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Editorial

Whether they are construction workers, CEOs or doctors – many of the people we encounter on a daily basis in Switzerland did not grow up here. Through their expertise and commitment in so many different branches, they make an important contribution to Swiss society. As the population grows, the demand for housing, training and infrastructure also increases. This reality and the question of how Switzerland intends to manage immigration in the future were the main focus of Swiss migration policy in 2014.

On 9 February 2014, Swiss voters adopted the popular initiative “Against Massive Immigration”. Under the new article of the Swiss Federal Constitution, Switzerland must now apply quotas to limit immigration and must enter into negotiations with the European Union (EU) to adapt the Bilateral Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons. Basing itself on preliminary work on implementation, the Federal Council has announced the need to more effectively tap the potential of Switzerland’s domestic labour force. Within this context, measures to encourage the integration of foreign nationals are very important. Implementing the popular initiative while at the same time safeguarding the bilateral path with the EU (and the many different areas tied to this) is a major undertaking. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) will continue to work on this over the next few months.

The situation in the Mediterranean Sea is one of the challenges that Switzerland and the EU share. Due to numerous crises and conflicts brewing in the Middle East, in Ukraine and across the African continent, the number of people fleeing their homes has reached levels not seen since World War II. The migration pressure on neighbouring countries in conflict zones is enormous. In addition, more and more people are trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Europe. In 2014, there were four times more boat migrants landing in Italy than in the previous year. Current developments indicate that the number of refugees will increase even more in 2015. European countries need to work together efficiently to adequately address the needs of these people.

Given more intensive migration pressures in Europe, streamlining existing asylum procedures has become a major concern. The ongoing restructuring of the Swiss asylum sector reached a new milestone in January 2014 with the introduction of a new test asylum centre in Zurich. Evaluations thus far have shown that it is possible to carry out procedures both quickly and fairly by having all of the procedural steps take place in the same location and by providing asylum seekers with legal



advice from the outset. More efficient procedures are important to ensure that the asylum system serves its original purpose: granting asylum to those who are truly in need of protection.

The present report provides an overview of the many different areas of activity of the State Secretariat for Migration and highlights current themes. I hope you will enjoy reading it!

Mario Gattiker
Director of the State Secretariat for Migration



One in every four employed persons in Switzerland is of foreign origin.

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A Overview



The foreign population is young: For every 100 foreign nationals, only 11 are aged 65 and older, the remainder are of working age (age 20 to 64). The ratio of persons aged 65 and older in Switzerland: 35/100.

1. Key figures in 2014

- At the end of the year, there were 1 947 023 (2013: 1 886 630) legally resident foreigners in Switzerland. Of these legally resident foreigners, 1 328 318 persons (2013: 1 279 455) were EU-28/EFTA nationals. Therefore, the proportion of foreigners to the total Swiss population stood at around 23.8 % in 2014.
- Most of the immigrants came from EU member states. In 2014, 1 108 500 EU-28/EFTA nationals immigrated to Switzerland. Around 65 % (721 080) of these foreign nationals immigrated to Switzerland for the purpose of taking up employment in Switzerland.
- Last year, Switzerland issued 439 978 Schengen visas. Most Schengen visas were approved by Swiss consulates in India (86 424 visas), China (76 835 visas) and Russia (42 901 visas).
- In 2014, 35 186 persons were granted Swiss citizenship. As in previous years, those naturalised came chiefly from Italy, Germany, France, Kosovo, Portugal and Serbia.
- 23 765 persons applied for asylum in Switzerland. The main countries of origin were Eritrea, Syria, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Morocco, Georgia and Kosovo.
- In 2014, the State Secretariat for Migration handled 26 715 asylum applications at first instance and granted asylum to 6 199 asylum seekers. This corresponds to an approval rate of 25.6 %.
- 9 367 were temporarily admitted.
- 2 287 obtained residence permits as hardship cases.
- Swiss authorities ensured the removal by air of 8 590 persons, of which 1 990 persons left Switzerland under the federal return assistance programme.
- The State Secretariat for Migration issued 11 447 entry bans.

In 2014, a total of 35 186 persons were granted Swiss citizenship.



People from 189 different nations live in Switzerland.

2. Year at a glance

Harmonious coexistence in Switzerland – key findings

The successful integration of foreigners is important for social cohesion. To achieve this, efforts are needed on all sides – from the migrants first of all, but also from state institutions that need to design their services in such a way as to ensure that all population groups have equal access to them. Indicators and studies allow us to see how well people live with one another in Switzerland and where social cohesion must be re-enforced. The present migration report sheds light on both “social integration” and “protection against discrimination”.

In 2014, the number of refugees worldwide rose to over 57 million.

Current trouble spots

The year 2014 was marked by various crises worldwide, which led to an increase in the number of refugees. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syrian refugees accounted for the largest share of the 57 million refugees worldwide (around 3.5 million).

In Europe, the volume of asylum applications reached levels in 2014 that had not been seen since the early 1990s. This trend was also reflected in the number of asylum applications in Switzerland, submitted mainly by nationals from Eritrea and Syria.

Switzerland is committed to doing its part to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ease pressures on countries bordering Syria. It already provides humanitarian aid on the ground in support of numerous aid projects and programmes in the region surrounding Syria. In addition, Switzerland temporarily eased visa requirements for Syrian nationals with relatives living in Switzerland. Around 4200 people have travelled to Switzerland as a result. As part of a three-year pilot project, 168 particularly vulnerable refugees had been afforded protection in Switzerland by the end of 2014. In the period running from the start of the war in March 2011 to the end of December 2014, some 7700 asylum applications had been received from Syrian nationals.

In 2014, the number of asylum applications from Eritrean nationals in Switzerland increased. This trend runs parallel to the number of persons landing in the south of Italy. A large proportion of these Eritrean asylum seekers arrive in Switzerland in dire conditions and are in need of protection.

Cooperation in Europe

Prior to 2014, never before had so many people attempted to cross the sea to Europe. The significant migration pressure on the Italian coast overwhelmed Italy's asylum and accommodation system. As a result, Dublin cooperation with Italy temporarily became much more difficult from an operational standpoint. Switzerland therefore systematically insisted that the Italian side abide by its commitments under the Dublin Agreement. At the same time, Switzerland showed a willingness to discuss ways to strengthen the Dublin system and offered assistance in handling the surge in newcomers. Following intensive discussions at all levels, the Italian side assured the Swiss side that it would indeed stand by its commitments. Generally speaking, cooperation with member states of the Dublin Agreement has been very positive and constructive.

Asylum reform: test asylum centre

Introduced by the State Secretariat for Migration on 6 January 2014, a new fast-track asylum procedure is being tested at the asylum centre in Zurich. This procedure will be gradually rolled out as part of the asylum reform process. All of the stakeholders involved (i.e. the State Secretariat for Migration, legal counselling centres and return centres) will be working together under a single roof. The new fast-track asylum procedure will be tested at the asylum centre and subsequent improvements will be implemented. Experiences thus far have shown that it is possible to carry out the procedure quickly and fairly.



84% of foreign nationals who work in Switzerland and came to this country within the past ten years, hold an upper-secondary or tertiary-level qualification.

Employment programme at reception and processing centres

In Bremgarten, each day a group of asylum seekers in waistcoats remove garbage from the town and riverbanks using gripping pliers and blue buckets. These and similar jobs are part of a new national employment programme at all federal housing centres for asylum seekers in Switzerland. In 2014, asylum seekers at federal housing centres worked a total of just under 164 500 hours, performing community tasks. They renovated dry walls, maintained forest and hiking trails, pulled weeds, removed garbage from the streets, streams and parks, shovelled snow or cleared up canals.

Managing immigration: implementation of 121a Cst

On 9 February 2014, the majority of the Swiss population and cantons voted in favour of the popular initiative "Against Mass Immigration". Following outcome of this vote, the new article 121a of the Federal Constitution was adopted.

Both constitutional provisions require introduction of a new admission system for all foreign nationals. In particular, annual caps and quotas will be introduced along with priority treatment for Swiss nationals. The Federal Council has established a broad-based group of experts to work on implementation. Their work will focus on three pillars: legislation, adaptation of the Swiss-EU bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons and the framework agreement between Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The group of experts will also propose supporting measures as well as steps to better tap the potential of Switzerland's domestic labour force.

Schengen evaluation

With the Schengen evaluation, member states wish to determine whether and to what extent the various countries have implemented their commitments in the areas of police cooperation, data protection, visa procedures, external borders and the Schengen Information System (SIS). Switzerland underwent its first evaluation prior to entry to Schengen in 2008. It underwent its second evaluation in 2014.

The report drafted by the evaluation committee confirms that Switzerland has properly adhered to Schengen requirements in the area of visa procedures and border controls.

In 2014, asylum seekers worked
just under 164 500 hours
on tasks benefiting the community.

EURINT: European cooperation in the area of returns

The EURINT project covers a network of 22 European migration authorities and the EU agency Frontex. The aim of the project is to improve cooperation with countries of origin to ensure the return of migrants. EURINT is an important foundation for the subsequent development of European asylum and migration policy. It provides the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) with a platform to raise practical questions and concerns regarding identification, obtaining of documents and forced return within an international context.

Measures to protect women in the sex industry

In the summer of 2013, the FDJP established a national group of experts tasked with devising methods to protect women in the sex industry. In March 2014, this group of experts published a report proposing 26 such measures. The existing legal framework must now be supplemented and new coordination bodies set up at the federal and cantonal level. Further priorities include improving prevention and enforcement in the following areas: police action, prosecution, courts, specialised counselling for victims, migration and diplomatic/consular missions. The various measures should help to improve the safety of sex workers, improve their level of self-determination and reduce structural discrimination.

3. New developments

Globalisation has enabled people to quickly interact with one another through worldwide networks. They exchange information that can reach the entire world in a matter of hours. In many developing countries, Internet, cell phone and satellite TV are now commonplace. Some emerging countries are actually already ahead of the rest of the world. More people are now aware of events transpiring on the other side of the planet and also have the possibility to travel there. People are also becoming more geographically mobile.

Over the past few years, many regions have experienced robust economic growth, which has gradually shifted the global balance towards Asia. However, the world's richest countries are still in Western Europe, North America and Australia. In contrast, millions of people in poorer countries remain trapped in a situation of poverty without prospects. This has prompted an increasing number of people to look for a better life elsewhere – thereby increasing migration pressure. This trend is unlikely to change much in the years to come.

In addition to these push factors – i.e. the pressure to leave one's home country – there are also pull factors, such as a demand for workers in industrialised countries. On the Swiss labour market, for instance, there is a demand for skilled workers. At the same time, however, there is a market for labour that is either illegal or borderline legal. Here, we are mainly referring to work done under the table by people who lack a work permit but also to prostitution and drug trafficking.

In recent decades, highly developed countries have become more knowledge-based, which has led to a decrease in demand for unqualified workers. With introduction of the Swiss-EU/EFTA bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons, Switzerland applies a restrictive policy on immigration by third-state nationals. Most migrants, particularly from less economically developed regions, do not meet the stringent criteria. As a result, many people who are not nationals of EU/EFTA member states have limited prospects to earn an income legally.

Last year, the number of displaced persons reached levels not seen since World War II.

Given different levels of prosperity and economic growth – as well as democracy and human rights – millions of people worldwide have migrated. In 2014, the number of international migrants (nearly 50 % of whom are women) reached an all-time high: the United Nations estimates that over 232 million international migrants, i.e. around 3 % of the world's population, spend over one year outside of their country of birth. This estimate does not include over 57 million internally dis-



placed persons (IDPs), most of whom remain relatively close to conflict zones.

Last year, the number of IDPs reached the highest level since World War II. One of the main reasons for this is the ongoing conflict in Syria, which has resulted in 7.5 million IDPs within the country and nearly 4 million refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries.

Switzerland places considerable value on the social integration of migrants. Since migration has now become a global phenomenon, measures must be taken to manage it before migrants reach national borders. Switzerland has therefore intensified its foreign policy in the area of migration. Through bilateral agreements, Swiss migration policy is now closely aligned with that of the EU. Switzerland therefore works closely with its European partners and often directly with non-EU countries of

origin and transit. Examples include migration partnerships, bilateral agreements with countries of origin as well as return assistance. Switzerland helps countries of origin to adapt their migration management structures, supports programmes to prevent illegal migration and maintains active migration dialogue with key partner countries.

On 9 February 2014, Swiss voters adopted the popular initiative "Against Mass Immigration". As a result, immigration from the EU/EFTA area will no longer be unlimited and will be subject to Swiss requirements. Immigration will therefore be managed in such a way as to take Swiss needs more directly into account. Implementation of this initiative, i.e. the formulation of new laws as well as negotiations with the EU will be a challenge from both a domestic and foreign policy standpoint. This theme will continue to be raised in political discourse for years to come.



In 2014, just under 15 000 people came to Switzerland for the purpose of pursuing initial or continuing education and training.

B Migration figures for 2014



Around 65 % of foreign nationals from EU/EFTA member states came to Switzerland for the purpose of taking up employment.

1. Immigration and foreign resident population

At the end of December 2014, there were 1 947 023¹ (2013: 1 886 630) legally resident foreigners in Switzerland. Of these legally resident foreigners, 1 328 318 persons (2013: 1 279 455) were EU-28/EFTA nationals (around 68 % of the foreign resident population) and 618 705 or 32 % (2013: 607 175) from other countries. The number of EU-28/EFTA nationals increased by 3.8 % compared to the previous year and the number of nationals from other countries increased by 1.9 %. The largest community of foreign nationals comes from Italy at 308 602 persons (16 % of the total foreign resident population), followed by Germany at 298 614 persons (15.3 %) and Portugal at 263 010 persons (13.5 %). Compared to the previous year, the largest increases were observed among nationals of Kosovo (+ 10 208), Portugal (+ 9 241) and Italy (+ 7 348).

¹ The State Secretariat for Migration's statistics on foreign nationals are based on data taken from the Central Migration Information System (ZEMIS), but nevertheless excludes the following categories of foreign nationals: international civil servants and their family members, short-term residents <12 months, asylum seekers and temporarily admitted persons.

² The current member states of the European Union are known as EU-28 member states. They are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. When Croatia joined the EU on 1 June 2013, Switzerland chose not to extend the provisions of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons to this country. Croatian nationals are therefore still subject to the provisions of Federal Act of 16 December 2005 on Foreign Nationals Act (FNA, SR 142.20). In 2013, a total of 412 Croatian nationals immigrated to Switzerland; of this figure, 78 came for the purpose of taking up employment. The current member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) are Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

³ EU-17/EFTA: citizens of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom and Cyprus enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement since 1 June 2007.

⁴ These values are based on the usual foreign resident population.

⁵ EU-8: citizens of Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004, excl. Malta and Cyprus: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia.

2. Employment

Switzerland draws a distinction between two types of foreign workers when awarding residence and work permits: EU/EFTA nationals and third-state nationals. The first group enjoys all of the benefits of the Swiss-EU/EFTA bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons and the second group is subject to quotas on the number of residence and work permits issued.

The largest community of foreign nationals comes from Italy, followed by Germany and Portugal.

On 9 February 2014, Swiss voters adopted the popular initiative "Against Mass Immigration". As a result, quotas will also apply to certain nationals from the EU/EFTA area. Plans are currently being made to implement this initiative. On 11 February 2015, the Federal Council adopted the draft revision of the Foreign Nationals Act as well as additional measures to better tap the potential of Switzerland's domestic labour force. On the same date, the Federal Council also decided on a definitive mandate for negotiations with the EU on revision of the Swiss-EU bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons.

