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## **PORTUGAL - Country Report**

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### Introduction

Portugal is the most western country of the Iberian peninsula, on the Western side of the European continent. Around 850 km face the Atlantic Ocean, and the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira are part of the Portuguese territory<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of this report is to use data and statistics provided by EUROSTAT in order to outline the features and traits concerning migration in Portugal over the last ten years. In particular, some parameters will be taken into account, which are:

- Stock of total population
- Stock of migrants in the last 10 years

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<sup>1</sup> Portogallo in Enciclopedia Treccani, available online at <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/portogallo/>, consulted on 16/04/2021.

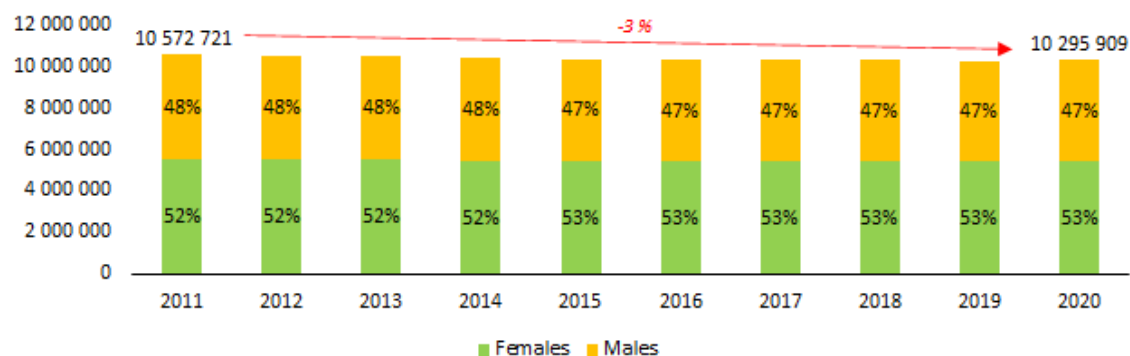
- Immigrant stock by category
- Population growth
- Flows of migrants in the last 10 years
- Immigration flow
- Total number of refugees
- Share of refugees on total migration
- Migrants employment/unemployment

The sections of this report will follow these categories.

Portugal has long been regarded as an emigration country whose citizens would move to the former overseas territory, other European countries, or America. However, since a few years, this trend seems to have changed and Portugal has been welcoming migrants coming not only from the former colonies, but also other European states. As a matter of fact, a number of EU citizens have chosen Portugal as a destination for its quality of life with a noteworthy share of pensioners.

## Relevant data for countries of destination

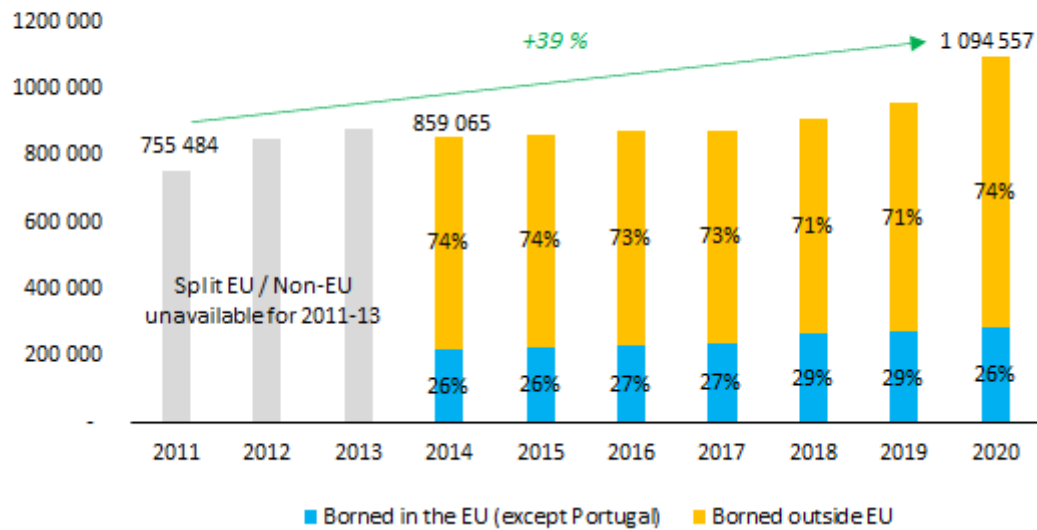
### *1 - Stock of total population*



[Tab 1.1] Source: *demo\_pjan*

The Portuguese population, over the last ten years, has steadily remained above ten million residents. However, this stock is slightly but steadily decreasing, going from almost 10.6 million in 2011 to less than 10.3 in 2020. This decrease in the last decade, quantifiable in about -3%, has involved almost identically females and males, whose proportions have remained almost unchanged, with a preponderance of the female population over the male one (53% vs 47% in 2020).

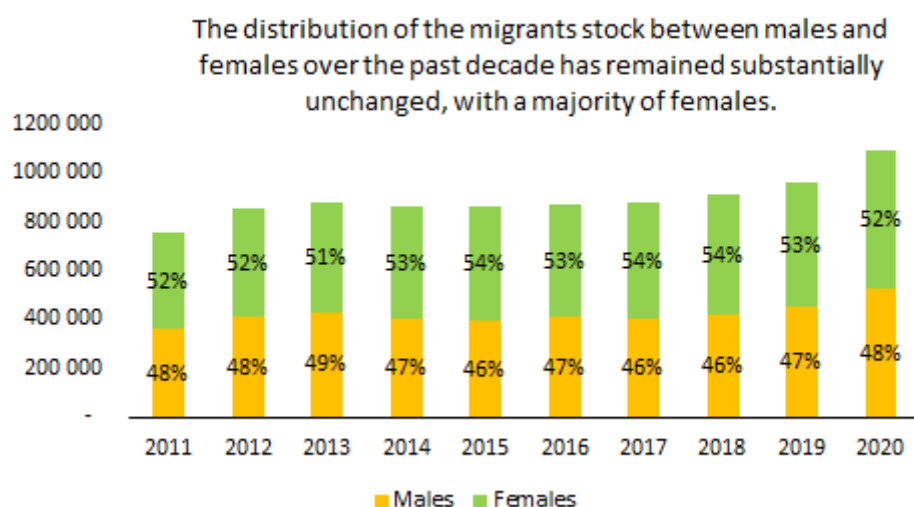
## 2 - Stock of migrants in the last 10 years



