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## **International Migration in Ireland, 2017**

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# International Migration in Ireland, 2017<sup>1</sup>

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## *Abstract*

This working paper is the Irish report to the OECD Expert Group on Migration. As such, the focus of the report is largely shaped by the reporting requirements for the preparation of the annual OECD International Migration Outlook. The purpose of the paper is to outline major developments and trends in migration and integration data and policy. The principal reference year is 2016, although information relating to early-2017 is included where available and relevant. The Executive Summary provides an overview of the main findings of the report. Section 2 discusses the main developments in migration and integration policy in Ireland in 2016, including topics related to migration in the public debate. Section 4 discusses the statistics on inward and outward migration movements. Section 5 examines trends in the population. Migration and the labour market are discussed in Section 6.

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Anne Sheridan of the Economic and Social Research Institute, and officials of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation; and the Central Statistics Office for their assistance in compiling this report.

## 1. Executive Summary

### **Legislation and Policy**

The International Protection Act was signed into law on 30 December 2015. The Act provides for the introduction of a single application procedure and brings Ireland into line with the arrangements for the processing of protection applications in all other EU Member States. The Act will significantly streamline and speed up the processing of protection applications. Under the single procedure, an applicant will make only one application, and will have all grounds for seeking international protection and to be permitted to remain in the State examined and determined in one process.

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was approved by Government in September 2015 in response to the migration crisis. The Government confirmed that Ireland would take in up to 4,000 persons by the end of 2017 in respect of relocation and resettlement refugees. On present trends it is probable that the commitment to take 1,040 refugees under the UN Resettlement Programme will have been fulfilled by the end of 2017. There has been less progress on the EU relocation programme. By end 2016, a total of 240 refugees had arrived in Ireland from Greece under the EU programme on and, given delays, it is difficult to see how the commitment to take 2,622 people under the relocation programme can be achieved by the end of 2017.

A series of reforms have been implemented following a review of Direct Provision, the system of reception of asylum seekers in Ireland, including increased allowances and improved access to education. A Supreme Court decision declared the ban on working for asylum seekers to be unconstitutional and, following the report of a taskforce, Government has indicated an intention to opt in to the EU (recast) Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) which lays down standards for the reception of international protection applicants.

*Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020* was published in 2016. The strategy aims to increase the value of international education to €2.1bn per annum and the number of international students to 176,000 by 2020.

## **Trends**

In 2017 the Central Statistics Office (CSO) presented revised estimates of population and migration in line with the 2016 Census. These revisions result in an increase in estimated population as well as increases in estimated immigration and decreases in emigration in each year between 2012 and 2016. In the twelve months to April 2017, inward migration increased by 2% above the previous year, from 82,300 in the year to April 2016 to 84,600 in April 2017. Emigration also increased to 64,800 (a decline of 2%), yielding net immigration of 19,800. Net emigration of Irish nationals continued, but at a much lower level than in previous recent years, and net inward migration of non-Irish nationals increased.

There were a total of 566,600 non-Irish nationals resident in Ireland in April 2016. This remained below the previous peak recorded in 2008 (575,600) prior to the Great Recession and the associated surge of outward migration. The non-national's share of the population in 2016, 11.8% is almost one percentage point lower the peak of 12.8% in 2008. The single largest group of non-nationals is from the 12 New EU Member States, 250,300, and this exceeds their number recorded in 2008.

With the improvement in the economy, employment continued to recover during 2015. Immigrants were hit hard by the Great Recession and the economic crisis in Ireland, but employment growth was stronger non-Irish nationals than natives between and 2012 and 2015, with the result that the unemployment rate among the former has fallen to within a few percentage points of the national average unemployment rate.

## 2. Major Developments in Migration and Integration Policy<sup>2</sup>

### **The International Protection Act, 2015**

The International Protection Act 2015 came into force from 31 December 2016. The Act provides for the introduction of a single application procedure, replacing the former sequential asylum application process, and bringing Ireland into line with other EU Member States. The 2015 Act provides for applications for international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) as well as permission to remain cases to be processed as part of a single procedure by one decision maker. The key provisions of the Act are as follows:

- the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner has been subsumed into the Department of Justice and Equality as part of the new dedicated International Protection Office (IPO).
- the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT) is established as an independent tribunal that decides appeals of those persons whose application for International Protection status has not been recommended by the IPO. IPAT also determines appeals under the Dublin System Regulations. IPAT replaces the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal.
- enhanced measures to improve the efficiency of the asylum system including designation of safe countries of origin, prioritisation of applications, acceleration of certain appeals, and the engagement under contracts of services of persons to assist in the processing of applications.
- specific guarantees for applicants who are unaccompanied minors including the appointment of a person by the Child and Family Agency to represent and assist the child throughout the application process.

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<sup>2</sup> The material in this section draws heavily on: European Migration Network, 2016, "Annual Report 2016 on Asylum and Migration Policy in Ireland (Part 1)." and A. Sheridan, 2017, "Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2016: Ireland." EMN Ireland and ESRI. A pre-publication of the latter report was generously made available by the author.

- if international protection is refused, applicants may be given permission to remain in the State in compliance with Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- applicants who are refused permission to be in the State on all grounds and who do not opt for voluntary return will be subject to a deportation order to be made under the new legislation and, if necessary, enforced under the Immigration Acts.
- the updating and enhancement of the national laws in respect of the EU Directive for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons to the territory of the Union.

The International Protection Act 2015 contains transitional provisions regarding (i) applications for refugee status and subsidiary protection lodged with the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and (ii) appeals lodged with the Refugee Appeals Tribunal before 31 December 2016.

### **Resettlement and Relocation**

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was approved by Government in September 2015 in response to the migration crisis. The Government confirmed that Ireland would take in up to 4,000 persons by the end of 2017 in respect of relocation and resettlement refugees.<sup>3</sup> This was to include 520 programme refugees by the end of 2016 under Ireland's Refugee Resettlement Programme. During 2016 the Irish Government agreed to a further 520 resettlement refugees from Lebanon. In practice, 519 refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict had arrived in Ireland by end 2016 and a further 260 arrived in Spring 2017. A further 260 refugees were selected for resettlement in October 2016 and were expected to arrive in spring 2017. Another mission to Lebanon to select another 260 resettlement refugees was announced in November 2016. If this mission also proves successful the commitment to take 1,040 refugees under the UN Resettlement Programme will have been fulfilled by the end of 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) (March, 2016)

There has been less progress on the EU relocation programme. By end 2016, a total of 240 refugees had arrived in Ireland from Greece under the EU programme, although the Department of Justice and Equality announced that 400 refugees would have either arrived or been cleared for arrival by end 2016 (Sheridan, 2017). There have been no arrivals from Italy due to difficulties raised by Italian authorities relating to the conduct of security assessments of applicants by the Irish Garda (police) in the Italian jurisdiction (Sheridan, 2017). It is difficult to see how the commitment to take 2,622 people under the EU relocation programme can be achieved by the end of 2017.

### **Direct Provision for Asylum Seekers**

The *Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision<sup>4</sup> and other Supports for Asylum Seekers* was published in June 2015. Progress was made during 2016 on implementation of the 173 recommendations in the Report. The Department of Justice and Equality published a summary of the status of the Working Group recommendations in June 2016.<sup>5</sup> By then, 91 recommendations had been implemented and 49 had been partially implemented. A further progress audit was published in February 2017 showing that that 92% of the Report's 173 recommendations were implemented or in progress. By June 2016, an estimated two thirds of people who had been in the Direct Provision (DP) system for five years or more had had their cases processed to completion.

