

## Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany; Annual Report 2020

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Federal Office  
for Migration  
and Refugees

**REPORTS ON MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION – SERIES 2**

# Freedom of Movement Monitoring: Migration of EU Nationals to Germany

Annual Report 2020

Johannes Graf

Forschung



**Research Centre**  
Migration, Integration and Asylum



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# At a Glance

## CENTRAL TRENDS

- According to the figures of the Central Register of Foreigners, 502,114 EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2020. This represents a decrease of 15.5% compared to the previous year. While a general downward trend had already been indicated in 2019, its current extent is presumably mainly due to the various entry restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which temporarily came into force from March 2020.
- At the same time, there was also a significant decline in the emigration of EU citizens from Germany (344,431 persons). With a minus of 20.4%, this was even more pronounced than with regard to immigration. In the years before, there had been a steady increase. This development is also likely to be due to the mobility restrictions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In terms of both immigration and emigration, nationals from Romania, Poland and Bulgaria were the quantitatively most significant groups. In line with the overall trend, however, both statistics for these states declined in 2020.
- Despite the significant changes in immigration and emigration, the number of immigrants continued to be significantly higher than the number of emigrants and led to a positive migration balance of 157,683 persons in total. However, the decline from previous years continued in 2020 (-2.1%). Nevertheless, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Germany recorded migration gains compared to every other EU state with the exception of Finland.
- At the end of December 2020, 4,987,279 foreign EU nationals were living in Germany, an increase of 2.1% compared to December 2019.
- In September 2020, 2,305,917 foreign EU nationals were employed in the German labour market and subject to social insurance contributions. While the employment of EU nationals increased by 1.3% overall compared to the same month of the previous year, Bulgaria and Romania in particular showed above-average rates of increase among the central countries of origin (+5.5% and +5.0% respectively).

# 1. Introduction and Database

As part of its "Series of Reports on Migration and Integration", the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees reports on the current development of immigration and emigration of EU citizens to and from Germany in its biannual Freedom of Movement Monitoring. For this purpose, corresponding evaluations are drawn from the nationwide Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister AZR). The Freedom of Movement Monitoring thus complements the parallel publication "Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring" (Series 1 of the Reports on Migration and Integration; formerly "Migration Monitoring"), which focuses on third-country nationals. This publication also uses the AZR as its data basis. However, the focus is not on immigration, but on the issuance of residence titles to third-country nationals for the purpose of education or employment in Germany (Graf 2021).

The AZR migration figures presented in the Freedom of Movement Monitoring differ from the figures of the case-related immigration and departure statistics of the Federal Statistical Office, which are based on registrations and notices of departure. The data of the AZR are person-related and persons are only registered in it if they stay in the Federal territory not only temporarily, but for longer than 90 days (Central Register of Foreigners Act, Section 2 (1)). Births or deaths of foreign nationals in Germany are not included in the migration statistics. Since the AZR only records data on persons without German citizenship, the migration figures also do not refer to German immigrants and emigrants, even if they also have a foreign citizenship in addition to their German citizenship.

The data presented in this report are subject to a three-month follow-on period, i.e. the data for 2020 result from a retrieval on 31 March 2021. This increases the reliability of the data because subsequent registrations in the AZR are considered which, although they did not take place until the first quarter of 2021, still relate to migration processes from the previous year.

In addition to the presentation of the migration figures broken down by the individual EU nationalities since 2012 (chapters 2 and 3) as well as the resulting net migration (chapter 4), the annual report pays special attention to the development of the immigration and emigration of nationals

- from the so-called **EU 8 states** (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary), for which full freedom of movement within the EU for employment purposes has applied since 1 May 2011;
- from the so-called **EU 2 states** (Romania and Bulgaria), for which full freedom of movement within the EU for employment purposes has applied since 1 January 2014, as well as
- from **Croatia**, which joined the EU on 1 July 2013 and for whose nationals full freedom of movement within the EU for employment purposes has applied since 1 July 2015.

The Freedom of Movement Monitoring closes with an overview of the number of foreign EU nationals residing in Germany as of 31 December 2020 (Chapter 5) as well as data on the participation of this group in the German labour market (Chapter 6). Since approx. 90% of new immigrants from the EU are of working age between 16 and 64 years, a high number of employed persons can be assumed. However, no statements can be made about the actual extent of employment on the basis of the AZR data, as such information is not recorded for EU nationals. For an analysis of the labour market, it is therefore necessary to refer to the employment statistics published by the Federal Employment Agency, as is also done in the Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring for third-country nationals employed in Germany.

The reporting year 2020 was significantly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to various travel restrictions, the free movement of EU nationals was also massively curtailed in some cases. From 16 March 2020, increased border controls and extensive entry bans were introduced, among other things. From then on, entry into Germany was only permitted in certain exceptional cases, such as for commuters, and from April 2020 within the framework of a fixed quota for seasonal workers from the EU. After the controls at the EU internal borders had been partially relaxed or limited to random checks from 15 May 2020, the free movement of people in the Schengen area was also gradually restored from 15 June 2020, taking into account known risk areas. For the remainder of the year, temporary entry restrictions from certain risk areas continued to apply, even within the EU.

Furthermore, since 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom is no longer a member state of the EU. However, until 31 December 2020, a transitional period applied during which the United Kingdom remained part of the EU's internal market and customs union.<sup>1</sup> As this also affected the free movement of people, this report includes UK nationals among EU citizens. After the end of the transitional period, British nationals planning to immigrate to Germany will be treated in the same way as other third-country nationals. However, persons who already had an entitlement to reside in Germany before 1 January 2021, as well as their family members, can continue to do so largely unchanged.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 According to the Brexit-Übergangsgesetz (BrexitÜG) as of 27/03/2019 (BGBl. I p. 402).
  - 2 For more information, see Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (2021).

## 2. Immigration of EU Nationals to Germany

According to the AZR, a total of 502,114 foreign EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2020. Compared to the previous year (593,987 persons), this means a decrease of 91,873 persons or 15.5%. Although a decline in immigration numbers could already be observed in 2019 (-6.5% compared to 2018), this already existing trend was probably significantly

exacerbated by the travel restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the greatest restrictions on the free movement of people already took place in the first half of 2020, the decline compared to the same period of the previous year was even higher here at -24.7%.