[Tab 2.1] Source: *migr\_pop3ctb*

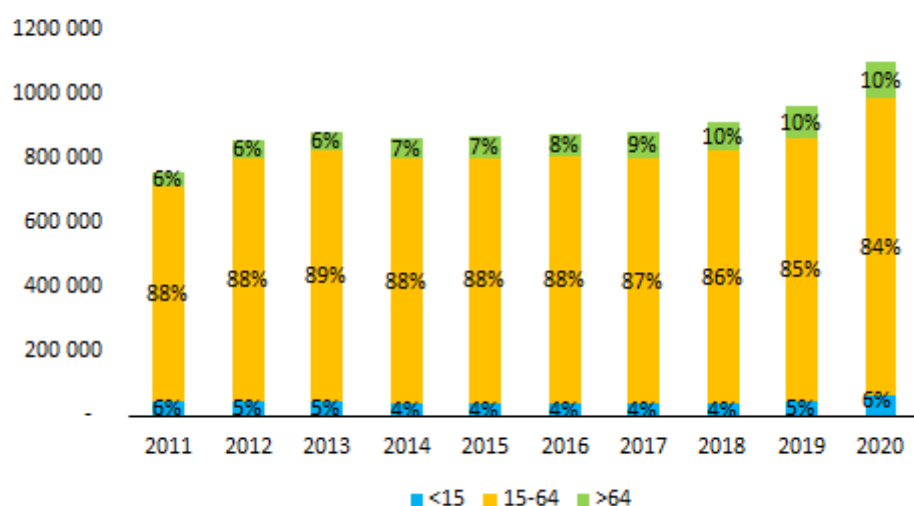
Looking in detail at the subpart of the Portuguese population relating to migrants, it can be seen that they have significantly increased. In this sense, taking into account people born outside Portugal as migrants, they increased from about 755,000 in 2011 to almost 1.1 million in 2020, the year in which the peak of the last decade was reached. More specifically, it can be seen that most of these migrants are made up of people born outside the European Union (74% in 2020, compared to 26% born in the EU). However, both components of these stocks (born in the EU or outside) have increased proportionally in the same way.

### 3 - Immigrant stock by category: sex, age, country of birth and reason for migration



[Tab 3.1] *Source: migr\_pop3ctb*

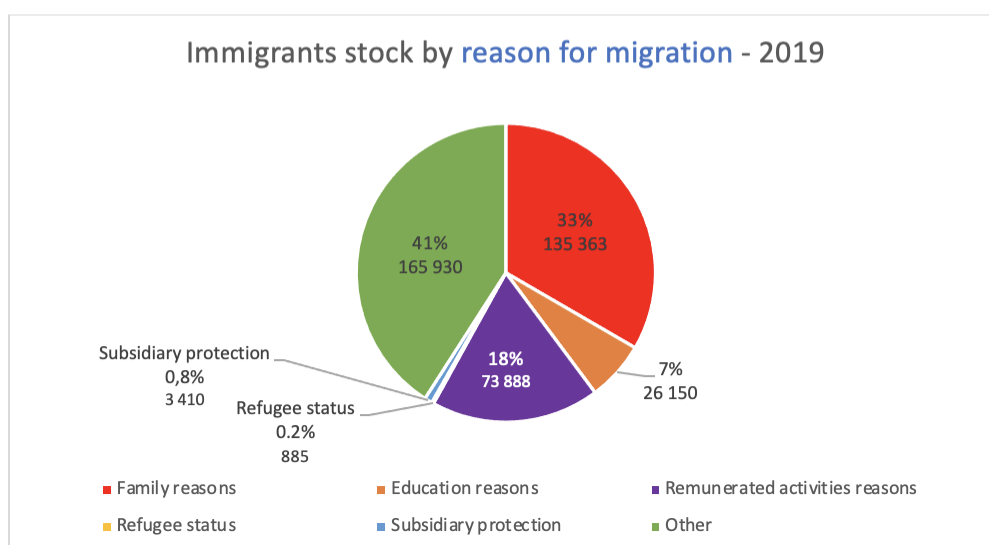
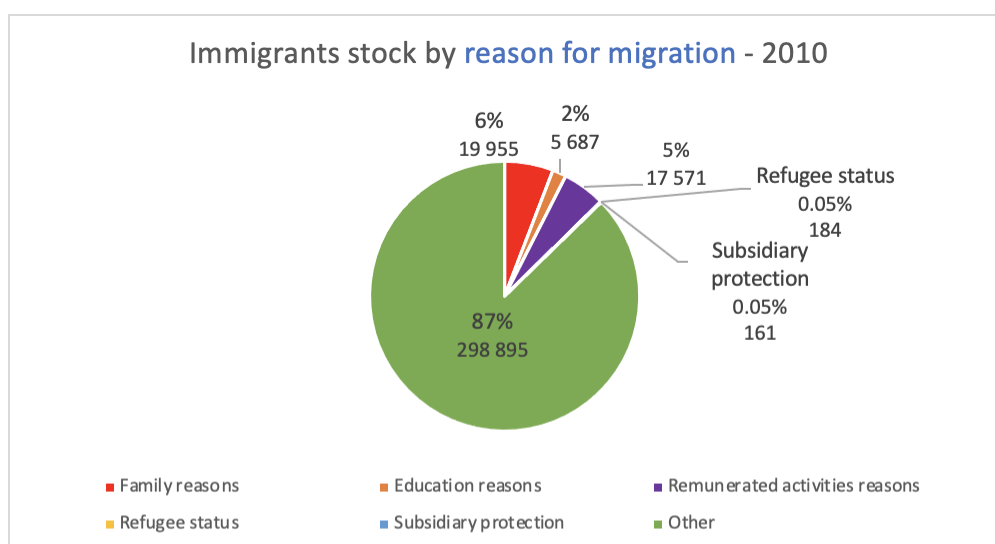
The rates of female and male migrants on total stock remains quite stable throughout all the period in analysis: even facing a significant increase in the total number of migrants present in Portugal, the gender distribution of stock shows a moderate majority of females (from 51,92% to 52,12%, with a peak of 53,99% in 2015) on males.



