



# COUNTRY FACTSHEET: SLOVAK REPUBLIC 2016

## EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

### 1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in the Slovak Republic during 2016, including latest statistics.

### 2. International Protection including Asylum

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016, Act No. 162/2015 Coll. **Administrative Procedure Code** entered into force, introducing several legislative changes regarding asylum. An important result of the recodification of the procedural law is the fact that the decision of the Ministry of Interior on the asylum procedure is considered in force from the moment the Ministry announces it. In addition, the Administrative Procedure Code establishes that asylum seekers can be legally represented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing assistance to foreigners. Regarding the review of the decisions carried out by administrative courts, new procedural figures are now available, such as a specialised type of administrative appeal regarding asylum. By filing an administrative appeal, a person can now request the review of a decision or measure taken by a public administration authority on asylum, subsidiary protection, temporary shelter, and transfer to another country. Moreover, the filing of an administrative appeal is accompanied by the possibility of requesting suspensive effect in the case of decisions that do not automatically include such an effect.

**Amendments to the Act on Asylum** also entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. These amendments modified Article 2.h) of the Act on Asylum and, as a result, a foreigner is considered an asylum seeker in the following circumstances:

- ★ During the period available for lodging an administrative appeal against a decision issued by the competent Ministry regarding the granting of asylum, except for a decision which suspends the asylum procedure, and for the duration of the administrative appeal procedure;

- ★ During the period for lodging a cassation complaint against a decision issued by the competent Ministry regarding the granting of asylum, except for a decision suspending the asylum procedure, and for the duration of the cassation appeal procedure.

Regarding **relocation**, in May 2016 the Slovak Republic submitted a pledge for the relocation of the first 10 persons from Greece, opting to focus on vulnerable groups, mainly single women with children. A precondition was that the applicants held valid travel documents which allowed the authorities to verify their identities. In August 2016, the first three persons were admitted from Greece and granted asylum on humanitarian grounds. Subsequently, the Slovak Republic submitted two more relocation pledges based on which it admitted six more persons from the same target group (single women with children) from Greece, who were also granted asylum on humanitarian grounds.

Furthermore, based on the **2015 Memorandum of Understanding between the Slovak Republic and Austria**, the Slovak Republic continued to provide accommodation for asylum seekers from Austria in the Gabčíkovo reception facility. The facility hosted approximately 1,220 asylum seekers whose applications were being assessed in Austria.

### 3. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

In 2016 the Information Centre for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Interior **updated the Methodological Guidelines on the Procedures to Provide Assistance to Human Trafficking Victims, with a Special Focus on Children and Foreigners** (for further information see Section 8 below).

Moreover, the proposed amendments to the Act on the Residence of Aliens introduced a number of **changes to ensure adequate conditions of detention for minors** held in the Police Detention Centre(s) for Aliens together with their families. These included: the provision of meals to minors five times a day, an

increase in the daily outdoors time spent within the facility, and enabling access to education for minors within three months since the start of detention. The amended Act was expected to be adopted by May 2017.

## 4. Legal Migration and Mobility

### 4.1 PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

In January 2016 a **webpage on “Integration of Foreigners in Slovakia”** was launched under the website of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MoLSAF). The portal, which is updated on an ongoing basis, provides information on entry and residence conditions, among other issues such as housing, employment, and education.

### 4.2 ECONOMIC MIGRATION

The amendments proposed to the Act on the Residence of Aliens referred to in Section 3 above included changes which aimed to transpose the [Seasonal Workers Directive \(2014/36/EC\)](#) and the [Intra-corporate Transferees Directive \(2014/66/EC\)](#) into the legislative framework of the Slovak Republic.

In addition, a proposal to **amend the Act on Employment Services** was developed in 2016 and further discussed within the legislative process. The proposed amendments aimed at stimulating the interest of highly qualified third-country nationals in the Slovak labour market, and facilitating their access to the country. One of the measures proposed was the extension of the validity period of the “Blue Card” residence permit from three to four years.

### 4.3 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

No particular developments were reported in 2016.

### 4.4 MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY<sup>1</sup>

The VISMAIL II international testing was successfully concluded, and the **VisMail communication platform** was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016. With support from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the Slovak Republic installed or upgraded **camera systems at five border crossing points in the Slovak-Ukrainian border**. These improvements aimed at supporting the authorities in better assessing waiting times at border crossing points; decreasing the opportunities for corrupt practices; enhancing public safety; and contributing to bring about improvements in the attitude of public agents towards citizens during the border checks.