**Table 1: Numbers of foreign EU nationals immigrated since 2012, by nationality**

Nationality	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Difference 2019/2020
Belgium	1,773	1,883	2,149	2,382	2,406	2,474	2,345	2,285	1,984	-13.2 %
Bulgaria	41,694	45,177	63,140	71,709	66,790	66,872	67,883	68,815	63,345	-7.9 %
Denmark	1,373	1,431	1,484	1,613	1,733	1,777	1,720	1,738	1,660	-4.5 %
Estonia	828	928	819	807	740	679	701	683	558	-18.3 %
Finland	1,453	1,500	1,692	1,963	1,905	1,913	1,717	1,486	1,038	-30.1 %
France	8,916	10,411	11,058	12,505	12,916	13,111	12,214	11,741	10,058	-14.3 %
Greece	24,567	24,921	23,361	23,910	22,330	22,227	20,967	18,884	15,650	-17.1 %
Ireland	1,141	1,129	1,312	1,660	1,792	1,936	1,987	2,070	1,679	-18.9 %
Italy	24,684	34,416	43,676	47,457	42,698	43,431	43,351	39,947	30,643	-23.3 %
Croatia*	9,019	18,633	37,060	50,646	51,163	50,283	48,618	40,151	28,563	-28.9 %
Latvia	6,513	6,174	5,810	5,400	5,289	6,062	5,968	5,820	4,782	-17.8 %
Lithuania	7,723	7,114	6,832	8,220	7,790	8,721	10,203	9,381	7,060	-24.7 %
Luxembourg	1,341	1,920	2,066	2,420	2,375	2,306	2,310	2,354	3,091	+31.3 %
Malta	65	72	65	89	71	88	84	95	115	+21.1 %
Netherlands	6,798	7,907	8,350	9,174	8,791	8,580	7,929	7,612	6,469	-15.0 %
Austria	7,057	7,351	7,925	8,792	8,740	8,860	8,321	7,730	8,490	+9.8 %
Poland	117,890	136,682	143,760	147,910	123,134	118,024	113,408	101,467	83,590	-17.6 %
Portugal	8,572	10,426	9,175	8,653	8,025	7,383	6,604	6,368	5,546	-12.9 %
Romania	82,557	102,753	156,440	174,779	171,380	179,838	194,615	188,091	161,405	-14.2 %
Sweden	1,426	1,629	1,770	2,271	2,092	2,279	2,313	2,162	1,976	-8.6 %
Slovakia	10,621	11,475	12,567	12,000	10,019	10,118	9,813	10,071	7,490	-25.6 %
Slovenia	2,417	3,194	3,477	3,852	2,839	2,720	2,294	1,990	1,618	-18.7 %
Spain	15,929	21,552	21,375	20,144	18,668	16,238	15,621	15,170	14,265	-6.0 %
Czech Republic	7,288	7,904	8,971	9,476	7,966	8,163	7,905	7,536	6,298	-16.4 %
Hungary	43,433	47,023	48,063	48,099	42,302	40,014	36,293	30,382	24,228	-20.3 %
United Kingdom	6,861	7,492	7,401	9,115	9,663	10,333	10,033	9,677	10,248	+5.9 %
Cyprus	220	412	445	439	419	406	320	281	265	-5.7 %
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	<b>442,159</b>	<b>521,509</b>	<b>630,243</b>	<b>685,485</b>	<b>634,036</b>	<b>634,836</b>	<b>635,537</b>	<b>593,987</b>	<b>502,114</b>	<b>-15.5 %</b>

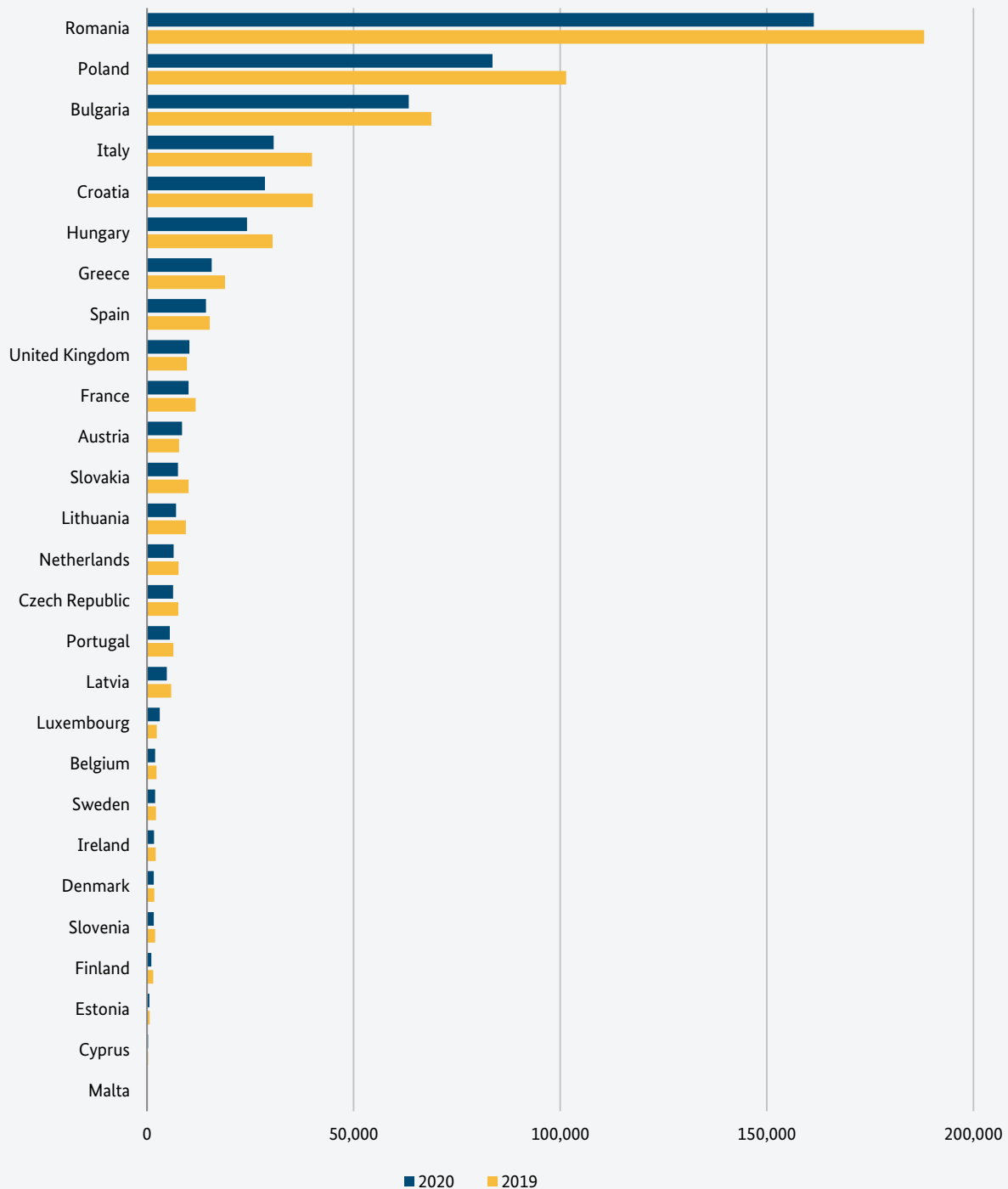
\* Croatia has been a member of the European Union since 1 July 2013. For reasons of comparison, the immigration figures of Croatian nationals were already added to the migration figures of EU nationals in 2012.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Table 1 shows the number of EU citizens who have immigrated annually since 2012 as well as the value for the entire year 2020 with the percentage change compared to the previous year - in each case differentiated according to the individual citizenships. Overall, the peak value was reached in the period under consideration in 2015 with the immigration of 685,485 EU nationals. In contrast, the value for 2020 represents a decline of 26.8%.

Despite the partly massive decrease in immigration, nationals from Romania (161,405 persons), Poland (83,590 persons) and Bulgaria (63,345 persons) again represented the largest groups of immigrants from the EU in 2020 (see Figure 1). Compared to the previous year, immigration of nationals from a total of four states has increased and from the remaining 23 states has decreased. Among the states with increased immigration is also the United Kingdom.

**Figure 1: Number of foreign EU nationals immigrated to Germany in 2019 and 2020, by nationality**



Source: Central Register of Foreigners



While there was still an increase in immigration in the years before the exit referendum in 2016 (from 6,861 persons in 2012 to 9,663 persons in 2016), it always fluctuated around the value of approx. 10,000 persons in the following years.

The largest absolute increase was for Austrian nationals (+760 persons), the largest decrease for Romanian nationals (-26,686 persons). In percentage terms, the largest increase was for Luxembourg nationals (+31.3%), the largest decrease for Finnish nationals (-30.1%), followed by Croatian nationals (-28.9%).

Overall, the pandemic-related travel restrictions did not have a major impact on the shares of the most important nationalities regarding immigration to Germany. In summary, as in the previous year, almost four out of five EU nationals who moved to Germany (388,937 persons or 77.5%) had the nationality of a country for which full freedom of movement has only applied for about a decade or less (EU 8, EU 2, Croatia).