[Tab 3.2] *Source: migr\_pop3ctb*

The stock of migrants divided by age groups shows a clear majority of adult migrants (or migrants in working age): however, the same rate of migrants between 15 and 64 years old

on the total stock of migration presents a slightly declining trend from 2011 to nowadays, placing the 2020 data (83,89%) below the rates shown by other European and Mediterranean countries (such as Italy and Greece, where data still is above 87%, or neighbouring Spain: 85,06%)<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, if child-migrants (less than 15 years old) stably represented the same portion of total stock, net of some small fluctuation, the share of older migrants (more than 64 years old) had significantly increased from 2011 to 2020, doubling from 5,68% to 10,25%, while the total number has almost trebled from 42994 to 112.242 persons.



[Tab 3.3] *Source: migr\_resvalid*

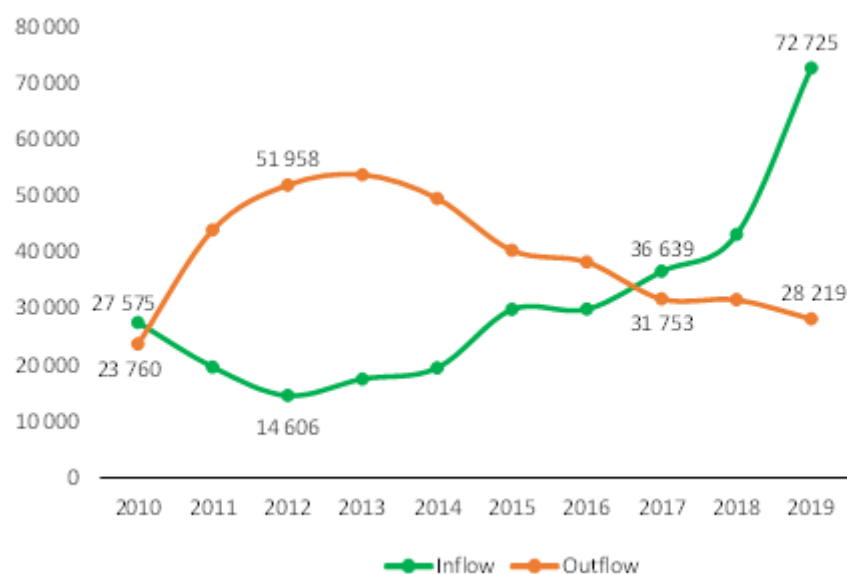
The two images present the reason for migration valid residence permits in 2011 and 2019, the last year for which Portugal has available data. In the face of a smaller number of valid residence permits (329.325 compared to 405.626 in 2019), in the first year of the decade data show a clear majority of reasons enclosed in the “other” category, meaning “diplomat,

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat, migr\_pop3ctb

consular officer treated as exempt from control; retired persons of independent means; all other passengers given limited leave to enter who are not included in any other category; non-asylum discretionary permissions”, as *Eurostat* defines it. On the other hand, in 2019, as the aforementioned category is reduced, migration for education reasons and for remunerated activities reasons more than treble their share on total migration (respectively from 2% to 7% and from 5% to 18%), while family reunification occupies a significant portion of count with the 33% of all valid residence permits. Finally, also the amount of allowed refugee status, as it will be later more deeply investigated, presents an increasing trend from 0,05% to 0,2% of total migration.

#### 4 - Flows of migrants

Migration is one of the most volatile factors that we use for analysing and determining population change and structure. Whereas birth and death rates vary gradually, the migratory balance, namely the number given by the difference of people entering and leaving a country in a specific year, can be unpredictable from one year to another; this could be related to the national migration policies added to/as well as to the historical and political moment that led to regional fluctuations in migration levels. This is what emerges from the statistics on migration flows of Portugal.