In 2014, a total of 110 850 EU-28/EFTA² nationals immigrated to Switzerland – around 65 % (72 108) of whom came for the purpose of taking up employment (usual foreign resident population).

EU-17/EFTA³ nationals work mainly in the tertiary sector (78 %).⁴ 21 % work in the secondary sector (industry and crafts) and 1 % works in the primary sector. The employment situation for EU-8 nationals is similar: around 71 % work in the tertiary sector and 21 % work in the secondary sector (industry and crafts). Compared to EU-17/EFTA nationals, however, considerably more EU-8⁵ nationals (around 8 %) work in the primary sector. For their part, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals (EU-2 nationals) have been able to benefit from the provisions of the Swiss-EU bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons since 1 June 2009. The vast majority of EU-2 nationals (80 %) work in the tertiary sector; around 10 % work in the secondary sector (industry and trade); and 10 % in the primary sector.

Work permit quotas for third-state nationals and service providers from EU/EFTA member states

Each year the Federal Council establishes quotas for workers from non-EU/EFTA member states (third-state nationals) as well as for service providers from EU/EFTA member states who wish to work for longer than 120 days. A quota of 5000 short-stay permits (L) and 3500 normal residence permits (B) was established for third-state nationals for 2014. The Federal Council established a separate quota of 3000 short-stay permits and 500 normal residence permits for service providers from EU/EFTA member states.

The 3000 short-stay permits available to service providers were all used up in 2014. Of the 500 normal residence permits available, only 343 permits (around 5 % less than in 2013) were issued. Permits for service providers were issued mainly in the tertiary sector (financial services, corporate consulting, IT) and the secondary sector (machine industry, electrical engineering, construction).

Of the 2014 quota for normal residence permits (B) for third-state nationals 80 % were used up (2813 permits issued). Likewise, 98 % of the 2014 quota for short-stay permits (L) for third-state nationals were used up (4923 permits issued)⁶. Compared to 2013, demand for residence permits fell while demand for short-term permits rose sharply.

In 2014, most of the permits were issued in the IT field (around 2170 permits), followed by the chemical and pharmaceuticals industry (760), corporate consulting (670), the machine industry (510), research (490) and the food and beverage industry (480). In 2014, 85 % of all third-country nationals who received a work permit were holders of a higher education qualification. As in 2013, third-state nationals mainly came from the following countries: India (2033), USA (1281), China (498) and Russia (410).

On 28 November 2014, the Federal Council decided to reduce the quotas for short-stay and residence permits by 1000 each. In 2015, there are now 4000 L permits and 2500 B permits available. At the same time, the quotas for service providers

from EU/EFTA member states has also been reduced (now: 2000 short-term stay permits and 250 residence permits). Responding to the will of Swiss voters expressed on 9 February 2014 (Art. 121a and 197 no. 11 of Swiss Federal Constitution), the Federal Council seeks to give Swiss employers even greater incentives to make better and more timely use of Switzerland's domestic labour force.

Bilateral traineeship agreements

Over the past decade, Switzerland has signed bilateral traineeship agreements with various countries. These agreements give young professionals between the ages of 18 and 35 the



⁶ In keeping with Annex 2 of the Ordinance of 24 October 2007 on Admission, Period of Stay and Employment (ASEO, SR 142.201, the Confederation carried forward 162 short-stay permits that had not been used up in 2013.

opportunity to work in their occupation for up to 18 months in another country and pursue subsequent training. This option is available for all occupations.

In 2014, around 300 Swiss nationals took advantage of this opportunity to spend some time abroad. Most of the young Swiss nationals travelled to Canada and the USA. In that same year, a total of 112 permits were issued to foreign nationals for traineeships in Switzerland. Most of the permits were issued to young professionals from Canada (53), Japan (15) and the USA (13). Traineeships in Switzerland took place in various branches, mainly in healthcare, architecture and finance.

In 2014, around 300 Swiss nationals
took advantage of traineeship
agreements to spend some time abroad.



Most work permits for workers from non-EU/EFTA member states were issued in the IT field and in the chemical and pharmaceuticals field.

3. Schengen visas

Schengen visas are valid for short-term stays (i.e. no longer than 90 days within a 180-day period) and usually required by tourists and business travellers. In 2014, Switzerland issued a total of 439 978 Schengen visas and rejected 31 672 visa applications. A visa application is turned down when the authority examining the application concludes that one or more entry requirements have not been met. For example, if an authority doubts that the visa applicant truly intends to leave Switzerland upon expiry of the visa or if the visa applicant lacks adequate financial resources.

Since 11 October 2014, Switzerland compares the fingerprints of holders of a Schengen visa in the Central Visa Information System.

Most of these visas were issued by Swiss consulates in India (86 424 visas), China (76 835 visas) and Russia (42 901 visas). Like other Schengen countries, Switzerland may require that fellow Schengen countries obtain Swiss consent in specific cases before a visa is issued. In 2014, the SEM handled preliminary consultation requests from other Schengen countries in relation to 380 680 persons. At the same time, the Swiss authorities submitted around 63 429 consultation requests to Schengen member countries.

The Central Visa Information System (C-VIS) has been in operation since October 2011. All Schengen member countries store biometric data (ten fingerprints and facial image) of visa applicants in this system. At present, biometric data are already obtained from visa applicants from Africa, the entire American continent, the Near East and Middle East, Turkey, Central and Southeast Asia as well as the West Balkans. This biometric data is then stored in the C-VIS. While the highly populated countries of India, China and Russia have not yet been connected to the C-VIS, by the end of 2015, all consular missions of Schengen states worldwide will be connected.

Border guards directly compare the fingerprints saved to the C-VIS with the fingerprints of travellers holding a Schengen visa. This fingerprint check has been systematically carried out at Swiss airports since 11 October 2014.

Switzerland has been comparing the fingerprints of asylum seekers with the C-VIS since December 2012. In 2014, Swiss authorities determined in this manner that 1422 of those who applied for asylum in Switzerland had done so only after already obtaining a Schengen visa from another country. An additional 103 others had submitted an asylum application in Switzerland after their visa application had been denied.

Under the Dublin Agreement, the Schengen country that issued the visa is responsible for handling any asylum applications submitted by the visa holder.

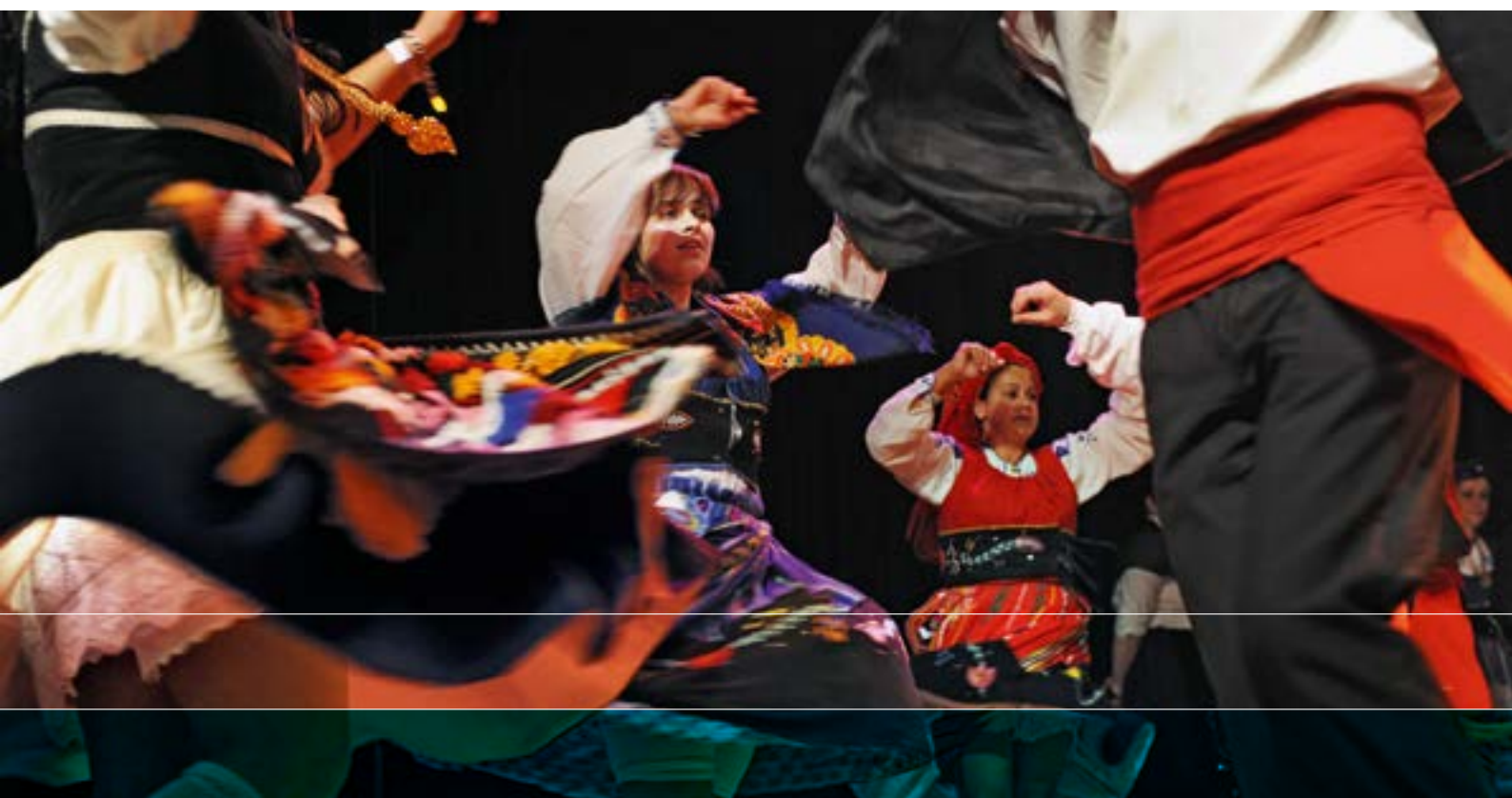
Since April 2014, citizens of the Republic of Moldova holding a biometric passport may travel to Switzerland without a visa. With this measure, the Federal Council aligned itself with a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council reached on 3 April 2014. If the EU introduces or repeals visa requirements for a given country, then this change applies to the entire Schengen Area, which includes Switzerland. Citizens of the following countries are no longer subject to visa requirements thanks to changes introduced in recent years: Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Albania.

4. Naturalisations

The number of naturalisation applications has increased substantially over the past few years: In 2008, 34 965 naturalisation applications were filed, setting a new record. Afterwards, the number of applications decreased steadily. In 2012, a new low was reached with 24 806 naturalisation applications, which was followed by a new increase. In 2014, the federal authorities received 30 961 new naturalisation applications, which corresponds to an increase of around 20 % compared to the previous year.

In 2014, 35 186 persons were granted Swiss citizenship (–3 % compared to 2013 when 36 290 persons were naturalised). In 2014, 23 895 persons acquired Swiss citizenship through the standard naturalisation procedure (–5.3 %) and 11 138 persons acquired Swiss citizenship through the fast-track naturalisation procedure (+2.3 %). The number of persons who obtained reinstatement of lost Swiss citizenship remained relatively constant at 153 persons. At total of 2198 naturalised persons live abroad (–9.7 %).

As in previous years, newly naturalised Swiss citizens have come mainly from Italy, Germany, France, Kosovo, Portugal and Serbia. A total of 4738 Italian nationals (+1.3 %) and 4212 German nationals (+7.2 %) obtained Swiss citizenship through naturalisation. In addition, 2674 French nationals (+5.4 %) and 2627 Kosovar nationals (–0.5 %) were naturalised. Among the top ten countries, Portugal accounted for the largest increase in naturalisations: in 2014, 2458 Portuguese nationals were naturalised (+11.8 %). Likewise, among the top ten countries, Serbia (–27 %), Bosnia and Herzegovina (–17.8 %) and Turkey (–14.3 %) accounted for the largest decreases in naturalisations: in 2014, 1862 Serbian nationals, 963 Bosnian nationals and 1403 Turkish nationals were naturalised. In addition, 1288 Macedonian nationals (+1.6 %) and 1083 Spanish nationals (+0.5 %) were naturalised.



In 2014, 2458 Portuguese nationals obtained a Swiss passport.

5. International cooperation

5.1 Migration cooperation in Europe

Switzerland is in the heart of Europe – enclosed by the European Union (EU). For this reason, the EU's migration and asylum policies have a direct impact on Switzerland. Through its signature of the Schengen/Dublin Association Agreement, Switzerland takes part in political and legal discussions concerning these topics. It is able to express its position and adopts corresponding *acquis* arising from this agreement.

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) analyses the effects of Schengen/Dublin policies on Switzerland and actively contributes to discussions in EU working groups, committees and councils. In addition, it coordinates with other federal agencies to establish a coherent Swiss position. Depending on the body, this position is represented by a head of department, the head of SEM, the head of the Swiss Mission in Brussels or another SEM delegate.

In 2014 an important topic was
human smuggling and the
associated migration situation in
the Mediterranean region.

In 2014, as in previous years, the head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga, regularly represented Switzerland on the EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA). An important topic for SEM was human smuggling and the associated migration situation in the Mediterranean Sea region (more details are provided in Chapter D, no. 2). With regards to Schengen, the SEM continued the Smart Borders project. This project involves the creation of two IT systems which enable more efficient processing of border crossings and help to maintain security within the Schengen Area itself. Efficiency and security are particularly important since it is expected that there will be a steady increase in travel, resulting in millions of additional border crossings at the external borders of the Schengen Area, such as the Geneva and Zurich airports.

In addition to discussions with the EU on the subject of Schengen and Dublin, the SEM also still engages in bilateral dialogue with individual EU member states. Such dialogue is centred on finding ways to support EU member states that have experienced particularly sharp increases in migration flows. In Greece, projects to exchange information on countries of origin have been continued and Greek asylum experts made a study trip to Switzerland. Bulgaria, which has seen a surge in asylum applications since the autumn of 2013, has also expressed interest in Swiss know-how. Swiss experts are currently working with Bulgarian colleagues within the framework of a project to share expertise on Switzerland's system of voluntary return and on best practices. The project will run until 2015. In addition, the SEM has signed an agreement with the Polish migration office for close long-term cooperation and regular exchanges of expertise. A corresponding Memorandum of Understanding was signed in November 2014.

5.2 Migration cooperation with third countries

Migration is a global phenomenon involving many state and non-state actors. Switzerland is unable to handle the various challenges on its own. European cooperation is intended to strengthen and secure external borders and implement a common asylum policy. Along this line, cooperation with third states outside the European Union as well as with countries of origin and transit plays a key role and takes on different forms. For example, the SEM helps countries to improve their accommodation and protection capacities. Refugees and persons seeking protection are also offered prospects to make a living in the region of origin. In addition to the protective aspect, the aim of preventing irregular migration remains the main objective. Here, Switzerland funds various projects for Syrian refugees in countries bordering Syria – within the framework of the "Protection in the Region" concept. In July 2014, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga travelled to Jordan to gain first-hand exposure to the situation on the ground. She visited the Zaatari refugee camp, which is run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). She also met with representatives of the Jordanian government and announced that Switzerland would provide additional support for a UN project aimed at helping Jordanian families to expand their houses and apartments to better accommodate refugees.