Among the reforms introduced to the system include:

- the weekly allowance for children in DP was increased by €6 to €15.60
- Prescription charges for residents of DP for medications issued on a doctor's prescription are waived.
- The pilot scheme to allow education-grant support children in DP to access further and higher education was extended for the 2016-17 academic year for students who had been in the Irish education and the asylum system for five years or more.

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<sup>4</sup> Direct provision: the system of reception for asylum seekers in Ireland, whereby all asylum seekers are offered accommodation on a full-board basis in a reception centre and a small weekly allowance is paid.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Justice and Equality: (16 June 2016) "Tánaiste and Minister Stanton welcome significant progress on Direct Provision and supports for asylum seekers." Press Release Available at: [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)

- The remit of the Office of the Ombudsman and that of the Ombudsman for Children is extend to residents of DP, allowing them recourse to those office in the case of complaints about service in DP centres

In May 2017 a Burmese man who spent eight years in DP won his appeal against the legal ban preventing him from working, with the Supreme Court determining that in an international protection system with no temporal limits as to when the application process will be concluded an absolute prohibition on the right to work for persons in the protection process is contrary to the right to seek employment under the Constitution. The Court adjourned consideration of its Order for six months to enable the State to consider its response. An intergovernmental taskforce recommended that the best option available to the State to comply with the judgement would be to opt into the EU (recast) Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) which lays down standards for the reception of international protection applicants.<sup>6</sup> In November 2017 the Government indicated that it had decided to opt in to the Directive and it is likely that Under the proposals, asylum seekers will be allowed to work no later than nine months after their application for asylum is lodged if they have not received a decision on their case.

### **Economic Migration**

During 2016 the Economic Migration Policy Unit of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation conducted reviews of the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL) which regulate employment permits in the context of skill needs in the labour market.<sup>7</sup> The reviews are conducted occasionally to ensure the lists of occupations eligible for employment permits are matched to skill needs in the economy and are informed by research conducted by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs . Occupations on the HSEOL are eligible for Critical Skills Employment Permits. Occupations that appear on neither list are not considered to be eligible occupations and are subject to a labour needs test.

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<sup>6</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, November 2017:

[http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Access\\_To\\_Work\\_for\\_International\\_Protection\\_Applicants](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Access_To_Work_for_International_Protection_Applicants)

<sup>7</sup> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 2016, "Call for submissions to the review of the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL)". [www.dbei.gov.ie](http://www.dbei.gov.ie)



## Student Migration

*Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020* was published in 2016. The strategy aims to increase the value of international education to €2.1bn per annum by 2020, a 33% increase. This will involve over 37,000 additional international Higher Education and English Language Training Students coming to Ireland and will bring the total number of such students in Ireland at any point in time to over 176,000<sup>8</sup>.

Among the stated aims of the strategy are to:

- Increase the number of international students studying in Ireland
- Attract outstanding researchers to build research capacity and commercialisation of research
- Build world class networks of learning and innovation that can attract funding from outside the Irish education system
- Equip Irish learners with the skills and experience to compete internationally
- Have more Irish students integrate overseas experience into their study through maximising mobility opportunities for all
- Enhance our international alumni networks to build global connections for greater social and economic outcomes for Ireland at home and abroad

The strategy follows on from a series of reforms of the student immigration regime in implemented in 2015. The Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) was announced in May 2015 restricting the list of eligible educational programmes for immigration purposes.<sup>9</sup> Non-language programmes eligible for inclusion on the list have been mainly limited to higher

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Education and Skills, 2016, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020*. <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See Reform of the International Education Sector and Student Immigration System Government Policy Statement May 2015, available at: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Interim%20List%20of%20Eligible%20Programmes%20-%20ILEP>

education programmes leading to educational awards at NFQ6/ISCED4 or above; ACCA professional accountancy programmes at designated institutions; and, until 2016, currently registered overseas accredited post-graduate degree programmes (at ISCED5 and 6). Private English language education providers seeking to have their programmes listed on the ILEP are expected to comply with certain additional requirements before they can be included on the ILEP. These requirements include transparency of ownership, good governance, and adequate learner protection and quality educational products. All programmes for which non-EEA students are now eligible to apply for residence are included on a single list.<sup>10</sup>

Changes to the student work concession were also introduced in 2015.<sup>11</sup> The work concession for non-EEA students<sup>12</sup> had been 20 hours per week during term time and 40 hours per week during holiday periods. However, variability of term-time and holiday periods between colleges had left the scheme open to abuse. From January 2015, the holiday periods, during which non-EEA students can work 40 hours per week, were standardised to May, June, July and August and 15 December to 15 January. The one exception to this rule is for students on the Graduate Scheme– under which degree graduates can work up to 40 hours per week for up to 12 months upon receipt of the results of their final college exams.

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<sup>10</sup> Sheridan, A. and Whelan, S., 2016, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2015: Ireland*. Dublin: EMN and ESRI

<sup>11</sup> [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie) - Note to Employers - Changes to the Employment entitlements of Non- EEA Students holding Immigration Stamp 2 – with effect from 1 January 2015, available at: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/News%20and%20Events>

<sup>12</sup> On Stamp 2 student immigration permission

### 3. Recent Migration Statistics

#### 3.1. Overall Trends

The number of immigrants to Ireland was 84,600 in the twelve months to 2017.<sup>13</sup> The number of emigrants in the same period was 66,200, indicating net migration of 19,800. Ireland returned to positive net migration for the first time in the year to April 2015 after experiencing net outward migration for the previous 5 years. Inward migration increased until 2007 but declined thereafter during the economic crisis. It increased to 84,600 in 2017 following the economic recovery. Emigration increased sharply during the crisis, to 83,000 in 2012: it fell to 64,800 in 2017.

Table 1: Gross and Net Migration Flows

<b>Year (ending April)</b>	<b>Inward</b>	<b>Outward 1,000s</b>	<b>Net</b>
1987	17.2	40.2	-23.0
1989	26.7	70.6	-43.9
1991	33.3	35.3	-2.0
1993	34.7	35.1	-0.4
1995	31.2	33.1	-1.9
1997	44.5	25.3	19.2
1999	48.9	31.5	17.3
2001	59.0	26.2	32.8
2002	66.9	25.6	41.3
2003	60.0	29.3	30.7
2004	58.5	26.5	32.0
2005	84.6	29.4	55.1
2006 <sup>1</sup>	107.8	36.0	71.8
2007	151.1	46.3	104.8
2008	113.5	49.2	64.3
2009	73.7	72.0	1.6
2010	41.8	69.2	-27.5
2011 <sup>1</sup>	53.3	80.6	-27.4
2012	57.3	83.0	-25.7
2013	62.7	81.3	-18.7
2014	66.5	75.0	-8.5
2015	75.9	70.0	5.9
2016 <sup>1</sup>	82.3	66.2	16.1
2017 <sup>2</sup>	84.6	64.8	19.8

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Census of Population. <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>13</sup> In the "Population and Migration Estimates April 2017" the Central Statistics Office (CSO) present revised estimates in line with the 2016 Census. The revised estimates result in an increase in estimated population as well as increases in estimated immigration and decreases in emigration in each year between 2012 and 2016.

### 3.2. Inward Migration

Immigration declined from a high of 151,000 in 2006-7 to a low of less than 42,000 in 2009-10. In more recent years inward migration has increased and was almost 85,000 in the twelve months to 2016.