[Tab 4.1] Sources: [migr\_imm3ctb], [migr\_emi2]

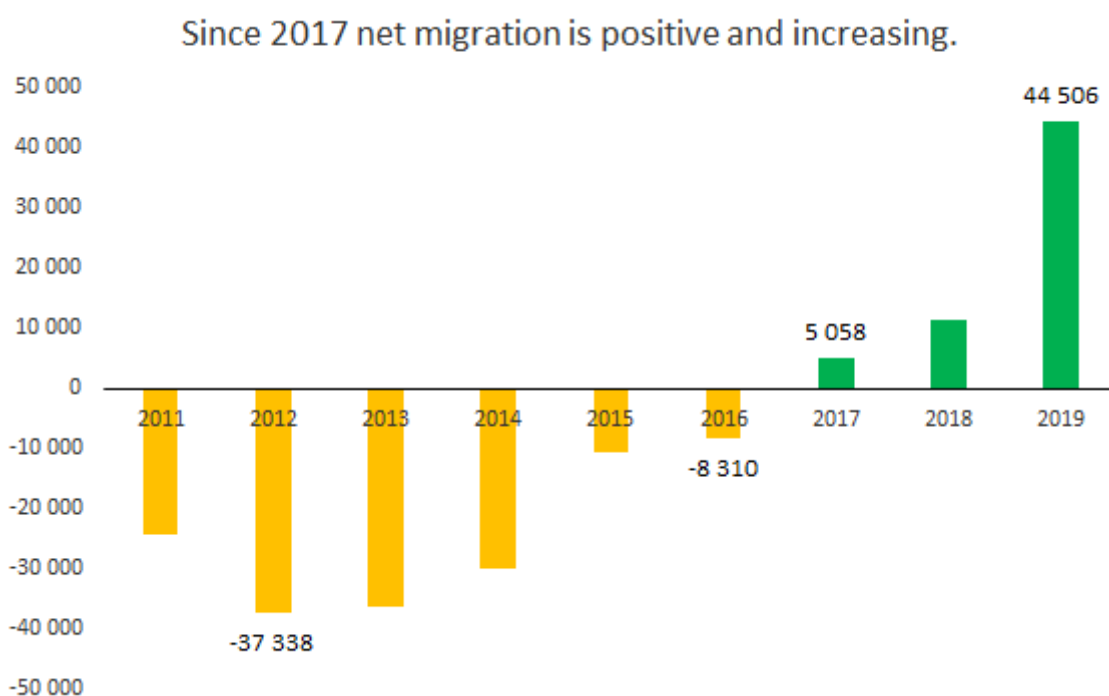
As we can observe from this graph, starting (2010) from a number of the immigrants slightly higher than the one of the emigrants, for more than half of the last decade outflows have outstripped the inflows; the negative difference between inflows and outflows is clearly visible by observing the gap between the two lines, relatively to 2011-2016 period of time. This gap, that reached its major discrepancy in 2012-2013, has gradually thinned out

until 2017, when the migration balance has become positive, with a final evident peak of 72,725 people immigrated in Portugal, despite the 28,219 of people that left the country in 2019.

## 5 - Population growth and net migration

In order to carry out a more in-depth analysis of Portugal flows of migrants; we choose to collect data on “net migration” – which can be defined as the difference between immigration and emigration from a state during a given year – and measure its annual contribution to the population growth of Portugal.

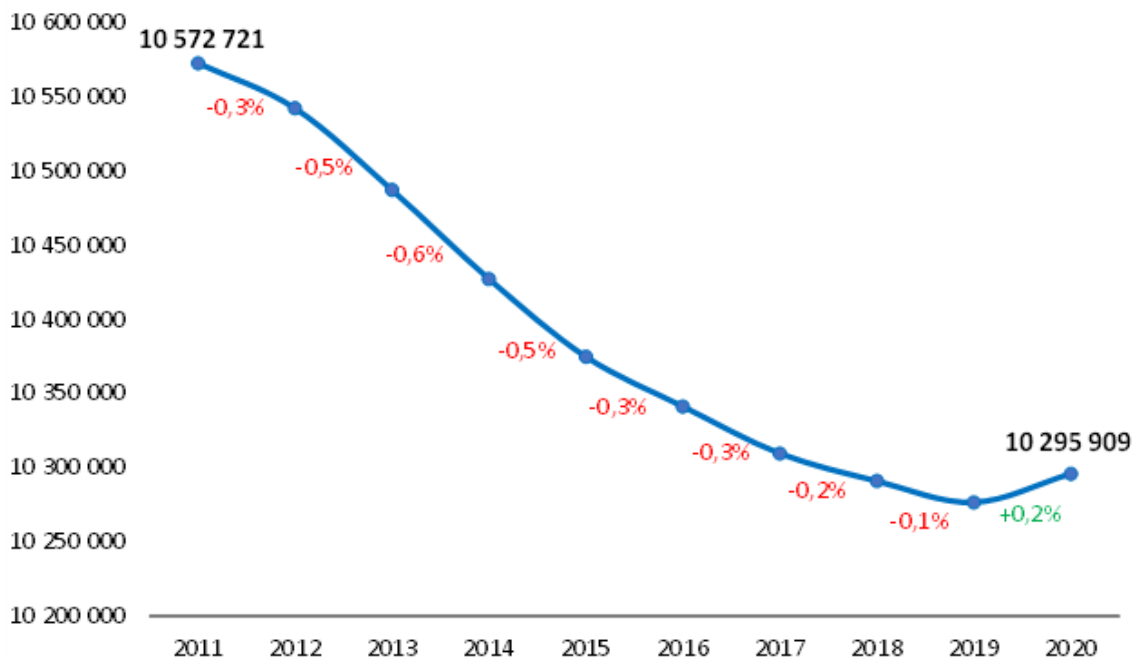
The following graph shows the data of Portugal on net migration in a time period of 10 years – from 2011 to 2019. We considered this time range in order to have a coherent comparison with the data that we collected in order to analyse the population growth, which net migration is strictly associated with.



[Tab 5.1] Source: [demo\_gind]

Looking at this graph, it is possible to notice how net migration in Portugal has followed a sinusoidal course from 2011 to 2019; it reached the lowest point in 2013 (-37,338), after which the trend has started increasing until the inflows exceeded the outflows, as we can observe in the last three years of the set (2017-2019), with a remark to the spike growth (+400%) registered in 2019.

By analysing the previous tabs, it is evident that net migration is a consistent component of a country population growth.



