



**UCD GEARY INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY
DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES**

**International Migration in Ireland, 2020
Report to the OECD Expert Group on Migration**

Philip J. O'Connell
UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy
University College Dublin

Geary WP2021/04
April 01, 2021

UCD Geary Institute Discussion Papers often represent preliminary work and are circulated to encourage discussion. Citation of such a paper should account for its provisional character. A revised version may be available directly from the author.

Any opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) and not those of UCD Geary Institute. Research published in this series may include views on policy, but the institute itself takes no institutional policy positions.

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 2019, although information relating to early-2020 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 2019. Section 3 discusses the statistics on inward and outward migration movements. Section 4 examines trends in the population. Migration and the labour market are discussed in Section 5.

1. Executive Summary

Legislation and Policy

The Department of Justice and Equality was restructured in 2019, as part of which policy and legislation on immigration matters were amalgamated with other similar functions within a new Civil Justice & Equality pillar, along with Immigration Service Delivery, including: visas; border management; determination of immigration permissions for non-EEA nationals in the State; registration of residence permissions; EU Treaty Rights; citizenship applications and repatriation.

UK nationals will not be required to hold employment permits in Ireland following Brexit.

From March 2019, spouses of Critical Skills employment permit holders and researchers with a hosting agreement qualify for a Stamp 1G, which enables full access to the labour market without the need to obtain an Employment Permit.

The Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process was published in September 2020.¹ The Advisory Group was established in 2019 to advise on the development of a long-term approach to supports for persons in the international protection process. The Advisory Group recommended: a holistic approach to the international protection process; shorter processing times for international protection applications; ending the congregated and segregated accommodation of applicants for protection and providing own-door accommodation; and early transition to a new system to be implemented by 2023.

Early indications suggest that the Covid pandemic has led to a substantial decline immigration to Ireland, while the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic has led to a sharp rise in unemployment, particularly among immigrant groups.

Trends

Gross inward migration to Ireland was an estimated 88,600 in the twelve months to 2019. The number of emigrants in the same period was 54,900, indicating net migration of 33,700. Immigration from outside the EU has increased in recent years and accounted for almost 35% of the gross inflow in 2019. Recent years have also seen a substantial increase in asylum seekers, from a low of less than 1,000 in 2012 and 2013: a total of 4,781 applications for international protection were submitted in 2019, an increase of 30% on 2018 applications

By April 2019, the number of non-nationals resident in Ireland, almost 623,000 substantially exceeded the pre-Recession peak, although non-nationals accounted for 12.2% of the total population in 2019, somewhat less than the 2008 share, due to strong growth in the indigenous population.

¹ Government of Ireland (2020) *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process*.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/634ad-report-of-the-advisory-group-on-the-provision-of-support-including-accommodation-to-persons-in-the-international-protection-process/>

2. Major Developments in Migration and Integration Policy

The Department of Justice and Equality underwent a restructuring process in 2019, as part of which the Department was divided into pillars: Criminal Justice and Civil Justice & Equality. Functions relating to immigration, including those under the aegis of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, were restructured as part of this process. Policy and legislation on immigration matters were amalgamated with other similar functions within the Civil Justice & Equality pillar, as was Immigration Service Delivery, including visas; border management; determination of immigration permissions for non-EEA nationals in the State; registration of residence permissions; EU Treaty Rights; citizenship applications and repatriation.

Brexit

UK nationals will not be required to hold employment permits in Ireland following Brexit. This derives from the Aliens (Exemption) Order 1999 which exempts nationals of the United Kingdom (UK) from application of immigration controls under the Aliens Act 1935.

The Withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2019 includes the provision of a legal basis for taking of fingerprints of applicants for an Irish visa and Irish transit visa to ensure the continuance of the British-Irish visa scheme.

Economic Migration

March 2019 saw the introduction of Stamp 1G for spouses of Critical Skills employment permit holders and researchers with a hosting agreement. This enables full access to the labour market for this category of individuals without the need to obtain an Employment Permit.

A public consultation on the Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill was launched in December 2019. The Bill includes proposals for a seasonal employment permit would provide for a non-EEA national to work in the Irish State temporarily while retaining a legal domicile in a third country, for the purposes of employment in a sector of seasonal activity . The Bill also provides for the introduction of a special circumstances employment permit to cover occasional needs in the labour market that would not meet all the criteria for a standard General Employment Permit²

Sheridan (2020)³ reports that a total of 3,347 applications were approved under the Atypical Working Scheme in 2019. This scheme provides for short term employment contracts in the State (90 days or less) which are not facilitated by the employment permit process. The permissions granted were mainly in the medical sector – non-EEA-national doctors, as well as engineers and computer skills specialists. The

² Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Consultations/Public-Consultation-General-Scheme-of-an-Employment-Permits-Consolidation-and-Amendment-Bill.html>

³ Sheridan, 2020, *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2019: Ireland*. ESRI, Dublin

Atypical Workers Scheme has been extended to non-EEA workers in the Irish fishing fleet since 2015: in 2019, 76 applications were approved for this element of the scheme, along with 137 renewals.

The immigration preclearance scheme was extended to non-EEA national *de facto* partners of Irish citizens in 2019. This allows partners of Irish citizens to apply for permission to reside prior to arrival in the state, can register with immigration authorities and have immediate access to the labour market.

International Protection

A total of 4,781 applications for international protection were submitted in 2019, an increase of 30% on 2018 applications. Detailed data on asylum applications and appeals are presented in Section 3.2 of this report. Sheridan (2020) reports that 307 family reunification applications in respect of 737 individuals were received in 2019. A total of 254 subjects were approved in 2019, some of which relate to applications submitted in 2019, others to earlier years.

Reception

The *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process* was published in September 2020.⁴ The Advisory Group was established in 2019 to advise on the development of a long-term approach to the provision of supports including accommodation to persons in the international protection process and to identify good practice in Europe. The Advisory Group recommended:

- A holistic approach to how Ireland handles applications for international protection, from day one to the end of the process.
- Shorter processing times for international protection applications.
- Ending the congregated and segregated accommodation of applicants for international protection and providing own-door accommodation.
- Starting as soon as possible the transition to a new system to be implemented by mid-2023.

Also, in 2019, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform published an expenditure review of the Direct Provision system conducted by the Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service (IGEES).⁵ The review found that expenditure in 2019 was expected to reach €218m, a substantial increase over the €78m spending in 2018. The report attributed the increased expenditure on the system to a range of factors, including: the 20% increase in the number of protection applicants seeking accommodation; the increase in the number of residents who have

⁴ Government of Ireland (2020) *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/634ad-report-of-the-advisory-group-on-the-provision-of-support-including-accommodation-to-persons-in-the-international-protection-process/>

⁵ Government of Ireland IGEES Unit (2020) . Department of Justice & Equality. http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Spending_Review.pdf/Files/Spending_Review.pdf

achieved refugee status who are unable to find private accommodation because of the rapid inflation in housing costs in Ireland; the increased reliance on more expensive emergency accommodation due to capacity shortfalls in the DP system; and improvements to the quality of accommodation in response to the recommendations of the McMahon Report on Direct Provision (2015)⁶.

The European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulation² 2018 came into effect in Ireland in June 2018. From that data, applicants for international protection are allowed access to the Irish labour market from nine months after their application for asylum is lodged if they have not received a first-instance decision on their case. The employment permission is valid for a period of 6 months, renewable if the applicant has not received a decision on their final application.