**Table 2: Estimated Immigration by Nationality, 1996 – 2015**

	Irish	UK	Old EU 13	EU NMS	Rest of World	Total
<i>12 months to:</i>						
	<i>1,000's</i>					
2001	26.3	9.0	6.5	0.0	17.3	59.0
2006	18.9	9.9	12.7	49.9	16.4	107.8
2007	30.7	4.3	11.8	85.3	19.0	151.1
2008	23.8	6.8	9.6	54.7	18.6	113.5
2009	23.0	3.9	11.5	21.1	14.1	73.7
2010	17.9	2.5	6.2	9.3	6.0	41.8
2011	19.6	4.1	7.1	10.1	12.4	53.3
2012	20.1	3.9	7.9	7.7	17.7	57.3
2013	21.7	4.1	8.8	8.3	19.8	62.7
2014	22.8	4.2	9.4	11.1	19.0	66.5
2015	26.6	5.0	10.2	12.2	21.9	75.9
2016 <sup>1</sup>	28.4	5.9	11.4	13.2	23.6	82.3
2017 <sup>2</sup>	27.4	6.1	10.8	10.9	29.4	84.6
<i>%</i>						
2001	44.6	15.3	11.0	0.0	29.3	100.0
2006	17.5	9.2	11.8	46.3	15.2	100.0
2007	20.3	2.8	7.8	56.5	12.6	100.0
2008	21.0	6.0	8.5	48.2	16.4	100.0
2009	31.2	5.3	15.6	28.6	19.1	100.0
2010	42.8	6.0	14.8	22.2	14.4	100.0
2011	36.8	7.7	13.3	18.9	23.3	100.0
2012	35.1	6.8	13.8	13.4	30.9	100.0
2013	34.6	6.5	14.0	13.2	31.6	100.0
2014	34.3	6.3	14.1	16.7	28.6	100.0
2015	35.0	6.6	13.4	16.1	28.9	100.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	34.5	7.2	13.9	16.0	28.7	100.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	32.4	7.2	12.8	12.9	34.8	100.0

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Census of Population; <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years). *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

In the early years of the Great Recession, returning Irish nationals represented the single largest group of immigrants, thus returning to a long established trend that

obtained prior to EU enlargement in 2004. That pattern altered again in the economic recovery since about 2013, when non-EU nationals became the single largest group of immigrants. In the 12 months to 2017, there was almost 30,000 immigrants from the Rest of the World (35%), followed closely by 27,000 of Irish nationality (32%).

In 2007, at the peak of the inward migration flow, 85,000 individuals migrated to Ireland from the new EU Member States (NMS), almost half total net immigration in that year. Immigration from the NMS fell to about 10,000 during the economic crisis, but increased only to about 14,000 in the year to April 2017.

**Table 3: Estimated Immigration by Country of Origin, 2008, 2012 and 2017**

12 months to April:	2008		2012		2017 <sup>1</sup>	
		%		%		%
UK	19.4	17.1	10.1	17.6	18.7	22.1
Old EU 13	14.5	12.8	10.2	17.8	15.1	17.8
New EU 12	45.5	40.1	10.1	17.6	12.2	14.4
Australia	7.1	6.3	5.4	9.4	7.1	8.4
Canada	2.0	1.8	1.7	3.0	3.2	3.8
USA	5.0	4.4	5.3	9.2	5.4	6.4
Rest of World	20.0	17.6	14.5	25.3	22.8	27.0
Total	113.5	100.0	57.3	100.0	84.6	100.0

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Preliminary

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years). *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

Table 3 shows estimated immigration by country of origin in 2008, before the Great Recession; 2012, during the depths of the crisis in Ireland; and 2017, after several years of economic recovery. Immigration from all countries of origin declined between 2008 and 2012. Similar to the patterns in immigration by nationality, the share of immigrants from the New EU member states (NMS) fell sharply, from 40% to less than 18%. The number of immigrants from the Rest of the World (excluding the EU, Australia, Canada and the USA) fell, but their share of total immigration increased to 25% in 2012 and then to 27% (23,000) in 2017. Given that the non-EU immigrants would have needed employment permits to work in Ireland, their increased shares in

total immigration may relate to high skilled migration to fill skills shortages in the Irish labour market as well as an increase in the number of international students.

Well over half (53%) of immigrants were in the prime working age group, 25-44 years in the 12 months to April 2016. Another quarter of the gross inflow relates to those aged 15-24 years.

**Table 4: Estimated Immigration Flows classified by Age, 1991-2016**

End April	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
1,000s						
1991	5.2	9.3	14.6	2.5	1.7	33.3
1996	6.6	10.9	16.9	3.6	1.2	39.2
2001	7.9	16.4	29.5	4.3	0.8	59.0
2006	11.5	31.6	57.2	6.1	1.4	107.8
2011	6.1	14.6	26.9	4.3	1.3	53.3
2012	6.6	16.9	26.4	4.5	2.9	57.3
2013	7.6	20.0	27.7	4.4	3.0	62.7
2014	6.5	21.8	31.6	3.2	3.4	66.5
2015	9.8	18.3	40.0	4.1	3.6	75.9
2016 <sup>1</sup>	9.9	18.2	44.7	7.1	2.4	82.3
2017 <sup>2</sup>	8.8	18.6	47.1	7.8	2.3	84.6
Males						
1991	2.7	4.5	8.0	1.4	0.9	17.6
1996	3.1	4.2	8.7	2.2	0.6	18.8
2001	4.1	6.6	16.3	2.5	0.5	30.1
2006	5.5	16.4	34.0	3.7	0.7	60.3
2011	3.1	6.4	13.6	2.2	0.7	26.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	5.0	8.0	23.1	4.0	1.1	41.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	4.1	8.6	24.1	4.7	1.1	42.7
Females						
1991	2.6	4.8	6.5	1.1	0.8	15.8
1996	3.6	6.7	8.1	1.3	0.6	20.4
2001	3.8	9.8	13.2	1.8	0.3	29.0
2006	6	15.2	23.2	2.4	0.7	47.5
2011	3	8.2	13.3	2.1	0.7	27.2
2016 <sup>1</sup>	4.9	10.2	21.6	3.1	1.3	41.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	4.7	10.0	23.0	3.1	1.2	41.9

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Census of Population; <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years). *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

## Other Indicators of Immigration

### *PPSN Allocations*

The Irish Department of Social Protection issues Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) which are necessary for employment. The number of such PPSNs issued to non-Irish nationals increased from 82,500 in 2003 to over 227,000 in 2006, and then fell to 67,800 in 2011. It has increased in recent years with the recovery in the labour market and was almost 108,000 in 2016.

**Table 5: Personal Public Service Numbers Issued by Nationality, 2003-2016**

	Irish	Non-Irish National	Total
		<i>1,000s</i>	
2003	109.1	82.5	191.6
2004	95.4	124.6	220.0
2005	85.6	185.6	271.2
2006	84.7	227.2	311.9
2007	90.2	215.4	305.6
2008	93.0	154.3	247.3
2009	86.7	79.2	165.9
2010	85.1	69.6	154.2
2011	85.2	67.8	153.0
2012	81.3	73.3	154.7
2013	78.6	85.6	164.2
2014	76.1	96.4	172.5
2015	75.0	94.7	169.7
2016	73.3	107.7	181.0
2017 <sup>1</sup>	36.5	55.4	91.9

Source: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

<sup>1</sup> January-June only.

An analysis by the Central Statistics Office that compares PPSN allocations and employer end-of-year (P45) returns to the Revenue Commissioners for non-Irish nationals reveals the extent to which those allocated PPS numbers took up and retained insurable employment over time.<sup>14</sup> The analysis shows that in 2015, just over 50% of foreign nationals with new PPSNs issued in that year had employment activity during the year, an increase on the 'employment rate' of new arrivals compared with previous

<sup>14</sup> Central Statistics Office (2016). *Foreign Nationals: PPSN Allocations and Employment, 2015*. Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie).

years. About 22% those who were allocated a PPSN in 2010 were in employment at some stage during 2015.