[Tab 5.2] *Source: [demo\_gind]*

This graph presents a zoomed picture on the variation of the stock of Portuguese population in the last 10 years (see also Tab. 1.1.). Taking a look on the growth trend, we can easily notice how over the past decade the Portuguese population has steadily declined, with the exception of a slight increase in 2020; a total 2.6% reduction if we consider the 2011-2020 period of time. We obtained the annual growth rate by aggregating data on net migration (see Tab. 5.1) and on natural change<sup>3</sup>, defined as the difference between total deaths and total births in a specific year and by putting them in relation with the stock of total Portugal population in the time set 2011-2020. What stands out from the graph is how the positive net migration number counterweights the negative natural change value, making the Portugal growth rate turn positive on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 (+0.2%).

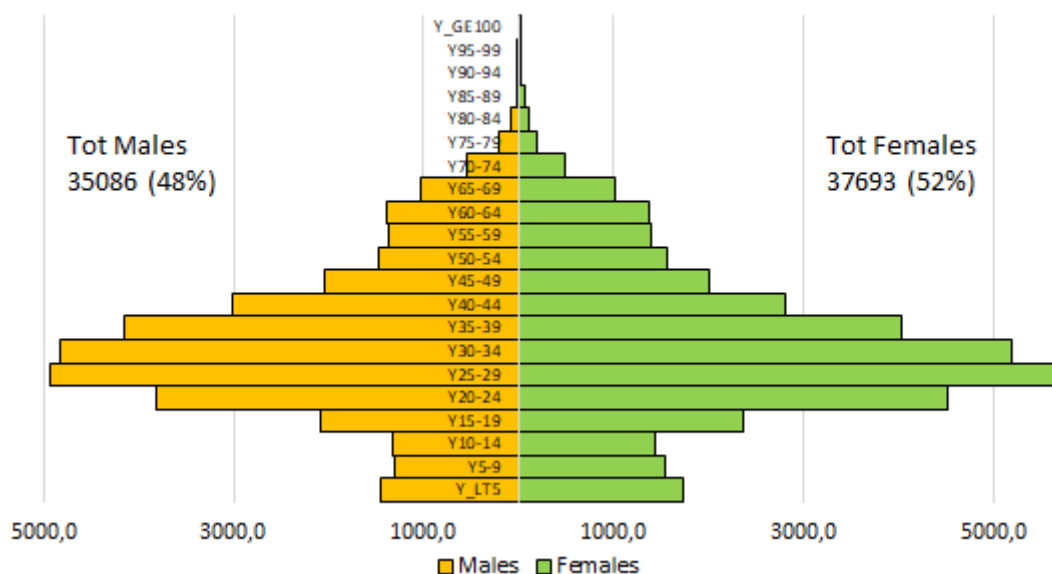
Therefore, although net migration has become positive since 2017, it is only due to a spike increase recorded in 2019 that a plus from inflows has generated a noteworthy rise to the next year's population growth rate (see Tab. 5.2.).

## 6 - Immigration flow by sex, age, country of birth and reason for migration

In order to deepen the topic of migration flows in Portugal, this paragraph will be specifically focused on inflows explored by the abovementioned demographic categories.

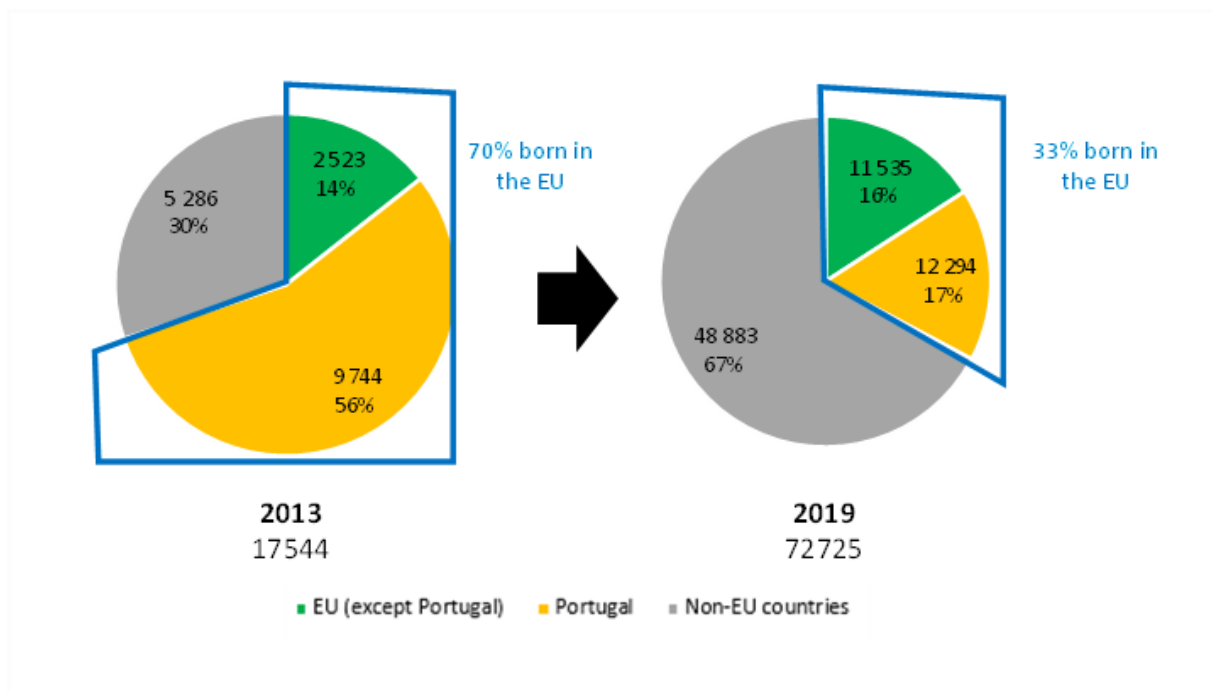
<sup>3</sup> Source of the data on natural change: Eurostat database, cod. "Demo\_gind".