In 2019 a total of 2,562 applications for Labour Market Access Permissions were submitted, of which 765 were refused. Reasons for refusal included applicants having received their first-instance decision within 9 months of application; applicants not having been in the system for 9 months; applicants having received final decisions on their protection applications; and incomplete documentation.⁷ By July 2020, 6,986 applications to work had been received and 5,109 permissions had been granted, of which 3,889 (76%) were granted to those in direct provision. Employers reported employing 2,539 applicants for international protection, of whom 1,786 (70%) are residents of direct provision.⁸

NGOs have called attention to several barriers to entry to the labour market, including the 6-month limit, which make job acquisition difficult, and the ineligibility of asylum seekers to acquire Irish driving licences. The latter is a particular issue for residents of direct provision centres in rural areas, although it is a more general issue to the extent that employment opportunities may require driving licences. The Road Safety Authority (RSA), which is responsible for issuing driving permits has taken the view that persons who reside in the State solely for the purpose of seeking international protection are not resident for the purposes of the Regulations. The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) found in Nov 2019 that the RSA had discriminated against the Complainant on the grounds of race. Despite this ruling the RSA still

⁶ Working Group to Report to Government Working Group on the Protection Process on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, *Final Report*, June 2015

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Report%20to%20Government%20on%20Improvements%20to%20the%20Protection%20Process,%20including%20Direct%20Provision%20and%20Supports%20to%20Asylum%20Seekers.pdf/Files/Report%20to%20Government%20on%20Improvements%20to%20the%20Protection%20Process,%20including%20Direct%20Provision%20and%20Supports%20to%20Asylum%20Seekers.pdf>

⁷ Office of the Ombudsman (2020) *The Ombudsman and Direct Provision: Update for 2019*. <https://www.ombudsman.ie/publications/reports/the-ombudsman-direct-prov-1/Direct-Provision-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>

⁸ Government of Ireland (2020) *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/634ad-report-of-the-advisory-group-on-the-provision-of-support-including-accommodation-to-persons-in-the-international-protection-process/>

maintains its position and has not issued a learner permit. In July 2020, the Dublin Circuit Court ruled that a ban on issuing learner driver permits to asylum seekers does not amount to racial discrimination.⁹

From March 2019 the expenses allowances for residents in Direct Provision (DP) were increased to €38.80 for adults and €29.80 for children. These bring the allowances up to the levels recommended in the McMahon Report on Improvements to the Protection Process published in 2015.¹⁰

Reception Capacity

Sheridan (2020) reports that there were over 6,058 residents in 39 Direct Provision centres dispersed throughout the country in November 2019. With capacity of 6,140 bed-spaces, this represents a 99% occupancy rate.

Ireland has been experiencing severe housing shortages and inflation in both rental and purchase costs for several years. This has intensified pressure on accommodation for asylum seekers as well as for those whose asylum claims are recognised.

At the end of 2019, 972 people who had achieved refugee status were still living in direct provision accommodation.¹¹ This would represent about 16% of the 6,058 residents in DP centres at the end of 2019. This can be attributed to the national housing crisis, which, with soaring rents, has led to increasing difficulties for new refugees with limited funds or access to employment, to find their own accommodation. In February 2019 it was reported in the media that the majority of direct provision centres are operating at nearly full capacity, due both to a substantial increase in the number of applicants and to difficulties encountered by refugees with status in securing housing¹².

During 2018 and 2019, efforts to bring on stream more direct provision places have been undermined by local opposition to the establishment of Direct Provision Centres in several local areas, and by arson attacks at centres being readied in Merville, Co Donegal, and Roosky, Co Roscommon. Local opposition has been aggravated by loosely coordinated campaigns by right-wing anti-immigration activists.¹³ Three accommodation centres were opened in in 2019, two with own-door accommodation. In addition to this provision in DP centres, approximately 1,500 people have been

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Office of the Ombudsman, 2020

¹¹ Office of the Ombudsman, 2020

¹² Irish Times, February 15, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/tensions-rise-in-direct-provision-centres-as-asylum-claims-hit-10-year-high-1.3794450>

¹³ Irish Times, September 23, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/how-the-far-right-is-exploiting-immigration-concerns-in-oughterard-1.4026612>

provided with emergency accommodation in hotels and guesthouses as if November 2019 (Sheridan, 2020).

Resettlement and Relocation

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was approved by Government in September 2015 and the Government undertook to 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. The relocation strand concluded in March 2018, by which time 1,022 people had been relocated from Greece to Ireland.¹⁴ In 2019, 783 people were resettled to Ireland under the UNHCR resettlement programme, bringing the cumulative total resettled over the duration of the IRPP to 1,913.¹⁵

The Department of Justice and Equality announced plans to resettle up to 2,900 refugees through a combination of resettlement and community sponsorship between 2020 and 2023 in December 2019. This new phase of the Irish IRPP would entail 650 UNHCR resettlements in 2020, 700 in 2021, 750 in 2022 and 800 in 2023. For the first two years, the arrivals are expected to mostly comprise of Syrian refugees resident in Jordan and Lebanon, along with a pilot group of 150 Eritrean refugees resident in Ethiopia. The European Commission is to provide €9m to support the resettlement of 900 people between early 2000 and June 2021.¹⁶

Citizenship

In July 2019 the High Court ruled that applicants for naturalisation must have an “unbroken” residence in the state for the entire year before the date of their application. The court ruled that the Minister of Justice’s discretionary practice of allowing applicants six weeks out of the country, for holiday or other reasons, and more time in exceptional circumstances, was not permitted by law, with the result that no absence should be allowed. In November 2019 the Court of Appeal ruled that the High Court had erred and that the ‘no absence’ requirement was unworkable overly rigid and gave rise to an absurdity. This ruling allows the authorities to return to a practice of exercising flexibility with regard to absences from Ireland during the year prior to a naturalisation application.¹⁷

¹⁴ Sheridan, 2019, *Annual report on Migration and Asylum in 2018: Ireland*. Dublin: EMN/ ESRI

¹⁵ Sheridan, 2020

¹⁶ Department of Justice and Equality (December 2019) “Ireland commits to a new Refugee Protection Programme” *Press Release* Available at: www.justice.ie

¹⁷ NASC, 2019, “Update: Court of Appeal overturns controversial High Court ruling on citizenship applications.” <https://nascireland.org/news/2019/update-court-appeal-overturns-controversial-high-court-ruling-citizenship-applications>

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

While it is too early for the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to be evident in most official indicators, this report does show some early signs of the impact. Section 3 shows that number of Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) issued to non-Irish nationals in the first 6 months of 2020 was about 40% lower than the number allocated in the first six months of 2019. Moreover, unemployment increased dramatically, particularly among non-Irish nationals (see Section 5).

New research by Enright, McGinnity, Privalko and Russell (2020)¹⁸ examines the impact of COVID-19 on the labour force outcomes of non-Irish nationals. They show that overall, the odds ratio of being in employment for all workers were halved in Q2 2020 compared to Q1. The fall in employment was found to be much sharper for Eastern European nationals compared to Irish nationals. Non-EU nationals had lower probability of employment in both quarters compared to Irish nationals although the scale of the decline in employment was similar for both non-EU and Irish nationals. Western European nationals were not disproportionately affected by the decline in employment levels due to the pandemic. The fall in employment between Q1 and Q2 for both women and men is similar for Irish, EU-West and non-EU nationals, with women more likely to experience job loss in all three groups. However, the drop in employment was particularly sharp for female Eastern European nationals.