Full freedom of movement within the EU has applied to the so-called EU 8 states<sup>3</sup> since 1 May 2011. Until 2015, an increase in the total immigration of nationals of these countries to Germany was recorded. The subsequent decline already intensified in 2019, and in 2020 it was again significantly higher at -31,706 persons or -18.9% (2019: -10.3%). As in the previous year, immigration from all eight countries fell. In absolute numbers, this was most pronounced for Polish nationals (-17,877 persons), which represents more than half of the total decline in the group of EU 8 states.

The number of immigrants with nationalities of the EU 2 states Bulgaria and Romania has also increased at an above-average rate since the introduction of the unrestricted free movement for employment purposes within the EU for this group on 1 January 2014 and reached its highest level to date for Bulgaria in 2015. Romania peaked in 2018. While a slight increase in immigration for Bulgarian nationals could be observed in the previous year, the immigration figures for both Romanian and Bulgarian nationals fell in 2020 (-14.2% and -7.9% respectively).

Since Croatia's EU accession in 2013, a stronger immigration of nationals from this country could also be observed, which reached its peak in 2016. The downward trend since then, however, increased again significantly in 2020 (-11,588 persons or -28.9%).

Overall, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant cut in the immigration of EU nationals. Although changing demographic structures in the most

important countries of origin and the associated changes in their labour markets have already led to a decrease in immigration in recent years, the extent of the current decline can probably be explained to a large extent by the mobility restrictions caused by the crisis. This is particularly evident from the fact that the percentage decline in immigration in the first half of 2020 was significantly higher than it was in retrospect for the whole year.

The impact of the UK's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020 on internal EU mobility cannot yet be assessed due to the massive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These will only become fully apparent when other migration patterns return to normal. However, due to the fact that the free movement of UK nationals within the EU was maintained during the transition period until 31 December 2020, a smaller effect of this event on immigration in 2020 was to be expected from the outset.

### Age and gender of immigrated EU nationals

Among the EU nationals who immigrated in 2020, around 90% were of working age (16-64 years), similar to previous years (see Table 2). The largest share is in the 25 to under 35 age group (27.6%). For most countries of origin, the highest value is in this age group. The characteristic age distribution suggests a high labour force participation of EU immigrants. Only in the case of French, Luxembourgish and Danish nationals is the maximum value in the even younger age group of 16 to under 25-year-olds, which may be due to high proportions of people studying in Germany (cf. Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community/Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2020). However, since the purpose of stay is not recorded in the AZR for EU nationals, this can only be assumed.

The proportion of women among all immigrated EU nationals was 37.2%, the proportion of men 62.7%.<sup>4</sup> The gender ratio varies greatly between the individual nationalities. While Finland was the only EU country with more female than male nationals immigrating to Germany in 2020 (53.5%), Latvia, Poland and Romania had the lowest proportions of female immigrants (32.9%, 33.9% and 34.7% respectively).

<sup>3</sup> Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

<sup>4</sup> For 555 persons, no gender information was filed in the AZR, eleven persons are registered as diverse.

**Table 2: Age and gender distribution of EU nationals who immigrated in 2020, by nationality**

Nationality	Age group in years							Total	Proportion of women
	0 to under 16	16 to under 25	25 to under 35	35 to under 45	45 to under 55	55 to under 65	65 and older		
Belgium	163	531	616	298	195	128	53	1,984	39.5 %
Bulgaria	9,086	11,350	14,699	13,185	10,354	3,772	899	63,345	39.4 %
Denmark	134	560	523	145	153	101	44	1,660	47.6 %
Estonia	37	108	181	123	58	36	15	558	45.0 %
Finland	92	263	383	157	76	42	25	1,038	53.5 %
France	686	3,997	3,107	1,136	638	297	197	10,058	49.1 %
Greece	2,085	2,984	4,202	2,730	2,210	978	461	15,650	38.9 %
Ireland	103	504	573	253	153	71	22	1,679	39.0 %
Italy	3,044	7,039	10,079	4,754	3,417	1,518	792	30,643	40.7 %
Croatia	3,402	5,947	6,984	5,297	4,210	2,266	457	28,563	37.3 %
Latvia	357	907	1,308	1,043	799	318	50	4,782	32.9 %
Lithuania	306	1,731	1,924	1,290	1,195	520	94	7,060	35.9 %
Luxembourg	288	954	801	310	293	296	149	3,091	49.3 %
Malta	14	17	37	24	15	3	5	115	44.3 %
Netherlands	573	1,173	1,841	981	930	601	370	6,469	38.4 %
Austria	537	1,944	2,808	1,218	980	639	364	8,490	48.3 %
Poland	3,988	17,293	22,810	17,155	14,061	6,690	1,593	83,590	33.9 %
Portugal	467	1,050	1,671	1,027	812	385	134	5,546	36.4 %
Romania	13,554	35,712	44,388	33,331	26,452	6,372	1,596	161,405	34.7 %
Sweden	331	394	628	328	161	87	47	1,976	46.2 %
Slovakia	826	1,610	2,074	1,548	985	387	60	7,490	37.0 %
Slovenia	162	322	488	332	191	92	31	1,618	37.9 %
Spain	1,924	3,576	4,281	2,298	1,538	438	210	14,265	45.6 %
Czech Republic	810	1,064	1,803	1,298	906	306	111	6,298	43.2 %
Hungary	1,414	4,933	6,889	4,691	4,312	1,555	434	24,228	34.9 %
United Kingdom	626	1,959	3,437	1,836	1,246	760	384	10,248	36.7 %
Cyprus	18	75	102	34	23	10	3	265	49.4 %
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	<b>45,027</b>	<b>107,997</b>	<b>138,637</b>	<b>96,822</b>	<b>76,363</b>	<b>28,668</b>	<b>8,600</b>	<b>502,114</b>	<b>37.2 %</b>

Note: The coloured backgrounds represent the age group with the highest number of cases per country.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

### 3. Emigration of EU Nationals from Germany

According to the AZR, a total of 344,431 foreign EU nationals left Germany in 2020. Compared to the previous year (432,854 departures), emigration fell by 20.4% (-88,423 persons). In contrast to the inflows, the development of the previous years was reversed, as the number of emigrants had risen constantly in the previous years. This, too, is probably mainly due to the travel restrictions in the context

of the COVID-19 pandemic, which applied both in Germany and in a similar form in other EU countries. This can also be seen in the fact that the decline in the first half of the year was even greater at -24.3%. In absolute terms, however, the number of departures is still significantly lower than the number of arrivals.