Migration dialogue is a further instrument that Switzerland uses to work with countries outside the EU. The SEM maintains regular dialogue on the subject of migration with major countries of origin and transit. Among other things, this dialogue covers such things as how agreements are to be applied and how specific migration projects are to be carried out. In September 2014, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga signed two agreements in Cameroon: the first covering mutual waiving of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports and the second on migration cooperation. The latter agreement provides for measures and projects to encourage and support the voluntary return and reintegration of migrants. So far, Switzerland has signed migration cooperation agreements with the following six countries: Tunisia, Benin, Cameroon, Angola, Guinea and Congo.

Moreover, Switzerland has entered into a migration partnership with five countries: Nigeria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Tunisia. A migration partnership is a comprehensive instrument of Swiss foreign migration policy that involves cooperation in all areas that are relevant to migration. During her trip to Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga, confirmed the migration partnerships with these two countries and visited projects that are supported by Switzerland.

In all of its foreign migration policy instruments – from migration dialogue to migration partnerships – Switzerland seeks to create partner-like dynamics that adequately take into account Swiss interests as well as those of the partner country and the migrants themselves.



In 2014, a total of 112 permits were issued to foreign nationals for traineeships in Switzerland.

6. Key figures for asylum and action strategy

Asylum applications in Switzerland

In 2014, Switzerland received 23 765 asylum applications. Compared to 2013, this amounts to an increase of 10.7 % (+2300 applications).

The main countries of origin were:

Land	Applications in 2014	Change from 2013–2014 in persons	Change from 2013–2014 in %
Eritrea	6923	+4360	+170.1 %
Syria	3819	+1918	+100.9 %
Sri Lanka	1277	+593	+86.7 %
Nigeria	908	–856	–48.5 %
Somalia	813	209	+34.6 %
Afghanistan	747	–145	–16.3 %
Tunisia	733	–1004	–57.8 %
Morocco	699	–369	–34.6 %
Georgia	466	–187	–28.6 %
Kosovo	405	–293	–42.0 %

Eritrea was the top country of origin, with 6923 applications and around 170 % more applications being submitted in 2014 than in 2013. This dramatic increase compared to the previous year is a direct consequence of boatloads of refugees arriving along the southern coast of Italy. In 2014, there were over 170 000 boat migrants, about four times more than in 2013 (43 000). Most of the Eritrean nationals (34 300 people) and Syrian nationals (42 300 people) landing in southern Italy quickly continued their journey to central and northern Europe and applied for asylum there. After Germany and Sweden, Switzerland was the third main country of destination for Eritrean asylum seekers. After peaking at 1480 in July 2014, the number of asylum applications submitted by Eritrean asylum seekers quickly fell in autumn and by December 2014, stood at only 185 asylum applications.

The second main country of origin was Syria with 3819 applications, which increased by around 100 % compared to the previous year. In the autumn of 2013, the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) responded to the dramatic situation in Syria by significantly easing visa restrictions for Syrian nationals with relatives in Switzerland. By the end of 2014, 4224 people had travelled to Switzerland thanks to this measure. 3062 of these Syrian nationals applied for asylum:

692 in 2013 and 2370 in 2014. By the end of 2014, an additional 892 Syrian nationals had been temporarily admitted by virtue of the Foreign Nationals Act (FNA, SR 142.20).

Handling of asylum applications

Cases handled in first instance	2014	Change from 2013–2014 in persons	Change from 2013–2014 in %
Asylum granted	6199	+3032	+95.7 %
Recognition rate ⁷	25.6 %	+10.2 %	+66.3 %
Protection rate ⁸	58.3 %	+28.5 %	+95.6 %
Applications dismissed	5873	–5124	–46.6 %
Of which related to Dublin (incl. other transfer procedures) ⁹	5136	–2052	–22.5 %
Asylum denied	12139	+5735	+89.6 %
Application cancelled	2504	–894	–26.3 %
Total cases handled	26 715	+2749	+11.5 %
Applications pending in first instance	16 767	–1330	–7.3 %

In 2014, the last of the asylum applications that had been pending for the longest time were finally resolved after introduction of the new strategy for the handling of Dublin cases and poorly justified asylum applications. At the end of 2013, there were still 10 151 asylum applications pending in the first instance that had been submitted earlier than a year previously. By the end of 2014, the SEM was able to bring this total down to 4697. Many of these asylum applications were submitted by individuals who truly were in need of

⁷ Proportion of all cases handled (excl. cancelled asylum applications) where asylum was granted.

⁸ Proportion of all cases handled (excl. cancelled asylum applications) where asylum or temporary admission was granted.

⁹ Since implementation of the Dublin III Ordinance on 1 January 2014, certain categories of foreign nationals no longer fall within the scope of application of the Dublin III Ordinance; for these foreign nationals, requests for transfer must be made in accordance with readmission guidelines or a bilateral readmission agreement.

¹⁰ Decisions to temporarily admit asylum seekers in the first instance form the basis for the calculation of protection rates indicated in the table above, which is why they are presented here separately.

protection, which resulted in a corresponding increase in recognition and protection rates.

In 2014, the SEM granted temporary admission to 9367 persons (2013: 3432), of whom 7924 (2013: 2961) following an asylum decision rendered in the first instance.¹⁰ 3217 cases of temporary admission also reached expiration (2013: 3329).

Strong migration pressures on the Italian coast made Dublin cooperation with Italy more difficult.

Duration of asylum applications handled in first instance

In 2014, the SEM renewed and intensified its efforts to process long-pending asylum applications. However, this lengthened the average duration of asylum applications handled in the first instance. All decisions considered, the total duration of asylum applications handled in first instance in 2014 stood at 400 days. In 2013, the total stood at 258 days and in 2012 163 days.

27 % of the asylum applications handled in first instance in 2014 were settled within two months and 47 % within six months after the asylum application was submitted. 80 % of the most quickly handled asylum applications in the first instance in 2014 took about 240 days.



In 2014, Switzerland granted asylum to 6199 asylum seekers and temporarily admitted 9367.

Dublin procedures

The Dublin Association Agreement came into force in Switzerland on 12 December 2008. In around 40 % of the cases, another Dublin country turned out to be responsible for the asylum application submitted to Switzerland. Experiences with the Dublin Association Agreement have been largely positive. Cooperation with partner countries works generally well. Despite this, considerable migration pressure on the Italian coast overwhelmed Italy's asylum and accommodation capacities. As a result, Dublin cooperation with Italy – Switzerland's most important Dublin partner country – was more challenging in 2014 and significantly hampered over a period of several months. All of this led to a decrease in the number of Dublin cases that Switzerland was able to transfer in 2014 compared to the previous year and meant that the SEM had to process 3000 more asylum applications than would otherwise have been the case.

In 2014, 19.2 % of all asylum applications handled fell under the provisions of the Dublin Association Agreement (2013: 29.5 %). Switzerland transferred considerably more asylum seekers back to the corresponding Dublin country than vice versa (2014: 2900 transfers to another Dublin country compared to 940 transfers to Switzerland). For asylum applications that led to a negative decision under the Dublin II Regulation, the amount of time required for processing was 66 days.

European trends

The volume of asylum applications in 2014 was significantly affected by numerous trouble spots to the south and east of the Mediterranean and on the African continent. These conflicts prompted many people to take flight and resulted in an exceptionally high number of boat migrants landing in the south of Italy. As a result, over 600000 more asylum applications were submitted in Europe in 2014, the highest number since the early 1990s. Switzerland's share of total asylum applications submitted in Europe fell to under 4 %. Nevertheless, Switzerland still has a higher-than-average proportion of asylum seekers at 3 applications per 1000 inhabitants. In 2014, the European average stood at around 1.2 asylum applications per 1000 inhabitants.

Main European destination countries for asylum seekers in 2014:¹¹

Country	Asylum applications		Change	
	2014	2013	Absolute	Relative
Germany	173 000	110 000	+63 000	+57.3 %
Sweden	81 000	54 000	+27 000	+50.0 %
Italy	65 000	28 000	+37 000	+132.1 %
France	64 000	66 000	-2000	-3.0 %
Hungary	43 000	19 000	+24 000	+126.3 %
UK	31 000	29 000	+2000	+6.9 %
Austria	28 000	17 500	+10 500	+60.0 %
Netherlands	27 000	14 500	+12 500	+86.2 %
Switzerland	23 765	21 465	+2300	+10.7 %
Belgium	17 000	16 000	+1000	+6.3 %

Main countries of origin of asylum seekers in Europe in 2014:¹¹

	Asylum applications in 2014	Difference compared to 2013	Asylum applications in Switzerland in 2014	Swiss share of all asylum applications
Syria	125 000	+73 500	3819	3.1 %
Eritrea	46 500	+26 000	6923	14.9 %
Afghanistan	42 000	+16 500	747	1.8 %
Kosovo	37 000	+17 500	405	1.1 %
Pakistan	22 000	+1000	120	0.5 %
Nigeria	21 000	+7500	908	4.3 %
Serbia	21 000	+5000	244	1.2 %
Somalia	18 500	-2000	813	4.4 %
Russia	17 000	-23 500	173	1.0 %
Albania	16 500	+5000	128	0.8 %

¹¹ The figures are partly based on provisional data or estimates taken from Web sites of the various migration authorities, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) and Eurostat.

Asylum Action Plan

The SEM processes asylum applications quickly and in a legally correct manner. According to Art. 37b AsylA, the SEM lists the categories of asylum applications that are to be given priority, indicating such things as legal deadlines for processing, the situation in countries of origin, clearly justified/unjustified applications and the behaviour of asylum seekers.

The Asylum Action Plan is intended to ensure effective processing of asylum applications by giving priority to specific categories of applications. Other objectives of the Asylum Action Plan include:

- Reducing the number of clearly unjustified asylum applications
- Easing housing burdens
- Minimising the overall costs of the asylum sector

In mid-2012, the State Secretariat for Migration adopted a new procedure for the processing of visa applications from visa-exempt European countries ("48-hour procedure") and in the spring of 2013, extended this procedure to nationals from Kosovo and Georgia.

In December 2012, the SEM also gradually introduced a "fast-track procedure". The main difference between the "48-hour procedure" and the "fast-track procedure" is that the latter is applied to nationals from countries where it is more difficult to enforce removal orders and obtain the necessary documents for departure. Currently, the fast-track procedure applies to nationals from six countries where chances of success in asylum applications are slim: Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, Gambia and Senegal.

Introduction of the "48-hour procedure" and the "fast-track procedure" has led to a significant reduction in the number of asylum applications from nationals of the corresponding countries of origin and the figure remains stable at a low level. As a result, nationals of these countries who are not in need of protection are no longer as keen on seeking asylum in Switzerland.



At the end of 2014, the largest community of foreign nationals came from Italy (308 602 persons), followed by Germany (298 614 persons) and Portugal (263 010 persons).

7. Hardship cases

The Asylum Act (SR 142.31) and the Foreign Nationals Act (SR 142.20) recognise three types of hardship cases for which asylum seekers may obtain a residence permit from a canton, subject to SEM approval:

Under the Asylum Act, asylum seekers must have lived in Switzerland for at least five years (their place of residence known by the Swiss authorities at all times) and experience personal hardship following intensive efforts to integrate in Switzerland. In 2014, 128 asylum seekers received residence permits under these conditions.

Under the Foreign Nationals Act, persons admitted on a temporary basis must have lived in Switzerland for at least five years, and in-depth verification must be carried out to determine whether or not personal hardship is present. In 2014, 1896 persons admitted on a temporary basis were granted a residence permit.

Finally, the Foreign Nationals Act enables a residence permit to be granted in the event of serious personal hardship. In 2014, 263 illegal immigrants living in Switzerland were granted residence permits. There is also a special rule whereby a residence permit may be revoked if a person becomes divorced under particular circumstances (e.g. domestic violence, forced marriage).



In 2014, 128 asylum seekers received residence permits as hardship cases.

8. Returns

8.1 Return assistance

“Return assistance increases the likelihood that migrants decide to return voluntarily and depart sooner. The prospect of forced return and the provision of timely information and counselling on return assistance also encourage migrants to return on their own. Without these alternatives, migrants would remain in Switzerland longer.”

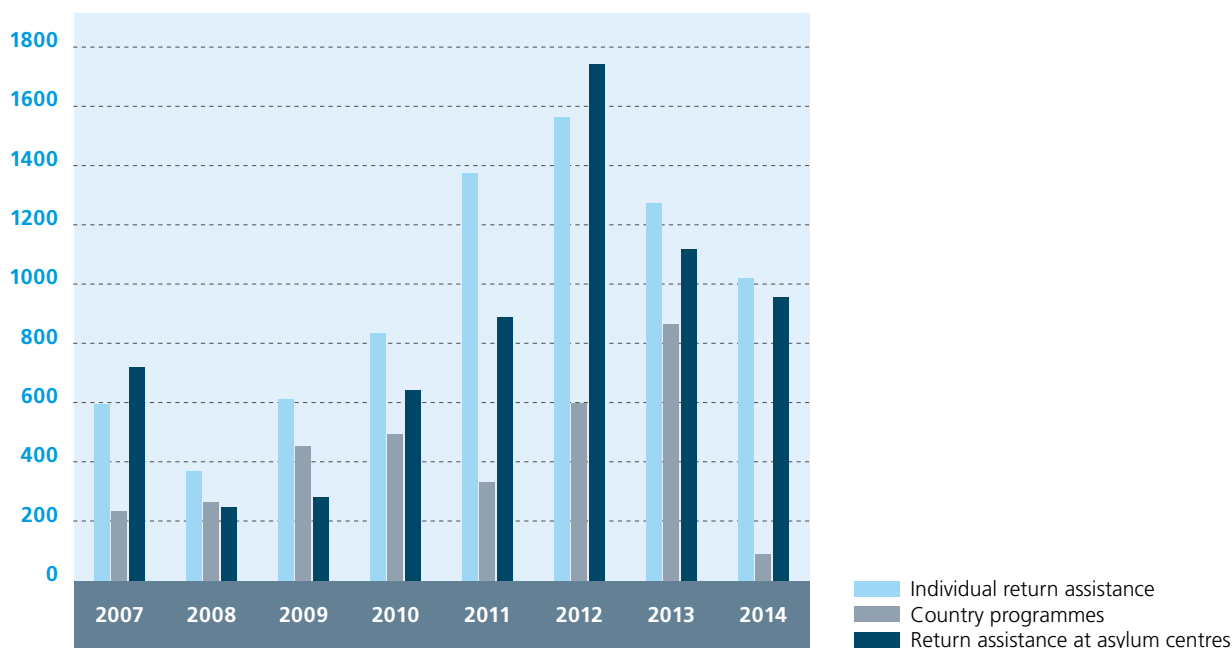
In mid-2014, the Federal Council expressed these words in its response to the postulate formulated by National Councillor Philipp Müller. The postulate calls for a comprehensive review of return assistance, in particular associated costs and effectiveness.

The Federal Council’s report was drafted upon completion of an external evaluation of the return assistance system. This report states that Swiss return assistance is on par with the European average, although comparison is difficult

Return assistance increases the likelihood that migrants decide to return voluntarily and depart sooner.

because general conditions vary. Like Switzerland, most European countries provide financial start-up assistance as well as local project support. Swiss project support is part of targeted spending to help returnees develop their income-earning prospects. The beneficiaries receive up to CHF 3000 to launch smallscale projects – such as a small restaurant – which enables them to earn their own living. This makes it easier for returnees to integrate once again and reduces the likelihood of renewed migration.

Return assistance in 2007–2014:



All asylum seekers and certain categories of foreign nationals (e.g. victims of human trafficking) may request return assistance at the local return counselling office in their canton of residence as well as at a reception and processing centre.