The report also shows that Eastern European nationals have significantly higher rates of COVID-related absence from work in Q2 2020 compared to Irish nationals. In addition, non-EU nationals have somewhat higher rates of COVID-related absence when models control for family status and education.

Administrative data on the recipients of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment from May to November 2020 show that around 28 per cent of PUP claimants were non-Irish nationals: This is significantly higher than the proportion of non-Irish nationals in the labour force in Q1 2020 before the pandemic hit (17.5 per cent). East European nationals were also more likely to receive payments under the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) relative to their share of employment, though not other non-Irish groups.

The report also considers vulnerability to the Covid-19 and finds that those of Black/Black Irish ethnicity, those of Asian ethnicity and Irish Travellers are overrepresented in COVID cases compared to their proportion in the population. Non-Irish nationals overall are slightly overrepresented in COVID cases compared to Irish nationals, relative to their proportion in the population. In general, however, ethnic minority groups and non-Irish nationals are underrepresented in deaths from COVID, which is likely to be linked to their younger age profile.

¹⁸ Enright, S., McGinnity, F., Privalko, I., and Russell, H., (2020) *Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland*. Dublin: Economic & Social Research Institute. <https://www.esri.ie/publications/covid-19-and-non-irish-nationals-in-ireland>

3. Recent Migration Statistics

The number of immigrants to Ireland was an estimated 85,400 in the twelve months to 2012. The number of emigrants in the same period was 56,500, indicating net migration of 28,900. Ireland returned to positive net migration for the first time in 2015 after experiencing net outward migration for the previous 5 years. Inward migration increased until 2007 but declined thereafter during the Great Recession. It increased steadily with the economic recovery since about 2012 and has been well over 80,000 since 2016. Emigration increased sharply during the crisis, to 83,000 in 2012: it declined with economic recovery and has been around 55,000 or 56,000 for the last three years.

Table 1: Gross and New Migration Flows, 1988 to 2020

| Year (ending April) | Outward | Inward | Net |
|------------------------|---------|---------------|-------|
| | | <i>1,000s</i> | |
| 1988 | 61.1 | 19.2 | -41.9 |
| 1998 | 28.6 | 46.0 | 17.4 |
| 2001 | 26.2 | 59.0 | 32.8 |
| 2002 | 25.6 | 66.9 | 41.3 |
| 2003 | 29.3 | 60.0 | 30.7 |
| 2004 | 26.5 | 58.5 | 32.0 |
| 2005 | 29.4 | 84.6 | 55.1 |
| 2006 ¹ | 36.0 | 107.8 | 71.8 |
| 2007 | 46.3 | 151.1 | 104.8 |
| 2008 | 49.2 | 113.5 | 64.3 |
| 2009 | 72.0 | 73.7 | 1.6 |
| 2010 | 69.2 | 41.8 | -27.5 |
| 2011 ¹ | 80.6 | 53.3 | -27.4 |
| 2012 | 83.0 | 57.3 | -25.7 |
| 2013 | 81.3 | 62.7 | -18.7 |
| 2014 | 75.0 | 66.5 | -8.5 |
| 2015 | 70.0 | 75.9 | 5.9 |
| 2016 ¹ | 66.2 | 82.3 | 16.1 |
| 2017 ² | 64.8 | 84.6 | 19.8 |
| 2018 ² | 56.3 | 90.3 | 34.0 |
| 2019 ² | 54.9 | 88.6 | 33.7 |
| 2020 ² | 56.5 | 85.4 | 28.9 |

Notes: ¹ Census of Population. ² Preliminary

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

Available at www.cso.ie

3.2 Inward Migration

Immigration declined from a high of over 150,00 in 2006-7 to a low of less than 42,00 in 2009-10. In more recent years the inflow has resumed and was 85,400 in the twelve months to 2019, a little lower than the previous two years.

Table 2: Estimated Immigration by Nationality, 2001-2020

| | Irish | UK | Old EU 13 | EU NMS | Rest of World | All |
|----------------------|-------|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| <i>12 months to:</i> | | | | | | |
| | | | | <i>1,000s</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 |
| 2011 | 19.6 | 4.1 | 7.1 | 10.1 | 12.4 | 53.3 |
| 2016 | 28.4 | 5.9 | 11.4 | 13.2 | 23.6 | 82.3 |
| 2017 ¹ | 27.4 | 6.1 | 10.8 | 10.9 | 29.4 | 84.6 |
| 2018 ¹ | 28.4 | 7.3 | 11.6 | 12.2 | 30.9 | 90.3 |
| 2019 ¹ | 26.9 | 7.4 | 12.6 | 11.1 | 30.6 | 88.6 |
| 2020 ¹ | 28.9 | 5.5 | 9.2 | 11.4 | 30.4 | 85.4 |
| | | | | <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 |
| 2011 | 36.8 | 7.7 | 13.3 | 18.9 | 23.3 | 100.0 |
| 2016 | 34.5 | 7.2 | 13.9 | 16.0 | 28.7 | 100.0 |
| 2017 ¹ | 32.4 | 7.2 | 12.8 | 12.9 | 34.8 | 100.0 |
| 2018 ¹ | 31.5 | 8.1 | 12.8 | 13.5 | 34.2 | 100.0 |
| 2019 ¹ | 30.4 | 8.4 | 14.2 | 12.5 | 34.5 | 100.0 |
| 2020 ¹ | 33.8 | 6.4 | 10.8 | 13.3 | 35.6 | 100.0 |

Notes: ¹ Census of Population. ² Preliminary

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

Available at www.cso.ie

In the early years of the Great Recession, returning Irish nationals represented the single largest group of immigrants, thus reverting to a long established trend that obtained prior to EU enlargement in 2004. That pattern altered again in the economic recovery since about 2012, when non-EU nationals became the single largest group of immigrants. In the 12 months to 2020, there were over 30,000 immigrants from the Rest of the World (36%), followed closely by almost 29,000 of Irish nationality (34%).

Table 3 shows estimated immigration by country of origin in 2008, before the Great Recession; 2011, during the depths of the crisis in Ireland; and 2020, after several years of economic recovery. 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 below 10,000 per

annum during the economic crisis and while it increased somewhat in recent years, it amounted to less than 9,000 in 2020.