**Table 3: Number of foreign EU nationals emigrated from Germany since 2012, by nationality**

Nationality	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Difference 2019/2020
Belgium	895	1,019	1,396	1,269	1,311	1,645	1,572	1,695	1,418	-16.3 %
Bulgaria	16,255	19,401	24,466	26,299	32,036	34,735	37,833	42,938	34,216	-20.3 %
Denmark	819	871	1,270	1,061	1,220	1,472	1,432	1,950	1,415	-27.4 %
Estonia	398	387	511	436	438	449	493	516	371	-28.1 %
Finland	1,102	1,097	1,414	1,243	1,322	1,578	1,436	1,617	1,162	-28.1 %
France	5,297	5,708	7,934	7,666	8,150	9,981	8,908	11,089	7,814	-29.5 %
Greece	6,509	7,366	10,127	9,733	11,498	12,813	12,503	14,492	11,523	-20.5 %
Ireland	604	669	873	859	1,079	1,122	1,301	1,612	1,012	-37.2 %
Italy	11,160	13,450	19,702	21,601	24,152	27,110	27,241	30,352	23,700	-21.9 %
Croatia*	6,501	6,642	9,416	11,789	15,122	17,467	18,561	19,634	16,365	-16.6 %
Latvia	2,769	2,654	3,199	2,827	2,989	3,416	3,526	4,195	3,185	-24.1 %
Lithuania	3,002	3,282	3,764	3,687	4,058	4,424	5,721	6,808	5,624	-17.4 %
Luxembourg	749	717	1,113	1,051	1,101	1,211	1,189	1,401	1,396	-0.4 %
Malta	40	43	52	47	53	61	59	67	48	-28.4 %
Netherlands	4,155	4,480	5,404	5,460	5,910	6,309	6,508	6,765	5,887	-13.0 %
Austria	4,912	4,861	5,948	5,192	5,473	6,964	6,033	6,611	5,722	-13.4 %
Poland	47,384	57,227	70,700	70,740	72,983	77,692	81,198	85,720	66,437	-22.5 %
Portugal	3,074	3,957	5,219	4,954	5,198	5,915	5,377	5,961	4,479	-24.9 %
Romania	32,371	43,953	63,363	73,183	87,853	100,984	113,413	124,373	102,937	-17.2 %
Sweden	1,026	1,064	1,402	1,303	1,432	1,638	1,550	1,863	1,413	-24.2 %
Slovakia	4,787	6,000	7,082	6,803	6,737	7,355	7,483	7,951	6,171	-22.4 %
Slovenia	1,179	1,418	1,723	1,890	1,926	1,952	1,837	1,821	1,360	-25.3 %
Spain	5,091	6,918	10,352	10,287	11,382	12,002	11,544	12,684	8,731	-31.2 %
Czech Republic	3,280	3,821	4,868	4,858	5,455	5,583	5,490	6,143	4,704	-23.4 %
Hungary	15,301	19,378	23,679	23,253	25,396	27,392	26,510	26,842	21,119	-21.3 %
United Kingdom	3,894	4,331	5,782	5,386	5,599	6,402	6,461	7,545	6,012	-20.3 %
Cyprus	51	79	175	159	150	220	213	209	210	+0.5 %
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	<b>182,605</b>	<b>220,793</b>	<b>290,934</b>	<b>303,036</b>	<b>340,023</b>	<b>377,892</b>	<b>395,392</b>	<b>432,854</b>	<b>344,431</b>	<b>-20.4 %</b>

\* Croatia has been a member of the European Union since 1 July 2013. For reasons of comparison, the departure figures of Croatian nationals were already added to the migration figures of EU nationals in 2012.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

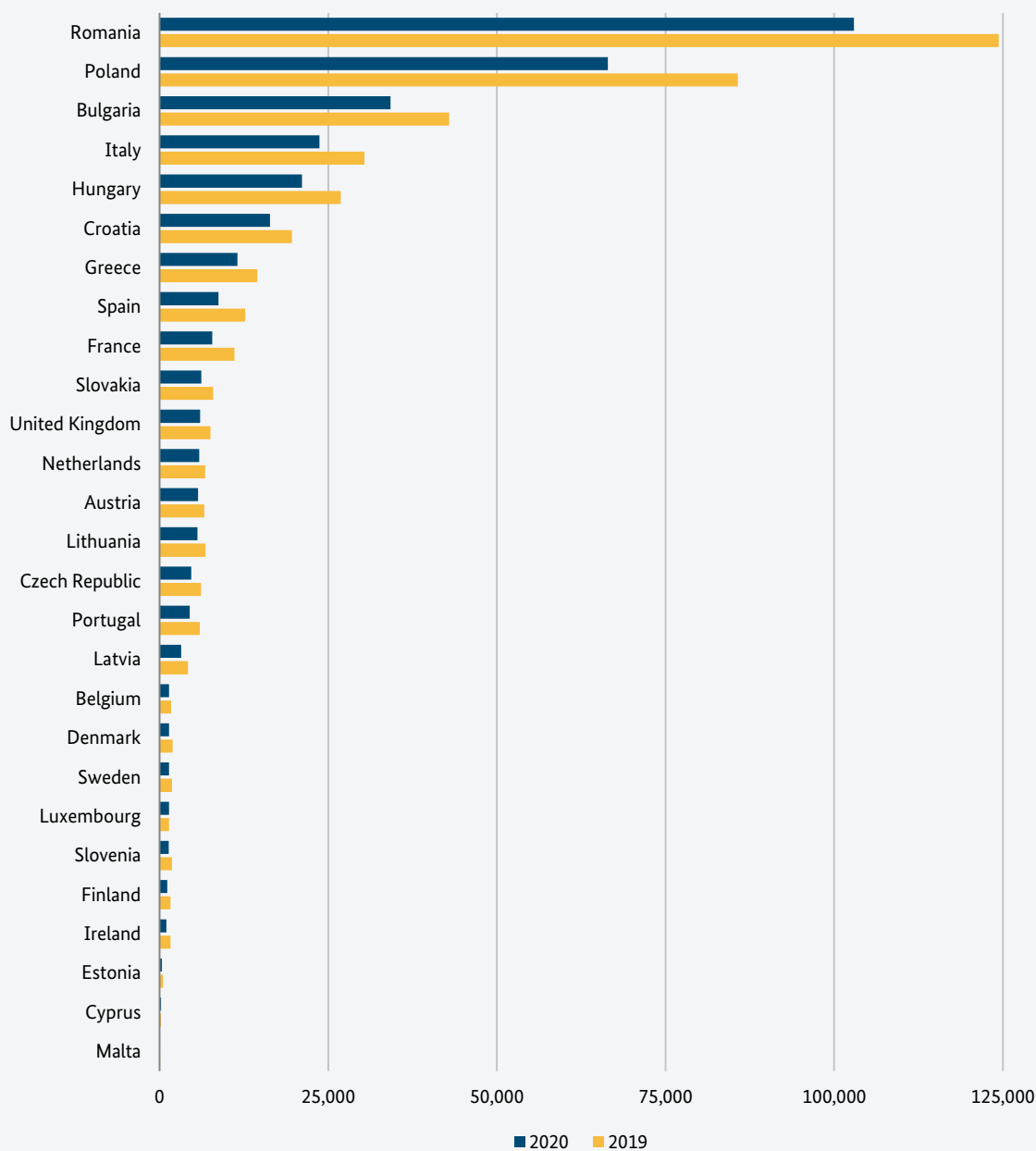
As in the previous year, the highest number of emigrants were Romanian nationals (102,937 persons), followed by Polish (66,437 persons) and Bulgarian nationals (34,216 persons). Thus, these three countries continue to show both the highest inflows and outflows and thus a high dynamic of migration. Together, they accounted for 61.4% of all inflows and 59.1% of all outflows. Detailed country-specific information on the emigration of foreign EU nationals from Germany since 2012 can be found in Table 3.

Compared to the previous year (see Figure 2), emigration has decreased for all foreign EU nationals with the excep-

tion of Cyprus. The highest decline was seen for Irish and Spanish nationals with -37.2% and -31.2% respectively. However, the number of departures of nationals of the EU 8 and EU 2 states, which are particularly significant for the level of immigration, as well as Croatia also fell significantly (-22.2%, -18.0% and -16.6% respectively).

In general, it should be noted that the extent of emigration of EU citizens depends, among other things, on the level of immigration in previous years (cf. chapter 2) and on the number of EU nationals last living in Germany (cf. chapter 5).