### ***Visas***

Approximately 124,200 entry visa applications for both short and long stays were received in 2016, an increase of 8% on 2015, and a cumulative increase of over 40% since 2012. The approval rate for entry visa applications was 90%. The top 5 nationalities applying for visas in 2015 were India (20%) China (13%) Russia (10%) Pakistan (8%) and Turkey (5%)<sup>15</sup>.

### ***Inflows of Workers from Non-EEA Countries***

It is possible to derive information on the trends in the numbers of non-EEA nationals<sup>16</sup> entering the country to take up employment by analysing the annual figures for the numbers of employment permits issued and renewed by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. This programme is based on the provisions of the *Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014*. Work and employment permits apply to all engagements for financial gain involving non-EEA citizens, including those of short duration. The system is employer-led. The application must relate to a specific job and to a named individual. In the period leading up to EU enlargement on 1 May 2004, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, in accordance with the *EU Accession Treaty*, encouraged employers to source their potential work permit requirements from the EU-25 countries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, "Irish Naturalisation and Naturalisation Service Immigration in Ireland: Annual Review 2016"

<sup>16</sup> EU citizens and citizens of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein do not require Employment Permits in order to take up employment in Ireland.

<sup>17</sup> Post-Accession in 2007, Ireland initially applied transitional arrangements and continued to require Bulgarian and Romanian nationals to hold an employment permit to access the Irish labour market (excluding self-employed and economically self-sufficient persons and students). The restrictions ceased after 1 January 2012.



**Table 6: Employment Permits Issued and Renewed, 1998-2016**

<b>Year</b>	<b>New Permits</b>	<b>Renewed Permits</b>	<b>Total Permits</b>
1998	3,830	1,886	5,716
1999	4,597	1,653	6,250
2000	15,735	2,271	18,006
2001	29,951	6,485	36,436
2002	23,759	16,562	40,321
2003	22,512	25,039	47,551
2004	10,821	23,246	34,067
2005	8,166	18,970	27,136
2006	8,254	16,600	24,854
2007	10,147	13,457	23,604
2008	8,481	5,086	13,567
2009	4,024	3,938	7,962
2010	3,394	3,877	7,271
2011	3,184	2,016	5,200
2012	2,919	1,088	4,007
2013	3,034	829	3,853
2014	4,861	634	5,495
2015	6,076	1,177	7,253
2016	7,691	1,682	9,373

*Source:* Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Available at [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie).

The impact of the Great Recession can be seen in the sharp decline in employment permits from 2009 to 2013. The impact of the recovery is also apparent, with the number of employment permits increasing to almost 9,400 in 2016.

**Table 7: Employment Permits by Type, 2016**

<b>Type of Permit</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Renewal</b>	<b>Total</b>
Contract for Services Employment Permit	91	40	131
Critical Skills Employment Permit	3,594	0	3,594
Dependant/Partner/Spouse Employment Permit	313	149	462
Exchange Agreement Employment Permit	17	0	17
General Employment Permit	2,739	1,295	4,034
Internship Employment Permit	28	0	28
Intra-Company Transfer Employment Permit	814	187	1001
Intra-Company Transfer (Training) Employment Permit	17	0	17
Reactivation Employment Permit	30	1	31
Sport and Cultural Employment Permit	48	10	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,691</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>9,373</b>

*Source:* Department of Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

The *Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014*, which amended the 2003 and 2005 Employment Permits Acts, created 9 new types of employment permits, as listed in Table 7. The most common form of employment permit is the General Employment Permit which accounted for over 4,000 permits (or 43% of the total) in 2015. Critical Skills Employment permits accounted for another 38% of the total.

Table 8 shows the number of employment permit holders by nationality in 2012 to 2015 and 2016. As in previous recent years, India stands out as the single largest nationality with 32% of the total. Pakistan accounts for another 11% and the USA for 9%.

**Table 8: Employment Permits Issued and Renewed by Country of Nationality, 2012-2016 (Major Sending Countries)**

	2012	2015	2016		
			New	Renewals	Total
			<i>1,000s</i>		
Australia	59	86	92	17	109
Brazil	186	309	536	25	561
Canada	94	162	124	34	158
China	217	240	284	38	322
Egypt	24	161	209	48	257
India	1,389	2,112	2570	420	2990
Israel	45	228	156	43	199
Japan	45	107	80	17	97
Malaysia	109	203	168	74	242
Nigeria	32	141	116	63	179
Pakistan	71	952	683	363	1046
Philippines	307	145	355	21	376
Russian Federation	54	215	159	29	188
South Africa	80	126	177	30	207
Sudan	2	268	221	136	357
Turkey	77	158	142	15	157
Ukraine	91	140	178	16	194
USA	528	714	728	107	835
Total	5,200	7,253	7691	1682	9373

Source: Department of Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

### ***Refugees and Asylum Seekers***

A total of 2,224 people applied for asylum in Ireland to the Office of the Refugee Applications Committee (ORAC) during 2016, a decrease of over 30% of the number of applications in 2015. This partly reflects the easing of the European refugee crisis and the growing need for asylum which had seen the number of applications increase sharply in 2014 and 2015. A total of 1,550 cases were finalised by ORAC during 2016 and 1,550 first instance applications remained outstanding at the end of the year. ORAC reports that the median processing time for prioritised cases in 2016 increased from 11 weeks in 2015 to 16 weeks in 2016 while the median time for processing remaining asylum applications increased from 29 to 42 weeks. This increase in processing times was due to staff shortages. Asylum applications to ORAC were suspended in October 2016 to make way for transitional arrangements for the commencement of the new Protection legislation.

**Table 9: Asylum Seekers 1992-2016**

Year	Number of Applications
1996	1,179
1997	3,883
1998	4,626
1999	7,724
2000	10,938
2001	10,325
2002	11,634
2003	7,900
2004	4,766
2005	4,323
2006	4,314
2007	3,985
2008	3,866
2009	2,689
2010	1,939
2011	1,290
2012	956
2013	946
2014	1,448
2015	3,276
2016	2,244

Source: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner

Available at <http://www.orac.ie>

**Table 10: Asylum Applications by Main Country of Nationality, 2015 and 2016**

2015		2016	
Pakistan	1,352	Syria	244
Bangladesh	286	Pakistan	233
Albania	214	Albania	222
Nigeria	186	Zimbabwe	192
India	144	Nigeria	176
Others	1094	Others	1,177
Total	3,276	Total	2,244

Source: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner

Available at <http://www.orac.ie>

The main nationalities of first-instance applications for asylum in 2016 were Syria (11%), Pakistan and Albania (10%), Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

**Table 11: Asylum Appeals Received by Type, 2014 and 2015**

Procedure	2015	2016	% Change
Substantive/ Substantive			
15 Day	716	1,551	185.7
Accelerated	43	8	-22.9
Dublin Regulation	171	396	176.0
Subsidiary Protection	456	219	-92.4
Total	1,386	2,174	275.9

Table 11 shows a marked increase in the overall number of appeals received by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT): the number almost trebled from 1,386 in 2015 to 2,174 in 2016. There was a sharp increase substantive/ 15 day appeals, which almost doubled from 716 to 1,551. for Subsidiary protection and the number of appeals under the Dublin Convention increased substantially from a low base. In 2015, 59% of the substantive/15 day recommendations by ORAC were affirmed by the RAT, as was 82% of the manifestly unfounded and accelerated decisions. All 29 of the ORAC decisions under the Dublin Regulation were affirmed.