Table 3: Estimated Immigration by Country of Origin, 2008, 2011 and 2020

| <i>12 months to April:</i> | 2008 | | 2011 | | 2020 ¹ | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | <i>1,000s</i> | % | <i>1,000s</i> | % | <i>1,000s</i> | % |
| UK | 19.4 | 17.1 | 11.9 | 22.3 | 15.3 | 17.9 |
| Old EU 13 | 14.5 | 12.8 | 9.7 | 18.2 | 13.8 | 16.2 |
| New EU 12 | 45.5 | 40.1 | 9.8 | 18.4 | 8.7 | 10.2 |
| Australia | 7.1 | 6.3 | 4.5 | 8.4 | 6.4 | 7.5 |
| Canada | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 2.4 | 2.9 | 3.4 |
| USA | 5.0 | 4.4 | 3.3 | 6.2 | 5.5 | 6.4 |
| Rest of World | 20.0 | 17.6 | 12.9 | 24.2 | 32.8 | 38.4 |
| Total | 113.5 | 100.0 | 53.3 | 100.0 | 85.4 | 100.0 |

Notes: ¹ Preliminary

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

Available at www.cso.ie

Table 4: Estimated Immigration Flows by Age-group, 2001 to 2020

| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| All | <i>1,000s</i> | | | | | |
| 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 |
| 2016 | 9.9 | 18.2 | 44.7 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 82.3 |
| 2019 ¹ | 9.4 | 21.4 | 46.8 | 8.4 | 2.6 | 88.6 |
| 2020 ¹ | 8.3 | 20.8 | 48.3 | 6.8 | 1.2 | 85.4 |
| Males | | | | | | |
| 2020 ¹ | 4.3 | 9.2 | 24.6 | 2.9 | 0.8 | 41.9 |
| Females | | | | | | |
| 2020 ¹ | 4.0 | 11.6 | 23.7 | 3.9 | 0.4 | 43.5 |

Notes: ¹ Preliminary

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

Available at www.cso.ie

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 24% in 2011 and then to over 38% (32,800) in 2020. 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 to an increase in the number of international students.

Eurostat data show that the number of first residence permits issued for educational purposes increased from 30,193 in 2018 to 34,735 in 2019.

Over half (53%) of all immigrants were in the prime working age group, 25-44 years in the 12 months to April 2020. Another 24% of the gross inflow relates to those aged 15-24 years.

Other Indicators of Immigration

PPSN Allocations

The Irish Department of Social Protection issues Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) which are necessary for employment and access to social services. The number of such PPSNs issued to non-Irish nationals exceeded 227,000 in 2006 at the height of the economic boom, and then fell to 67,800 in 2011. It has increased in recent years with the recovery in the labour market and was almost over 196,000 in 2019. The data for 2020 refer just to the period Jan-June, but they already reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of PPS numbers issued to non-Irish nationals, 36,700 in the first 6 months of 2020 was about 40% lower than the number allocated in the first six months of 2019. The equivalent decline in PPS numbers issued to Irish nationals was just 15% lower in the first six months of 2020 than the same period in 2019.

Table 5: Personal Public Service Numbers Issued by Nationality, selected years 2006-2020

| | Irish | Non-Irish National | Total |
|-------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| | | <i>1,000s</i> | |
| 2006 | 84.7 | 227.2 | 311.9 |
| 2011 | 85.2 | 67.8 | 153 |
| 2016 | 73.3 | 107.7 | 181.0 |
| 2019 | 70.4 | 125.8 | 196.2 |
| 2020 ¹ | 30.9 | 36.7 | 67.6 |

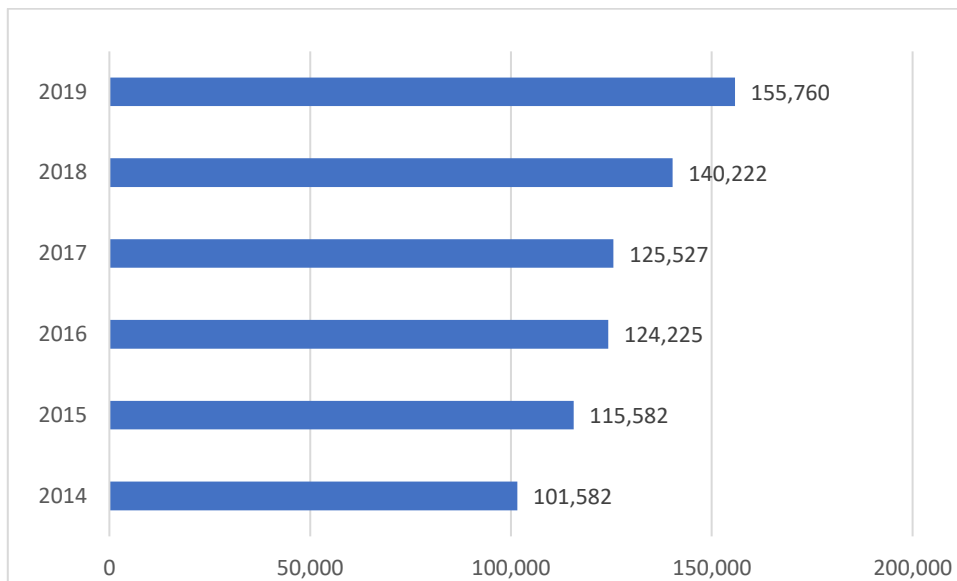
Note: ¹ January to June only.

Source: www.welfare.ie

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.¹⁹ The analysis shows that in 2018, over 59% 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 years. About 25% those who were allocated a PPSN in 2013 were in employment at some stage during 2018.

Figure 1: Visa Applications



Source: Department of Justice and Equality

In 2019 the Irish Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INIS) received 155,760 applications for short-stay and long-stay visas - an 11% increase on 2018, and a cumulative increase of 53% since 2014. The approval rate for entry was 90%. The top five nationalities applying for visas were: India (24%), People’s Republic of China (15%), Russian Federation (12%), Nigeria (5%), and Turkey (4%).

Inflows of Workers from Non-EEA Countries

It is possible to derive information on the trends in the numbers of non-EEA nationals²⁰ entering the country to take up employment by analysing annual data 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

¹⁹ Central Statistics Office (2019). *Foreign Nationals: PPSN Allocations and Employment and Social Welfare Activity, 2018*. Available at www.cso.ie.

²⁰ EU citizens and citizens of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein do not require Employment Permits in order to take up employment in Ireland.

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.²¹

Table 6: Employment Permits, selected years 2002-2019

| year | New | Renewed | Total |
|------|--------|---------|--------|
| 2002 | 23,759 | 16,562 | 40,321 |
| 2003 | 22,512 | 25,039 | 47,551 |
| 2004 | 10,821 | 23,246 | 34,067 |
| 2006 | 8,254 | 16,600 | 24,854 |
| 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 |
| 2017 | 9,401 | 1,960 | 11,361 |
| 2018 | 11,304 | 2,092 | 13,396 |
| 2019 | 14,130 | 2,219 | 16,349 |

Source: Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. www.djei.ie

The impact of the Great Recession can be seen in the sharp decline in employment permits from 2006 to 2013. The impact of the recovery is also apparent, with the number of employment permits increasing to over 11,000 in 2017 and to over 16,000 in 2019, an increase of 22% over the previous year.

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 Critical Skills Employment Permit, which accounted for over 7,700 permits (or 47% of the total) in 2019 and this represented an increase of 32% over the previous year. . General Employment Permits accounted for another 41% of the total, and the number of these increased by 23% between 2018 and 2019. Employment Permits for Dependents, Spouse and Partners declined sharply, from 852 to 283 between 2018 and 2019.

²¹ 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. The restrictions ceased after 1 January 2012.