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<sup>1</sup> “Managing migration and mobility” refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

## 5. Integration

A new **Action Plan on Integration Policy** for the period 2017–2018 was adopted in December 2016. The Action Plan included measures aimed, among other objectives, to facilitate a more effective use of active labour market policy tools; remove barriers and social prejudice; and improve cooperation with local authorities and NGOs in seeking solutions to key integration issues concerning housing and cultural, social and political integration.

In relation to **labour market integration**, the amendments proposed to the Act on Employment Services (see Section 4.2 above) provided that beneficiaries of international protection were to be considered **disadvantaged job seekers** and therefore did not need to fulfil a series of requirements in order to take up employment – e.g. submit a job permit and confirm their suitability to fill in a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment. In addition, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were granted access to employment-related services under the same conditions as Slovak citizens.

In addition to setting up a webpage on integration (see Section 4.1 above), the MoLSAF launched an [internet site devoted to discrimination issues](#). The website offers information to the general public, and to public and private entities, on discrimination-related issues, as well as basic counselling to persons at risk.

As for further measures to raise awareness on immigration and integration in the host society, the MoLSAF, in cooperation with Human Rights League, the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and the Press Council of the Slovak Republic, developed a document outlining **“Ethical Rules of Presenting Information on the Topics of Migration and Integration”** which are currently pending approval. In addition, in 2017 the MoLSAF plans to further cooperate with NGOs through the implementation of projects based on the Communication Strategy on the Benefits and Positive Aspects of Migration and Integration of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic, which was developed jointly by the Ministry and the Human Rights League.

## 6. External Dimension of EU Migration Policy

In 2016 two **implementing protocols of EU readmission agreements** entered into force – concerning, respectively **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (8<sup>th</sup> February 2016) and **Georgia** (1<sup>st</sup> March 2016).

Additional implementing protocols were in the process of being negotiated with Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

## 7. Irregular Migration and Return

### 7.1 THE FIGHT AGAINST FACILITATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

To enhance the monitoring of irregular migration, the diplomatic missions of the Slovak Republic were instructed, starting from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, to bi-monthly **submit analytical information** to the Department of Risk and Statistics Analysis of the Bureau of the Border and Aliens Police on issues related to fraudulent visa applications, the misuse of legal migration channels, and the facilitation of irregular migration to the EU, among others.

The Slovak Republic also actively participated in Frontex activities, including training-related activities.

### 7.2 RETURN OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

No particular developments in 2016.

## 8. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

In 2016 a number of ministerial departments – i.e. the Ministry of the Interior, the MoLSAF and Ministry of Health – developed an updated **the Methodological Guidelines on the Procedures to Provide Assistance to Human Trafficking Victims, with a special focus on children and foreigners**. The tool facilitates access by all participating entities to information on the procedures for providing effective support and protection to children and adults who are foreign victims of human trafficking.

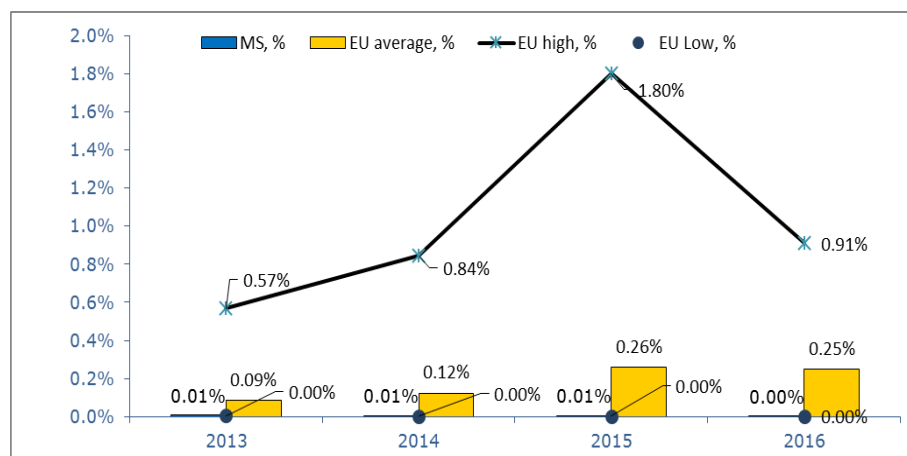
### STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for the Slovak Republic on aspects of migration and international protection (2013-2016), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as "N/A".

