massive influx of immigrants from Syria and Iraq.

Although a moderate increase in population can be observed in the years following the Middle Eastern war, since the year 2020 the stock population of the country seems to have reached a stability of around 83 million people.



Total females =  
42 128 512  
Total males =  
41 026 519

Table 4. Source : EUROSTAT [demo\_pjanbroad]

By a more detailed analysis of the year 2021, it can be noted that the largest category of people residing in Germany is that of females, exceeding the total male population by more than 1 million people.

The division of females and males across the broad age categories is quite heterogeneous, although there are almost 2 more million females than males aged 65 or over.

Overall, the age range 15-64, which can be described as the “working age” range, constitutes the highest portion of German stock population; this is due to the increased labour mobility following the enlargement of the EU, which created more job opportunities for natives and foreigners.

## 2. STOCK OF MIGRANTS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

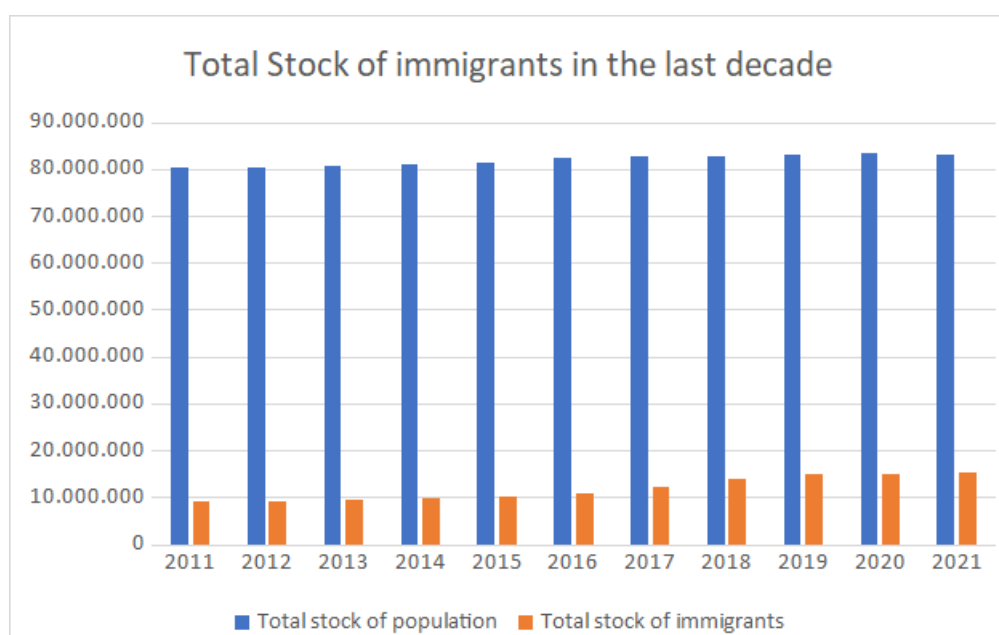


Table 5. Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

Between 2011 and 2016, the total stock of migrants is about 9 741 041, representing about 12% of the total population. Meanwhile, during this decade, the total stock of the population is relatively stable at around 82 000 000, after 2016, after 2016, the total number of migrants increased with 12 105 436 immigrants in 2017 and 15 162 728 in 2021, so the 18% of the total population.

### 3. IMMIGRANT STOCK BY CATEGORY

#### 3.1 SEX

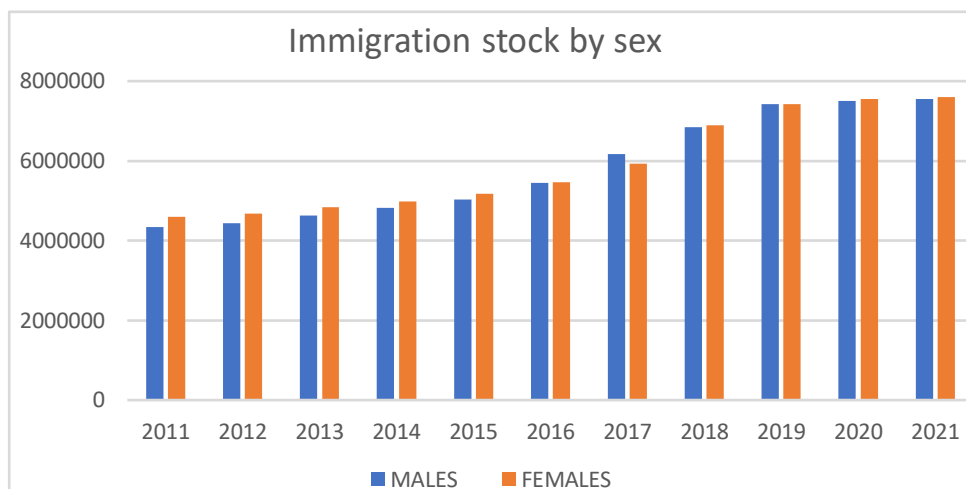


Table 6. Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

On average, in the last decade, female immigrants constituted the major part of total immigrant stock by sex in Germany. Nevertheless the number of male immigrants had a significant peak in 2017 with 6 171 564 male immigrants against 5 933 872 female immigrants. It can be noted that both male and female immigrants follow the same trend, increasing since 2015.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the number of male immigrants is around 7 556 729, whereas that of female immigrants is around 7 605 999.