Table 7: Employment Permits by type, 2018 and 2019

| Type of Permit | 2018 | 2019 | | 2018-19 | |
|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Total | New | Renewal | Total | Change |
| | | <i>Number</i> | | | <i>%</i> |
| Critical Skills Employment Permit | 5868 | 7749 | 0 | 7749 | 32.1 |
| General Employment Permit | 5487 | 4922 | 1848 | 6770 | 23.4 |
| Intra-Company Transfer Employment Permit | 916 | 1047 | 174 | 1221 | 33.3 |
| Dependant/Partner/Spouse Employment Permit | 852 | 181 | 102 | 283 | -66.8 |
| Sport and Cultural Employment Permit | 57 | 85 | 32 | 117 | 105.3 |
| Contract for Services Employment Permit | 120 | 48 | 54 | 102 | -15.0 |
| Internship Employment Permit | 22 | 33 | 0 | 33 | 50.0 |
| Reactivation Employment Permit | 38 | 26 | 9 | 35 | -7.9 |
| Intra-Company Transfer (Training) Permit | 19 | 22 | 0 | 22 | 15.8 |
| Exchange Agreement Employment Permit | 17 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 0.0 |
| Grand Total | 13396 | 14130 | 2219 | 16349 | 22.0 |

Source: Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

Table 8 shows the number of employment permit holders by nationality in 2018 and 2019. As in previous recent years, India stands out as the single largest nationality with nearly 5,400 permits, 33% of the total. Brazil accounts for another 10% and the USA for 7%. The number of Employment Permits issued to Brazilian nationals more than doubled between 2017 and 2018.

Under the Atypical Working Scheme, a total of 3,347 applications were approved in 2019 providing for short-term (up to 90 days) contracts that are not covered by the employment permits system.²² The main sectors covered were in health, engineering, and information technology.

²² Sheridan, A., 2020, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2019: Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI

Table 8: Employment Permits Issued and Renewed by Country of Nationality, 2018 and 2019 (Major Sending Countries)

| | 2018 | 2019 | | | 2018-19 | |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | New | Renewal | Total | Distribution | Change |
| | | <i>Number</i> | | | % | % |
| Australia | 132 | 136 | 14 | 150 | 0.9 | 13.6 |
| Brazil | 1426 | 1400 | 165 | 1565 | 9.6 | 9.7 |
| Canada | 181 | 204 | 30 | 234 | 1.4 | 29.3 |
| China | 370 | 614 | 47 | 661 | 4.0 | 78.6 |
| Egypt | 347 | 297 | 66 | 363 | 2.2 | 4.6 |
| India | 4313 | 4888 | 485 | 5373 | 32.8 | 24.6 |
| Israel | 94 | 77 | 10 | 87 | 0.5 | -7.4 |
| Japan | 137 | 103 | 33 | 136 | 0.8 | -0.7 |
| Malaysia | 308 | 282 | 104 | 386 | 2.4 | 25.3 |
| Mexico | 59 | 88 | 12 | 100 | 0.6 | 69.5 |
| Nigeria | 223 | 193 | 67 | 260 | 1.6 | 16.6 |
| Pakistan | 1026 | 649 | 334 | 983 | 6.0 | -4.2 |
| Philippines | 802 | 754 | 29 | 783 | 4.8 | -2.4 |
| Russian Federation | 211 | 248 | 15 | 263 | 1.6 | 24.6 |
| South Africa | 435 | 566 | 93 | 659 | 4.0 | 51.5 |
| Sudan | 515 | 372 | 253 | 625 | 3.8 | 21.4 |
| Thailand | 28 | 230 | 2 | 232 | 1.4 | 728.6 |
| Turkey | 272 | 229 | 31 | 260 | 1.6 | -4.4 |
| Ukraine | 317 | 424 | 55 | 479 | 2.9 | 51.1 |
| USA | 957 | 886 | 152 | 1038 | 6.3 | 8.5 |
| Zimbabwe | 96 | 107 | 16 | 123 | 0.8 | 28.1 |
| Total | 13398 | 14163 | 2220 | 16383 | 100.0 | 22.3 |

Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/>

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

A total of 4,781 people applied for asylum in Ireland to the International Protection Office (IPO) during 2019, an increase of 30% over the number of applications in 2018.²³ Recent years have seen a substantial increase in asylum seekers, from a low of less than 1,000 in 2012 and 2013.

²³ With the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 in 2016, the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) was subsumed into the Department of Justice and Equality as part of the new dedicated International Protection Office (IPO), which also took over responsibility for publishing statistics on first-instance applications for asylum.

Table 9: Asylum Seekers, 2000 to 2019

| Year | Number of Applications |
|------|------------------------|
| 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 |
| 2017 | 2,926 |
| 2018 | 3,673 |
| 2019 | 4,781 |

Sources: 2000-2016: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. www.orac.ie
2017-2019: International Protection Office. www.ipo.gov.ie

Table 10: Asylum Applications by Nationality, 2018 and 2019

| 2018 | | 2019 | |
|----------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Albania | 459 | Albania | 976 |
| Georgia | 450 | Georgia | 635 |
| Syria | 333 | Zimbabwe | 443 |
| Zimbabwe | 282 | Nigeria | 386 |
| Nigeria | 251 | South Africa | 322 |
| Other | 1898 | Other | 2,019 |
| Total | 3,673 | Total | 4,781 |

Sources: International Protection Office. www.ipo.gov.ie

In Ireland, applications for international protection are considered first by the International Protection Office (IPO). If the decision is negative, the applicant can appeal to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT).

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal received a total of 2,064 appeals for international protection and subsidiary protection during 2019. A total of 2,633 cases were scheduled for hearing during the year 2019, an increase of 54% over the 1,714 hears scheduled in 2018 appeals.

Table 11: Asylum Appeals Received by Type, 2019

| Type of Appeal | |
|---|------|
| Substantive International Protection Appeal | 1478 |
| Substantive IP Appeal, Asylum only | 83 |
| Substantive IP Appeal, Subsidiary Protection only | 12 |
| Subsidiary Protection/Legacy | 23 |
| Accelerated IP Appeal | 235 |
| Dublin III | 148 |
| Inadmissible Appeal | 26 |
| Subsequent Appeal | 38 |
| Reception Conditions Appeal | 21 |
| Total | 2064 |

Source: International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2020 *Annual Report 2019*

Table 11 shows the number of appeals received by IPAT by type in 2019. The largest category related to 1,478 appeals dealt with by way of the new ‘Single Procedure’ introduced in the International Protection Act 2015, assessing entitlement both to refugee status and, if the person was found not to be entitled to refugee status, to subsidiary protection. This category included both ‘transition appeals’ pursuant to s.70(2)(d) of the International Protection Act or as ‘new’ appeals pursuant to s.41(1)(b) of the Act. Another 23 were legacy subsidiary protection appeals.

Table 12: Protection Appeals by Country of Origin, 2019

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Pakistan | 283 |
| Zimbabwe | 196 |
| Albania | 157 |
| Nigeria | 129 |
| Bangladesh | 83 |
| South Africa | 82 |
| Georgia | 73 |
| DR Congo | 66 |
| Malawi | 65 |
| Algeria | 57 |
| Other | 312 |
| Total | 1,503 |

Source: International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2020, *Annual Report 2019*.

In 2019 Pakistan was the most numerous stated country of nationality of applicants for appeal, with 283 appeals accounting for 19% of all appeals. Zimbabwe followed with 196 appeals (13% of the total), followed by Albania, with 157 (10%) appeals.

Decisions were issued in respect of 1,944 cases. Table 13 shows the decision outcomes in respect of 1,777 decisions in 2019. Over 70% of 1,585 International Protection Single Procedures Appeals were refused, as were 87% of Dublin III appeals. The overall refusal rate for the 1,777 decisions reported upon is 72%.