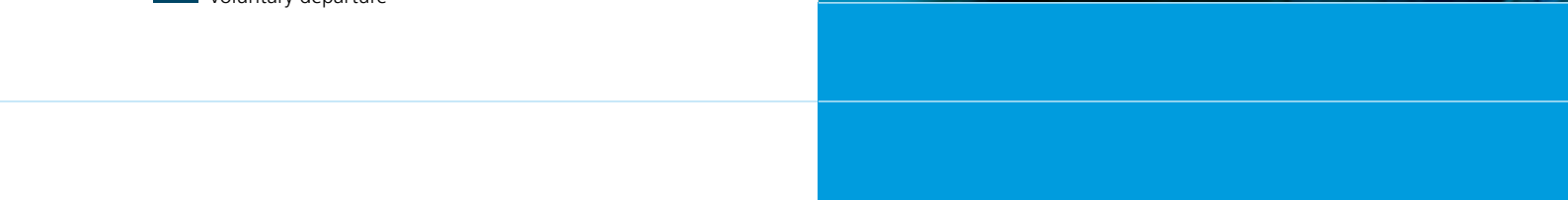
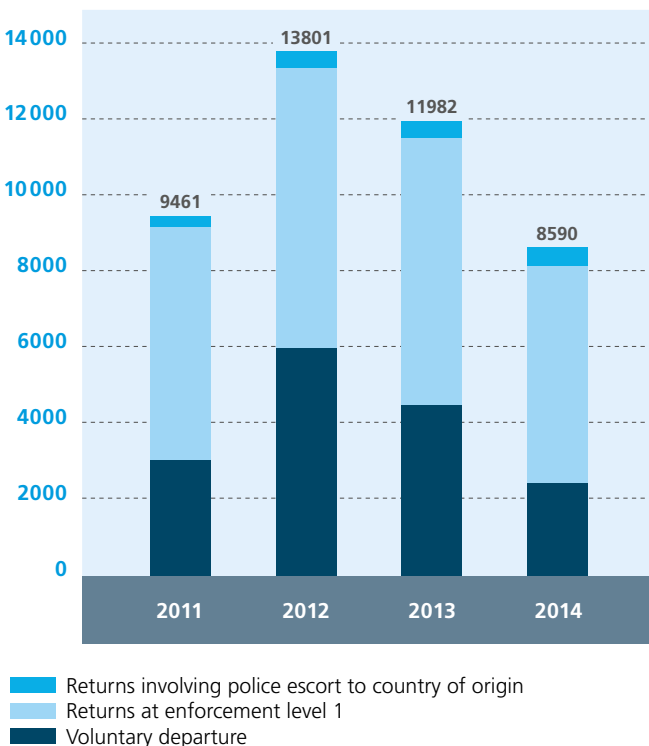
Since the introduction of return assistance in 1997, around 86 000 migrants have returned to their countries of origin on their own with return assistance. In 2014, the figure stood at 1990 migrants. Return assistance helped to avoid forced return measures, which tend to be costly (e.g. escorted returns, administrative detention). Foreigners with criminal records and asylum seekers who fail to leave Switzerland after their asylum applications have been denied do not qualify for return assistance. The same holds true for citizens of EU/EFTA member states and countries who may travel to Switzerland without a visa for stays of up to three months.

8.2 Removal by air

Individuals do not always return to their country of origin voluntarily. Asylum seekers whose application has been turned down must leave Switzerland after the deadline for departure. Other foreign nationals residing illegally in Switzerland may be issued a removal order. If the individuals in question do not leave Switzerland, then detention and other coercive measures may be applied.

In the reporting year, the Swiss authorities ensured the removal by air of 8590 persons. Compared to 2013, this corresponds to a decrease of 28 % (2013: 11 982 departures). This decrease is due in part to the fact that the State Secretariat for Migration

Removal by air in 2011–2014:

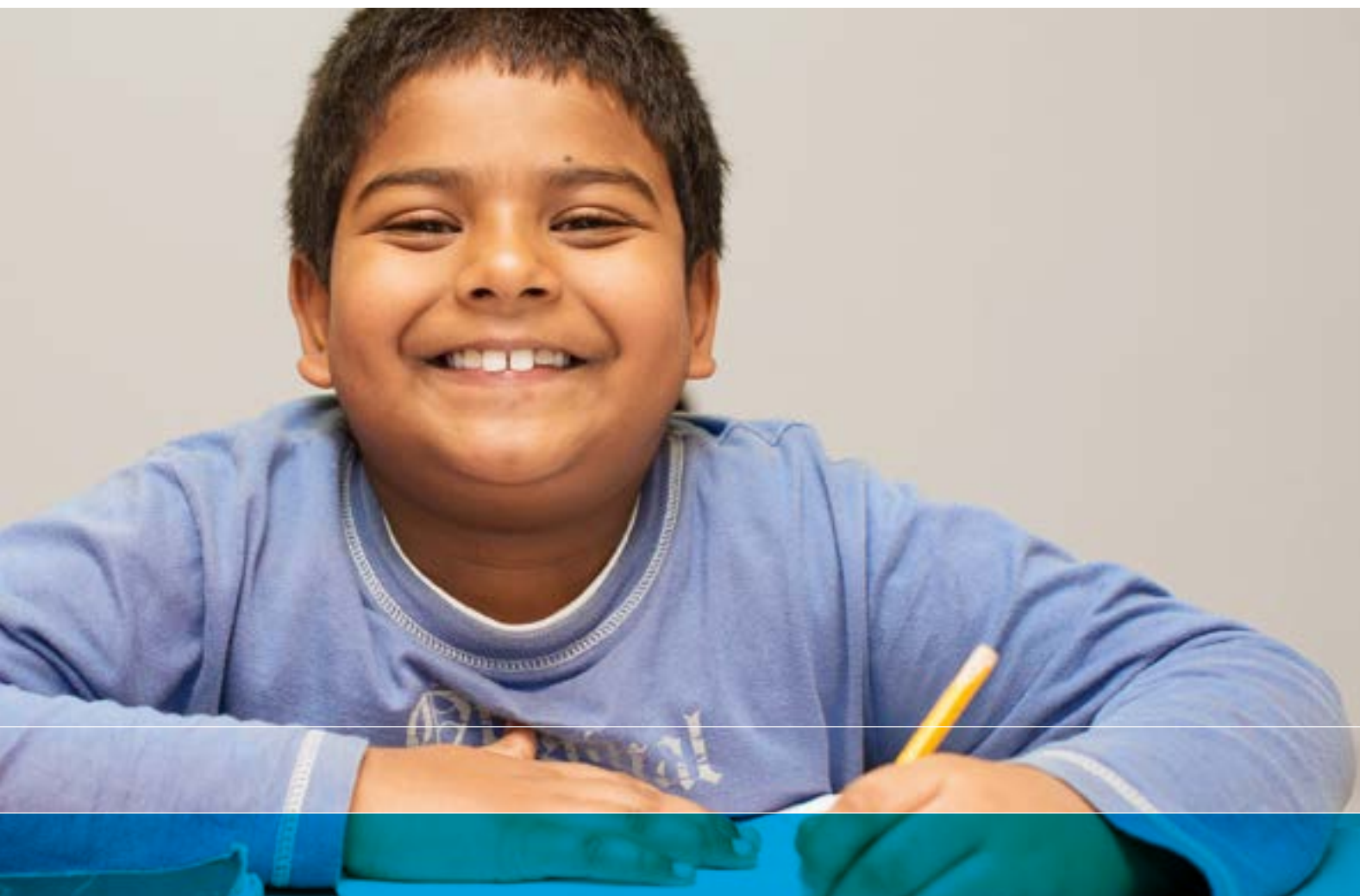


(SEM) granted asylum or temporary admission to many more people in 2014 than in the previous reporting year. These asylum seekers came from crisis regions such as Syria. In addition, Switzerland was unable to send as many asylum seekers to other Dublin States.

Nearly 30 % of those ordered to depart Switzerland left voluntarily. Many individuals, however, fail to comply with removal or expulsion orders; choosing instead to go underground or refusing to leave. Most of these persons were returned under enforcement level 1 (police escort to the departure gate to ensure that the person boards the aircraft). Only 477 persons (6 % of the departures) were accompanied by specially

trained security officials to their destination country on standard flights and 252 on 41 special deportation flights.

In 2014, Switzerland took part in seven joint EU flights for the removal of illegal immigrants. These flights were coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex). Compared to the previous year, Swiss participation in such flights intensified (2013: three joint EU flights). The Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) intends to intensify Swiss participation in these joint EU flights even further.





At the end of 2014, Switzerland's foreign resident population stood at 1 947 023.

8.3 Detention

The average duration of administrative detention¹² was 21 days (2013: 22 days), which is practically the same as in the previous reporting year. A total of 5417 detention orders were issued (2013: 5982 detention orders). Most of the individuals placed in administrative detention in 2014 came from Nigeria, Albania and Kosovo.

In February 2014, a new provision was added to the Foreign Nationals Act (Art. 82 para. 1 FNA). It authorises the Confederation to provide the cantons with financial contributions to cover enforcement of administrative detention orders falling within the scope of the Foreign Nationals Act. As part of restructuring of the asylum sector, the cantons will require additional detention space for 500 to 700 detainees to ensure effective enforcement of removal orders.

¹² Detention pending deportation (*Ausschaffungshaft*) is a preventive measure taken to enforce an expulsion or removal order. The duration of detention may not exceed 18 months. The general conditions applying to detention are set forth in Art. 76 of the Foreign Nationals Act (SR 142.20).

According to Art. 78 of the Foreign Nationals Act (SR 142.20), coercive Detention (*Durchsetzungshaft*) is intended to force a hitherto non-compliant individual to leave Switzerland. Non-compliant individuals may be detained for no longer than 18 months if detention pending deportation is not an option and other more lenient measures are ineffective. Coercive detention is initially ordered for a period of one month, and may be extended at two-month intervals.

Detention in preparation for departure (*Vorbereitungshaft*) is intended to enforce removal proceedings. The maximum duration of detention is six months and this measure is subject to the general conditions set forth in Art. 75 of the Foreign Nationals Act (SR 142.20).

9. Procedures to remove and keep people away

The Foreign Nationals Act (SR 142.20) provides for a range of measures designed for categories of foreign nationals whom Switzerland wishes to send back and/or deny entry for a limited or unlimited duration. These categories include foreign nationals who have seriously and/or repeatedly undermined Switzerland's security and public order or who constitute a serious threat to Switzerland's internal or external security. These measures include, in particular, removal orders (Wegweisung), expulsion orders (Ausweisung) and entry bans (Einreiseverbot).

Expulsions and entry bans are aimed at preventing the uncontrolled entry to Switzerland of undesirable foreign nationals. Both measures are preventive rather than penal in nature. As

long as they remain in force, the foreign national may not enter our country without obtaining the explicit authorisation of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). In the case of EU nationals, the conditions are more restrictive. Indeed, for a removal or entry ban to be ordered, the person in question must represent a real, current and sufficiently serious threat to security and public order. In 2014, a total of 11 447 entry bans were issued (2013: 10 617).

Since the Swiss-EU bilateral agreement on Schengen/Dublin cooperation came into effect, all bans on entry ordered by our country are entered into the Schengen Information System (SIS). This enables undesirable foreign nationals to be barred from entry to the entire Schengen Area.



Since the introduction of return assistance in 1997, around 86 000 migrants have returned to their countries of origin on their own with return assistance.

C Integration



EU-28/EFTA nationals account for around 68% of Switzerland's foreign resident population.

Integration with emphasis on social integration and protection against discrimination

The successful integration of foreigners is important for social cohesion. In addition, the integration of migrants on the labour market helps provide the Swiss economy with the workers it needs. Switzerland has a high-quality education and health

system, occupational safety and social stability. In terms of support for integration, Switzerland also compares favourably with other countries.

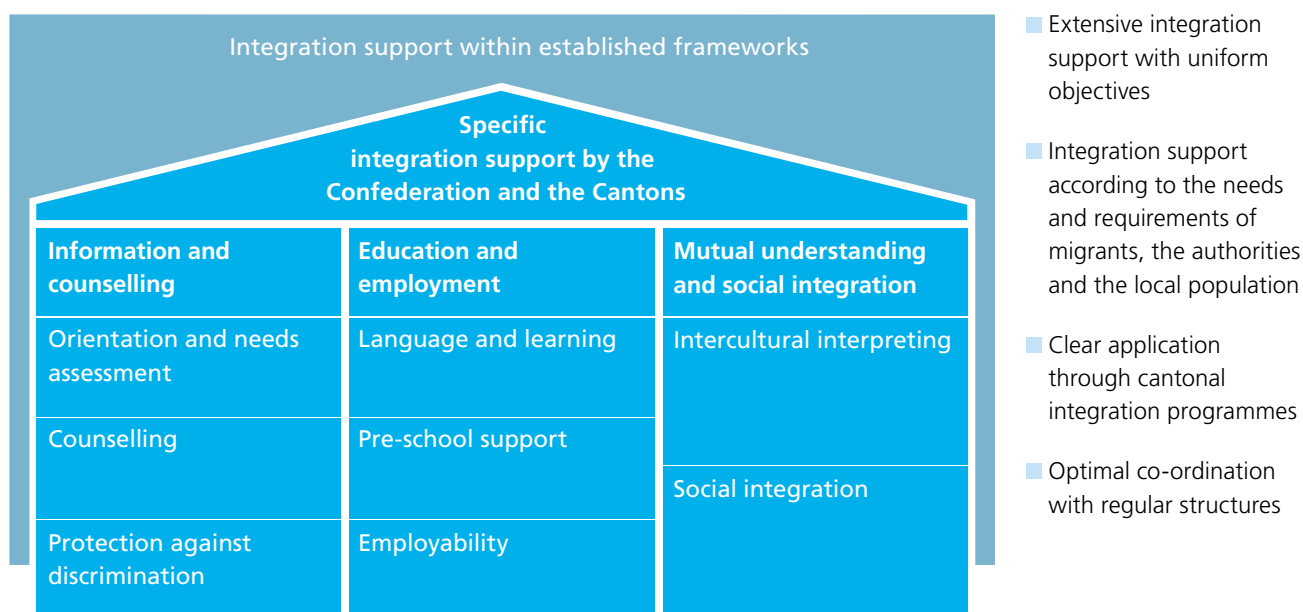
Cantonal integration programmes (CIPs)

In order to facilitate the integration of migrants even further, the Federal Council and cantonal governments have agreed to pursue a joint strategy. All cantons have devised their own cantonal integration programmes (CIPs), which were launched in January 2014. As a result, the whole of Switzerland follows the same objectives of targeted integration support. The cantons, considering their own specific realities at both local and regional levels, have eight areas of focus for integration support: Orientation and needs assessment; Counselling; Protection against discrimination; Language and learning; Pre-school support; Employability; Intercultural interpreting; and Social integration. The following chart shows how specific integration support provided by the Confederation and the cantons is based on three pillars: "Information and counselling"; "Education and employment"; "Mutual understanding and social integration". The eight areas of focus can be found beneath each of these three pillars.

In order to achieve integration, efforts must be made on all sides – from the migrants first of all, but also from state institutions that need to design their services in such a way as to ensure that all population groups have equal access to them. Integration support is an endeavour for the whole of society. It starts with established frameworks (e.g. schools, VET institutions, health institutions) as well as civil society organisations and social partners. Specific integration support serves to complement these efforts, closing existing gaps (e.g. limited support for language learning or the professional integration of refugees). It also helps established frameworks to implement their integration mandate.