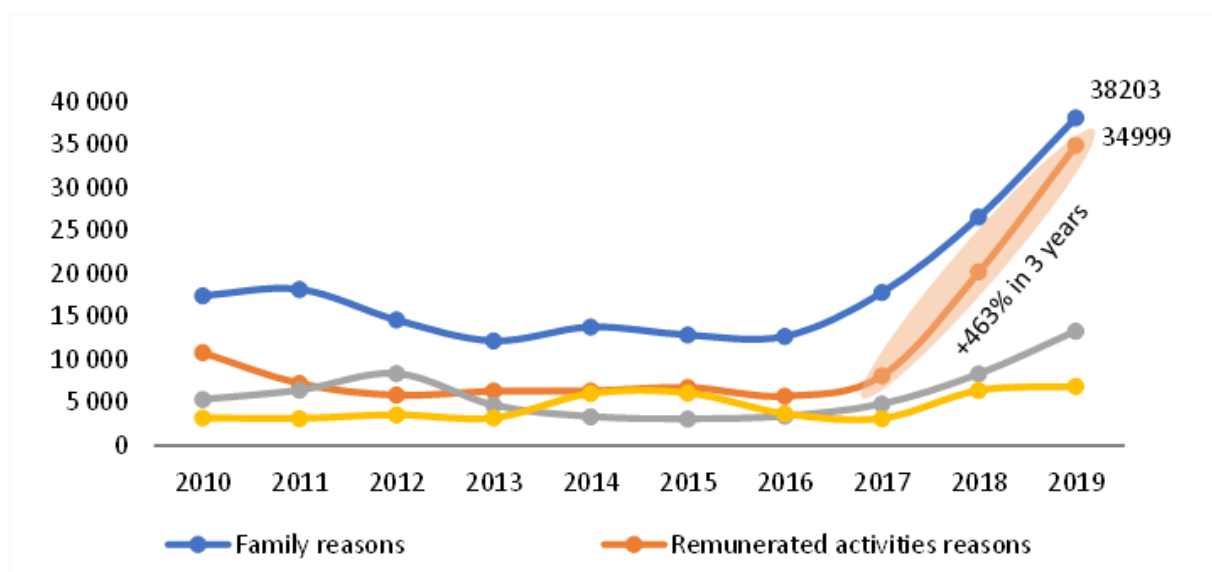
[Tab 6.1] Source: *migr\_imm3ctb*

By observing in detail, the composition of immigrant flows, we can notice a prevalence of certain age groups. In particular, by dividing the immigrants in 2019 by age group of five years, it is possible to see that the relative majority of them belong to the age group of people between 25 and 29 years old. The prevalence of young migrants is confirmed by the following two most numerous age groups, which are respectively those between 30 and 34 and the one between 20 and 24. So, immigrants who reached Portugal in 2019 were mostly young adults. Furthermore, by focusing on sex, it is possible to note a prevalence of women (52% vs 48%). Looking at the graph in detail, this majority of women is present substantially in all age groups (go to page below).



[Tab 6.2] *Source: migr\_imm3ctb*

Analysing the origin of migrants, we can notice that it has completely changed in recent years. In particular, comparing the years 2013 and 2019, it is evident how more than half of immigrants were people born in Portugal, coming back to their native country. This was also due to the fact that in the first half of the last decade Portugal was not a country of immigration, and in fact in 2013 inflows were equal to only 17 thousand people, the equivalent of a small city. In the following years, as Portugal became a country of immigration, proportions changed significantly, with a prevalence of people born outside the EU (about 67% in 2019, out of a total immigration of about 73 thousand people).



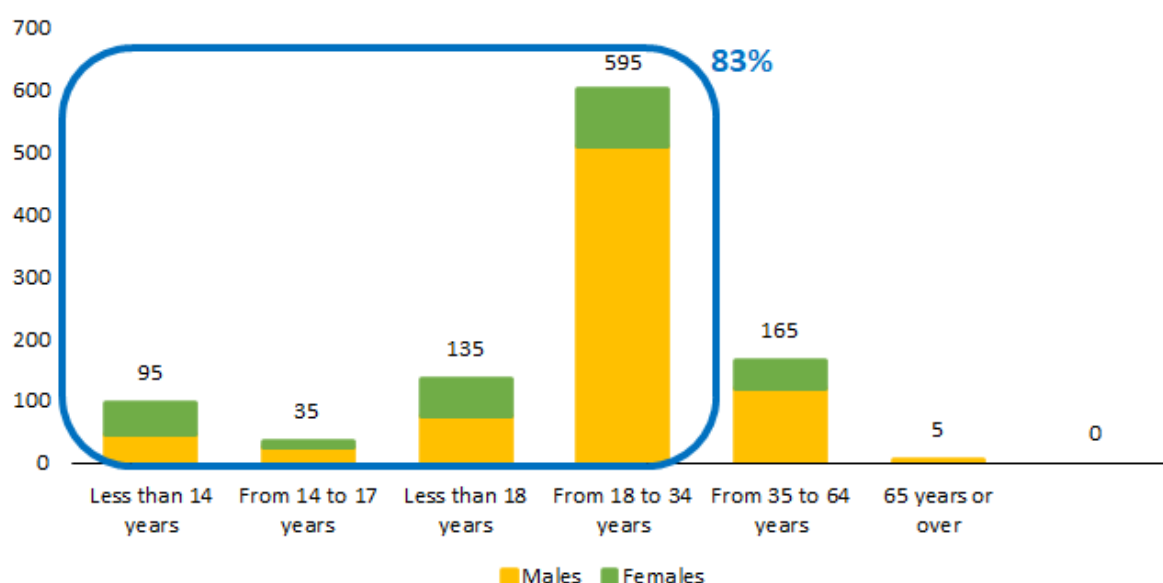
[Tab 6.3] *Source: [migr\_resfirst]*

Looking at the reasons that have led to the increase of immigration in Portugal, we can see that in the last ten years migrants have gone to Portugal mainly for family reasons. However, in recent years there has been a huge increase in migrants who went there for “remunerated activities” reason (+ 463% in just three years from 2017 to 2019). This significant increase has led that motivation to rival with “family reasons” for the top spot among immigration reasons. Education reasons have also been slightly increasing in recent years also, although less than the other reasons.