#### 3.2 AGE

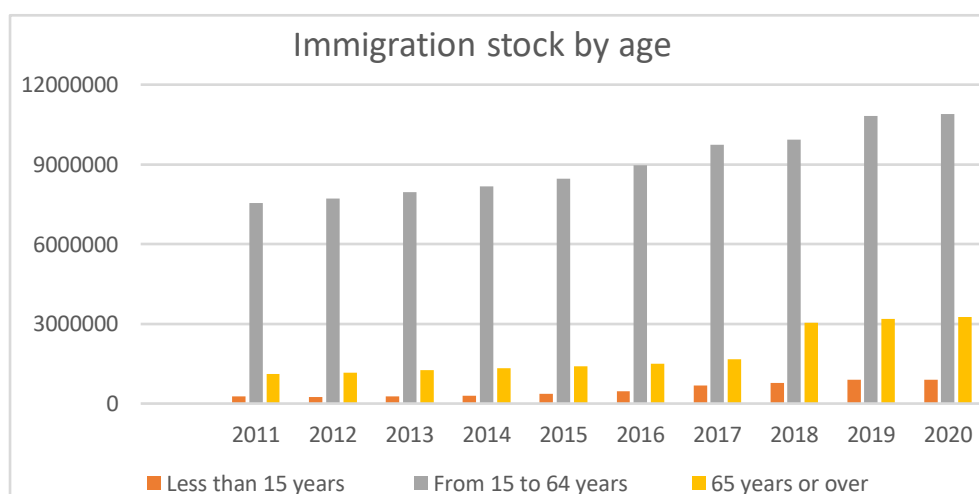


Table 7. Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]



Table 7 highlights the outstanding difference among the three broad age groups of immigrants in Germany. It is clear that the majority of immigrants is constituted by those within working age, ie. between 15 and 64 years old, this is because Germany attracts in prevalence immigrants seeking jobs from European and non-European countries. The working trend is further confirmed by the German Federal Labour Agency, which has been encouraging the recruitment of skilled migrants in order to contrast massive labour shortages and to replace those retiring from the country's ageing workforce<sup>7</sup>. For what concern the group aged 65 or over the number is fairly stable between 2011 and 2017 with an average of 1 300 000, increasing then between 2018 and 2021 with an average of 3 000, 000.

Finally the number of immigrants under the age of 15, has remained stable between 2011 and 2015, increasing then since 2016 when immigrants moved together with their families to escape the war and, therefore.

Beginning January 1, 2021, the number of immigrants less than 15 years old is 1 021 092.

### 3.3 COUNTRY OF BIRTH

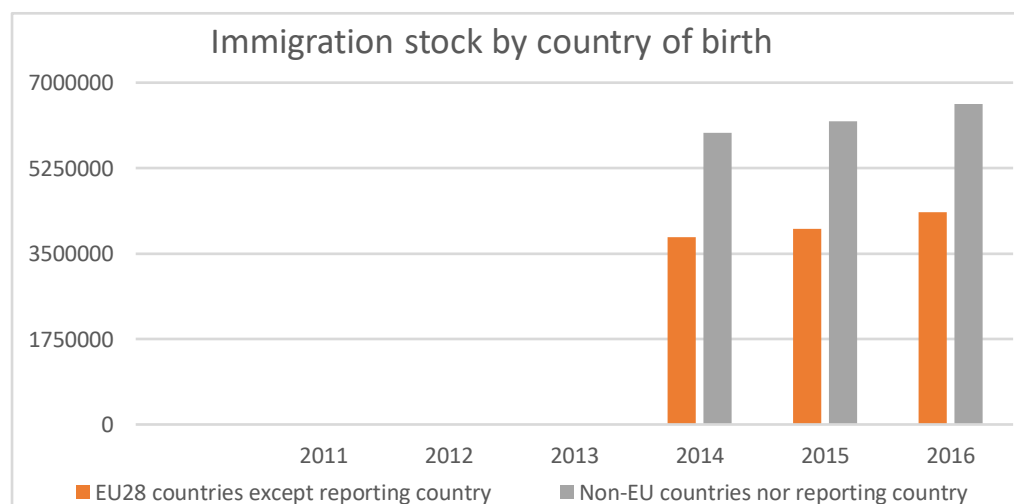


Table 8. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_pop4ctb]

<sup>7</sup> DW, *Germany's workforce in desperate need of skilled immigrants, warns labor agency*, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-workforce-in-desperate-need-of-skilled-immigrants-warns-labor-agency/a-58974377>. Accessed on 8th April 2022.

Table 8 is a representation of the countries of birth of immigrants in Germany between 2011 and 2021.

Notwithstanding the lack of data regarding EU and non-EU countries from 2011 to 2013, and again in 2021, it can be noted that immigration from Non-EU countries has been the main sources throughout the years.

Since 2016 to 2020, the number of non-EU immigrants as well as the number of EU immigrants increased, with an average of 7 730 424 Non-EU immigrants and 5 598 231 EU immigrants.

### 3.4 IMMIGRATION REASONS

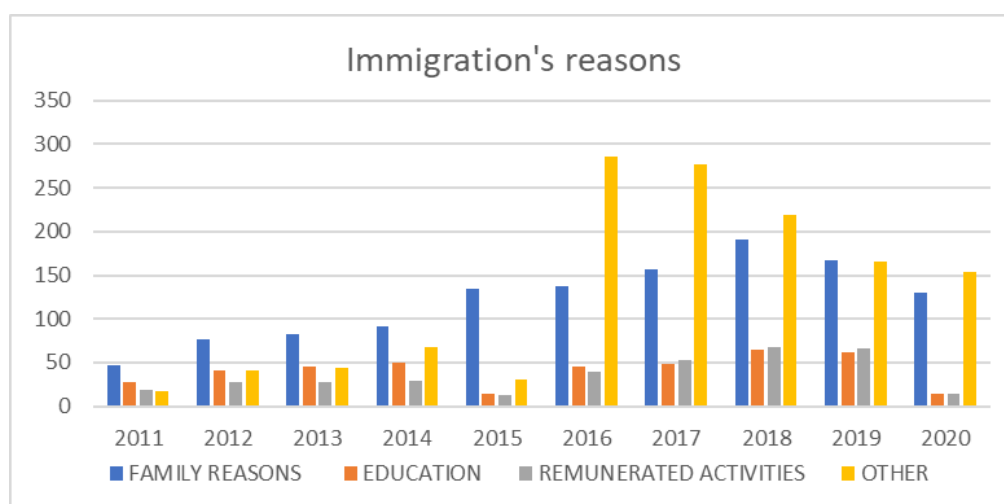


Table 9. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_resfirst]

The above data was collected from all residence permits issued between 2011 and 2020 on Eurostat, whose statistics only refer to third-country nationals, therefore, excluding EU-countries.

As it can be noted from the graph, family has been the major reason for migrating to Germany between 2011 and 2015.

From the European refugee crisis in 2015 to now, “other reasons” became the main channel of entrance to Germany. According to Eurostat, these include: refugee status and subsidiary protection, humanitarian reasons, residence only, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking in human beings and other reasons not specified (for a specific focus on refugees, please look at Chapter 7).