At the start of 2014, all cantons began implementing their own integration programme CIP (see info box). As a complement to CIPs, the SEM runs and supports various programmes and projects of national importance.

The present Migration Report highlights two areas of support: "social integration" and "protection against discrimination".



1. Facts and figures on social integration in Switzerland – integration indicators

Increasingly, people are asking how integration in Switzerland or even the impact of individual integration measures can be evaluated. There are very few impact studies on integration since they are very costly and their findings are not very revealing. This is because the impact of a given measure depends on the context and may vary considerably from one individual to another on the basis of his/her motivation and abilities. Nevertheless, it is possible to use indicators and studies to provide a glimpse of specific aspects of life in which integration measures can make a difference.

Since 2012, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has regularly published the results of its indicator system on the *integration of migrants*.¹³ Integration indicators also provide information about social integration.

Xenophobia is expressed more plainly in the form of hostility towards Muslims.

A few examples of indicators and interesting findings:

- 10.1 % of the Swiss population report some form of discrimination or racist behaviour based on citizenship, religion, ethnic origin, skin colour or other external traits. This ratio stands at 20.9 % for foreign nationals and 6.9 % for Swiss nationals (i.e. three times less). The persons affected experience discrimination in occupational or socioeconomic situations (e.g. when looking for an apartment or employment, when applying for an apprenticeship position, at compulsory school, during studies or at work).
- Around 61 % of the population feel that foreign nationals should have the same opportunities in Switzerland as Swiss nationals. Persons who do not come from a migration background are less likely to be supportive of equal opportunities (55.7 %) than those who come from a migration background (70.7 % or 1.3 times higher).

- Loneliness statistics at the national level: 36.1 % of the population live with feelings of loneliness compared to 44.5 % of foreign nationals born outside of Switzerland, 40.4 % of foreign nationals born in Switzerland and 41.6 % of Swiss nationals born outside of Switzerland. These proportions are all higher than that reported by Swiss nationals born in Switzerland (32.8 %).
- 26.2 % of the population from a migration background are active in an association, a company, a club, a political party or other group. This proportion is considerably lower than that reported by Switzerland's non-migrant population (46.1 %).
- Foreign nationals in the cantons Jura and Neuchâtel enjoy the right to vote on issues and elect representatives at both the cantonal and communal levels. At the communal level, the same holds true in individual communes in the cantons Fribourg, Geneva and Vaud. In the cantons Basel-Stadt, Graubünden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden, foreign nationals have the right to vote on issues but may not elect representatives.

The pulse of the population – survey on harmonious coexistence in Switzerland

An important objective of integration is to break down prejudice against migrants, prevent discrimination and avoid stigmatisation. In 2007, the Federal Council issued a commission to the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) to develop a survey to monitor racist and discriminatory trends in Switzerland. In order to carry out the first trends analysis, the opinion research institute gfs.bern gathered the opinions of around 1000 Swiss nationals and 700 foreign nationals on racism, xenophobia, hostility towards Muslims, anti-Semitism and intolerance. The survey was conducted three times during the pilot phase (2010, 2012, 2014). It also shows how respondents feel about the extent and impact of social policy measures.¹⁴ The pilot phase of the survey on harmonious coexistence in Switzerland was completed at the end of 2014. In February 2015, the Federal Council decided to include a long-term survey module in the Omnibus Survey (which covers several different topics). This survey is conducted by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) as part of the Federal Population Census.

¹³ www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/del/index/themen/01/07/blank/ind43.html

¹⁴ Reporting and monitoring of the Service for Combating Racism (SCRA): www.edi.admin.ch/frb/02015/index.html?lang=de

A few of the findings from the pilot phase:

- To sum up, it can be said that racist sentiment¹⁵ remains stable at no more than 13 %. The same holds true for anti-Semitism: even after the rise in anti-Semitic statements on the Internet observed in the summer of 2014, the percentages stand at around 11 %. Xenophobia (24 %) is more widespread and is expressed more plainly in the form of hostility towards Muslims.¹⁶
- Trends analysis shows that high percentages of hostility towards Muslims observed during the first survey (45 %) were mainly influenced by discussions on the Minaret Initiative. Since then, the percentage has fallen to 19 %. However, rejection of people from other nationalities at the workplace, particularly of non-EU citizens, has increased.
- Most of the respondents see racism as a very serious or serious problem. The percentage has fallen from 71 % in 2010 to 56 % in 2014. During this period, support for social policy measures to counter racism and discrimination at communal, cantonal and federal levels rose from 50 % in 2010 to 63 % in 2014.
- 46 % of those surveyed in 2014 felt that not enough is being done to explain why Swiss nationals are concerned about foreign nationals. At the same time, 29 % feel that not

enough is being done to explain things to Swiss nationals. Therefore, it can be said that most of the respondents feel that Switzerland is doing the right thing to ensure the integration of foreigners. Only a minority felt that too much (19 %) or too little (22 %) is being done in the area of integration. These results have not varied much over time.

Future surveys should provide us with reliable information about how well people live with one another in Switzerland and where social cohesion must be reinforced. Trends should be identified early on, causes analysed and the impact of social policy measures evaluated.

¹⁵ Opinions were determined not on the basis of individual replies but rather on the basis of groups of replies. A given opinion was deemed as racist or anti-Semitic only if the respondent made corresponding statements several times and systematically.

¹⁶ Racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia relate to feeling of discomfort in response to the presence of strangers and specific groups of people on the basis of the colour of their skin, language, religion or nationality.



2. Reducing prejudice – protecting people from discrimination

Cantonal integration programmes (CIPs) have been established for the purpose of taking concrete steps to encourage the integration of migrants, reduce prejudice against them and prevent discrimination.

For this purpose, the cantons have established new advisory services or are in the process of improving the quality and/or scope of existing services. For example, continuing training courses are offered to advisors, additional regional counselling services are being expanded or efforts are being made to raise awareness of the existence of advisory services.

In 2014, the cantons developed and held basic and continuing training courses on the subject of discrimination for government employees. Cantons in the French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking regions of Switzerland also drafted guidelines on protection against discrimination within the public administration. These guidelines contain information, tips and checklists

on how to devise an awareness-raising strategy. The aim is also to achieve a trickle-down effect within each canton. The Canton of Bern, for instance, held a conference on the subject of protection against discrimination at the communal level.

An action week against racism is organised each year in March. Many cantons and towns use this week to draw greater public attention to the issue through roundtable discussions, cultural events and other activities. In the summer of 2014, the Canton Basel-Stadt launched an information campaign called “Basel sets the example: for openness and fairness, against xenophobia”. Supported by clubs, associations and religious communities, this campaign was explicitly intended to show that the canton does not support the growing intolerance against individual population groups and religious communities. It also underscored the fact that respect for newcomers is a prerequisite for harmonious coexistence.



Nearly half of Switzerland's foreign resident population was born here or has been living in Switzerland for over 15 years.

3. Enabling interaction between cultures

In addition to cantonal integration programmes (CIPs), which absorb a significant portion of funds set aside for integration, the Confederation also guides and supports various programmes and projects of national importance. These projects are aimed at generating new knowledge for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of integration support measures. The national mentoring programme launched by the SEM in 2014 (see info box) is an example of how social integration can be encouraged. In addition, the Confederation supports very promising projects that should help to achieve integration policy objectives. One example of this is the “House of Religions – Cultural Dialogue” initiative launched at the end of 2014. Thanks to integration subsidies paid by the Confederation, workshops are being organised for companies, schools, associations and other interested parties. These workshops should lead to closer interaction and discussion between members of different religions and cultures.

In addition, many migrant organisations actively pursue their own projects to build bridges and break down integration barriers. Several interesting projects have been launched by the Eritrean community in Switzerland. The Eritrean association Zukunft, Metsai Futur organises workshops in cooperation with cantonal integration delegates at five locations (BE, BS, LU, VD and ZH). These workshops are open to all migrant groups regardless of their country of origin and are given in the corresponding language of the canton. Since the project was established by an Eritrean group and is also intended for refugees, translation into Tigrinya is provided. The workshops provide important information about life as parents and children in Switzerland. This project by the Eritrean community began in Bern in October 2014 and will continue into the spring of 2015. In addition, the Swiss workers' relief agency SAH in Central Switzerland is currently pursuing a group project called Co-opera, which helps people to become self-sufficient in Switzerland and become more familiar with the customs and values of the host community. In 2010, Caritas in Aargau created its first course for adults called “Grüezi Eritrea”. For its part, the SEM helps with networking and knowledge transfer between the various projects.

Mentoring Programme for 2014–2016

The aim of integration policy is to ensure that all people wishing to live and work in Switzerland over extended periods of time are able to make use of social services and structures. Everyone who lives in Switzerland has individual experiences, skills and aptitudes. However, not everyone manages to develop this potential in their jobs and society. Migrants in particular find it difficult to contribute their existing potential, skills and competences, even though they have completed education and training and possess strong language skills. Immigrants often lack informal knowledge of processes and mentalities in Switzerland and fail to develop personal contacts and networks. With the help of mentors, these people receive specific support to help them overcome hurdles and make better use of their potential.

In 2014, the SEM 2014 therefore issued a call for tenders for the “Mentoring Programme 2014–2016”. This programme is intended to support mentoring projects aimed at helping migrants in their vocational and personal development. Mentors provide them with informal knowledge and help them to join existing networks. The sponsors of individual projects must be able to sustainably work with existing institutions and maintain the quality of mentoring pair dynamics.

Over 30 project proposals from 17 cantons were submitted. The project proposals mostly deal with labour market integration, but there are a few that cover scholastic and social integration. Specific target groups include temporarily admitted persons and refugees, highly qualified migrants, children and young people as well as women. The SEM intends to spend around CHF 1.5 million by 2016 on these mentoring projects.

During the programme phase, the SEM will organise annual events devoted to networking and the exchange of ideas among project sponsors. The knowledge gained from the programme should shed light on mentoring success factors and will be broadly discussed and used to further develop measures aimed specifically at facilitating integration.



Main highlights in 2014



Around one-third of naturalised citizens were actually born in Switzerland.

1. Current trouble spots

1.1 Consequences of the crisis in Syria

The year 2014 was marked by various crises, which led to an increase in the number of refugees. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syrian refugees (around 3.5 million) accounted for the largest share of the 57 million refugees worldwide.

Numerous civil wars on the African continent, south of the Sahara – often unreported in the world press – appear unlikely to be resolved anytime soon. The situation in South Sudan and the Central African Republic is particularly critical. Additional conflicts have also broken out in various parts of Sudan and Mozambique. Moreover, with the advance of fundamentalist rebels in Mali, Nigeria and Somalia, hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes.

Switzerland provides support
to numerous aid projects and
programmes in the region surrounding
Syria to improve the lives
of people affected by the conflict.

In Syria, over three years of armed conflict have produced a major humanitarian crisis. With its massive human rights violations, the “Islamic State” has worsened the situation in the crisis region, forcing more people to flee. Neighbouring countries have stretched their capacities to the limit and are no longer able to accommodate more refugees without help from the international community. The increasing migration pressure and precarious security situation in certain refugee camps have convinced many refugees from this region that they need to continue their journey to Europe. The war in Syria has also deeply destabilised the security situation in Iraq. Following clashes in the northern part of Iraq, thousands of people have been displaced.

Armed militia have seized control over vast swathes of Libya. Regular outbreaks of violence hinder the development of state structures. As a result, the coastal regions are largely uncontrolled and offer human smugglers free reign. Hazardous boat crossings on the Mediterranean Sea are commonplace and the accommodation capacities of southern Europe have been placed under increasing pressure. In Europe, the volume of asylum applications in 2014 reached levels unheard of since the early 1990s. The situation in 2014 also affected Switzerland, which experienced an increase in the number of asylum applications, particularly from Eritrean and Syrian nationals.

Switzerland is committed to doing its part to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ease pressures on countries bordering Syria. It already provides support to numerous aid projects and programmes in the region surrounding Syria to improve the lives of people affected by the conflict. In addition, in September 2013, the Federal Council decided to accept 500 particularly vulnerable refugees under a three-year pilot project. By the end of December 2014, 168 refugees from the Syrian conflict zone had travelled to Switzerland under the resettlement programme (see info box, page 41). In September 2013, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga ordered an easing of visa requirements for Syrian nationals with relatives in Switzerland. Between the start of the war in March 2011 and the end of December 2014, some 7700 asylum applications had been received from Syrian nationals.

1.2 Easing of visa requirements for Syrian nationals and admission of particularly vulnerable refugees

On 4 September 2013, the Federal Justice and Police Department (FDJP/FOM) decided to ease visa requirements for Syrian nationals with relatives in Switzerland. This easing of visa requirements applied to spouses, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers and sisters and their nuclear family. In order to qualify, visa applicants had to have relatives who already live in Switzerland (holders of a type B residence permit, holders of a type C settlement permit or naturalised Swiss citizens). Intended as a temporary measure, the easing of visa requirements was designed to reduce red tape so that family members could escape the war zone as quickly as possible to seek refuge in Switzerland. This easing of visa requirements served to complement local relief efforts, hosting of groups of refugees and Swiss humanitarian aid in the Syrian conflict zone.

The visa entitled the holder to reside in Switzerland without a permit for a period of three months. After this period of time was over, the person was required to leave Swiss territory if they had not been issued a standard residence permit, had not applied for asylum or had not been temporarily admitted to Switzerland by the State Secretariat for Migration (at the request of the Canton and under the terms of the Foreign Nationals Act). Given the ongoing civil war, none of the Syrian nationals who have entered Switzerland have had to leave.

The FDJP discontinued this measure on 29 November 2013. By the end of December 2014, a total of 4673 visas were issued. By the end of 2014, a total of 4224 Syrian nationals travelled to Switzerland, and 3062 of these applied for asylum. So far, 283 asylum seekers have been granted asylum and 892 have been granted temporary admission under the terms of the Foreign Nationals Act and 841 have been



At the end of 2014, the number of non-EU/EFTA citizens living in Switzerland stood at 618 705.

granted temporary admission under the terms of the Asylum Act. Around 550 visa applications were still pending by the end of 2014.

Standard entry requirements now apply to all visa applications submitted after 29 November 2013. Family reunification within the nuclear family is still possible. Those at risk of violence and death may also apply for a humanitarian visa.

Temporary admission granted to asylum seekers from Syria

Analysis of the crisis regions in Syria shows that there is a general situation of violence all over the country, which makes removal to Syria unreasonable. On 25 March 2013, the SEM therefore decided to grant temporary admission to individual asylum seekers from Syria whose asylum application was rejected due to the unreasonableness of enforcing a removal order.

This measure does not apply to individuals who have received lengthy prison sentences in Switzerland or abroad or who pose a security threat to Switzerland within or outside its borders. This measure also does not apply to individuals who hold a valid residence permit of another country and who are able to return to that country. Since the outbreak of violence in Syria in March 2011, no removal orders to Syria have been enforced.

Targeted resettlement programme

In September 2013, the Federal Council decided to admit particularly vulnerable refugees as part of a three-year resettlement project. At the end of November 2013, the first group of refugees arrived in the Canton of Solothurn. After this, another group of Syrian nationals were admitted to Switzerland in 2014. By the end of 2014, a total of 168 people had arrived. Switzerland intends to accept a total of around 500 individuals who are considered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as recognised refugees. For these people, the SEM is currently working with the host cantons on a specific integration programme, aimed at providing refugees with quick and comprehensive information needed to adapt to life in Switzerland. A longitudinal study will be conducted to assess the programme. This will include the gathering of detailed data and concrete updates on how well integrated the 500 people have become.