In 2016 Pakistan was the main stated country of nationality of applicants for appeal, accounting for almost 28% of all appeals. The number of appeals from Pakistani nationals increased sharply from 265 in 2015 to 618 in 2016. Nigeria followed closely,

with 203 appeals (15% of the total), and Nigerians predominated among those seeking both substantive appeals and among those seeking accelerated appeals.

**Table 12: Asylum Appeals Received by Country of Origin**

2015	2016
Pakistan	265
Nigeria	203
Albania	98
Bangladesh	92
Zimbabwe	88
DR Congo	79
Algeria	57
South Africa	42
Malawi	41
Ukraine	
Other	380
	1,386
	2174

Source: Refugee Appeals Tribunal Annual Report, various years.

<http://www.protectionappeals.ie>

**Table 13: Refugee Recognition Rate 2014, 2015 and 2016**

	2014	2015	2016
	<i>Number</i>		
Total ORAC Recommendations*	793	820	2102
Total RAT Decisions	206	487	591
Positive ORAC Recommendations	132	152	444
"Positive" RAT Decisions**	91	182	202
Total Decisions/ Recommendations	999	1,307	2,693
Total Positive Decisions/ Recommendations	223	334	646
	<i>%</i>		
Recognition Rate ORAC	16.6	18.5	21.1
Recognition Rate RAT	44.2	37.4	34.2
Overall Recognition Rate	22.3	25.6	24.0

Source: Derived from Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner statistics available at [www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie); Refugee Appeals Tribunal statistics available at <http://www.protectionappeals.ie/>. Data related to EU Dublin Regulation cases are excluded, including cases withdrawn or deemed withdrawn.

\*Recommendations issued by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, alongside refusals under Section 13(4)(b) and Section 13(5), and Section 13 for 2005 and 2006.

\*\*Recommendations issued by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to the Minister for Justice and Equality to overturn the decisions of the Refugee Applications Commissioner are counted as "positive decisions".

Note: figures do not include subsidiary protection cases.

Table 13 provides estimated refugee recognition rates for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 based on published statistics from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT). Some 444 positive recommendations were made at first instance during 2016, with 202 appeals granted at second instance. The refugee recognition rate in Ireland during the year was 24%, a substantial increase over recognition rates that prevailed in the earlier years of this decade. Most of the increase in the recognition rate in recent years appears to be due to a substantial increase in positive second instance decisions. These rates are calculated on the basis of the total number of recommendations or decisions that refugee status should be granted at first instance and appeal in any given year as a percentage of the total number of recommendations or decisions made at first instance or appeal in that year. However, there is a problem of double counting. The number of persons who are granted refugee status in Ireland in accordance with provisions set out in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees tends to be comparatively small. Calculation of refugee recognition rates that take adequate account of first instance and appeal stages are inherently problematic because they involve the comparison of annual numbers of applications and decisions, and the latter can relate to applications over a number of years.

### **Resettlement and Relocation**

As discussed in Section 1, the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was approved by Government in September 2015 in response to the migration crisis. The Government confirmed that Ireland would take in a total of 4,000 persons by the end of 2017 in respect of relocation under the EU relocation mechanism, and resettlement under the UNHCR programme resettling refugees from Lebanon. This was to include 520 programme refugees by the end of 2016 under Ireland's Refugee Resettlement Programme. In response to pressure from civil society and public opinion, in November 2016 the Government also undertook to allocate up to 200 places for unaccompanied minors who had been living in the Calais refugee camp. These places are included within the commitment of 4,000 places in the IRPP.

**Table 14: Irish Government Commitment under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme**

Relocation	2,622
Resettlement	1,040
Unaccompanied minors previously in Calais	200
Other	138
Total	4,000

Source: A. Sheridan, 2017, *Annual report on Migration and Asylum in 2016: Ireland*. Dublin: EMN/ESRI

During 2015, 176 programme refugees were brought into Ireland from Jordan and Lebanon under the UN resettlement programme, and this included 163 cases from Lebanon covered by the IRPP above. In 2016 a total of 356 people were resettled to Ireland, of Syrian, Syrian Palestinian and Iraqi origin<sup>18</sup> and these included 519 of the 520 commitment under the UN Resettlement Programme. A further 260 refugees were selected for resettlement in October 2016 and were expected to arrive in spring 2017. Another mission to Lebanon to select another 260 resettlement refugees was announced in November 2016. If this mission also proves successful, this would suggest that the commitment to take 1,040 refugees under the UN Resettlement Programme will have been fulfilled by the end of 2017.

By end 2016, a total of 240 refugees had arrived in Ireland from Greece under the EU relocation programme, although the Department of Justice and Equality announced that 400 refugees would have either arrived or been cleared for arrival by end 2016 (Sheridan, 2017). There have been no arrivals from Italy due to difficulties raised by Italian authorities relating to the conduct of security assessments of applicants by the Irish Garda (police) in the Italian jurisdiction (Sheridan, 2017).

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<sup>18</sup> Office for the Promotion of Migrant integration:  
[www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/resettlement-overviewresettlementprogrammes2010onward-en](http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/resettlement-overviewresettlementprogrammes2010onward-en)

### 3.3. Outward Migration

Emigration increased during the recession and peaked at 83,000 in 2012 and subsequently declined, to 65,000 in the twelve months to April 2017. Emigration of Irish nationals have dominated the outflow since 2010: they accounted for about 60% of all immigrants from 2012 to 2015 and their share of total emigration only fell below half in the twelve months to 2017. However, the number of Irish emigrants has fallen with economic recovery: from almost 50,000 in 2012 to almost 31,000 in 2017.

**Table 15: Estimated Emigration by Nationality, 2006-2017**

	Irish	UK	Rest of EU15	EU12/13 NMS	Rest of world	Total
<i>1,000s</i>						
2006	15.3	2.2	5.1	7.2	6.2	36.0
2007	12.3	3.7	8.9	12.6	8.2	46.3
2008	13.1	3.7	6.0	17.2	9.0	49.2
2009	19.2	3.9	7.4	30.5	11.0	72.0
2010	28.9	3.0	9.0	19.0	9.3	69.2
2011 <sup>1</sup>	42.0	4.6	10.2	13.9	9.9	80.6
2012	49.7	6.7	6.9	9.0	10.7	83.0
2013	48.3	6.7	7.2	8.2	10.9	81.3
2014	45.0	5.8	6.3	7.6	10.2	75.0
2015	42.5	5.6	6.0	7.1	8.8	70.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	37.1	5.2	5.7	6.8	11.4	66.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	30.8	4.0	6.7	9.6	13.7	64.8
<i>%</i>						
2006	42.5	6.1	14.2	20.0	17.2	100.0
2007	26.6	8.0	19.2	27.2	17.7	100.0
2008	26.6	7.5	12.2	35.0	18.3	100.0
2009	26.7	5.4	10.3	42.4	15.3	100.0
2010	41.8	4.3	13.0	27.5	13.4	100.0
2011 <sup>1</sup>	52.1	5.7	12.7	17.2	12.3	100.0
2012	59.9	8.1	8.3	10.8	12.9	100.0
2013	59.4	8.2	8.9	10.1	13.4	100.0
2014	60.0	7.7	8.4	10.1	13.6	100.0
2015	60.7	8.0	8.6	10.1	12.6	100.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	56.0	7.9	8.6	10.3	17.2	100.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	47.5	6.2	10.3	14.8	21.1	100.0

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup>Census <sup>2</sup>Preliminary



There was a marked surge of emigration among nationals of the new EU Member States at the onset of the recession - 31,000 left in 2009 and 19,000 in 2010 - but the outflow has slowed in more recent years, albeit with a recent increase to almost 10,000 in 2017. The increase in the share of emigrants with nationalities from the Rest of the World has increased in recent years, reflecting an increase in immigration flows during the same period.