Except for the years 2015 and 2020, when the Syrian war occurred and the pandemic started, education has also played an important role in immigration, strictly linked with remunerated activities.

Table 10 provides for an overview of the main reasons of immigration to Germany as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

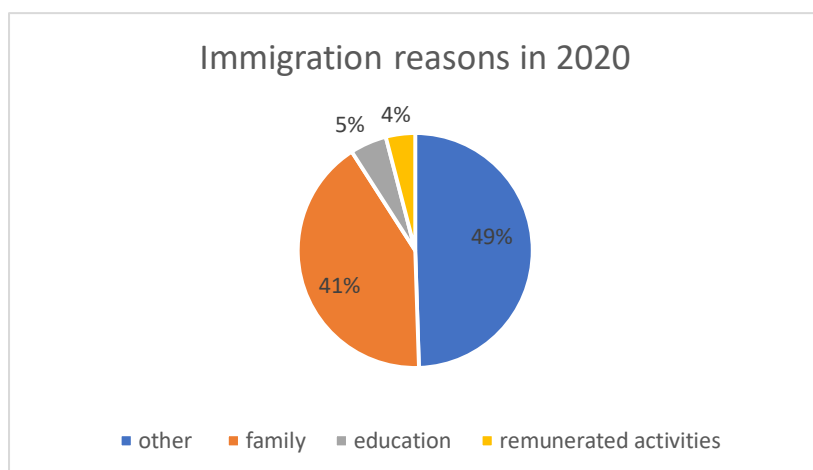


Table 10. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_resfirst]

#### 4. POPULATION GROWTH

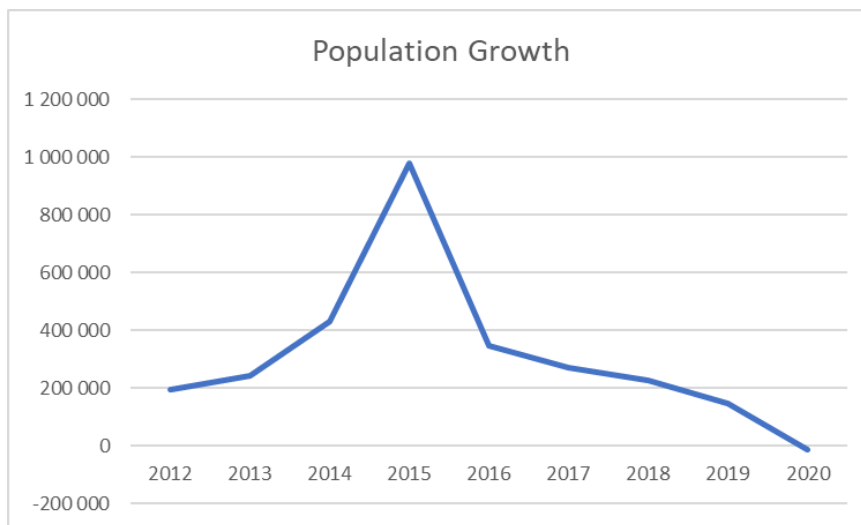


Table 11. Source EUROSTAT [demo\_gind]

Population growth is the difference in population size on 1<sup>st</sup> January of two consecutive years. The population change, whether positive or negative, consists of natural change (ie. Births and deaths) and net migration.

Table 11 shows that German population had a steady growth between 2012 and 2014.

Due to the massive influx of immigrants from Syria and Iraq, the population increased by 548 073 between 2014 and 2015.

Since then, the German population has suffered a severe decline between 2015 and 2016, which continued to spread less rapidly – and yet still incisive - in the upcoming years due to low birth rates compared to an increase of the life expectancy<sup>8</sup>.

Indeed, as it can be noted in 2020, the total population reached a negative number (- 11, 680), proof that Germany's population is ageing fast even more than most other OECD Member States.

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<sup>8</sup> German Federal Government, *Federal Government Report on the Demographic Situation and Future Development of Germany*, [https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/themen/demography/demografiebericht\\_kurz\\_en.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=1](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/themen/demography/demografiebericht_kurz_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1). Accessed on 12th April 2022.

## 5. FLOWS OF MIGRANTS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

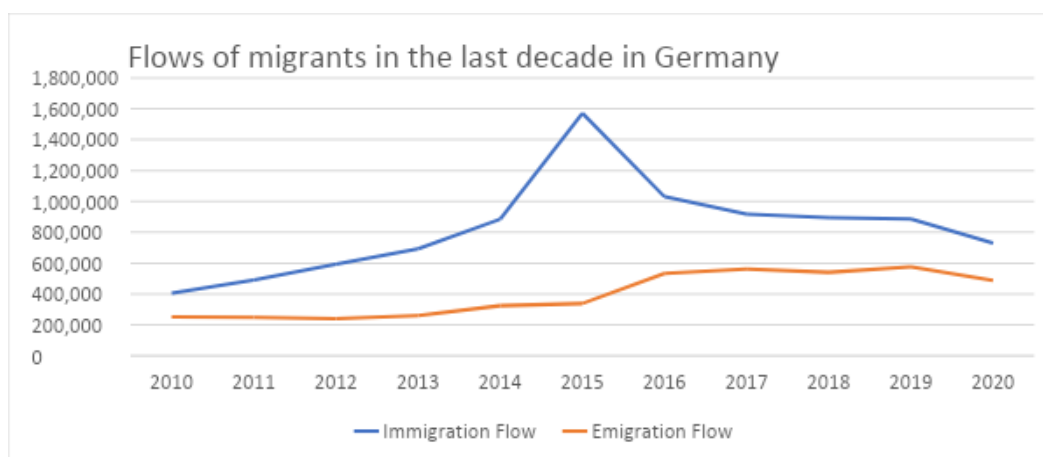


Table 12. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_imm8], [migr\_emi2]

At first sight, the immigration flow is much larger than the emigration one. This large difference can be explained, as noted in Chapter 2, “Stock of migrants in the last 10 years”, by the fact that since the mid-2000s, Germany has been considered as one of the most sought-after immigration countries in Europe<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, more people are coming to Germany than those who are leaving it.