Integration programme for particularly vulnerable groups of refugees

The individuals who travelled to Switzerland by the end of 2014 under the resettlement programme are particularly vulnerable persons (women, children, the elderly, trauma victims, persons with chronic illnesses, disabled persons or persons with war-related injuries). This includes 114 Syrian refugees, who had fled to Lebanon as well as 54 Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, who were evacuated directly from Syria. The 168 people were accommodated in the cantons of Solothurn, Uri, St. Gallen, Lucerne and Schaffhausen. In 2015, additional Syrian refugees from Lebanon and Jordan and a group of Palestinian refugees from Syria will be admitted to Switzerland. The cantons of Geneva and Valais have already expressed their willingness to also host refugee families in 2015.

Resettlement refugees undergo a two-year integration programme designed for specific groups of refugees. The SEM coordinates this programme with the host cantons and analyses the results using a detailed monitoring system. The integration process begins already in the country to which the refugees first fled. There, they undergo pre-departure cultural orientation (PCO), which provides the refugees with initial information concerning their future home. A few weeks after arriving in Switzerland, refugees begin to attend intensive language courses and receive medical treatment. Those individuals who are already able to do so will start to attend vocational and social integration courses. Children will also go to Kindergarten, school or day-care shortly after arrival. Generally speaking, resettlement refugees remain in a cantonal group housing facility for up to six months before moving to their own apartment. For the entire duration of the cantonal integration programme, resettlement refugees are guided by a coach who assists them with the integration process.

1.3 Asylum seekers from Eritrea

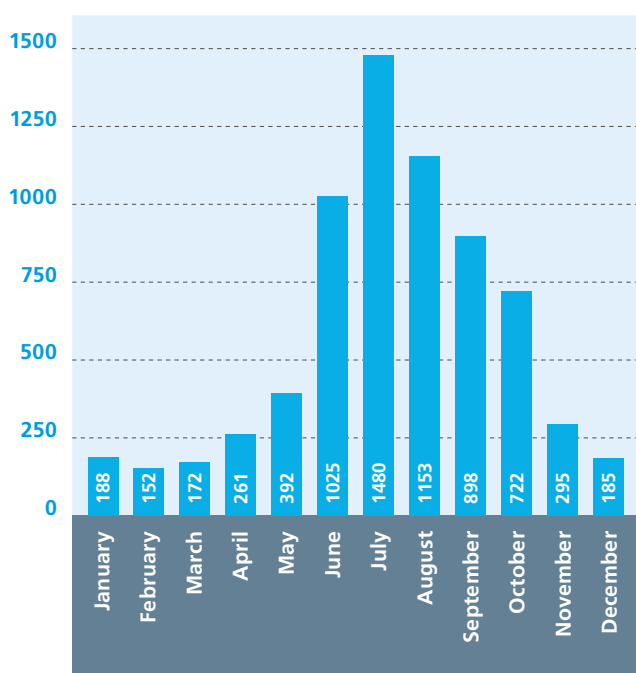
In 2014, the number of asylum applications submitted by Eritrean nationals in Switzerland was largely similar to the number refugees arriving by sea to the south of Italy. In 2014, around 34 300 Eritrean nationals reached the south of Italy. These refugee inflows peaked in the months of May to July. After that, the number of incoming Eritrean nationals quickly dropped. Starting from mid-October, practically no more Eritrean nationals landed in the south of Italy.

Most of the Eritrean nationals continued their journey northwards shortly after reaching the Italian coast.

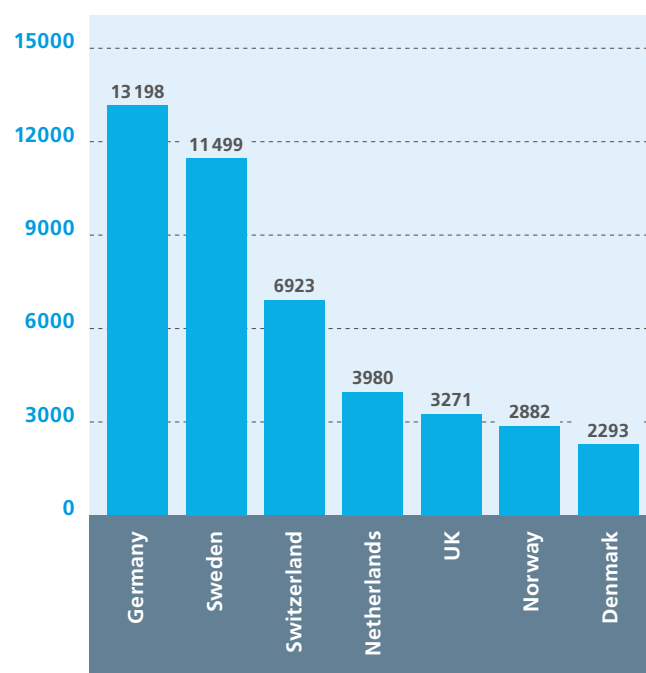
Likewise, starting from May 2014, the number of asylum applications submitted by Eritrean nationals in Switzerland increased sharply, peaking at 1480 asylum applications in July and steadily decreasing thereafter. In December 2014, Switzerland received 185 asylum applications from Eritrean nationals.

The main European countries of destination experienced similar fluctuations in incoming asylum applications as Switzerland. The main European countries of destination were Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the UK, Norway and Denmark. Most of the Eritrean nationals who reached the Italian coast continued their journey northwards shortly afterwards.

6923 asylum applications submitted by Eritrean nationals from January to December 2014



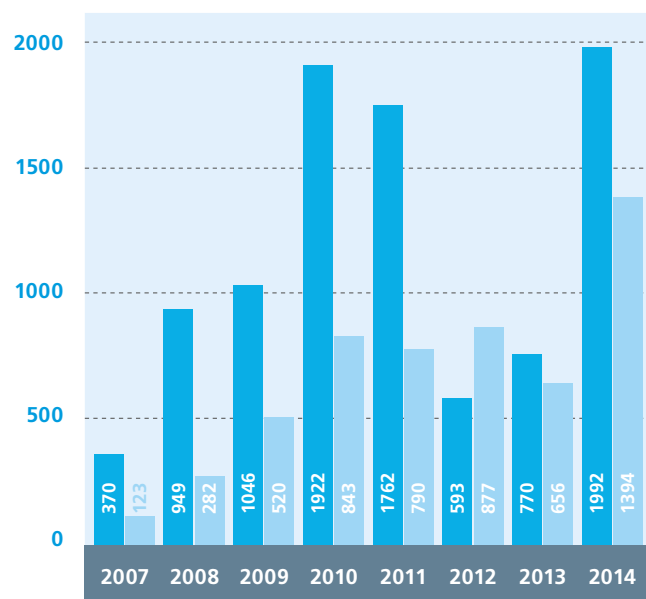
Main countries of destination for Eritrean asylum seekers in 2014



Granting of asylum

Normally, desertion and refusal to enter military service are not sufficient grounds to obtain asylum. In Eritrea, however, deserters and those who refuse to enter military service are regularly sentenced without trial by military commanders and punished at their own discretion. Often, punishments are inhumane and degrading and tend to be extremely harsh. Deserters and those who refuse to enter military service in Eritrea may therefore apply for asylum under Art. 3 of the European Human Rights Convention (SR 0.101), which provides for freedom from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. The main criteria is that punishment be mainly political in nature. Therefore, asylum seekers from Eritrea who have deserted or refused to enter military service may be granted asylum – despite Art. 3 para. 3 AsylA (SR 142.31) – because Eritrea uses these circumstances as a pretext to mete out excessive punishments to persons who hold certain political views.

Eritrean nationals granted asylum or temporarily admitted from January 2007 to December 2014



■ Individual refugee status
 ■ Derivative refugee status as family members



At the end of 2014, the number of recognised refugees living in Switzerland stood at 34 724.



EU/EFTA citizens work primarily in the services sector.

2. Cooperation in Europe

2.1. Situation in the Mediterranean and in Italy

Never before have so many people tried to reach Europe by sea than in 2014. In October 2013, a ship sank off the coast of the island of Lampedusa, with a death toll of just under 400 people. The Italian authorities responded by launching the search and rescue operation Mare Nostrum in the Mediterranean. This operation has saved the lives of thousands of people in the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, the improved monitoring of the coast has raised the stakes for human smugglers and migrants, causing them to consider the Mediterranean route as a less viable option. On 1 November 2014, the Frontex Joint Operation Triton was launched in the central Mediterranean and Mare Nostrum was phased out. Several Schengen/Dublin member countries, including Switzerland, have provided both human and material support to the Joint Operation Triton.

The significant migration pressure on the Italian coast overwhelmed Italy's asylum and accommodation system.

The significant migration pressure on the Italian coast overwhelmed Italy's asylum and accommodation system. As a result, Dublin cooperation with Italy temporarily became much more difficult from an operational standpoint from the spring of 2014 onwards. In particular, the Italian authorities were not always able to take fingerprints of boat migrants. Switzerland therefore systematically insisted that the Italian side abide by its commitments under the Dublin Agreement. At the same time, Switzerland showed a willingness to discuss ways to strengthen the Dublin system and offered assistance in handling the surge in newcomers. Following intensive discussions at all levels, the Italian side assured the Swiss side that it would indeed stand by its commitments. The proportion of matches found during fingerprint checks once again reached normal levels towards the end of the year. During the same period of time, fewer refugees arrived at the Italian coast.

The EU also gave priority to handling the difficult migration situation on the Mediterranean Sea. The European Minister and the European Commission established the Task Force Mediterranean (TFM), which is responsible for deciding and implementing measures to address migration flows across the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future. The Civil War in Syria, the persistently unstable situation in Libya and the threat of terrorist militias in the Middle East have displaced millions of people. It is therefore still a major issue on the European agenda.

2.2 Cooperation with Dublin countries

Since the new Dublin III regulation¹⁷ came into effect on 1 January 2014, cooperation with Dublin member states has been very good and constructive. An agreement to simplify implementation of the Dublin III regulation was reached with France, which should considerably reduce response times and facilitate transfers of asylum seekers between the two countries; this agreement has been in effect since 10 November 2014.

On 4 November 2014, the European Court of Human Rights issued its ruling in the Tarakhel case against Switzerland. The judges required guarantees for the family before they could be transferred to Italy. In the future, Italy will have to take age into account when accepting children and make every effort to keep families together. As a result, Switzerland and Italy agreed on a procedure to handle similar cases in the future. In addition, a Swiss liaison at the Italian Ministry of the Interior remained in place in 2014.

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person.



At the end of 2014, 345 714 people working in Switzerland were holders of a cross-border work permit.

3. First year of test asylum centre in Zurich – status report from Förrlibuckstrasse

The SEM's test asylum centre in Zurich began operations on 6 January 2014. Although the 30-odd employees initially found themselves working literally on a construction site, operations became more normal in the months that followed. New procedures will be tested at the asylum centre to identify weaknesses and implement possible improvements in the fast-track procedure.

Experiences thus far have shown that it is possible to carry out procedures both quickly and fairly. Quickly because tight procedural deadlines have been met in most cases; fairly because asylum seekers receive legal advice free of charge from the moment they arrive at the test asylum centre. This gives them a better understanding of the procedure and leads to greater acceptance of the decision rendered in each case. The physical proximity of the various actors, the ability to consult files and take a stance regarding the draft decision as well as the adequate personal resources were all contributing factors enabling around 75 % of asylum applications to be processed in the first instance using the fast-track procedure. Even with the fast-track procedure in place, Switzerland continues to afford complete protection to those in need.

How does the procedure at the test asylum centre differ from those at normal reception and processing centres?

The procedure at the test asylum centre is broken down into various phases. Initially, there is the preparatory phase. This includes, for example, the first questions about how the asylum seeker reached Switzerland, why he/she fled the country, clarifications and consultation discussions. The second phase involves a hearing and results in an initial decision being reached in the first instance. In addition to these two phases, there is a special process that is set in motion in Dublin transfer cases. The complaints and/or implementation phase completes the process.

Roughly speaking, the test asylum centre handled between 1300 and 1400 asylum applications in 2014. This resulted in an average of six asylum seekers per day being assigned at random to one of four reception and processing centres: Basel, Chiasso, Kreuzlingen and Vallorbe. Housing capacity at the Juch centre is enough to accommodate 300 asylum seekers.

All things considered, the maximum duration of stay at the test asylum centre is 140 days, in keeping with the test phase rules. The preparatory phase lasts no more than 21 days and the decision-making phase 8–10 working days. The remaining time is used to handle any complaints, obtain ID and travel documents and make the necessary arrangements for the person's departure.

Experiences thus far have shown that it is possible for the asylum procedure to be handled quickly and fairly.

A few figures

By 31 December 2014, a total of 1504 asylum seekers were received at the test asylum centre and 1012 asylum applications were processed. A total of 133 asylum seekers were granted asylum, 140 were denied asylum and a removal order was issued. 436 asylum seekers fell under the provisions of the Dublin Agreement and were therefore transferred and the asylum applications of 16 others were deemed groundless. 145 asylum seekers were temporarily admitted. A total of 142 asylum applications were rejected. An additional 142 asylum seekers withdrew their application and 127 asylum seekers left Switzerland voluntarily. In 137 cases, a complaint was filed, which amounts to 18 % of the total number of cases. So far, 86 cases have been taken to the Federal Administrative Court.

Around 35 % of asylum applications at the test asylum centre were processed using the fast-track procedure and around 40 % fell under the scope of the Dublin procedure. The remaining 25 % received more in-depth processing because additional clarifications were needed. In such cases, only the initial interview and hearing were carried out.



Asylum seekers do community service as part of new employment programmes.

4. Thousands of work hours devoted to community service – a documentary on the employment programme for asylum seekers

It is 9:00 a.m. The day is dark with clouds hanging low and snow falling slightly. A group of asylum seekers are standing in front of a warehouse at the federal centre Obere Allmend in Bremgarten (AG). These men and women are waiting to receive their work orders. Today, they will be collecting garbage. In a few minutes, deputy supervisor Urs Waldispühl will accompany the asylum seekers outside. At the moment he is helping one of the asylum seekers, who arrived late, with his working outfit. Like everyone, the young man is given a gripper, a blue bucket and a luminous waistcoat. All of the men and women are either reaching for a yellow weather-proof rain jacket or are already wearing theirs. "We also have rubber boots for them", explains Urs Waldispühl, "but most prefer to wear their own shoes." Wearing only her canvas sneakers, one of the women is going to have a hard time with the nasty weather.

The group walks through the natural reserve along the banks of the River Reuss. The men walk in single file on the right side of the road and the women do the same on the left side. "They organise themselves in this manner," explains Urs Waldispühl with a grin. He walks ahead, looks in the bushes and along the riverbank. There, right next to the edge of the river, he spots a bottle and three bags of dog excrement and sends one of the men down there to remove the trash. They cross the river, reach a step. "If necessary, we also wipe the steps", states Urs Waldispühl. Today, there is no need.

The ground is muddy and there are puddles everywhere that can barely be avoided. The canvas shoes mentioned earlier are now drenched. Two women approach the group with their dogs. "I find it good that the asylum seekers are able to do this", says one of the ladies as she walks by.

The next series of steps has been reached. Urs Waldispühl sends the men and women up to gather cigarette butts stuck in the crevices between cobblestones and they set about removing dried chewing gum from the stones. The group works its way through the lower part of town. An elderly woman stops and asks about this "column of cleaners". Urs Waldispühl replies: "We are part of the employment programme for asylum seekers. This keeps them occupied during the day while awaiting the decision on their asylum application."