Table 13: International Appeals Decisions, 2019

| | All | Refused | % |
|---|-------|---------|------|
| International Protection Single Procedure | 1,585 | 1,113 | 70.2 |
| Dublin III | 152 | 132 | 86.8 |
| Inadmissibility decisions | 5 | 5 | 100 |
| Subsequent application | 35 | 27 | 77 |
| All | 1,777 | 1,277 | 71.9 |

Source: International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2020, *Annual Report 2019*.

IPAT *Annual Report 2019* (2020) notes that 2019 could be considered the Tribunal's first year of full operational capacity following the implementation of the introduced in the International Protection Act 2015. The average length of time taken by IPAT to process and complete Substantive International Protection Appeals, including transition cases in 2019 was 170 working days. However, the Annual Report notes that the average processing time was reduced to 100 working days in relation to appeals that were both accepted and completed within the year 2019.

Delays due to Covid-19 restrictions can be expected to substantially reduce the number of decisions and to increase the length of time to process and complete decisions in 2020.

3.3 Outward Migration

Emigration increased during the recession and peaked at 83,000 in 2012 and subsequently declined, to just under 55,000 in the twelve months to April 2019.

Table 14: Estimated Emigration by Nationality, 2006-2020

| | Irish | UK | Old EU 13 | EU12 NMS | Rest of world | Total |
|-------------------|-------|-----|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------|
| <i>To April</i> | | | <i>1,000s</i> | | | |
| 2006 ¹ | 15.3 | 2.2 | 5.1 | 7.2 | 6.2 | 36.0 |
| 2011 ¹ | 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 ¹ | 37.1 | 5.2 | 5.7 | 6.8 | 11.4 | 66.2 |
| 2017 ² | 30.8 | 4.0 | 6.7 | 9.6 | 13.7 | 64.8 |
| 2018 ² | 28.3 | 4.1 | 6.8 | 7.1 | 10.0 | 56.3 |
| 2019 ² | 29.0 | 3.2 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 11.2 | 54.9 |
| 2020 ² | 28.3 | 2.5 | 5.2 | 9.2 | 11.4 | 56.5 |
| | | | % | | | |
| 2016 ¹ | 56.0 | 7.9 | 8.6 | 10.3 | 17.2 | 100.0 |
| 2017 ² | 47.5 | 6.2 | 10.3 | 14.8 | 21.1 | 100.0 |
| 2018 ² | 50.3 | 7.3 | 12.1 | 12.6 | 17.8 | 100.0 |
| 2019 ² | 52.8 | 5.8 | 8.2 | 12.8 | 20.4 | 100.0 |
| 2020 ² | 50.1 | 4.4 | 9.2 | 16.3 | 20.2 | 100.0 |

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

Available at www.cso.ie

¹Census ² Preliminary

Emigration of Irish nationals have dominated the outflow since 2010: they accounted for about 60% of all immigrants from 2012 to 2015, and they accounted for just over half of all emigrants in the twelve months to April 2018. However, the *number* of Irish emigrants has fallen with economic recovery: from almost 50,000 in 2012 to a little over 28,000 in the three years since 2018.

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 to about 7,000 in 2018 and 2019 and 9,200 in 2020. 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 15: Estimated Emigration by Country of Destination, 2011-2020

| | UK | Old EU13 | EU 12 NMS | Australia | Canada | USA | Other | Total |
|-------------------|------|----------|--------------|---------------|--------|-----|-------|-------|
| <i>To April</i> | | | | <i>1,000s</i> | | | | |
| 2011 | 20.0 | 13.9 | 10.4 | 13.4 | 2.1 | 4.7 | 16.2 | 80.6 |
| 2016 | 14.4 | 13.9 | 9.3 | 5.3 | 3.4 | 5.7 | 14.2 | 66.2 |
| 2017 ² | 12.1 | 12.9 | 9.7 | 5.3 | 3.7 | 6.5 | 14.5 | 64.8 |
| 2018 ² | 11.4 | 12.3 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 3.9 | 5.8 | 11.9 | 56.3 |
| 2019 ² | 11.6 | 10.4 | 3.8 | 6.5 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 12.5 | 54.9 |
| 2020 ² | 10.0 | 12.2 | 9.1 | 6.1 | 3.1 | 6.0 | 10.1 | 56.5 |
| Males | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 ² | 6.0 | 5.7 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 5.9 | 28.1 |
| 2020 ² | 5.6 | 5.6 | 4.1 | 3.2 | 1.8 | 2.8 | 4.6 | 27.9 |
| Females | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 ² | 5.6 | 4.7 | 1.8 | 3.6 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 6.6 | 26.8 |
| 2020 ² | 4.3 | 6.6 | 4.9 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 3.1 | 5.5 | 28.7 |

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

Available at www.cso.ie

¹Census ² Preliminary

Table 16: Estimated Emigration by Age Group, 2011-2020

| End | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| April | | | | | | |
| All | 1,000s | | | | | |
| 2006 | 2.2 | 15.9 | 14.1 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 36.0 |
| 2011 | 5.3 | 34.5 | 31.3 | 6.1 | 3.4 | 80.6 |
| 2016 ¹ | 10.2 | 18.3 | 31.3 | 4.6 | 1.7 | 66.2 |
| 2019 ² | 5.7 | 17.6 | 26.8 | 3.6 | 1.2 | 54.9 |
| 2020 ² | 7.1 | 15.7 | 29.8 | 3.5 | 0.5 | 56.5 |
| Males | | | | | | |
| 2020 ² | 3.3 | 7.1 | 15.0 | 2.3 | 0.2 | 27.9 |
| Females | | | | | | |
| 2020 ² | 3.8 | 8.6 | 14.7 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 28.7 |

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

Available at www.cso.ie

¹Census ² Preliminary

Table 15 shows emigration by country of destination. Over half (55%) of all emigrants from Ireland went to European destinations, including the UK, in 2020. About 16%

went to North America, 11% to Australia and 18% to rest of the world. The UK has been the country of destination of the largest number of Irish emigrants for many years and accounted for 18% of emigrants from Ireland in 2010. However, the numbers emigrating to the UK have been trending downwards in recent years. This may reflect the recovery in the Irish economy, but it may also be an indication of the impact of Brexit, in the course of which the UK may become a less popular destination for Europeans in general.

Irish emigration mainly involves young people. The most recent estimates available show that almost 53% of emigrants was in the 25-44 year age group in the twelve months to 2020. Another 28% was in the 15-24 year age group.. The number of emigrants aged less than 14 has 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 17 shows population data for the 21st Century. The population of Ireland continued to increase during 2018, to an estimated 4,557,00 in April 2018. 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 17: Components of Annual Population Change, 2000-2020

| 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 ¹ | 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 ² | 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 ² | 65.4 | 29.8 | 35.6 | 82.3 | 66.2 | 16.2 | 51.8 | 4,739.6 |
| 2017 ³ | 63.9 | 30.8 | 33.1 | 84.6 | 64.8 | 19.8 | 52.9 | 4,792.5 |
| 2018 ³ | 61.2 | 30.7 | 30.5 | 90.3 | 56.3 | 34.0 | 64.5 | 4,857.0 |
| 2019 ³ | 61.2 | 30.4 | 30.8 | 88.6 | 54.9 | 33.7 | 64.5 | 4,921.5 |
| 2020 ³ | 58.3 | 31.2 | 27.1 | 85.4 | 56.5 | 28.9 | 55.6 | 4,977.4 |

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

Available at www.cso.ie

¹ 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. ² Census ³ Preliminary

Recent years have seen a return to positive net migration following the improvement in macro-economic conditions. In the twelve months to April 2020, the estimated

inflow of 85,400 was offset by an outflow of 56,500, resulting in net inward migration of 28,900. This, added to a natural increase of 32,200, led to an increase in the population of 55,600, to 4,977,400.