**Figure 2: Number of foreign EU nationals emigrated from Germany in 2019 and 2020, by nationality**



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

## 4. Net Migration

Net migration or migration balance is calculated from the difference between immigration and emigration figures. This allows statements to be made about the change in foreign population groups in Germany. When assessing the level

of net migration for the individual nationalities, the respective number of persons residing in Germany should also be considered (chapter 5), as this has a decisive influence on the volume of inflows and outflows.

**Table 4: Net migration of foreign EU nationals since 2012, by nationality**

Nationality	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Difference 2019/2020
Belgium	878	864	753	1,113	1,095	829	773	590	566	-4.1 %
Bulgaria	25,439	25,776	38,674	45,410	34,754	32,137	30,050	25,877	29,129	+12.6 %
Denmark	554	560	214	552	513	305	288	-212	245	-215.6 %
Estonia	430	541	308	371	302	230	208	167	187	+12.0 %
Finland	351	403	278	720	583	335	281	-131	-124	-5.3 %
France	3,619	4,703	3,124	4,839	4,766	3,130	3,306	652	2,244	+244.2 %
Greece	18,058	17,555	13,234	14,177	10,832	9,414	8,464	4,392	4,127	-6.0 %
Ireland	537	460	439	801	713	814	686	458	667	+45.6 %
Italy	13,524	20,966	23,974	25,856	18,546	16,321	16,110	9,595	6,943	-27.6 %
Croatia*	2,518	11,991	27,644	38,857	36,041	32,816	30,057	20,517	12,198	-40.5 %
Latvia	3,744	3,520	2,611	2,573	2,300	2,646	2,442	1,625	1,597	-1.7 %
Lithuania	4,721	3,832	3,068	4,533	3,732	4,297	4,482	2,573	1,436	-44.2 %
Luxembourg	592	1,203	953	1,369	1,274	1,095	1,121	953	1,695	+77.9 %
Malta	25	29	13	42	18	27	25	28	67	+139.3 %
Netherlands	2,643	3,427	2,946	3,714	2,881	2,271	1,421	847	582	-31.3 %
Austria	2,145	2,490	1,977	3,600	3,267	1,896	2,288	1,119	2,768	+147.4 %
Poland	70,506	79,455	73,060	77,170	50,151	40,332	32,210	15,747	17,153	+8.9 %
Portugal	5,498	6,469	3,956	3,699	2,827	1,468	1,227	407	1,067	+162.2 %
Romania	50,186	58,800	93,077	101,596	83,527	78,854	81,202	63,718	58,468	-8.2 %
Sweden	400	565	368	968	660	641	763	299	563	+88.3 %
Slovakia	5,834	5,475	5,485	5,197	3,282	2,763	2,330	2,120	1,319	-37.8 %
Slovenia	1,238	1,776	1,754	1,962	913	768	457	169	258	+52.7 %
Spain	10,838	14,634	11,023	9,857	7,286	4,236	4,077	2,486	5,534	+122.6 %
Czech Republic	4,008	4,083	4,103	4,618	2,511	2,580	2,415	1,393	1,594	+14.4 %
Hungary	28,132	27,645	24,384	24,846	16,906	12,622	9,783	3,540	3,109	-12.2 %
United Kingdom	2,967	3,161	1,619	3,729	4,064	3,931	3,572	2,132	4,236	+98.7 %
Cyprus	169	333	270	280	269	186	107	72	55	-23.6 %
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	<b>259,554</b>	<b>300,716</b>	<b>339,309</b>	<b>382,449</b>	<b>294,013</b>	<b>256,944</b>	<b>240,145</b>	<b>161,133</b>	<b>157,683</b>	<b>-2.1 %</b>

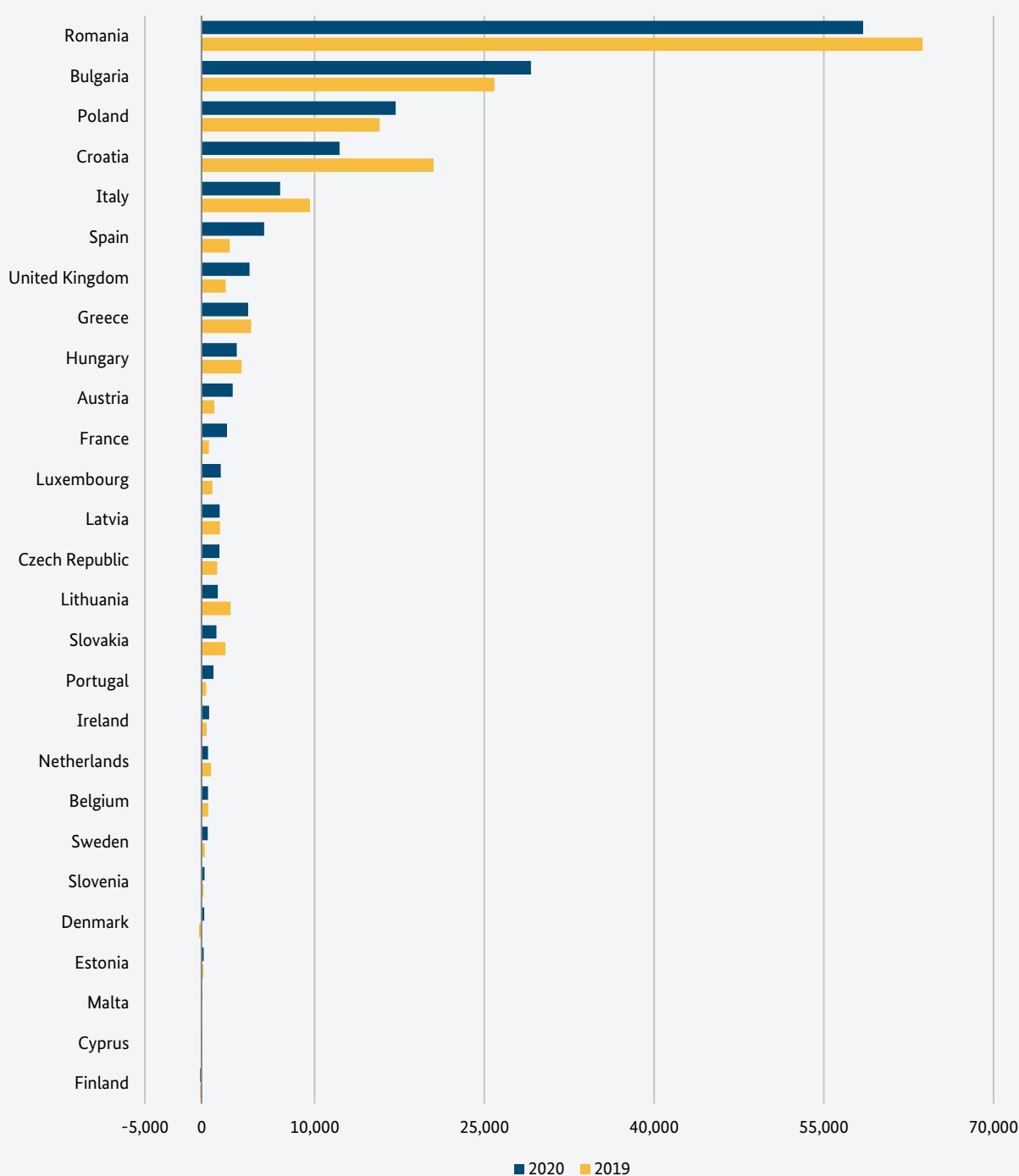
\* Croatia has been a member of the European Union since 1 July 2013. For reasons of comparison, the inflow and outflow figures of Croatian nationals were already added to the migration figures of EU nationals in 2012.