The aim of these employment programmes is to provide asylum seekers with a daily routine and at the same time render service to the community.

The SEM's employment programmes have been established at all federal housing centres throughout Switzerland. In 2014, asylum seekers at federal housing centres did nearly 164 500 hours of paid community service. They renovated drywalls, maintained forest and hiking trails, pulled weeds, removed garbage from the streets, streams and parks, shovelled snow and freed up canals.

Asylum seekers are paid CHF 5 per hour and no more than CHF 30 per day to perform these tasks. The Swiss Parliament established the legal basis for this with the amendment of Art. 91 of the Asylum Act of 28 September 2012. The aim of these employment programmes is to provide asylum seekers with a daily routine and at the same time render service to the community. "It's a good thing", says one asylum seeker from Syria.



Immigration is largely controlled on the basis of economic needs.

5. Managing immigration: implementation of article 121a Cst

On 9 February 2014, Swiss citizens voted for Switzerland to control and restrict immigration autonomously and at the same time for an amendment to the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons with the European Union (EU), while safeguarding Switzerland's overall economic interests. Approval of this new constitutional provision means that no international agreements may be signed that run counter to it (Art. 121a para. 4 Cst). Switzerland is required to renegotiate and adapt any prior international agreements that run counter to the new provision. The agreements affected include the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons signed with the EU¹⁸ and the EFTA¹⁹ as well as the framework agreement signed by Switzerland and Liechtenstein²⁰. The new article 121a of the Federal Constitution contains two assignments: introducing a new immigration system, and negotiating with the EU on an amendment to the Agreement on Free Movement of Persons (AFMP). These two assignments must be completed by February 2017.

Switzerland is required to renegotiate
and adapt any prior international
agreements that run counter to the new
constitutional provisions.

On 12 February 2014, the Federal Council tasked the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), in cooperation with the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) to work on implementation of the new constitutional provisions. The Federal Council has established a broad-based group of experts to focus on both the concept and content of implementation. Emphasis was placed on discussion and validation of the Federal Administration's implementation model and other implementation proposals. On 20 June 2014, the Federal Council presented its concept for implementation of the new article of the Federal Constitution. This concept is the result of the work done by the group of experts, extensive legal analysis and expertise, consultation with a wide range of different stakeholders at the cantonal and communal levels, the private sector, research community and the committee that launched the popular initiative.

The concept shows that implementation of Art. 121a Cst cannot be limited to legislation on foreign nationals. For this reason, the concept does not present a model for how legislation should be crafted but rather shows the various challenges and objectives that should be taken into account for both domestic and foreign policy. The Federal Council wishes to maintain and further develop the close and important ties that Switzerland has with the EU and its member states. In addition, it needs to better tap the existing potential of its domestic labour force in the future. Moreover, binding international commitments in the area of asylum must be upheld.

In February 2015, the Federal Council adopted the draft bill for a new Foreign Nationals Act. The consultation period lasted until 28 May 2015. Already in July 2014, Switzerland submitted its formal request to the EU to revise the AFMP. The Federal Council decided on its negotiating mandate on 8 October 2014 pending the necessary consultations with the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Political Institutions Committee of both the National Council and the Council of States, the Conference of the Cantonal Governments of Switzerland (CCG) and social partners. With these negotiations, the Federal Council seeks to achieve the following two objectives: the agreement should be revised so as to enable Switzerland to autonomously control and limit immigration – taking its own economic interests into account; the bilateral path in Swiss dealings with the European Union (EU) should also remain possible. Both objectives will be given equal importance.

¹⁸ *Agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and its member states, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons (AFMP; SR 0.142.112.681).*

¹⁹ *Agreement on Amendment of the EFTA Convention of 21 June 2001 (SR 0.632.31).*

²⁰ *Agreement on Amendment of the EFTA Convention of 21 June 2001 (SR 0.632.31).*

6. Schengen evaluation

With the Schengen evaluation, member states wish to determine whether and to what extent the various countries have implemented their commitments in the areas of police cooperation, data protection, visa procedures, external borders and the Schengen Information System (SIS). The evaluation focuses primarily on countries that would like to join the Schengen cooperation framework. At the same time, it is conducted to periodically verify compliance with Schengen acquis among the various member countries.

Switzerland underwent its first evaluation prior to entry to Schengen in 2008. It underwent its second evaluation in 2014.

For this year's evaluation of Switzerland, the SEM's Entries Division headed the "Visa" and "External borders" working groups; the latter working group involved cooperation with the Federal Office for Civil Aviation (FOCA). In the area of visas, the SEM works closely with the Consular Directorate of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the evaluated consulates general. In addition to SEM representation, the "External borders" working group is comprised of representatives of Geneva and Zurich airport security and operations and the Swiss Border Guard. The Federal Office of Justice (FOJ) and the FDFA's Directorate for European Affairs (DEA) took part in all working groups and were responsible for overall coordination of the Schengen evaluation.

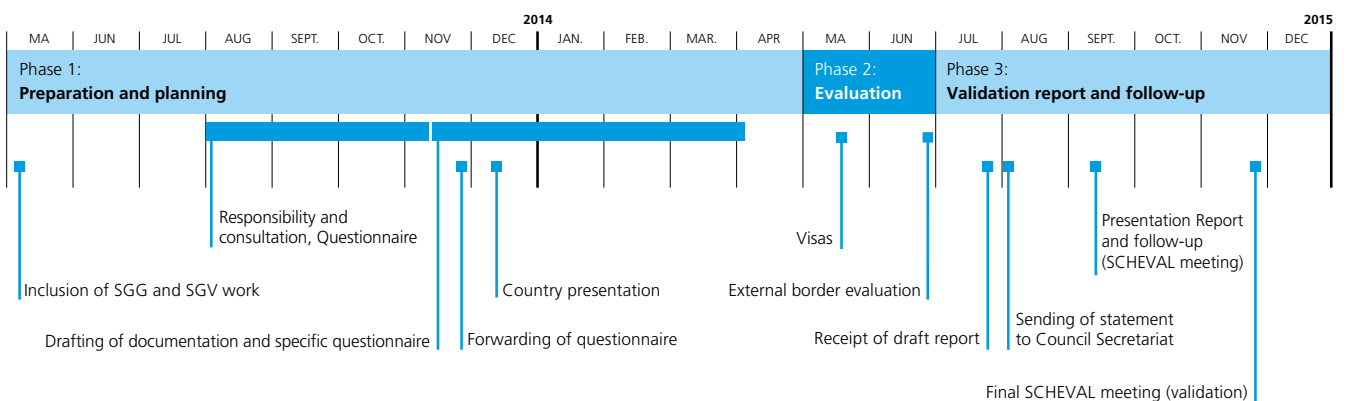
From 19 to 23 May 2014, the visa evaluation was conducted at the Consulate General of Switzerland in Mumbai and Guangzhou. Measures in place to protect Switzerland's external borders at the airports in Geneva and Zurich were reviewed from 23 to 26 June 2014.

The committee reports confirm that Switzerland properly applies Schengen standards in the area of visas and border control.

The committees that took part in the evaluation were comprised of representatives of the European Commission and the Council Secretariat, leading experts from Greece and other experts.

The committee reports were positive and confirm that Switzerland properly applies Schengen standards in the area of visas and border control.

Timeline of Schengen evaluation (Visas and external border)



The “External borders” evaluation committee welcomed the efforts being made by the Confederation and the cantons to develop and implement the Integrated Border Management Strategy. The “Visa” evaluation committee highlighted the efficient and thorough processing of Schengen visa applications and expressed its satisfaction with the global linkup of the national visa information system with the Schengen Central Visa Information System.

The “Visa” evaluation committee formulated around a dozen recommendations on organisational and procedural aspects. The evaluation committee noted various areas where there was optimisation potential (e.g. suggested changes to IT system for the printing of visas).

The report by the “External borders” evaluation committee contains a total of 17 recommendations. In addition to further improvements in the exchange of information between the SEM and border control authorities as well as in the area of risk analysis, the evaluation committee recommends that work to establish a common national asylum centre for migration be completed as soon as possible.

Both the “Visa” and “External borders” working groups have devised measures to address these recommendations. With adoption of both evaluation reports by the Council of the European Union on 18 November 2014, Switzerland passed the 2014 Schengen Evaluation with flying colours. The next Schengen Evaluation of Switzerland is scheduled to take place in 2018.



In 2014, a total of 69 227 people emigrated from Switzerland.

7. EURINT: European cooperation in the area of return

The EURINT project covers a network of 22 European migration authorities and the EU agency Frontex. The aim of the project is to improve cooperation with countries of origin to ensure the return of migrants. Member states join working groups to develop specific strategies enabling individual countries to reach this objective. Coordinated by the Netherlands, this project receives funding from the European Return Fund and will continue until the end of 2015.

What is Switzerland doing in relation to EURINT?

The SEM has been part of EURINT since September 2013. It coordinates two working groups (Ethiopia, Iran). Experts from Germany, Denmark, England, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden meet at the SEM twice each year and hold regular teleconferences. The SEM also plays an active role in EURINT working groups for other countries of origin and was part of joint delegations to Bangladesh, Nepal and Morocco.

What benefits are derived from participation in EURINT?

EURINT is an important foundation for the subsequent development of European asylum and migration policy. It provides the SEM with a platform to raise practical questions and concerns regarding identification, obtaining of documents and forced return within an international context. In addition, daily contacts with officials from partner authorities are very useful.

Where does EURINT go from here?

The future of EURINT has been secured. The Netherlands have submitted the follow-up project under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The new project was approved by the European Commission on 24 December 2014. It will begin in early 2016 and continue until 2021. Switzerland will also remain involved in EURINT.



According to UN reports, each year around 800 000 people worldwide fall victim to human trafficking.

8. Measures to protect women in the sex industry

In the summer of 2013, the FDJP established a national group of experts for the purpose of finding ways to protect women in the sex industry. This group of experts, headed by former cantonal councillor Kathrin Hilber was comprised of representatives of the Confederation, the cantons, social partners and women's protection organisations. In March 2014, it published a report with 26 measures to protect women in the sex industry.²¹ The group of experts notes that women in the sex industry are regularly exploited and must work in precarious conditions. The general opinion is that policy makers, government officials and NGOs need to take various measures in a targeted fashion to safeguard the rights of women in the sex industry.

Specifically, the report suggests measures that may be taken in various respects: certain provisions need to be added to the existing legal framework; new coordination bodies need to be created at the federal and cantonal levels; and improvements need to be made in the area of prevention and enforcement at many levels: police work, prosecution, the judicial system, specialised victim counselling, migration offices and consular missions abroad. These measures should make the daily lives of sex workers safer, strengthen self-autonomy and reduce structural discrimination. The experts see room for improvement in such areas as the unethical practice of prostitution contracts between sex workers and clients,²² development of counselling services or helping law enforcement authorities to become more aware of the problems of human trafficking and sex work. The findings from the experts' report will be used in another report by the Federal Council on prostitution in Switzerland.²³ This report will respond to the various postulates and will be released sometime in 2015.

The findings of the national group of experts were mainly used as the basis for the Federal Council's decision to repeal the cabaret dancer status.²⁴ The Group of experts made this recommendation based on prevailing grievances in the cabaret field. The Federal Council based its decision on this recommendation as well as on the results of the consultation on 22 October 2014. The cabaret dancer status will be repealed on 1 January 2016.

The group of experts notes
that women in the sex industry
are regularly exploited and
must work in precarious conditions.

Repeal of this status will be accompanied by various protective measures mentioned in the experts' report. Swiss diplomatic/consular missions abroad will be made more aware of the problem and will heighten their level of vigilance. Prevention work by Swiss organisations that seek to protect women will receive support with enactment of a new Ordinance on measures to prevent crimes against prostitutes. In addition, individuals who fall victim to crime as a result of their employment, within the meaning of the Victim Support Act²⁵ will be able to apply for return assistance and regularisation of their residence status.

²¹ Report of the national group of experts "Protective measures for women in the sex industry", March 2014 can be found here (German version) www.bfm.admin.ch/dam/data/bfm/publiservice/berichte/ber-schutz-erotikgewerbe-d.pdf

²² According to jurisprudence of the Federal Supreme Court (FSC 111 II 295, in 2011 confirmed in a non-published ruling by the FSC in a criminal law case 6 B.188/2011), contracts for the provision of sexual services in exchange for money are considered unethical. For this reason, they are deemed null and void under Art. 20 of the Swiss Code of Obligations and outstanding demands cannot be legally made.

²³ Specifically: Postulate 12.4162 "Stop human trafficking aimed at sexual exploitation", 13.3332 "Strengthen the legal status of sex workers", 13.4033 "Report on the situation of sex workers in Switzerland", 13.4045 "Prostitution and sex work. Country study".

²⁴ The cabaret dancer status is an exception to the rule of only allowing highly skilled workers from third states to enter Switzerland. It allows women from third states who lack vocational skills to work for a maximum period of eight months per year in Switzerland as a cabaret dancer.

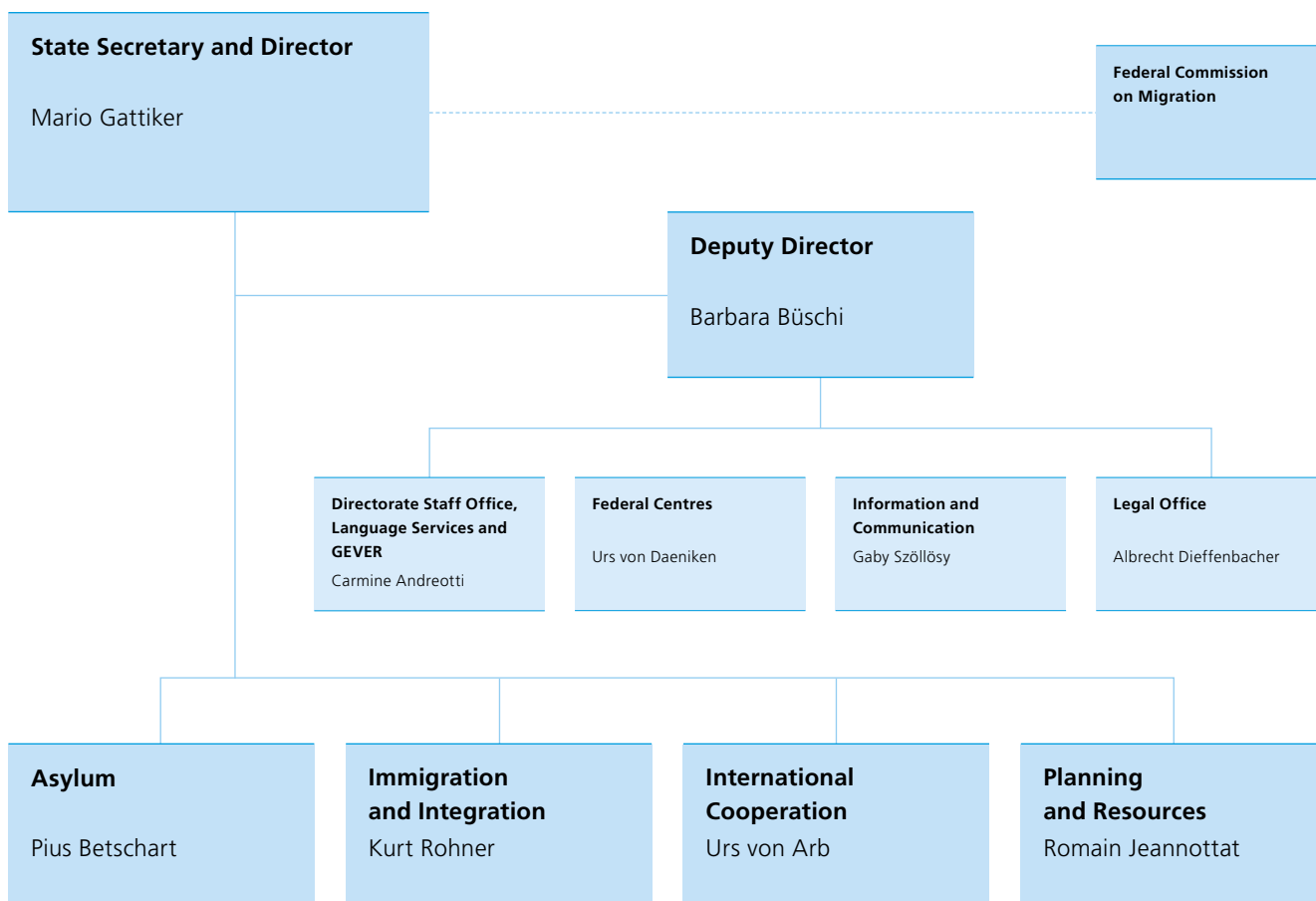
²⁵ VSA, SR 312.5.