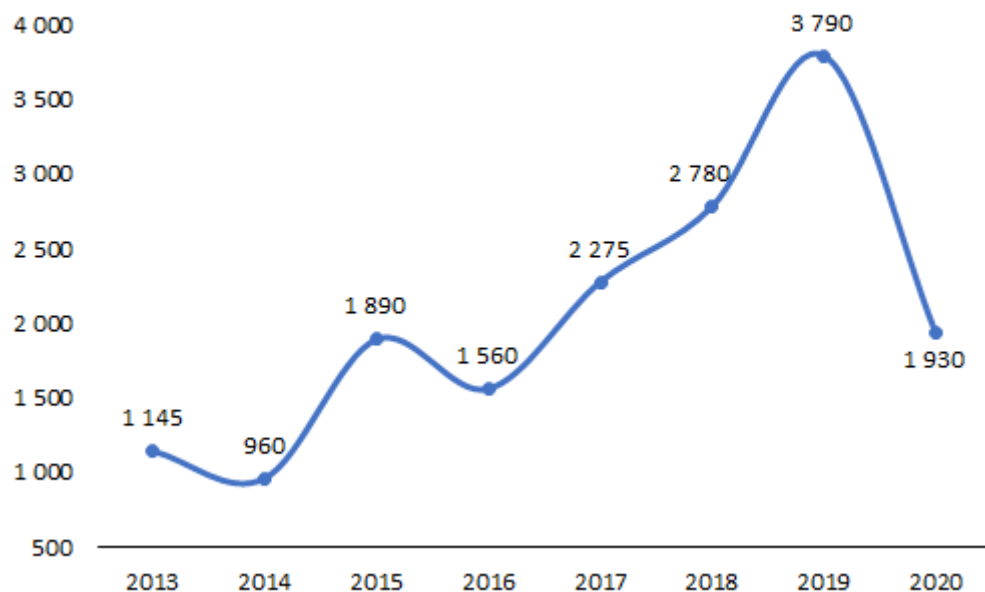
## 7 - Total number of asylum seekers by sex and age

Moving on to the number of refugees, the data show a relatively small number of refugees if compared with previous years, especially 2019. In fact, in 2019, after a trend of several years characterized by a constant increase, asylum applications from non-Eu countries peaked with almost 4000 requests, whereas 2020 marked a dramatic drop reaching almost 2000 applications, probably due to the pandemic.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the category is mainly represented by young males (18-34) and that the overall number of young applicants younger than 35 years old makes up 83% percent of the total pool.



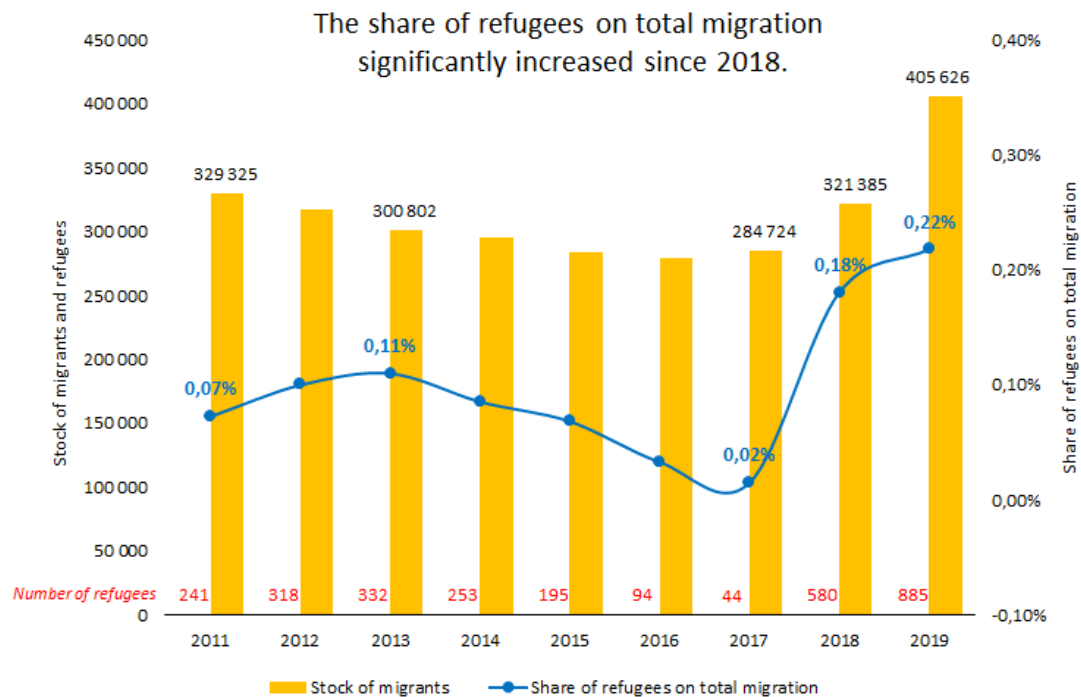
[Tab 7.1] Source: [migr\_asyappctza]



[Tab 7.2] Source: [migr\_asyappctza]

### 8 - Share of refugees on total migration

Despite what we have just said concerning the number of asylum applications, it is not possible to state that the trend also shows up if compared to the share of refugees on total migration. As a matter of fact, the percentage of refugees within the stock of migrants followed a negative trend from 2013 to 2017 when it reached its lowest level, to subsequently increase dramatically in 2018 and peak the following year (go to page below).