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

In the period under consideration up to 2018, Germany recorded continuous annual migration gains vis-à-vis every single EU state, i.e. more people migrated to Germany than left (Table 4). As with immigration, the highest total value for net migration was achieved in 2015. In 2019, three countries - Denmark, Sweden and Finland - had negative net migration of their nationals to Germany. In 2020, this was only the case for Finland.

As in the previous year, the overall migration gain from the EU declined: 157,683 more EU nationals migrated to Germany than emigrated from Germany. However, this represents a decrease of only 3,450 persons or 2.1% compared to 2019, which is significantly lower than the previous year in both percentage and absolute terms (2019/2018: 79,012 persons or -32.9%), although immigration fell more sharply in 2020. This is due to the simultaneous decline in emigra-

**Figure 3: Net migration of foreign EU nationals in 2019 and 2020, by nationality**



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

tion figures, which had increased in each of the previous years. In the first half of 2020, there was still a decline in net migration of around 25%. In the second half of the year, however, the decline for immigration flattened out somewhat more than for emigration.

Figure 3 shows the net migration of EU nationals in 2020, sorted by level. Despite the changes mentioned, the country of origin for whose nationals Germany has the highest migration gain is Romania, as in previous years. This country alone accounted for more than one third (37.1% or 58,468 persons) of Germany's total migration gain among EU nationals in the year under review. Bulgaria and Poland also show a particularly high positive migration balance (29,129 and 17,153 persons respectively), while the net migration of Croatian nationals has become significantly less significant compared to the same period of the previous year (-40.5% to 12,198 persons).

When the migration balances of the individual citizenship groups in 2020 is compared with those of the previous year, eleven EU states show a decreased value. In 2019, on the other hand, this was still the case for 26 and therefore almost all states. For 16 EU states, the migration gain in 2020 has increased. The largest absolute decrease in net migration compared to the previous year can be observed

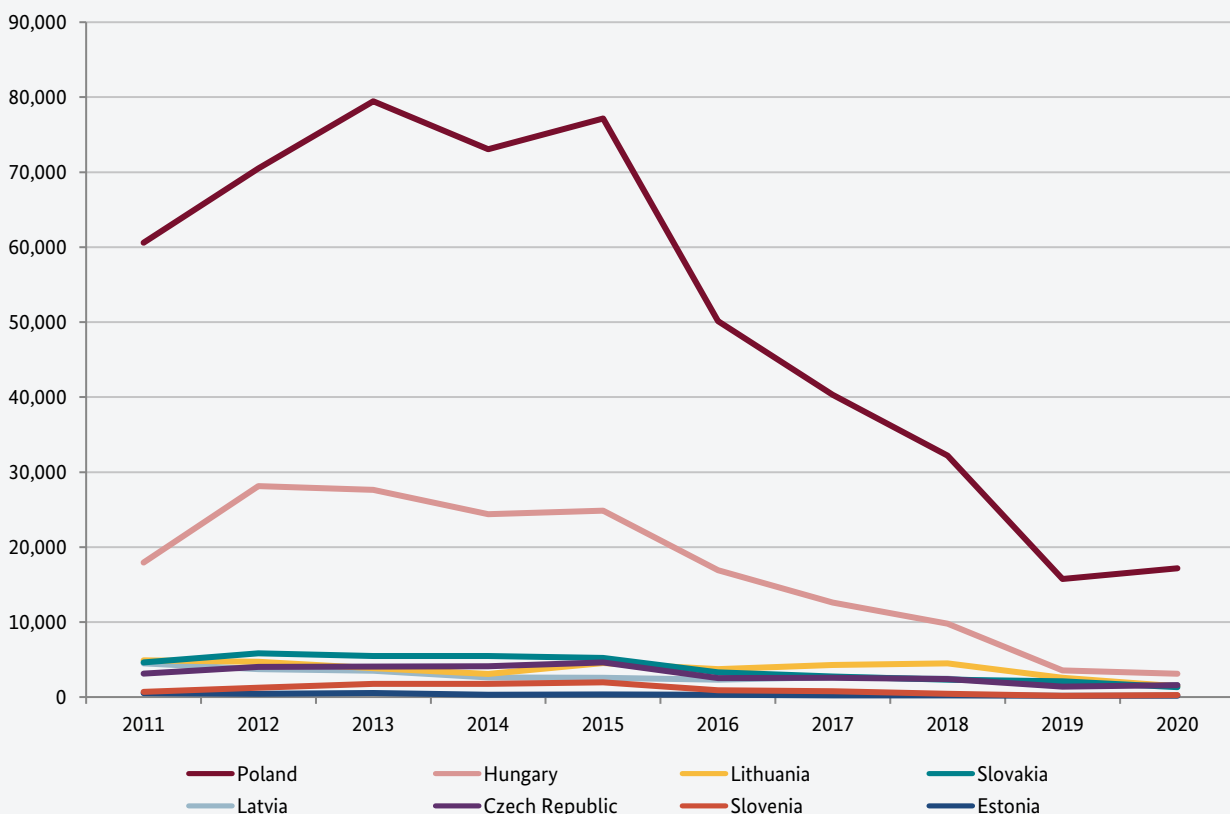
for Croatian nationals with -8,319 persons, while Bulgaria shows the highest absolute increase (+3,252 persons or 12.6%). In terms of the quantitatively most significant countries of origin, additionally to Croatia, net migration also declined at an above-average rate for Italy (-27.6%).

Due to the partly drastic cuts in the free movement of people in 2020, it is not yet possible to conclude from the migration movements shown that there will be a permanent change in the trend of net migration. Whether net migration from the EU can stabilise in the next few years or whether the decline of previous years will continue also depends on the further course of the COVID-19 pandemic and its after-effects in the individual EU states.

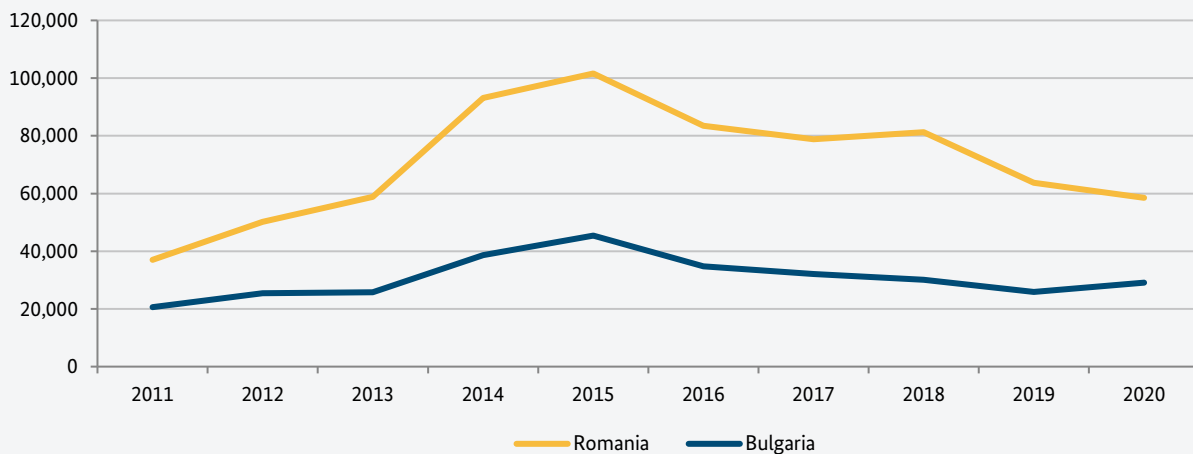
### Net Migration of EU 8 nationals

As shown in Table 4, the introduction of full freedom of movement for workers for nationals of the EU 8 states on 1 May 2011 was particularly noticeable in the development of net migration of Polish and Hungarian nationals. While the annual migration gain for the other nationals from the EU 8 was clearly below 10,000 persons throughout the entire observation period, it reached its temporary peak for Hungarian migrants in 2012 with 28,132 persons. The migration balance for Polish nationals was even higher.