**Table 16: Estimated Emigration by Country of Destination, 2006-2017**

<i>End April</i>	UK	Rest of EU 15	EU12/13 NMS	Australia	Canada	USA	Other	Total
<i>Persons</i>				<i>1,000s</i>				
2006	8.8	5.7	2.3			3.3	15.8	36.0
2011 <sup>1</sup>	20.0	13.9	10.4	13.4	2.1	4.7	16.2	80.6
2012	18.1	13.7	9.2	17.4	2.8	8.2	13.7	83.0
2013	20.0	10.5	13.0	14.1	4.9	5.7	13.2	81.3
2014	16.4	14.8	8.0	9.2	4.3	6.3	16.0	75.0
2015	16.6	13.3	5.9	6.5	6.6	5.1	15.9	70.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	14.4	13.9	9.3	5.3	3.4	5.7	14.2	66.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	12.1	12.9	9.7	5.3	3.7	6.5	14.5	64.8
<i>Males</i>								
2006	4.5	2.4	1.0			1.6	9.3	18.7
2011	11.1	7.0	4.9	7.4	1.1	2.6	7.7	41.9
2016 <sup>1</sup>	7.6	5.7	4.3	2.5	1.7	2.8	6.4	31.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	6.5	5.9	5.2	2.8	2.1	4.3	7.4	34.2
<i>Females</i>								
2006	4.4	3.3	1.4			1.7	6.6	17.3
2011	8.9	6.8	5.4	6.0	1.0	2.1	8.5	38.8
2016 <sup>1</sup>	6.8	8.2	5.0	2.8	1.7	2.8	7.8	35.1
2017 <sup>2</sup>	5.6	7.0	4.5	2.5	1.6	2.2	7.3	30.6

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup>Census <sup>2</sup>Preliminary

Table 16 shows emigration by country of destination. Well over half of all emigrants from Ireland went to European destinations in 2017, about 16% went to North America, 8% to Australia and 22% to rest of the world. The UK has been the country destination of the largest number of Irish emigrants for many years. There appears to have been a slight shift in that pattern in 2017 when the number emigrating to the old EU Member States exceeded those travelling to the UK. as a group. This may be an early indication of

the impact of Brexit, in the course of which the UK may become a less popular destination.

**Table 17: Estimated Emigration by Age Group, 2006-2017**

<i>End</i>						
<i>April</i>	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
<i>Persons</i>			<i>1,000's</i>			
2006	2.2	15.9	14.1	2.1	1.7	36.0
2011 <sup>1</sup>	5.3	34.5	31.3	6.1	3.4	80.6
2012	9.5	26.0	38.5	6.8	2.1	83.0
2013	11.1	23.9	37.1	7.6	1.7	81.3
2014	10.2	21.8	37.4	3.3	2.2	75.0
2015	11.4	17.3	35.5	4.3	1.5	70.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	10.2	18.3	31.3	4.6	1.7	66.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	8.2	16.2	34.5	4.4	1.4	64.8
<i>Males</i>						
2011 <sup>1</sup>	2.5	15.9	17.9	3.1	2.4	41.9
2012	4.6	13.6	22.7	4.1	0.9	45.9
2013	5.8	12.0	19.2	3.8	0.8	41.6
2014	4.5	10.9	20.3	1.9	0.8	38.3
2015	6.0	6.5	19.6	2.9	0.8	35.8
2016 <sup>1</sup>	4.7	9.5	13.9	2.2	0.7	31.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	4.2	7.9	18.2	3.0	0.8	34.2
<i>Females</i>						
2011 <sup>1</sup>	2.7	18.6	13.3	3.1	1.0	38.8
2012	5.0	12.4	15.8	2.7	1.2	37.1
2013	5.2	11.9	17.9	3.8	0.9	39.7
2014	5.7	10.9	17.1	1.4	1.5	36.6
2015	5.5	10.7	15.8	1.4	0.7	34.1
2016 <sup>1</sup>	5.5	8.8	17.4	2.4	1.0	35.1
2017 <sup>2</sup>	4.0	8.3	16.4	1.4	0.5	30.6

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup> Census <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

Irish emigration mainly involves young people. The most recent estimates available show that almost 35% of emigrants were in the 25-44 year age group in the twelve months to 2017. Another quarter was in the 15-24 year age group, which shows some decline for this younger age group. The number of emigrants aged less than 14 had also fallen in recent years, which may reflect a decline in the number of families emigrating, which may be partly due to the improvement in economic and labour market conditions in Ireland.

## 4. Population Trends

Table 18 shows population data for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The population of Ireland continued to increase during 2017, to an estimated 4,792,500 in April 2017. Natural increase was positive throughout this century, peaking at almost 50,000 in 2010. Net emigration has fluctuated in line with economic conditions: it peaked at almost 143,000 in 2007, mainly due to a surge of immigration during the economic boom, and fell below -27,000 in 2010 and 2011 during the Great Recession.

**Table 18: Components of Annual Population Change, 2000-2017**

Year ending April	Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Immigrants	Emigrants	Net migration	Population change	Population
	'000							
2000	54.0	32.1	21.8	52.6	26.6	26.0	47.9	3,789.5
2001	55.1	30.2	24.8	59.0	26.2	32.8	57.7	3,847.2
2002	58.1	29.3	28.8	66.9	25.6	41.3	70.0	3,917.2
2003	60.8	28.9	31.9	60.0	29.3	30.7	62.6	3,979.9
2004	62.0	28.6	33.3	58.5	26.5	32.0	65.3	4,045.2
2005	61.4	27.9	33.5	84.6	29.4	55.1	88.6	4,133.8
2006 <sup>1</sup>	61.2	27.0	34.2	107.8	36.0	71.8	106.0	4,232.9
2007	66.6	28.4	38.2	151.1	46.3	104.8	142.9	4,375.8
2008	73.0	28.0	44.9	113.5	49.2	64.3	109.2	4,485.1
2009	75.3	28.6	46.7	73.7	72.0	1.6	48.3	4,533.4
2010	77.2	28.4	48.8	41.8	69.2	-27.5	21.4	4,554.8
2011 <sup>2</sup>	75.1	27.7	47.5	53.3	80.6	-27.4	20.1	4,574.9
2012	73.2	28.7	44.5	57.3	83.0	-25.7	18.8	4,593.7
2013	69.4	29.8	39.6	62.7	81.3	-18.7	21.0	4,614.7
2014	68.4	29.2	39.2	66.5	75.0	-8.5	30.8	4,645.4
2015	66.4	29.9	36.5	75.9	70.0	5.9	42.3	4,687.8
2016 <sup>2</sup>	65.4	29.8	35.6	82.3	66.2	16.2	51.8	4,739.6
2017 <sup>3</sup>	63.9	30.8	33.1	84.6	64.8	19.8	52.9	4,792.5

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup> Up to and including 2005, the annual population estimates are on a de facto basis. From 2006 onwards the concept of usual residence is used. <sup>2</sup> Census <sup>3</sup> Preliminary

Recent years have seen a return to positive net migration following the improvement in macro-economic conditions. In the twelve months to April 2017, the estimated inflow of 84,500 was offset by an outflow of 64,800, resulting in net inward of 19,8700. This,

added to a natural increase of 33,100 lead to an increase in the population of 52,900, to 4,792,500.