Table 18: Total Population by Nationality, selected years 2008-2020

| | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1,000's | | | | | |
| Irish | 3,909.5 | 4,017.9 | 4,117.6 | 4,189.1 | 4,263.5 | 4,333.0 |
| Non Irish | 575.6 | 557.0 | 527.8 | 550.5 | 593.5 | 644.4 |
| UK | 117.9 | 114.9 | 107.1 | 105.7 | 110.8 | 116.9 |
| Rest of EU15 | 50.8 | 49.4 | 56.9 | 64.9 | 73.7 | 85.8 |
| New EU12/13 | 247.7 | 231.5 | 242.8 | 249.4 | 255.0 | 258.2 |
| Rest of world | 159.2 | 161.2 | 121.0 | 130.4 | 154.1 | 183.5 |
| Total | 4,485.1 | 4,574.9 | 4,645.4 | 4,739.6 | 4,857.0 | 4,977.4 |
| | % | | | | | |
| Irish | 87.2 | 87.8 | 88.6 | 88.4 | 88.2 | 87.1 |
| Non Irish | 12.8 | 12.2 | 11.4 | 11.6 | 11.8 | 12.9 |
| UK | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.3 |
| Rest of EU15 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| New EU12/13 | 5.5 | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 5.2 | 5.2 |
| Rest of world | 3.5 | 3.5 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 3.7 |
| 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

Prior to the Great Recession, the number of foreign nationals resident 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 2020, the number of non-nationals resident in Ireland, 644,400, substantially exceeded its pre-Recession peak, and non-nationals accounted for 12.9% of the total population in 2020, although this was only marginally greater than the 2008 share, due to strong growth in the indigenous population.

The single largest group of non-nationals is from the 12/13 New EU Member States, almost 248,000 in 2008 and 258,000 in 2020: the new EU MS nationals have accounted for over 5% of the population throughout the period considered here. The number of immigrants from other European countries has also increased, from just over 50,000 in 2008 to almost 86,000 in 2020. Nationals from the Rest of the World (outside Europe) have increased in number since 2014 – to 183,000 in 2020, at which point they represent 3.7% of the total population and more than 28% of all non-Irish nationals. This increase 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.

Almost 168,300 residence permits were registered at the end of 2019 (an increase of 18% on the previous year). Permits on most grounds were buoyant, particularly in respect of remunerated activities, which increased by 28% and refugee status, which increased by 32% over the previous year.

Table 19: Valid Residence Permits by Reason, 2018 and 2019

| | 2018 | 2019 | % change |
|------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Family reasons | 31,174 | 34,317 | 10.1 |
| Education reasons | 43,724 | 50,946 | 16.5 |
| Remunerated activities | 30,811 | 39,404 | 27.9 |
| Refugee status | 1,821 | 2,406 | 32.1 |
| Subsidiary protection | 718 | 805 | 12.1 |
| Other | 34,038 | 40,419 | 18.7 |
| Total | 142,286 | 168,297 | 18.3 |

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_resvalid/default/table?lang=en
13.12.2020

Table 20: 'Top Ten' Nationalities of Permits, 2018 and 2019

| Nationality | 2018 | 2019 | % change |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| India | 21,604 | 29,652 | 37.3 |
| Brazil | 22,236 | 27,192 | 22.3 |
| China including Hong Kong | 12,617 | 14,049 | 11.3 |
| United States | 10,448 | 11,353 | 8.7 |
| Pakistan | 7,428 | 7,678 | 3.4 |
| Nigeria | 5,657 | 6,379 | 12.8 |
| Philippines | 5,002 | 5,719 | 14.3 |
| South Africa | 3,629 | 4,772 | 31.5 |
| Malaysia | 3,479 | 3,840 | 10.4 |
| Canada | 3,454 | 3,687 | 6.7 |

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_resvalid/default/table?lang=en
13.12.2020

There is a great deal of stability from year-to-year in the distribution of permits by nationality. However, Table 20 shows that, India overtook Brazil as the country of nationality of the most residence permits issued in Ireland at the end of 2019 (almost 30,000) having increased by 37% over the previous year. India was the second most numerous (27,000), well ahead of China, in third place with 14,000.

Change of Immigration Status

Table 21 shows changes in immigration status during 2019. A total of 13,737 people changed status during the year, an increase of this form of mobility of 43% over the previous year. Most changes of status involved changes from education status, 7,536 in all; with 898 changing to family reason, 1,419 changing to remunerated activities, and 5,219 to 'other' reasons.

Table 21: Change of Immigration Status, 2019

| | <i>To reason</i> | | | | All |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------|------|
| | Family | Education | Remunerated Activities | Other reason | |
| <i>From Reason</i> | | | | | |
| Family | | 3 | 33 | 28 | 64 |
| Education | 898 | | 1419 | 5219 | 7536 |
| Remunerated Activities | 439 | 479 | | 1325 | 2243 |
| Other Reasons | 1187 | 435 | 2272 | | 3894 |

Source:

Eurostat: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_reschange&lang=en

A total of 2,243 persons changed from remunerated activities, with 439 changing to family reasons, 479 to education and 1,325 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 and 8,223 in 2018.

Table 22: Citizenship Certificates Issued, 2012-2018

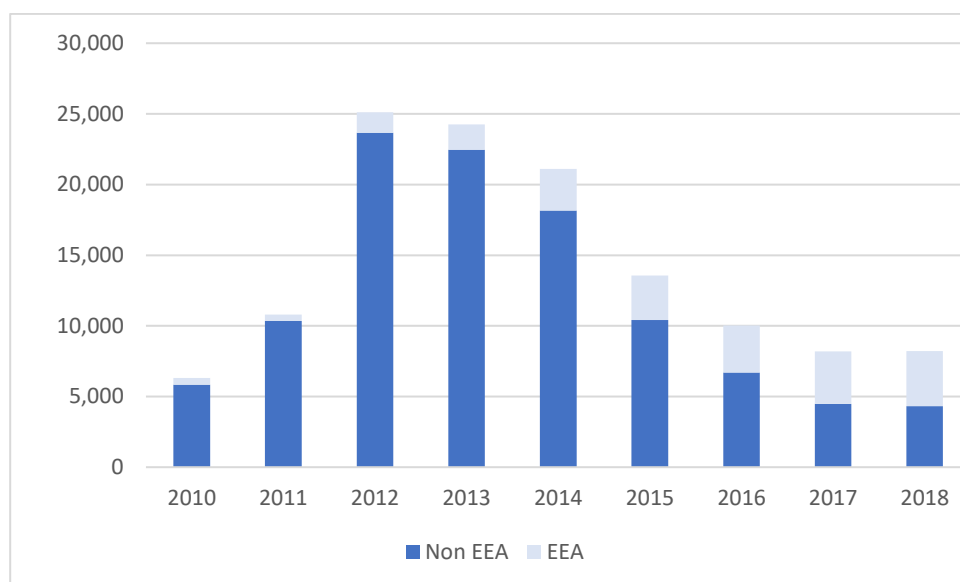
| | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| UK | 85 | 51 | 98 | 529 | 687 |
| Rest of EU15 | 75 | 149 | 170 | 169 | 202 |
| EU12/13 | 1,265 | 2,725 | 3,058 | 3,022 | 3,024 |
| Rest of World | 23,685 | 18,177 | 6,712 | 4,474 | 4,310 |
| Total | 25,110 | 21,102 | 10,038 | 8,196 | 8,223 |

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

Available at www.cso.ie

Table 22 suggests that 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: 1,265 in 2012 over 3,000 in the years 2016-2018. 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.