**Figure 4: Net migration trends from the EU 8 countries since 2011**



Source: Central Register of Foreigners

**Figure 5: Net migration trends from the EU 2 countries since 2011**

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

Here, the maximum net migration to date was reached with 79,455 persons in 2013. Since these peaks, however, both groups have shown almost constant downward trends. In 2020, half of the EU 8 states - Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia - recorded an increase in net migration compared to the previous year, which, however, only exceeded 1,000 persons for Poland (+1,406).

For all EU 8 nationals, continuous declines in migration gains have been recorded since 2016. Since 2018, the level of 2011 - the year of the start of full free movement of workers for these nationals - has been undercut again for all states. In 2020, net migration fell again by 681 persons or 2.5% to a total of 26,653 persons. Although the decline is clearly below that of the previous year (2019: -49.7%), net migration as a whole is still less than a quarter of the peak of 2013 (cf. Figure 4).

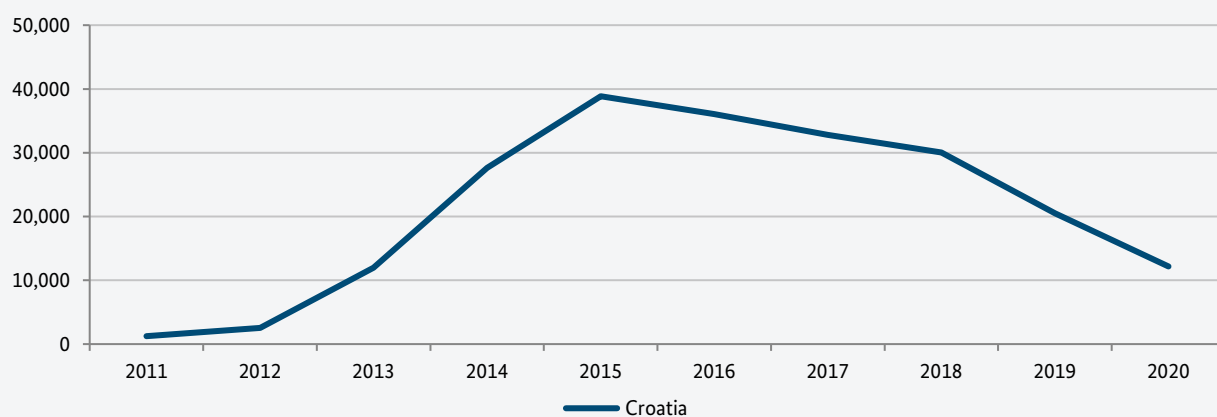
### Net Migration of EU 2 nationals

The migration balances of the nationals of the EU 2 states Romania and Bulgaria rose - against the background of EU accession on 1 January 2007 and the introduction of full EU freedom of movement for workers from 1 January 2014 - continuously until 2015. But here, too, there was a decline in 2016 and 2017. This downward trend continued for the most part in the following years. In 2020, this continued to be the case for Romania (-8.2%). However, net migration from Bulgaria increased again somewhat compared to the previous year (+12.6%), as immigration in 2020 declined less than emigration. The entire course of annual migration gains from the EU 2 states since 2011 is shown in Figure 5.

### Net Migration of Croatian nationals

The net migration of Croatian nationals to Germany has risen sharply in the first half of the past decade. The reason for this is Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013 and the associated facilitation of immigration and residence for these nationals. Thus, the migration gain rose from 2,518 persons in 2012 to 38,857 persons in 2015. This temporary peak is most likely due to the introduction of full freedom of movement within the EU for Croatian citizens as of 1 July 2015. In the following years, however, net migration fell steadily again. This development continued in 2020, when it fell significantly by 8,319 persons or 40.5% to a total of only 12,198 persons compared to the previous year. Thus, the migration gain was roughly at the level of the year of Croatia's EU accession (Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Net migration trend for Croatian nationals since 2011**

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

## 5. EU Nationals Residing in Germany

According to the AZR, 4,987,279 nationals of other EU states<sup>5</sup> were resident in Germany as of 31 December 2020. This represents an increase of 104,784 persons or 2.1% compared to 31 December 2019.<sup>6</sup> With 43.6% EU nationals thus accounted for slightly less than half of all foreign nationals living in Germany (11,432,458 persons in total). The proportion of women among EU nationals was 45.5%. However, this varies greatly between the different EU nationalities. While almost two-thirds of those with Finnish citizenship are female (65.3%), the share of women was 36.8% for the United Kingdom and 41.2% for Ireland – the current EU state with the lowest figure. Overall, women were in the majority among only seven EU nationalities.

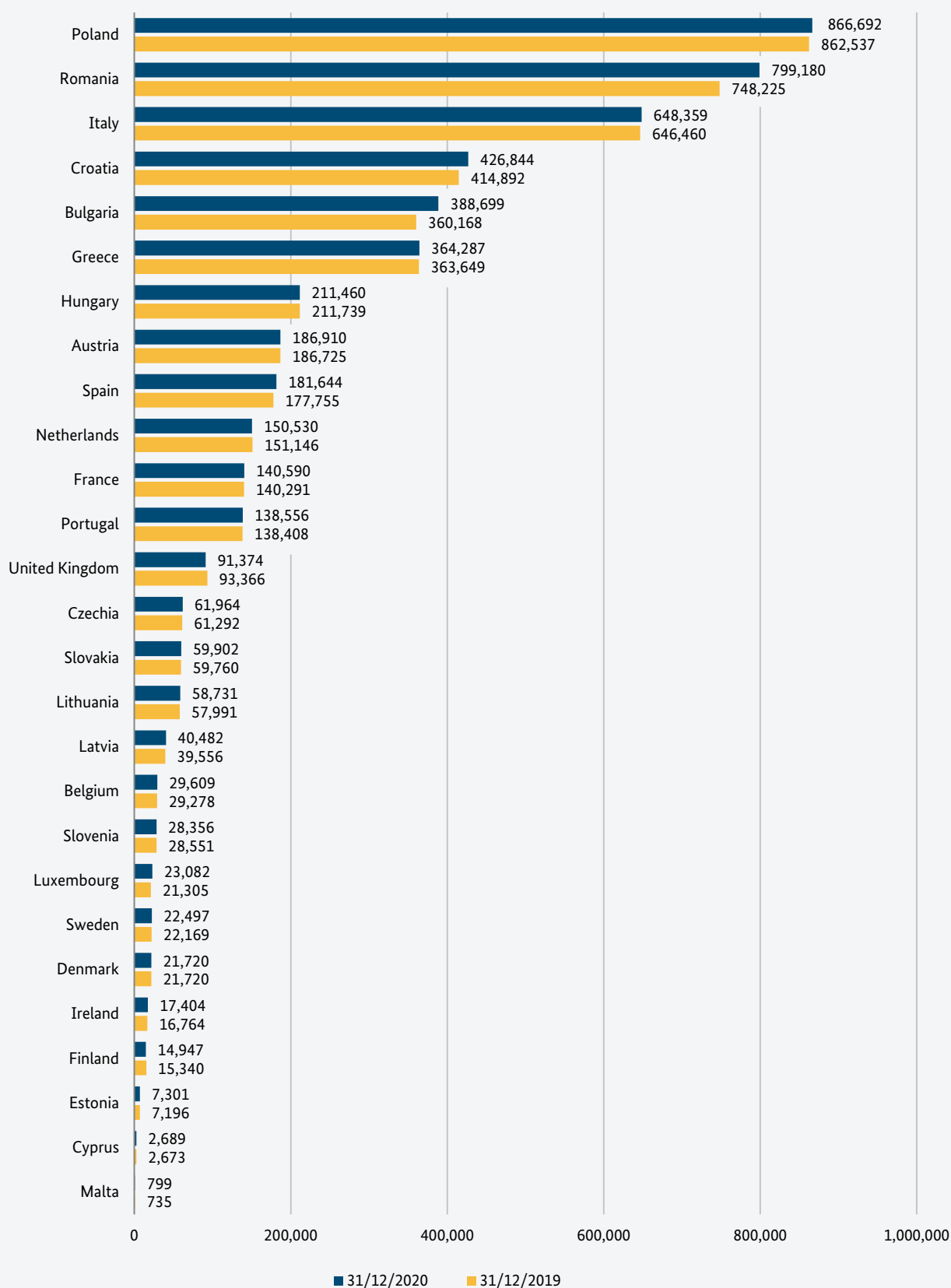
Figure 4 shows the number of foreign EU nationals residing in Germany according to the individual citizenships. With 866,692 persons, Polish nationals represented the largest nationality group (17.4%). Romanian nationals (799,180 persons or 16.0%) and Italian nationals (648,359 persons or 13.0%) followed in second and third place. Compared to the situation on 31 December 2019, the respective figure increased for 21 EU nationalities, while it decreased for five.