Most recently, between 2014 and 2017, especially in 2015, the immigration flow was at its highest in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany due to the large arrival of asylum seekers coming from Syria and Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

The table further shows a peculiarity in the trend of immigrants and emigrants between the years 2014 and 2016: whereas the immigration flow abruptly increased by 686 154 between 2014 and 2015, the emigration flow almost had a neglectable increase in those years. Vice versa, between 2015 and 2016, the immigration flow decreased by 541 195, whilst the emigration flow had an increase of 195 359.

The opposite trend between the two flows can be noted up until 2017, after which, immigration and emigration seems to be following the same direction.

<sup>9</sup> Gwénola Sebaux, *Immigration, intégration : l'Allemagne sur la voie de la modernité*, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-allemande-d-aujourd-hui-2014-4-page-154.htm>. Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>10</sup> BPB, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, *Historical and Current Development of Migration to and from Germany*, <https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/laenderprofile/english-version-country-profiles/262758/historical-and-current-development-of-migration-to-and-from-germany/#node-content-title-4>. Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022.

Furthermore, the slight decrease in immigration that can be noted from the year 2019 is of great concern for Germany, which, as stated in the introduction, is a country that relies heavily on immigration. Data after the year 2020 are not yet available, but it can be presumed that such a decreasing trend has not changed especially due to Covid-19. This is why Germany is now looking to implement new policies to attract foreign labour force.

## 6. IMMIGRATION FLOW

### 6.1 SEX

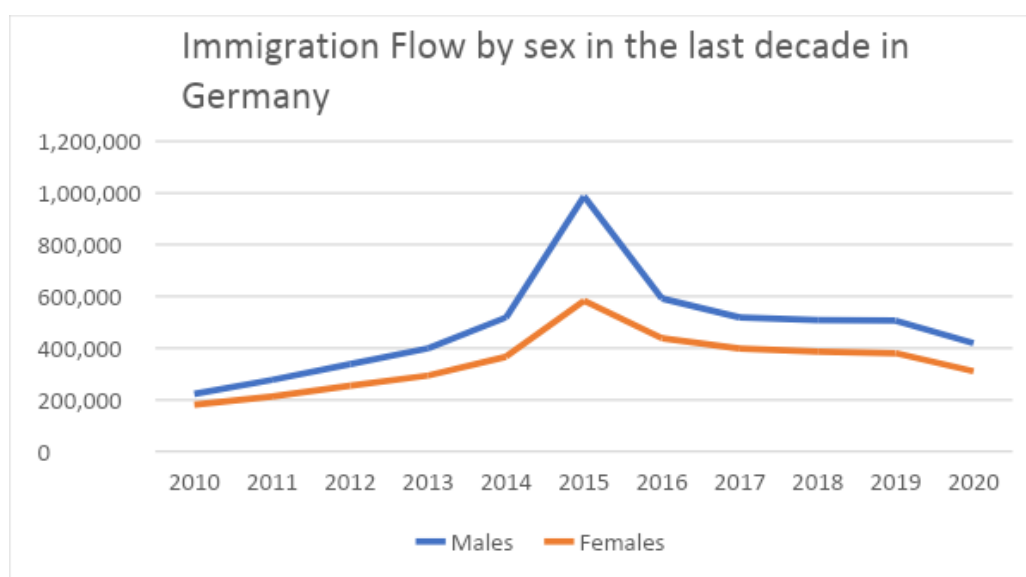


Table 13. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_imm8]

In the last decade, the flow of male immigrants has constantly been higher than that of female immigrants, even if both flows have followed the same trends (ie. Increasing slowly between 2010 and 2014, abruptly increasing between 2014 and 2015, abruptly declining between 2015 and 2016, declining slowly in the following years).

Between 2014 and 2015, during the Syrian crisis, the flow of male immigrants (469 408) was more than double the flow of female immigrants (216 746).

## 6.2 AGE

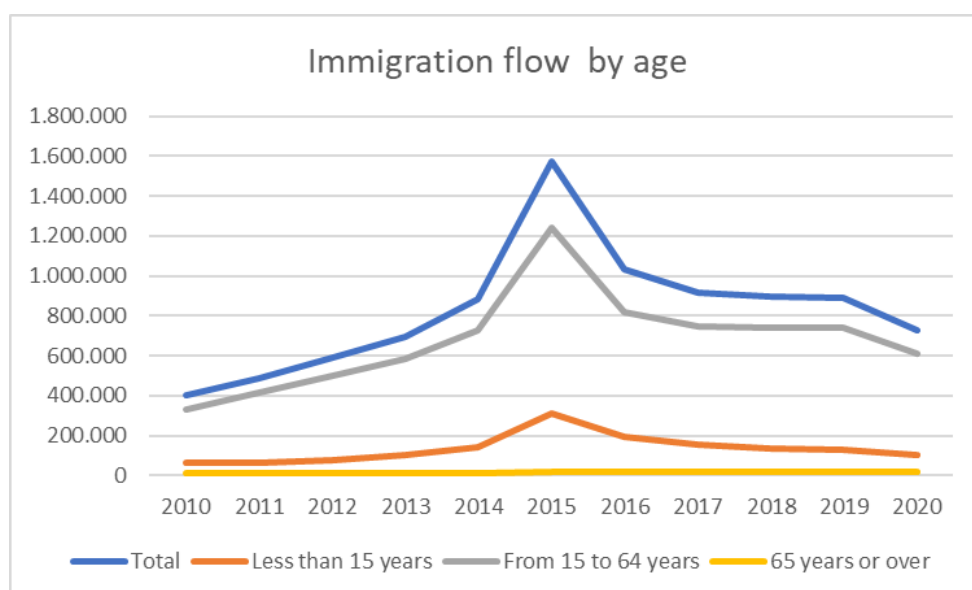


Table 14. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_imm8]

Thanks to Germany's attractiveness for foreign workers, the highest flow of immigrants by age is that from 15 to 64 year olds, whilst the lowest flow is that of immigrants aged 65 or over, who can be considered pensioners.

With regards to the two most significant age groups, ie. Working age and children, it can be noted that both of them experienced a significant growth between 2014 and 2015, due to families arriving in Germany to escape war. Both age groups abruptly declined between 2015 and 2016 and have not ceased declining in the upcoming years.