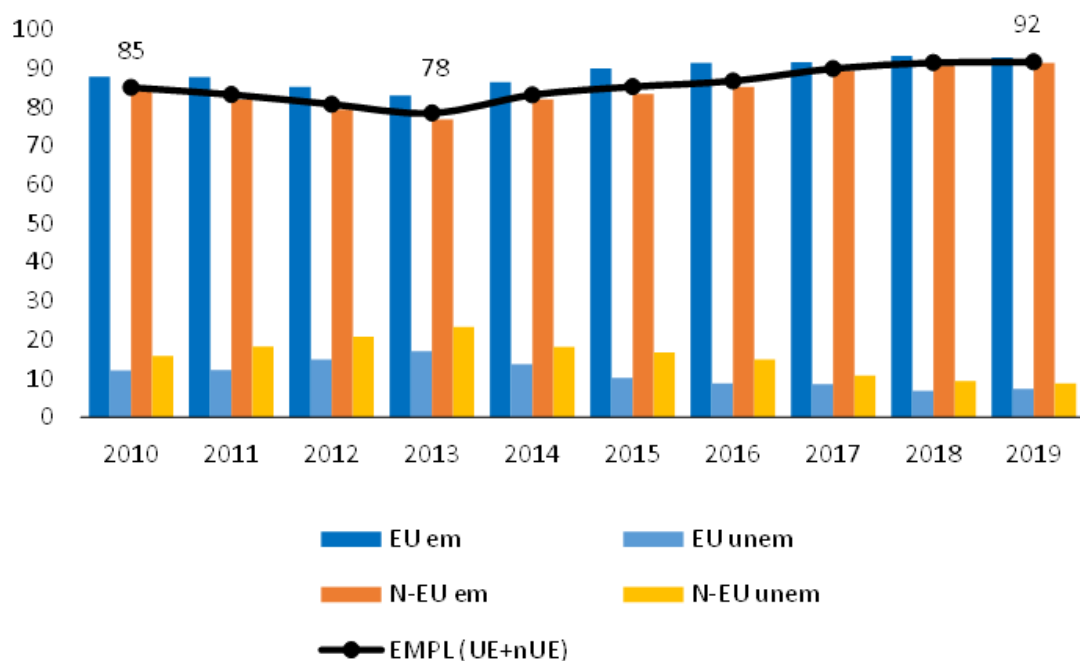


[Tab 8.1] Source: [migr\_resvalid]

## 9 - Migrants integration indicators employment or unemployment<sup>4</sup>

Focusing on integration of migrants in the labour sector, we can notice that the number of unemployed immigrants increased until 2013, when the quantity of employed ones started to rise. At first glance, it seems that immigrants from non-EU countries are more integrated in the labour market than European ones, but this is due to a very large number of people coming from non-European countries. Comparing percentage data, it's clear how in 2010, but even in 2019, European immigrants were more employed. The total of immigrants employed increases by 6% (both EU-countries and others), also thanks to the migration balance, which has become positive since 2017. It can be noted that the disparity between the employment of immigrants of European and non-European origin, decreased from 2010 to 2019, from 3.07% to 1.8% (see page below).

<sup>4</sup> Rates of employed immigrants calculated on active population, excluding students and pensioners



[Tab 9.1] *Source: [lfsa\_pgacws]*

## Conclusions and comments

From the data available in the Eurostat databases, it emerges that Portugal is a country of recent immigration, and probably this will be valid for the next few years. Because of their position at the Eastern or Southern border of the European Union, countries such as Italy and Greece have been preferred first countries of migration but given the political changes at both national and European level, new ways are being found to enter Europe. Going back to tab 3.3, also the steep increase in family reunification as a trigger for migration from 2010 to 2019 suggests how Portugal is gradually becoming an inviting destination for migrants, as they are supposed to settle and gain enough social and economic stability in order to reunite with their relatives abroad.

On the other hand, referring to tab 3.2, a relevant evidence - that has been assumed also in the introduction of this work - undoubtedly is the remarkable expansion of foreign pensioners (generally individuals above 64 years old) present in the country. This surely denotes how Portugal represents an attractive destination for the elders, a trend that Portuguese policy-makers have concretely supported promoting special measures of tax relief (which, however, have been partially lifted in 2020: an analysis of the same trend in the upcoming years will probably be able to estimate to which extent these political programs sustained such a pattern of migration).

Looking at the data on emigration, a possible explanation is that Portugal was one of the worst hit countries during the 2008 financial crisis, and for the first part of the decade unemployment pushed many out of the country to look for occupation.

Then, by expanding our analysis on Portugal to a broader context, we can also state that the positive migratory balance alone is not a sufficient factor to definitely solve the current question of the declining and the aging of a great part of the European population; nonetheless, a migration plus, combined with effective migration policies, can objectively contribute to compensate the contingent reduction in total population number and to keep it stable, also in a perspective of a possible “replacement” in the working age gap.

Finally, when it comes to the number of refugees within the stock of migrants, it is important to point out that they represent a small part. As a matter of fact, they reached the highest level in 2019 when they made up 0.22% of total migrants and after several years of fluctuation. Besides, as far as the number of asylum applications is concerned, even though they dropped in 2020 after a period of constant increase the percentage of young people remained very high.