The largest increase in absolute terms was for Romanian nationals (+50,955 persons or 6.8%), while the United Kingdom saw the largest decrease (-1,992 persons or -2.1%). However, the decline in UK nationals living in Germany was much greater in the previous year (31 December 2019 compared to 31 December 2018: -12.0%). The decline in numbers may be related to both emigration and naturalisations of UK nationals in Germany, which have increased in recent years. While these peaked at 14,600 persons in 2019, only 4,900 British citizens were granted German citizenship in 2020 (cf. Destatis 2021).

What effect the COVID-19 pandemic will have in the medium term on the number of resident EU nationals in Germany as a whole will be shown in later reports.

<sup>5</sup> Total of resident nationals of all EU states except Germany (see Figure 7) plus immigrants from former Czechoslovakia who could not be clearly assigned to a successor state (Czech Republic or Slovakia).

<sup>6</sup> The change in the number of resident foreign EU nationals results from net migration, from the number of births and deaths of these nationals in Germany and from the number of naturalisations and changes of nationality. In addition, there are changes based on subsequent entries and data adjustments in the AZR.

**Figure 7: Number of foreign EU nationals residing in Germany on 31 December 2019 and 2020, by nationality**

Source: Central Register of Foreigners

## 6. EU Nationals on the German Labour Market

Since the purpose of residence of EU nationals is not recorded in the AZR, it is not possible to make any statements about the integration of EU citizens into the German labour market from this source of data. For this purpose, it is necessary to refer to the employment statistics data provided by the Federal Employment Agency (Federal Employment Agency 2021). Table 5 therefore shows the number of foreigners with EU citizenship who are employed in Germany subject to social insurance contributions as of 30 September 2020.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, on this date a total of 2,305,917 foreign EU nationals were employed in Germany on a compulsory social security basis.<sup>8</sup> This represents an increase of 28,959 persons or 1.3% compared to the same month last year. In 2019, this increase was significantly higher at 5.4%. An effect of the COVID-19 pandemic can be assumed here, but the increase was already declining in the previous year. The situation is similar with the employment of third-country nationals, whose growth last year fell from 9.8% to 3.7% compared to the same month in the previous year. However, employment of German nationals subject to social insurance contributions (29,411,092 persons) and thus employment overall (33,791,865 persons) actually fell by 0.8% and 0.4% respectively in the same period (previous year: +0.8% and +1.5%). However, the number of employees subject to social insurance contributions only represents one part of the labour market. At the same time, the figures also say nothing about the type and scope of employment. Initial analyses show that migrants - and especially refugees - are disproportionately affected by the effects of the Corona crisis on the labour market (Brücker et al. 2021).

EU nationals accounted for approx. 6.8% of all employees subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market on 30 September 2020. Furthermore, EU nationals made up the majority of all foreign employees at 52.9%. This contrasts with the ratio of resident foreigners (43.6%; see Chapter 5). Whether this is due to a different age structure or employment rate cannot be conclusively

clarified on the basis of the data on which this report is based. The differing number of cross-border commuters or a higher proportion of employment subject to social insurance contributions compared to other forms of employment are also possible reasons.

About one third of the foreign EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions in Germany (30.9%) were citizens of an EU 8 state, another 24.1% were citizens of a so-called GIPS state<sup>9</sup>, 24.9% were citizens of an EU 2 state and 8.7% were Croatian citizens. These 15 states therefore account for almost 90% of the foreign EU nationals subject to social insurance contributions in the German labour market. With 80,627 persons or 3.5%, France is the country with the largest share outside the group mentioned. However, a larger proportion of cross-border commuters can be assumed here, as well as in Germany's other neighbouring countries.

Within the ten most frequent countries of origin, Bulgaria (+5.5%), Romania (+5.0%), Croatia (+1.7%) and Poland (+1.4%) showed above-average rates of increase compared to the same month last year. However, these increases were significantly below the level of the previous year (+12.4%, 11.2%, 7.7% and 4.6% respectively). Whether this was due to changed migration conditions or pandemic-related changes in the labour market remains open at this point.

The share of women among all employed EU nationals was only 38.5% in September 2020. However, this has increased somewhat since last year (+0.3 percentage points), as the increase in employment was slightly higher for women (2.2%) than for men (+0.7%). Only among persons with Estonian and Finnish citizenship did female employees constitute the majority (61.6% and 59.9% respectively), but for 17 EU nationalities female employment increased more than male employment. At 31.0%, the share of women was lowest for employees from the United Kingdom. Among the current EU member states, Romania had the lowest figure at 34.4%.

<sup>7</sup> As there is a six-month waiting period for the data, the 2020 year-end figures cannot be used in this report.

<sup>8</sup> I.e. excluding only marginally employed persons, self-employed persons, civil servants, assisting family members or professional and temporary soldiers, but including cross-border commuters.

<sup>9</sup> Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

**Table 5: Foreign EU nationals\* with employment subject to social insurance contributions in Germany, by nationality (30/09/2021)**

Nationality	Employees subject to social insurance contributions			Difference compared to the same month of the previous year	
	Number	Share	Proportion of women	Absolute	Percentage
<b>Total EU nationals</b>	2,305,917	100.0	38.5	+28,959	+1.3
<b>EU 8 countries</b>	712,856	30.9	40.0	+4,958	+0.7
<b>EU 2 countries</b>	574,278	24.9	35.0	+28,034	+5.1
<b>GIPS countries</b>	556,689	24.1	38.7	-3,585	-0.6
<b>Top 10 nationalities</b>					
Poland	455,470	19.8	39.3	+6,070	+1.4
Romania	421,249	18.3	34.4	+20,088	+5.0
Italy	272,998	11.8	37.4	-2,957	-1.1
Croatia	199,990	8.7	40.4	+3,310	+1.7
Bulgaria	153,029	6.6	36.6	+7,946	+5.5
Greece	148,023	6.4	39.4	-1,479	-1.0
Hungary	105,920	4.6	39.8	-812	-0.8
France	80,627	3.5	41.3	-1,987	-2.4
Spain	72,685	3.2	42.5	+793	+1.1
Austria	65,155	2.8	46.2	-519	-0.8
Other EU nationals	330,771	14.3	39.7	-1,494	-0.4

\* Incl. nationals of the United Kingdom.

Source: Federal Employment Agency (own calculation)

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