A more serious decline can also be noted between 2019 and 2020, presumably due to the global pandemic, which restricted the movement of migrants both for work and education.

### 6.3 COUNTRY OF BIRTH

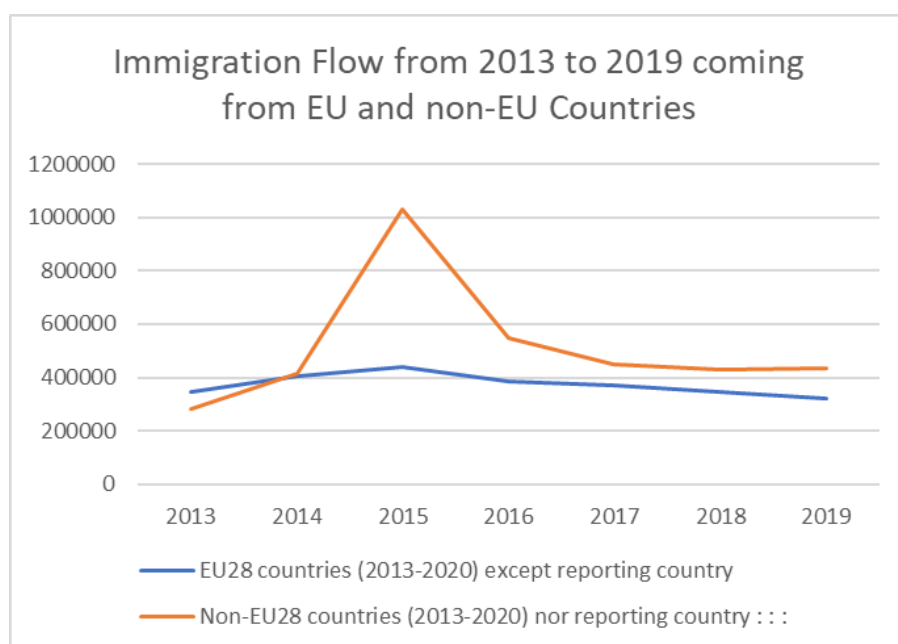


Table 15. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_imm3ctb]

Notwithstanding the lack of data up until 2013, it can be noted that between 2013 and 2014, the main immigration movement was that of EU nationals. Only with the Syrian crisis the immigration flow in Germany developed into an outstanding peak of non-EU nationals in 2015 representing an increase of 612 552 immigrants.

Between the same years, the number of EU immigrants increased by 34 530. Notably, third country immigrants constituted the majority of immigrant flow in Germany in those years.

Although the abrupt decline in numbers between 2015 and 2016, and the subsequent slow decline, extra Union citizens constitute still to date the main immigration flow in Germany.

Indeed, the country has been trying to attract more foreign workers in order to tackle the population ageing issue (see Chapter 4, “Population growth”). In this regard, it seems that the Government policies, established in recent years, have led to a slow increase of extra-Union migrants and this trend may be expected to grow after 2019.

Such policies, however, did not have the same attractive power on Union migrants, considering that their numbers have slowly been decreasing between 2017 and 2019, even reaching a lower number (319 479) in 2019 than in 2013 (345 692), when the first data was collected.



## 6.4 REASONS FOR MIGRATION

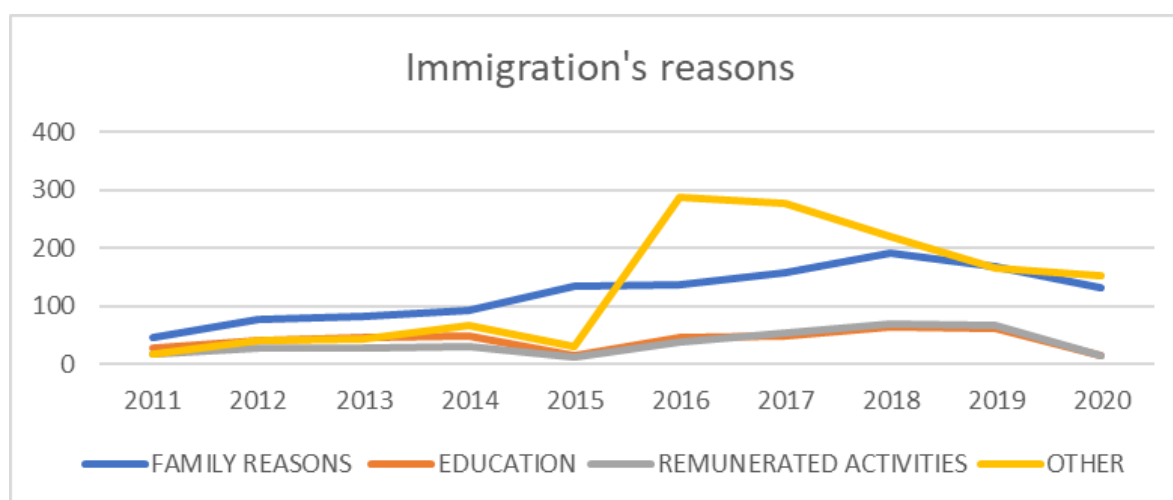


Table 16. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_resfirst]

As a general overview, it can be noted that, in the last decade, education and remunerated activities have been following a parallel trend in Germany. However, both of them have always been superseded by family reasons and “other reasons” (for definition of “other reasons, please read Chapter 3.4, “Immigration reasons”).

Up until 2014, all of the four reasons experienced a slight increase, but with Europe’s refugee crisis of 2015, the main entry channel into Germany was constituted by “other reasons”; in fact, between 2015 and 2016, the numbers almost tripled.

This is also true when read in conjunction with the table for “Immigration flow by country of birth”, which showed that non-EU immigrants are still to date the main influx of immigrants in Germany. As such, entry visas and refugee applications have been and are likely to continue to be the major source of entry in the country.

These are immediately followed by family reasons, which had a continuous growth up until 2018, when it started to decline. Notably, with less people moving to Germany, as shown in Chapter 5, “Flows of migrants in the last 10 years”, there will be less families needing to reunite.

## 7. TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES (asylum seekers, sex, age)

The analysis of refugees is carried out in accordance with the definition of refugee provided by Eurostat, ie. a person covered by a decision granting refugee status, taken by administrative or judicial bodies during the reference period. Asylum applicants whose application has been accepted can, therefore, be considered as refugees.