**Table 19: Total Population by Nationality, selected years 2008-2017<sup>19</sup>**

	2008	2011 <sup>1</sup>	2014	2015	2016 <sup>1</sup>	2017 <sup>2</sup>
	<i>1,000's</i>					
Irish	3,909.5	4,017.9	4,117.6	4,152.9	4,189.1	4,225.9
Non-Irish	575.6	557	527.8	534.9	550.5	566.6
UK	117.9	114.9	107.1	105.7	105.7	107.7
Rest of EU15	50.8	49.4	56.9	60.3	64.9	69.0
EU12/13	247.7	231.5	242.8	247.8	249.4	250.3
Rest of world	159.2	161.2	121.0	121.1	130.4	139.6
Total	4,485.1	4,574.9	4,645.4	4,687.8	4,739.6	4,792.5
	<i>%</i>					
Irish	87.2	87.8	88.6	88.6	88.4	88.2
Non-Irish	12.8	12.2	11.4	11.4	11.6	11.8
UK	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2
Rest of EU15	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4
EU12/13	5.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.2
Rest of world	3.5	3.5	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup> Census <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

The number of foreign residents in Ireland peaked in 2008 at over 575,000, or 12.8% of the total population. Their number declined during the Recession, to less than 528,000 in 2014, but has been growing again since. By April 2017 the number of non-nationals resident in Ireland, 567,000, remained below its pre-Recession peak and accounted for just under 12% of the total population. The single largest group of non-nationals is from the 12/13 New EU New Member States, just over 248,000 in 2008 and over 250,000 in 2017: the new EU MS nationals have accounted for over 5% of the population throughout the period considered here. The number of immigrants from

<sup>19</sup> As noted in relation to Table 1 above, the "Population and Migration Estimates April 2017" present revised estimates in line with the 2016 Census. The revised estimates result in increases in estimated immigration and decreases in emigration in each year between 2012 and 2016. The revised population estimates differ substantially. For example, total non-Irish nationals were estimated at 593,900 in 2016 in the 2016 report and 550,500 in the 2017 report, a discrepancy of over 43,000. The 2016 report showed an estimated 31,600 nationals from the 'old EU 13' countries (the EU minus Ireland and the UK) in 2016, while the corresponding number of EU 13 nationals is reported as 69,000 in the 2017 report for the same year, more than double the earlier estimate.

other European countries has also increased, from just over 50,000 in 2008 to 69,000 in 2017. immigrants fallen from over 52,000 in 2010 to less than 32,000 in 2016, a sharp decline of 40%. Nationals from the Rest of the World (outside Europe) have increased in number since 2014 – to almost 149,000 in 2017. This is consistent with the data on immigration presented in Table 2, and may be partly related to the influx of highly skilled immigrants to meet skill demands in particular sectors, particularly Information Technology and Health, and to the growth in the number of international students.

**Table 20: All Valid Permits Issued by Reason 2015 and 2016**

Reason	2015	2016
Family reasons	25,632	27,243
Education reasons	43,540	35,323
Remunerated activities	17,947	20,973
Refugee status	976	1,117
Subsidiary protection	454	542
Other reasons	25,365	25,729
Total	113,914	110,927

Source: Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_resvalid&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_resvalid&lang=en)

Almost 110,000 permissions were registered at the end of 2015 (a decrease of 3% on the previous year). Permits on most grounds were buoyant, with the exception of permits for education reasons, which fell by almost 20% between 2015 and 2016. An increase in student migration is anticipated in years to come, given the hostile environment for immigrants in the UK, a significant competitor for international students.

**Table 21: ‘Top-ten’ Nationalities of Valid Permits, 2015 and 2016**

Nationality	2015	2016
Brazil	18,189	14,324
India	11,986	13,319
China (including Hong Kong)	9,949	10,322
United States	8,076	9,203
Pakistan	6,195	6,592
Nigeria	5,463	4,834
Philippines	3,942	3,826
Malaysia	3,766	3,412
Canada	2,848	2,917
South Africa	2,546	2,650

Source: Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_resvalid&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_resvalid&lang=en)

Table 21 shows that the single largest number of residence permits valid at end December 2015 were issued to Brazilian nationals (14,324) followed by those India and China. There is a great deal of stability from year to year in the distribution of permits by nationality.

### ***Change of Immigration Status***

Table 22 shows changes in immigration status during 2016. A total of 5,872 persons changed status during the year. Most changes of status involved changes from education status, with 752 changing to family reason, 1,060 changing to remunerated activities, and 1,589 to 'other' reasons, for a total of 3,401 status changes.

**Table 22: Change of Immigration Status, 2016**

	<i>To reason</i>			
	Family	Education	Remunerated Activities	Other reason
<b><i>From Reason</i></b>				
Family		8	11	18
Education	752		1060	1589
Remunerated Activities	236	281		439
Other Reasons	902	160	416	

Source: Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_reschange&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_reschange&lang=en)

Just 37 persons changed from family reasons to other statuses. A total of 956 persons changed from remunerated activities, with 236 changing to family reasons, 160 to education and 439 for other reasons.

### ***Naturalisation***

There was a marked increase in the number of immigrants who acquired Irish citizenship after 2011. This was due both to an increase in applications and the introduction of administrative reforms to reduce a pent-up bag-log of applications. As a result, the number of persons acquiring Irish citizenship increased from 6,300 in 2010, to a high of over 25,000 in 2012 before trending down, to just over 10,000 in 2016.

**Table 23: Citizenship Certificates Issued, 2012-2016**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
UK	85	55	51	54	98
Rest of EU15	75	91	149	145	170
EU12/13	1,265	1,615	2,725	2,921	3,058
Rest of World	23,685	22,482	18,177	10,443	6,712
Total	25,110	24,243	21,102	13,563	10,038

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*.

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

Table 23 suggests two trends. First, the number of naturalisations involving non-EEA nationals increased until 2012, then declined both due to the easing of the back-log of applications as well as to a decline in applications, which mainly entailed a decline in applications from Nigerians which was the main nationality of those who had benefitted from the Irish Born Child Scheme in 2005 (McGinnity, Quinn, Kenny and O’Connell, 2016). Second, the number of naturalizations involving those from the EEA has increased steadily: from 477 in 2010 1,265 in 2012 and to over 3,000 in 2016. This may reflect a process of settling in as those who migrated, particularly from the new EU member states, decide to put down permanent roots for themselves and their families.

## 5. The Labour Market

Table 24 tracks the trends in employment by nationality since the end of the economic boom in 2007, through the Great Recession, to 2012, and the ongoing recovery in 2016.<sup>20</sup> After 2007, with the onset of the Great Recession, immigrants began to lose ground in the Irish labour market. Total employment fell by over 14% between the end of 2007 and the end of 2012<sup>21</sup>. While employment among Irish nationals fell by 13%, it fell by 21% among non-Irish nationals. Non-Irish nationals accounted for almost 16 per cent of total employment in 2007; this share had fallen below to 14.6% by the end of 2012. Employment among New EU MS nationals contracted by over 26% between 2007 and 2012 and among UK nationals by 18%. The biggest employment losses occurred in construction, in the wholesale and retail trade, and in accommodation and food services; these sectors had expanded substantially, and with large increases in migrant labour, during the boom years. The disadvantages suffered by immigrants in the Irish crisis are confirmed by a growing body of research.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 24: Employment by Nationality, 2007, 2012 and 2016 (4<sup>th</sup> quarters)**

	2007	2012	2016	Change 2007–12	2012–16
	1,000s	1,000s	1,000s	%	%
Irish	1814.5	1579.9	1731.7	-12.9	9.6
Non-Irish	341.5	269.2	316.4	-21.2	17.5
of which:					
UK	56.8	46.5	54.3	-18.1	16.8
EU13	32.4	29.1	21.4	-10.2	-26.5
EU NMS	171.3	125.9	141.2	-26.5	12.2
Other	81.0	67.7	99.6	-16.4	47.1
Total Persons	2156	1848.9	2048.1	-14.2	10.8
	%	%	%		
Percent Non-Irish	15.8	14.6	15.4		

Source: CSO: *Quarterly National Household Survey*

<http://www.cso.ie/en/qnhs/releasesandpublications/qnhspostcensusofpopulation2011/>

<sup>20</sup> These data are drawn from the *Quarterly National Household Survey* time series tables available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie). The QNHS series does not appear to have been adjusted to bring them into line with the population data collected in the 2016 Census (see footnote to Tables 19 above).