## Statistical Annex: Migration and Asylum in Slovak Republic (2013-2016)

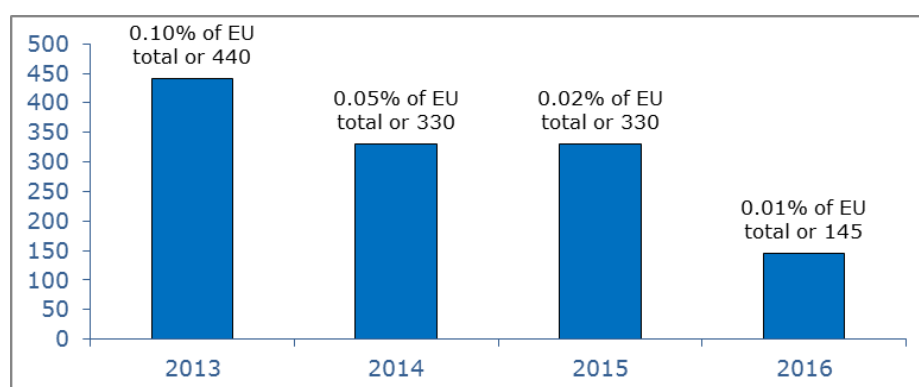
### 1. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

**Figure 1: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Slovak Republic, EU average and EU high and low (2013-2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asyappctza](#))<sup>2</sup>, data extracted 17/04/2017

**Figure 2: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2013-2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017

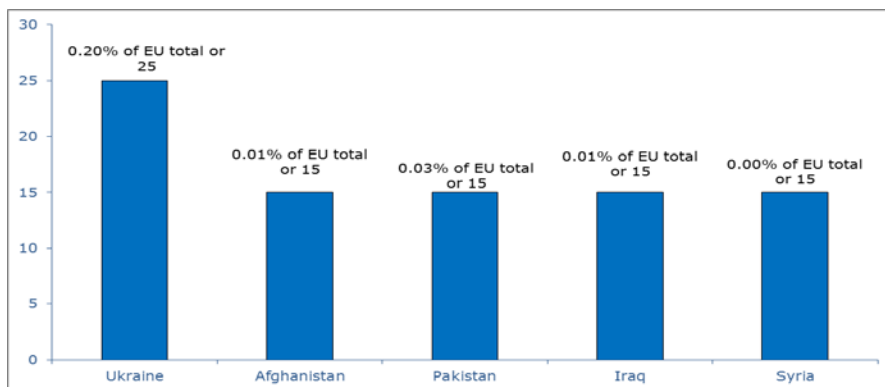
**Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2013–2016)**

2013			2014			2015			2016		
Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total
Afghanistan	110	25%	Afghanistan	95	29%	Iraq	170	52%	Ukraine	25	17%
Somalia	55	13%	Syria	40	12%	Afghanistan	35	11%	Afghanistan	15	10%
Georgia	35	8%	Ukraine, Vietnam	25	8%	Ukraine	25	8%	Pakistan	15	10%
Eritrea	30	7%	Somalia	20	6%	Unknown	15	5%	Iraq	15	10%
Armenia	25	6%	Georgia, Unknown	15	5%	Russia, India, Syria	10	3%	Syria	15	10%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017

<sup>2</sup> Figures regarding the total population were extracted from Eurostat ([demo\\_gind](#))

**Figure 3: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017

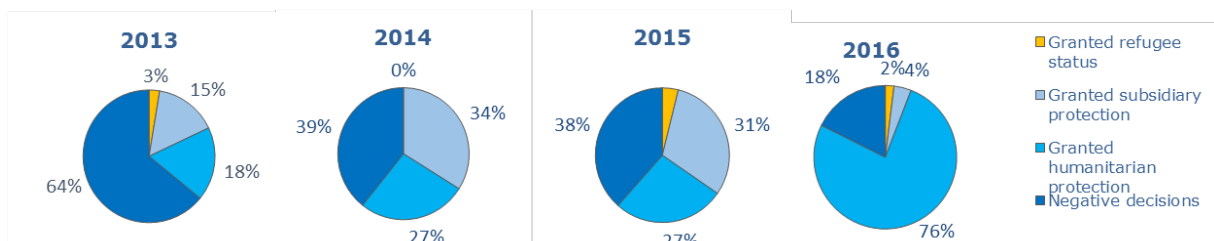
Note: the figure reads as: The Slovak Republic received 25 asylum applications from Ukraine or 0.20% of all asylum applications lodged by Ukraine in EU in 2016.

**Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2013-2016)**

Year	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2013	190	70	5	30	35	125
2014	280	170	0	95	75	110
2015	130	80	5	40	35	50
2016	250	210	5	10	195	45

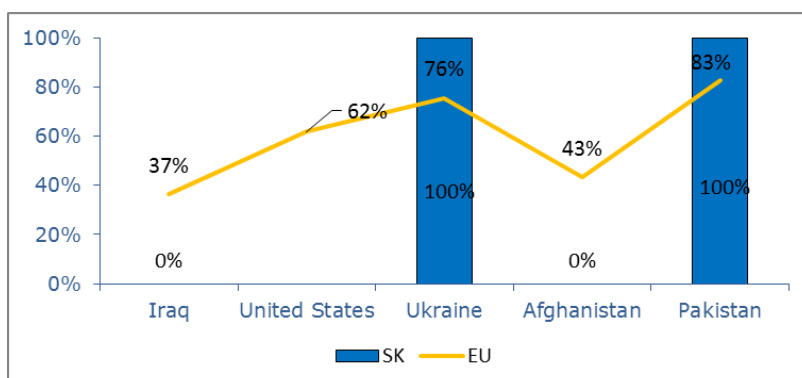
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017

**Figures 4-7: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2013-2016)**



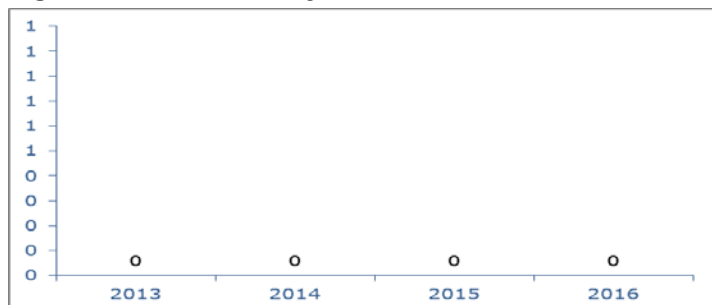
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017

**Figure 8: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asydcfsta](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017

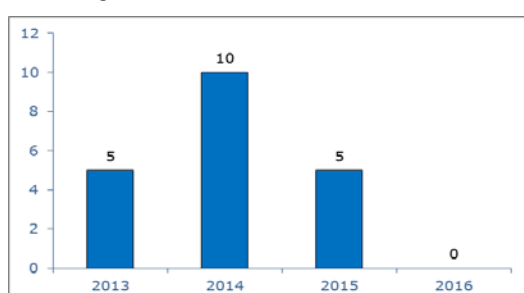
**Figure 9: Third-country nationals resettled (2013-2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_asyresa](#)), data extracted 09/05/2017

## 2. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

**Figure 10: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2013-2016)**



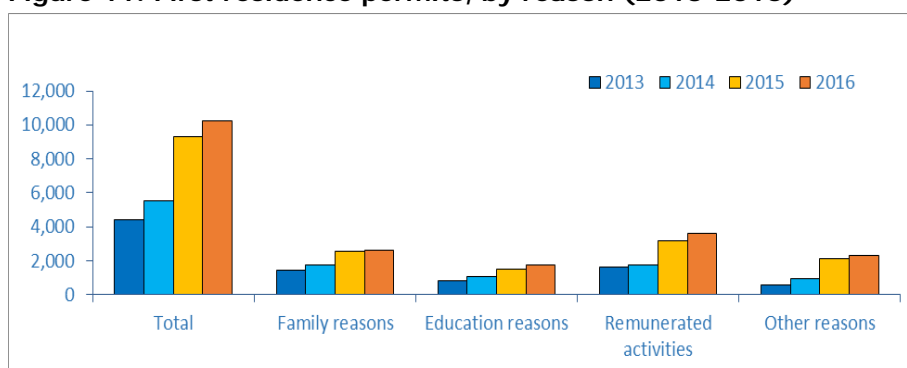
**Table 3: Unaccompanied minors (2013-2016)**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Unaccompanied minors (total)	N/A	N/A	26	33
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	5	10	5	0

Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) ([migr\\_asyunaa](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017; EMN NCPs