Consequently, the information provided below is calculated based on the total number of positive first instance and final decisions taken by an administrative or judicial body<sup>11</sup>.

### 7.1 REFUGEES – Total number

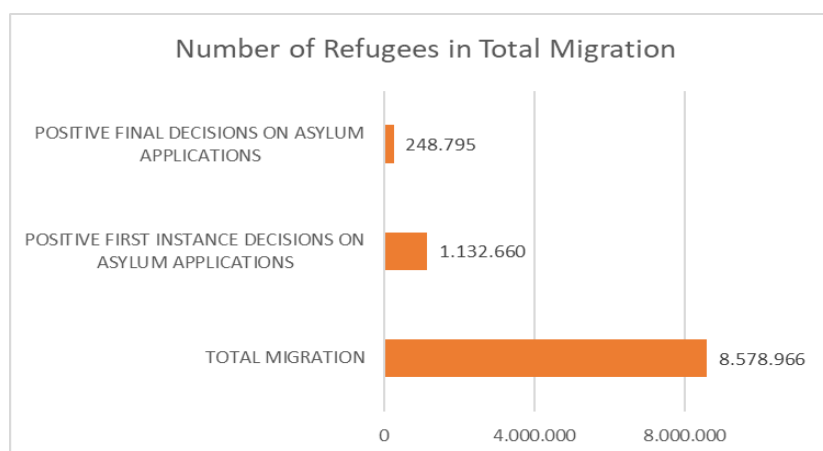


Table 17. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfsta], [migr\_asydcfina]

The total aggregate number of migrants in Germany between 2011-2020 is 8.67 million, almost 1.4 million being refugees. The majority of refugees are granted their status as refugees from the first instance decisions, that number being 1.13 million. The final decisions mentioned above in the graph, are the appeal decisions for the decisions of the first instance authorities. Those final decisions also granted a substantial number of persons their refugee status, approximately 250.000.

<sup>11</sup> Positive decisions consider applications for international protection as well as the grants of authorisations to stay for humanitarian reasons, including decisions under priority and accelerated procedures taken by administrative or judicial bodies in Member States, and decisions granted to persons who are a subject of the Dublin Regulation. The statistics related to the final decisions refer to what is effectively a final decision in the vast majority of all cases: i.e. that all normal routes of appeal have been exhausted.

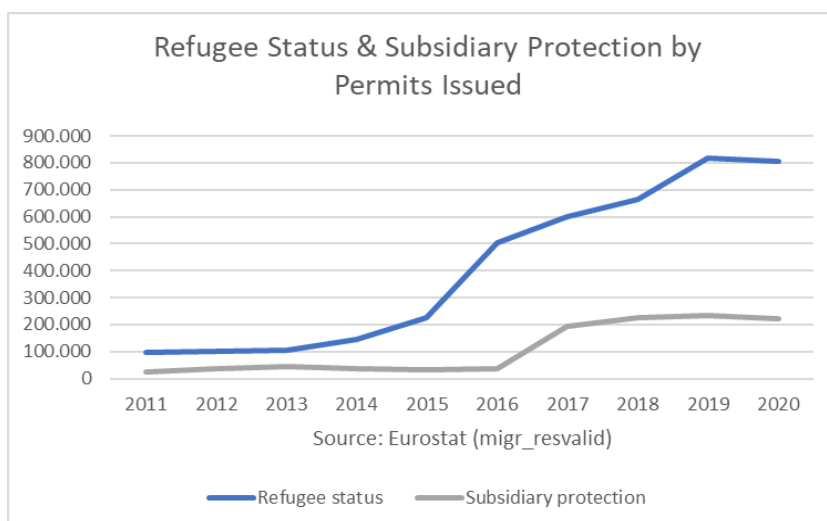


Table 18. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_resvalid]

It can be seen from the graph above that especially after 2014, there is a huge increase in the amounts of refugee and subsidiary protection status granted, this arising from the Syrian refugee crisis which began about that time.

## 7.2 ASYLUM SEEKERS BY AGE

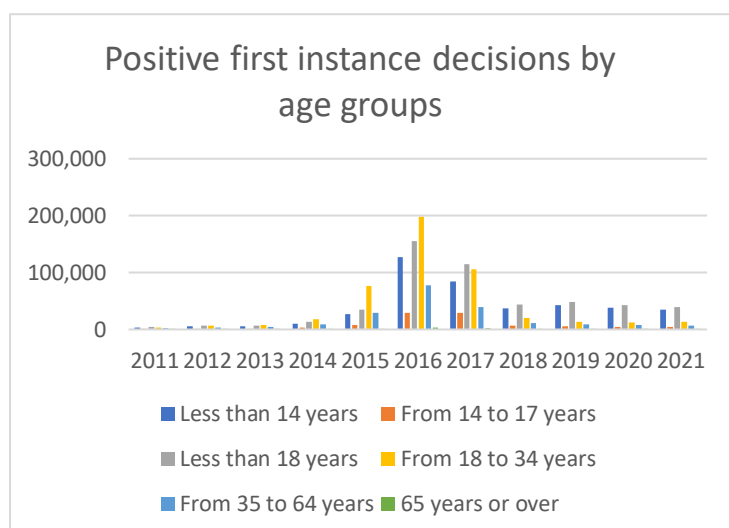


Table 19. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfst]

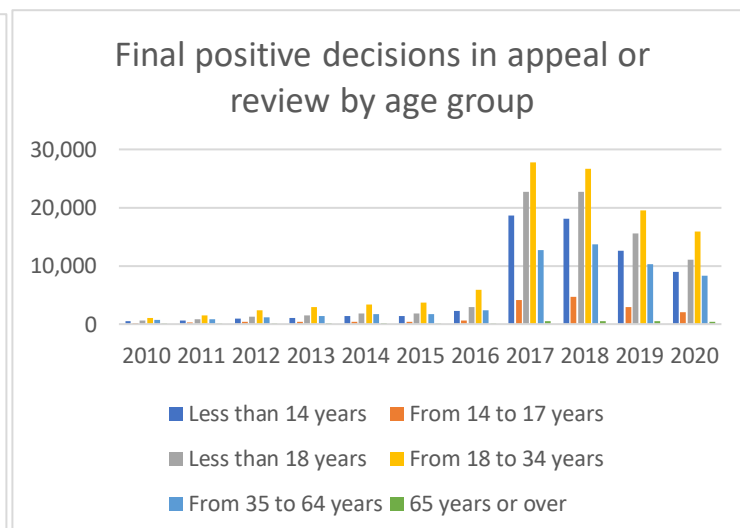


Table 20. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfina]

From both graphs, it can be noted that the majority of asylum seekers, granted refugee status from first instance or final decisions, is constituted by the age group 18-34. This trend has been present since 2010, but it became quite noticeable from 2015. Most of the applications were accepted at first instance between 2015 and 2016, but since 2017 they have mainly had a positive outcome in appeal or review.