<sup>21</sup> Given that supply and demand in the labour market are influenced by seasonality, we focus on the fourth quarter of each year so as to compare like with like.

<sup>22</sup> Barrett, A., Bergin, A., Kelly, E. and McGuinness, S. (2014). "Ireland's Recession and the Immigrant/Native Earnings Gap," *IZA Discussion Papers* 8459, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Kelly, E., McGuinness, S., O'Connell, P., González Pandiella, A., and Haugh, D., (2015) "How did Immigrants fare in the Irish Labour Market over the Great Recession?" UCD Geary Institute Discussion Paper Series: WP2015/13.



In the more recent context of economic recovery, total employment increased by almost 11% between the end of 2012 and 2017. Employment among Irish natives increased by just under 10% and among non-Irish by 17.5%: the volatility of immigrant employment in the down turn was matched in the up-swing. The rate of growth was greatest (47%) among those from outside the EU, reflecting demand for skills in short supply among Europeans, and among UK nationals (17%). Notwithstanding the economic recovery, employment of nationals of the older EU countries (other than UK) appears to have continued to decline.

**Table 25: Unemployment by Nationality, 2007, 2012 and 2016 (4<sup>th</sup> quarters)**

	2007	2012	2016
	%	%	%
Irish	4.4	13.2	6.6
Non-Irish	5.8	16.6	7.5
<i>Of which</i>			
UK <sup>1</sup>	7.5	19.4	8.4
Old EU 13 <sup>2</sup>	--	--	--
New EU 12	5.7	17.0	7.3
Rest of World	5.9	16.7	7.9
All	4.6	13.7	6.7

Source: CSO: *Quarterly National Household Survey*

<http://www.cso.ie/en/qnhs/releasesandpublications/qnhspostcensusofpopulation2011/>

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Estimate with wide margin of error due to small number of cases.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates too small to be considered reliable.

The national unemployment rate increased from 4.6% of the labour force in 2007 to 15% in the first half of 2012. As the recession deepened, the gap in unemployment rates grew wider between Irish and non-Irish nationals. At the end of 2007 the unemployment rate among Irish nationals was 4.4%, compared with 5.8% among non-Irish nationals: a gap of less than 1.5%. Following substantial job losses, the unemployment rate among non-Irish nationals was 16.6% at the end of 2012, 3.4 percentage higher than among natives Irish. At that time low point in the Recession, the unemployment rate among UK nationals was almost 20%. With the recovery, unemployment rates have trended downwards, so that by Q4 2016, the unemployment rates were 6.6% among the Irish and 7.5% among the non-Irish nationals. UK nationals continued to suffer the highest rate of unemployment (8.4%) in 2016.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The unemployment rate among citizens of the 'Old EU 13' group has historically been lower than the national average, but their numbers have fallen to such an extent that we do not have sufficient cases to support an accurate estimate of the true unemployment rate for this group.

In March 2016 the Workplace Relations Commission ruled that an Irish family had breached the National Minimum Wage Act, the Organisation of Working Time Act and the Terms of Employment (Information) Act in the case of a Spanish *au pair* who had been employed by the family and awarded her €9,229. The case had been supported by Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (MRCI) an NGO, which argued that families employing *au pairs* are required to abide by employment laws.

## 6. Special Focus: Investor, start-up and entrepreneur visas

### **Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP)**

The Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP) allows non-EEA nationals and their families who commit to an approved investment in Ireland to acquire a secure residency status in Ireland. The Programme was established by the Irish Government in 2012 to attract high-worth investments in Irish companies or in philanthropic projects. The IIP requires that investors possess a minimum net worth of €2 million.

Four types of investment are currently eligible under the IIP:

#### 1. Enterprise Investment

- Minimum investment of €1m in Irish enterprise or enterprises for at least 3 years.
- Enterprise must be registered and headquartered in Ireland
- Investment should support job-creation

#### 2. Investment Fund

- Minimum investment of €1m in an Approved Investment Fund for at least 3 years
- Funds must be regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland

#### 3. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT)

- Minimum investment of €2m in an Irish REIT listed on the Irish Stock Exchange, for at least 3 years

#### 4. Endowment

- Minimum endowment of €500,000 in a project of public benefit in the arts, sports, health, cultural or educational field.
- Philanthropic endowment entailing no financial benefit to investors and recoupment of the principal.

Two other types of investment in the original IIP were suspended: Immigrant Investor Bonds (€1m) and Mixed Investment, which combined investment in Immigrant Investor Bonds (€0.5) as well as purchase of property (€0.45m). The application fee for the IIP is €1,500.

Under the IIP, a non-EEA national who makes a successful investment application, may apply for residency status as an individual, and/or for themselves and their spouse/partner and children under the age of 18. Successful applicants and their nominated family members will be granted residence in Ireland for two years which will be renewable for a further three years. After 5 years residence, participants under the programme will be eligible for long term residence in the State. The IIP does not provide a preferential route to citizenship, although investors and/or family members may apply for naturalisation under the same terms as other non-Irish national.

Table 26 shows the number of applications approved over the course of the IIP. A total of 380 applications were approved between 2012 and 2016, resulting in investment of approximately €140m.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 26: Immigrant Investment Programme, 2012-2016**

Year	Applications Approved
2012	5
2013	14
2014	23
2015	65
2016	273
Total	380

The IIP was revised in 2013 to reduce the minimum level of investment required to €500,000 in order to stimulate interest. Following the surge in applications in 2016, the IIP thresholds were reviewed and the minimum investment levels were restored to their original levels as shown in Table X from December 2016.

### **Start-up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP)**

The purpose of the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP) is to enable non-EEA nationals and their families who commit to a high potential start up business in Ireland to acquire a secure residency status in Ireland. The Programme was established in 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Department of Justice and Equality (16 February 2017) Response to Parliamentary Question 7719/17 Available on: [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

As in the case of the IIP, non-EEA national may apply for residency status as an individual, and/or for themselves and their spouse/ partner and children under the age of 18. Successful applicants and their nominated family members will be granted residence in Ireland for two years which will be renewable for a further three years. After 5 years residence, participants under the programme will be eligible for long term residence in the State.

The STEP provides that migrants with a proposal for a high potential start-up in the innovation economy and funding of €75,000 can be given residency in this State for the purposes of developing their business. No initial job creation targets will be set as it is recognised that such businesses can take some time to get off the ground. Where a proposal has more than one principal, other than family members, seeking to avail of this programme then each principal will be required to demonstrate access to €75,000 funding.

A High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) is defined as a start-up venture that is:

- Introducing a new or innovative product or service to international markets.
- Capable of creating 10 jobs in Ireland and realising €1 million in sales within three to four years of starting up.
- Led by an experienced management team.
- Headquartered and controlled in Ireland.
- Less than six years old.

The application process has two stages Stage one – application for investment and immigration approval. In the application stage candidates submit their application forms and all supporting documentation as well as the required details of their enterprise proposals for approval by the Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee considers the proposal and may seek further information from the candidate if required. There is an application fee for the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme of €350.

**Table 27: Start-up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP), 2012-2016**

Year	Applications Approved
2012-14	30
2015	25
2016	43
Total	98

A total of 98 STEP applications have been approved between the start of the programme in 2012 and the end of 2016.