## 3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

**Figure 11: First residence permits, by reason (2013-2016)**



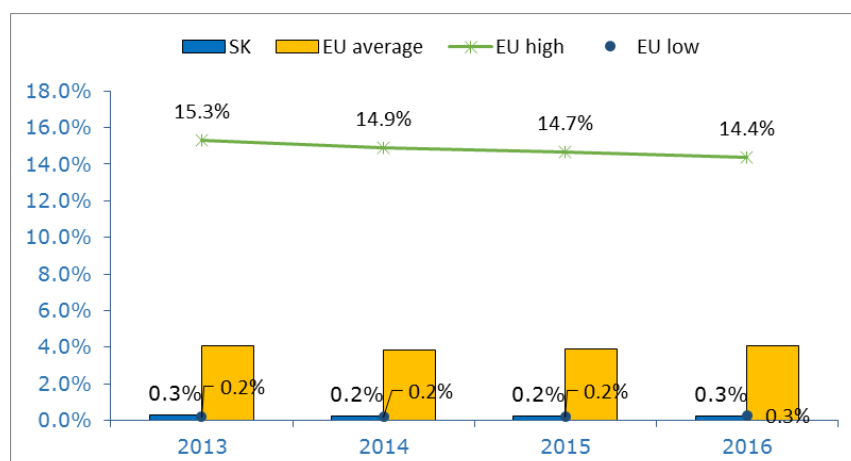
Source: Eurostat ([migr\\_resfirst](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017; EMN NCPs

**Table 4: First residence permits: Top five third-country nationalities (2013–2016)**

2013		2014		2015		2016	
Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number	Nationality	Number
Ukraine	1,040	Ukraine	1,592	Ukraine	3,340	Ukraine	3,016
Serbia	603	Serbia	830	Serbia	1,394	Serbia	2,076
South Korea	389	Russia	494	Syria	899	Russia	743
Russia	377	South Korea	365	Russia	739	Iran	513
China (incl. Hong Kong)	228	China (incl. Hong Kong)	226	South Korea	359	Syria	481

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_resfirst](#)), data extracted 02/08/2017

**Figure 12: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Slovak Republic EU average, EU high and low (2013-2016)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_pop1ctz](#)), data extracted 17/04/2017

#### 4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

**Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2013–2016)**

Third country nationals:	2013	2014	2015	2016
Refused entry at external borders	435	455	465	750
Found to be illegally present	1,025	1,155	1,985	2,035
Ordered to leave	545	925	1,575	1,735
Returned following an order to leave	375	695	1,230	1,410

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr\\_eirfs](#))([migr\\_eipre](#))([migr\\_eiord](#)),([migr\\_eirtn](#)) data extracted 09/05/2017

**Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2013-2016)**

Year	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2013	325	64	50
2014	275	418	57
2015	560	668	92
2016	314	1,094	116

Source: EMN NCPs

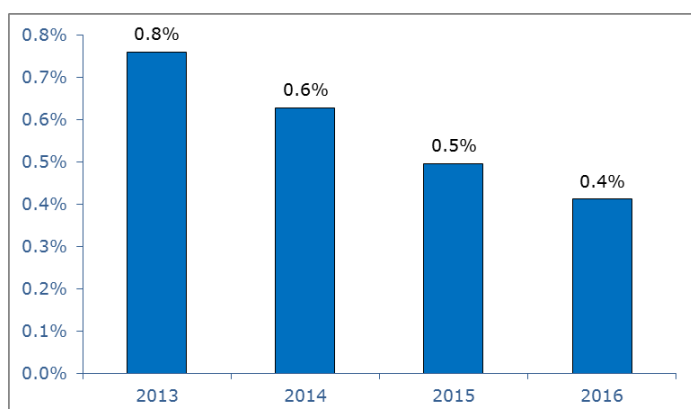
#### 5. SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

**Table 7: Number of Schengen visas applications (2013–2016)**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	131,194	104,988	76,491	62,472

Source: DG Migration and Home – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

**Figure 13: Uniform visa applications received in MS as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2013-2016)**



Source: DG Migration and Home affairs – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

**Table 8: Top five countries in which the highest number of visa applications for MS was lodged (2013-2016)**

2013		2014		2015		2016	
Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number	Countries	Number
<b>Ukraine</b>	88,144	<b>Ukraine</b>	49,466	<b>Ukraine</b>	45,727	<b>Ukraine</b>	38,426
<b>Russia</b>	27,722	<b>Belarus</b>	27,393	<b>Russian Federation</b>	11,268	<b>Russian Federation</b>	9,512
<b>Belarus</b>	6,242	<b>Russia</b>	18,429	<b>Belarus</b>	8,811	<b>Belarus</b>	5,384
<b>China</b>	1,317	<b>China</b>	1,317	<b>China</b>	1,944	<b>China</b>	2,097
<b>Turkey</b>	1,180	<b>Iraq</b>	1,213	<b>Kuwait</b>	1,186	<b>Kuwait</b>	1,252

Source: DG Migration and Home affairs