The second highest category is that of asylum seekers aged less than 18, presumably due to minors accompanying their parents when migrating.

7.3 ASYLUM SEEKERS BY SEX

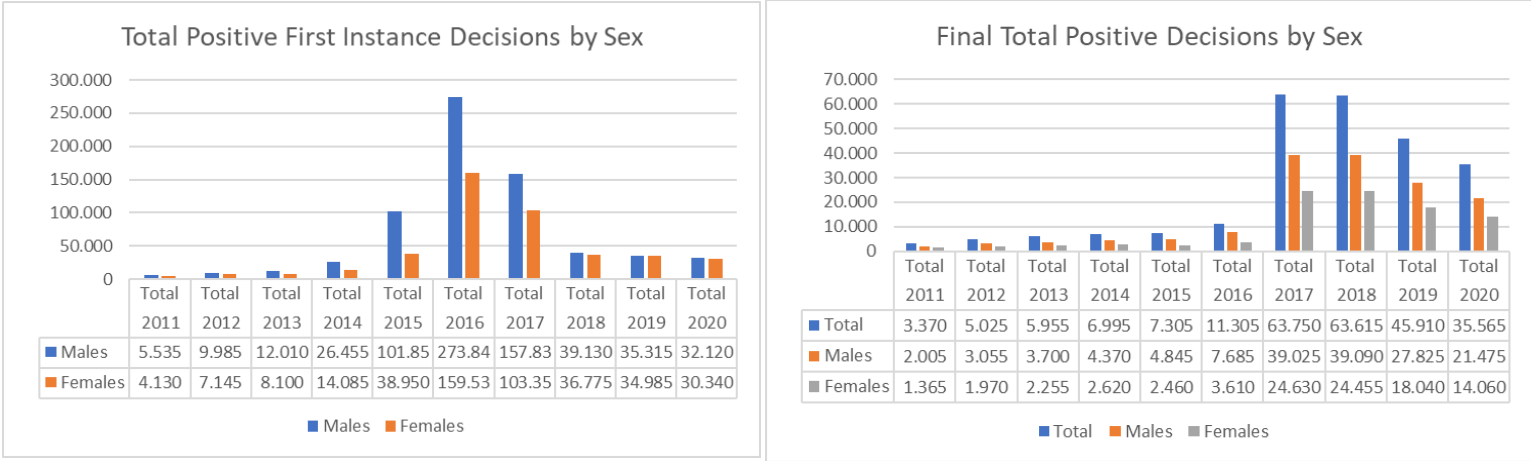


Table 21. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfst]

Table 22. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfina]

From the first graph, it can be seen that the males are, yet again, on the heavier side of the scale. Even though the numbers of males and females in the total positive decisions are relatively close until 2014, between 2014 and 2017 there is a major spik of males in the total numbers. It should be added that, beginning with 2018, there is a somewhat more balanced division of the two sexes in the total decisions made.

Concerning the final decisions, the difference between sexes in the total decisions given by the authority are present consistently, unlike the first instance decisions. Indeed, the difference of sexes at the first instance decisions is almost neglectable between 2011 and 2013, and between 2018 and 2020.

On the other hand, the number of male recipients of final instance decisions is always higher than the female ones.

## 8. SHARE OF REFUGEES IN TOTAL MIGRATION

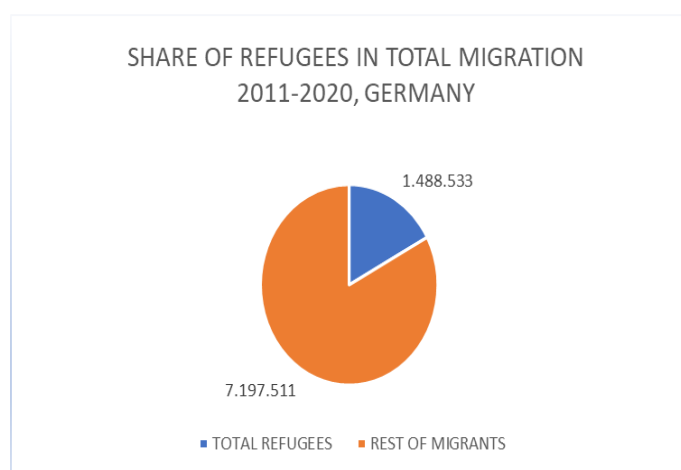
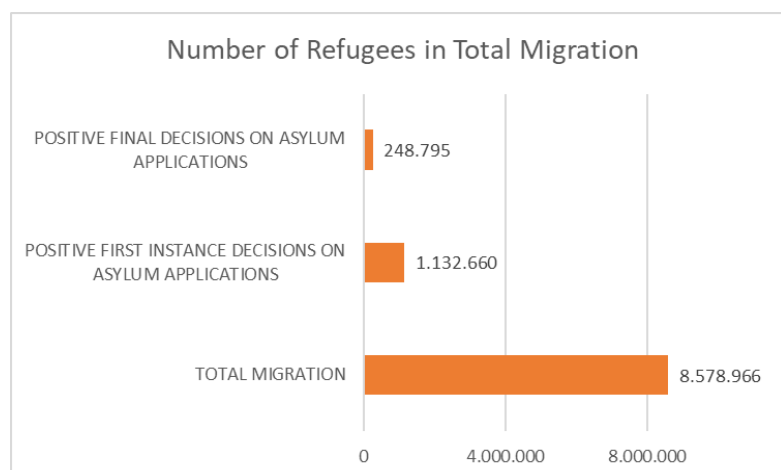


Table 17. Source EUROSTAT

Table 23. Source EUROSTAT [migr\_asydcfsta], [migr\_asydcfina]

In order to better highlight the share of refugees in total migration in Germany between 2011 and 2020, Table 17 is reported again.