Figure 2: Naturalisations by Former Nationality Group – EEA and Non-EEA, 2010-2018



Source: Central Statistics Office, 2020, *Population and Migration Estimates, April 2020*. Available at www.cso.ie

Figure 2 shows that this trend continues. In 2018, 3,913 EEA nationals became naturalised Irish citizens, representing 45% of the total of 8,223 naturalizations that year – up from 453, or 4% in 2010.²⁴ There was a surge in applications for Irish citizenship by British nationals following the Brexit referendum in 2016. There were 98,500 applications for Irish passports from British residents in 2018 and an further 42,500 from Northern Ireland. , with 819 applications in 2017.²⁵

²⁴ Quinn, E., (2018) “Active Citizenship” in F McGinnity, E Quinn, É Fahey, S Arnold, B Maitre and P O’Connell, *Monitoring Report on Integration*. Dublin: ESRI.

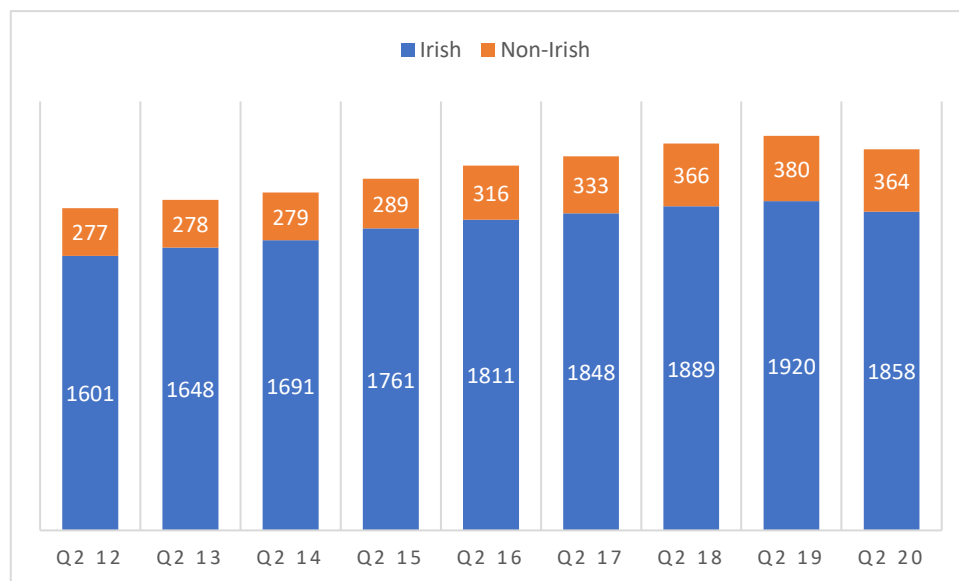
²⁵ Irish Times, May 2, 2019, . <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/british-applicants-for-an-irish-passport-face-60-day-wait-1.3878500>

5. The Labour Market

During the Great Recession, total employment fell by over 14% between the end of 2007 and the end of 2012²⁶. While employment among Irish nationals fell by 13%, it fell by 21% among non-Irish nationals. 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.

In the recovery, since about 2012, total employment increased by about 22% between 2012 and 2019. Employment among Irish nationals increased by 20%, from 1,600,000 in 2012 to 1,920,000 in 2019. Employment among non-Irish nationals, which contracted more sharply during the Recession, increased more rapidly in the recovery, by 37% from 277,000 in 2012 to 380,000 in 2019.

Figure 3: Employment among Irish and Non-Irish Nationals, Q2 2012 to 2020



Source: CSO, Labour Force Survey. www.cso.ie

However, employment declined by 3.4% in the second quarter of 2020, compared to Q2 2019, reflecting the early impact of the restrictions introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Employment declined by 3% among Irish nationals and 4% among non-Irish.

²⁶ 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.

In general, non-Irish nationals have higher employment rates than Irish nationals. With the exceptions of Irish and UK nationals, EU nationals have higher employment rates than those from outside the EU. The latter pattern reflects the EU internal labour market which accords EU citizens similar labour rights to Irish citizens. It also reflects the generally lower age profile of immigrants, who are therefore more likely to be economically active.

In 2020, in the context of the Covid pandemic, the overall employment rate dropped 3 percentage points, from 58.8% of the population aged over 15 in Q2 2019 to 55.9% in Q2 2020. Employment among Irish nationals fell by 2.5 percentage points, but among non-Irish by 5.5 points. The greatest decline occurred among nationals of the 'new EU member states, among whom the employment rate fell from 7% in Q2 2019 to 64% in 2020.

Table 23: Employment and Unemployment Rates by Nationality, 2019 and 2020 (Q2)

| | Employed | | Unemployed | |
|-----------|----------|------|------------|------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Irish | 57.2 | 54.7 | 5.2 | 4.8 |
| Non-Irish | 68.6 | 63.1 | 6.2 | 6.4 |
| UK | 56.0 | 51.3 | -- | -- |
| Old EU13 | 79.5 | 79.0 | -- | -- |
| EU NMS | 74.0 | 64.2 | -- | -- |
| Non-EU | 64.3 | 61.6 | -- | -- |
| All | 58.8 | 55.9 | 5.4 | 5.1 |

Source: CSO, Labour Force Survey Time Series

Note: -- indicates insufficient cases to be considered reliable

Non-Irish nationals in general have higher unemployment rates than Irish nationals. This is a common pattern internationally, and reflects the difficulties encountered by new entrants to the labour market. However, the gap between Irish and non-Irish unemployment rates, which increased sharply during the Recession, narrowed considerably in the context of the economic recovery.

The impact of the Covid-19 restrictions is not evident in the unemployment rates in Q2 2020. This is partly due to the reporting conventions relating to unemployment. The Labour Force Survey utilizes the ILO definition which defines persons as unemployed if they were not in employment, carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period, and were currently available to take up employment. Many of those who were displaced from employment by the Covid restrictions were receiving a Pandemic Unemployment Payment, were not actively seeking work and were therefore not reported as unemployed. Overall, the Covid-19

Adjusted Unemployment rate increased to 26% in May 2020 in Ireland, when the traditional unemployment rate stood at 5.8%.²⁷ The Covid-19 Adjusted Unemployment rate is not disaggregated by nationality. However, the traditional unemployment rate increased to 7.1% in Q3 2020: 6.7% among Irish nationals, and 8.8% among non-Irish nationals²⁸.

²⁷ CSO Monthly Unemployment June 2020.

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentjune2020/>

²⁸ CSO, 2020, *Labour Force Survey, Q3 2020*.

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lfs/labourforcesurveyq32020/>