As it can be noted, asylum seekers, who have been granted refugee status either from first or final decisions, are 1 488 533, which make up around 16% of the total migration.

## 9. MIGRANTS INTEGRATION INDICATORS (EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT).

In order to evaluate the migrants' integration statistics, the analysis will compare the German total population ("Total") with the foreign natives residing and working in Germany. This will provide a better understanding of the differences in employment and unemployment between foreign and native born.

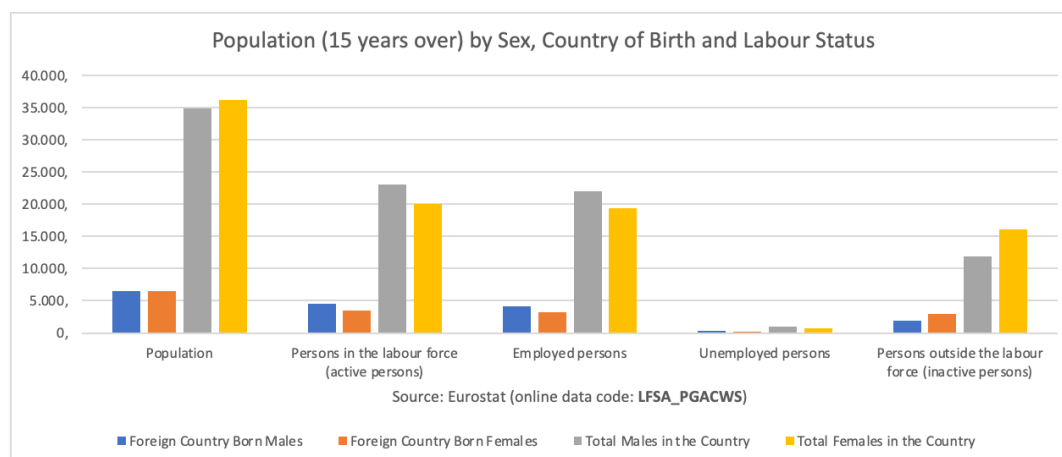


Table 24. Source EUROSTAT [lfsa\_pgacwsi]

This graph focusses on the age group 15 year olds and over, as it is the most relevant age range for working.

While the total number of females who are 15 years or over is more than the total male population, the number of males in the labour force, employed and unemployed are higher than females. On the other hand, the total number of females who are outside the labour force is higher than males. Not surprisingly, all foreign born statistics show similar gaps between two sexes.

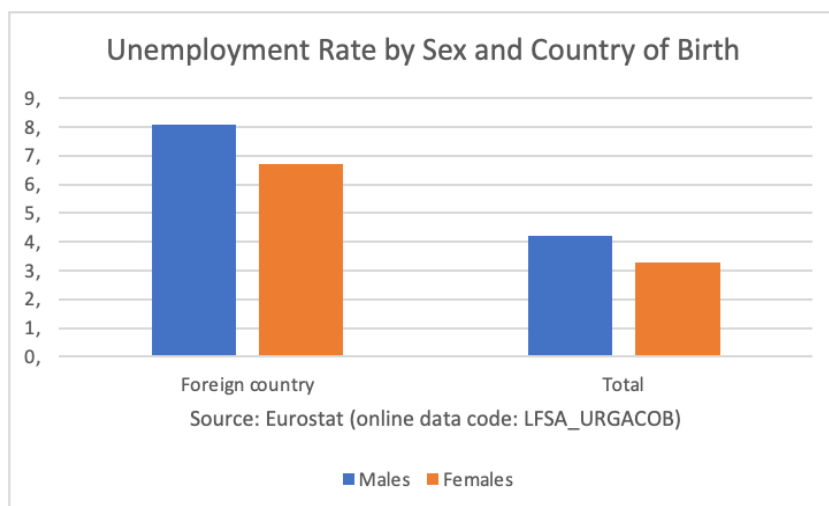


Table 25. Source EUROSTAT [lfsa\_urgacob]

This graph demonstrates that the unemployment rates are quite similar in terms of gender gap for both the total population and foreign-born population. In both categories female unemployment rate is lower than male. However, this graph has to be read in conjunction with the previous one which shows the detailed labour status such as persons outside the labour force, in the labour force, employed and unemployed.

## CONCLUSION

Germany is the most populous country within the European Union and one of the most attractive destinations for both EU and non-EU migrants.

Since 1972, immigration has become one of the major sources of population growth and an indispensable factor for future demographic and economic stability.

The analysis carried out above has highlighted some issues faced by Germany with regards to migration and internal population.

Among these, it is firstly noticeable how the German population has continued ageing, especially over the last four years.

Secondly, subsequent to the peak experienced in 2015 across all the sectors analysed above, immigration and emigration have slowly been decreasing. Such an issue is not to be overlooked by the German Federal Government, which, notwithstanding the implementation of measures favouring the arrival and integration of skilled workers, has still some difficulties in ensuring a high employment rate of foreign nationals.

Some further considerations that can be made include the challenges of the future:

1. Coronavirus led to a significant decrease in migration and asylum applications (dropping by 28%). Although German authorities approved more than half of the asylum applications in the first three months, there is still a trend in Germany to approve applications only in appeal or review<sup>12</sup>.
2. Nearly 147 000 people have fled to Germany from Ukraine since the beginning of the war. The German government has already put in place measures to support children, women and men, but the question remains on whether these will be enough to integrate them<sup>13</sup>.

To conclude, even if Germany has been welcoming refugees and has started to implement measures to attract foreign labour force, will these policies truly slow down or prevent the ageing of the population?

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<sup>12</sup>DW, *Germany: Asylum applications rebound as COVID fears wane*, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-asylum-applications-rebound-as-covid-fears-wane/a-60255516>

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<sup>13</sup> Schengen Visa Info News, *About 150,000 Ukrainian Refugees Have Arrived in Germany So Far*, <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/about-150000-ukrainian-refugees-have-arrived-in-germany-so-far/>

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