E State Secretariat for Migration



In 2014, the State Secretariat for Migration had 1020 employees.

1. Organisation chart



On 1 January 2015, the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) became the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). This change reflects the increasing importance of migration and the comprehensive range of tasks that it is called upon to handle. The organisation and structure remain unchanged.

The SEM establishes the conditions whereby a person may enter, live and work in Switzerland and it decides who receives protection from persecution in Switzerland. The SEM coordinates migration activities at the federal, cantonal and communal levels and is responsible for naturalisations at the federal level. In all areas of migration policy, the SEM actively fosters international dialogue with countries of origin, transit or destination as well as with international organisations.

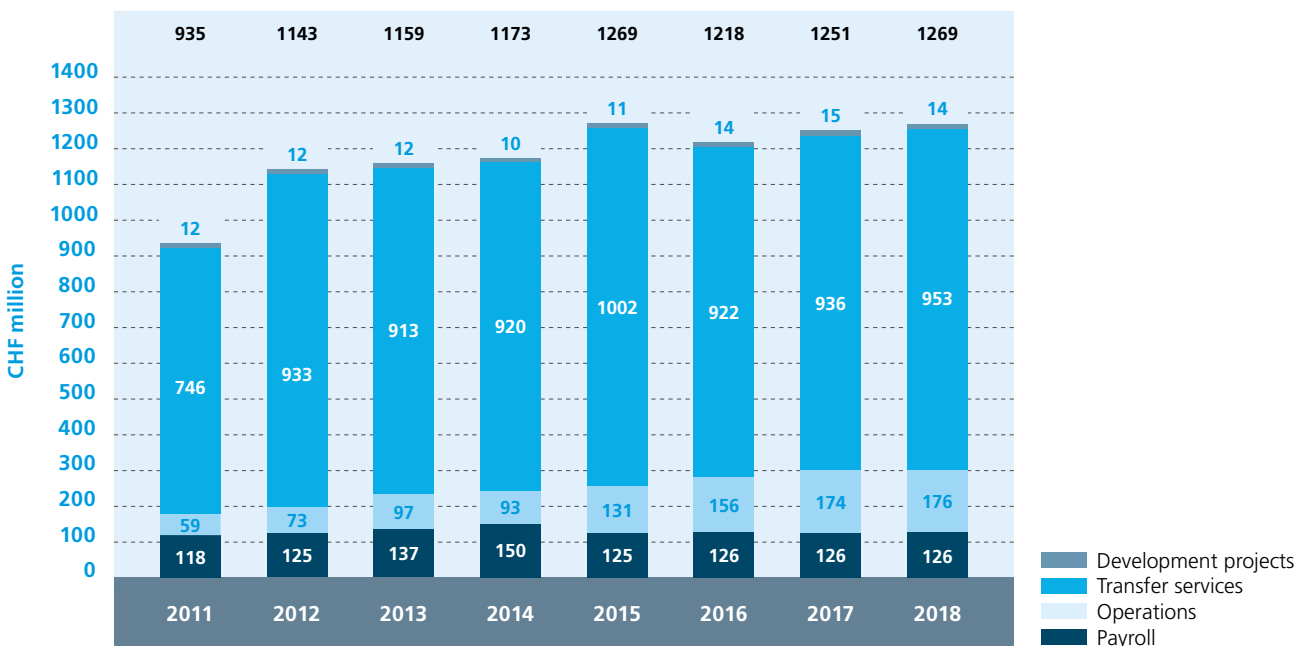
2. SEM activities

The SEM’s expenditure can be broken down into four categories:

- **Transfer services:** around 78 % of total expenditure relate to support services for asylum seekers; persons admitted on a temporary basis and refugees; costs associated with enforcement of removal orders; costs associated with providing return assistance; costs associated with integration measures for foreign nationals; and costs associated with international cooperation in the area of migration.
- **Payroll:** around 13 % of the total expenditure relate to payroll (including social insurance contributions for all categories of staff) and other associated costs such as initial and continuing education and training.
- **Operations:** around 8 % of the total expenditure relate to running reception and processing centres; maintaining and developing IT infrastructure; consultancy; and other operating costs.
- **Development projects:** around 1 % of the total expenditure relates to developing and introducing specialised software applications.

SEM activities – only major expenditures

(government accounts for 2011–2014, budget for 2015, financial plan for 2016–2018)



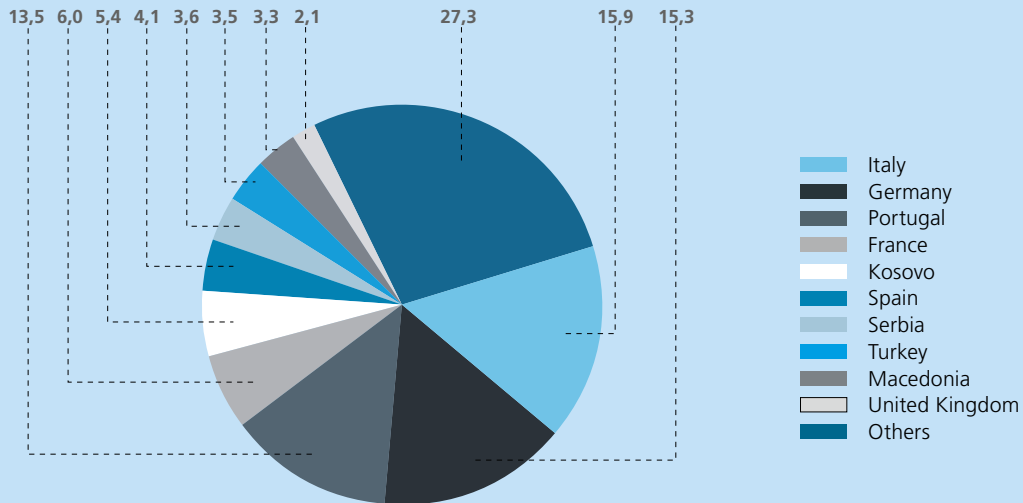


Most foreigners are hosted by the Canton of Zurich, followed by the Canton of Vaud, the Canton of Geneva and the Canton of Aargau.

Appendix

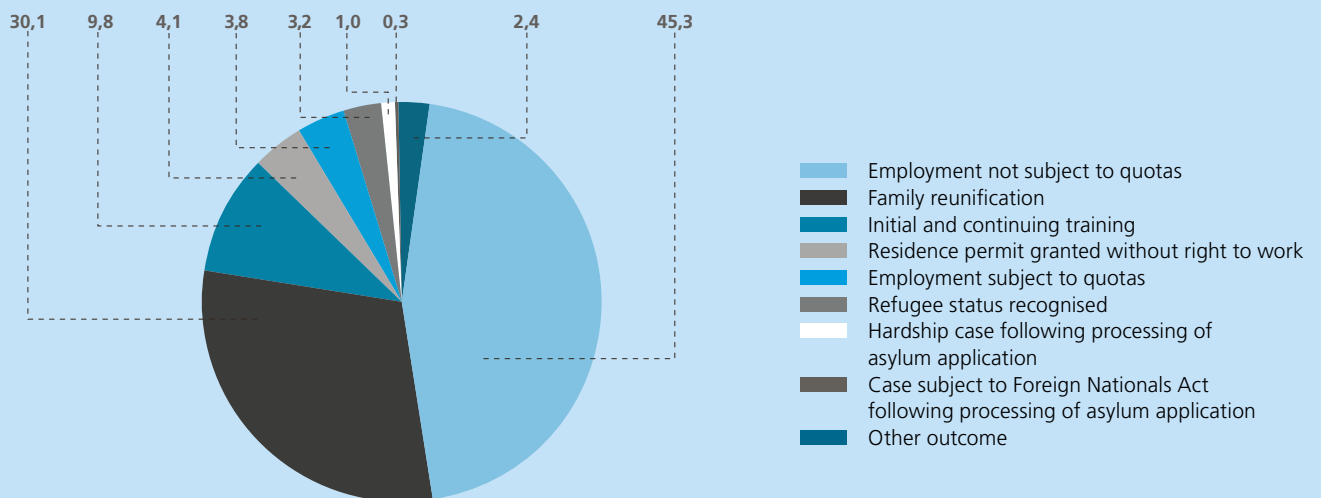
Usual foreign resident population

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



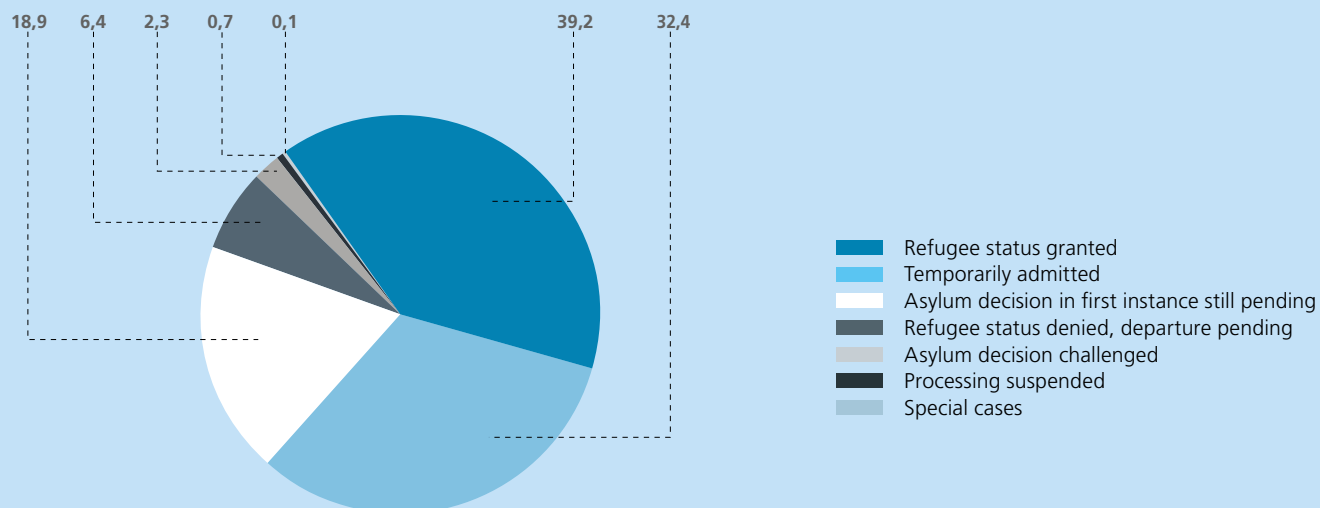
Reason for immigrating

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



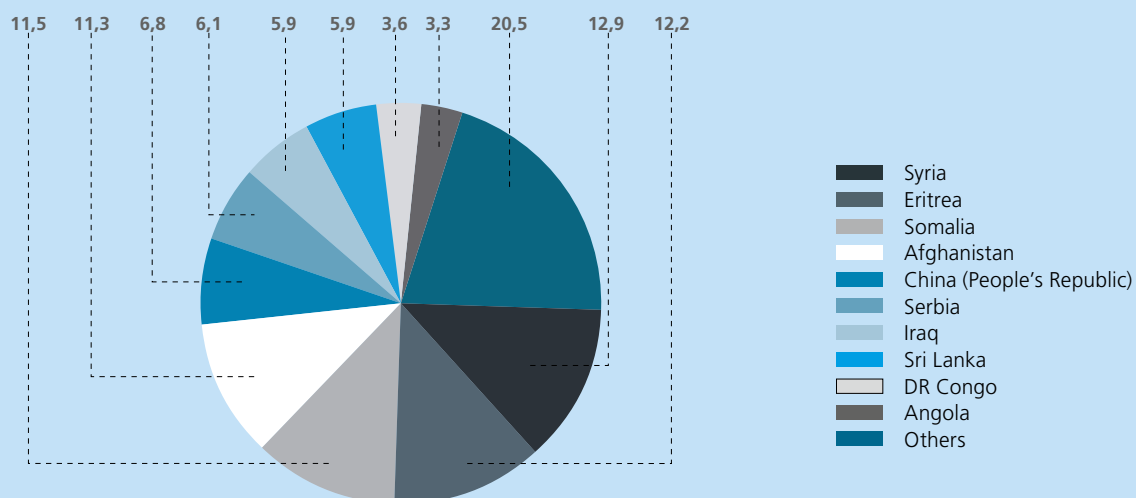
Asylum figures

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



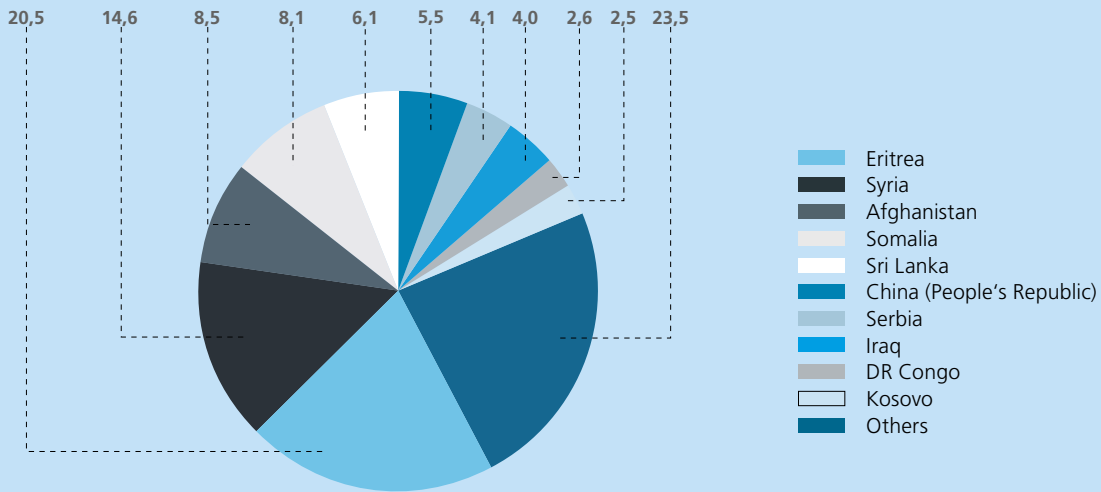
Temporarily admitted persons by country

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



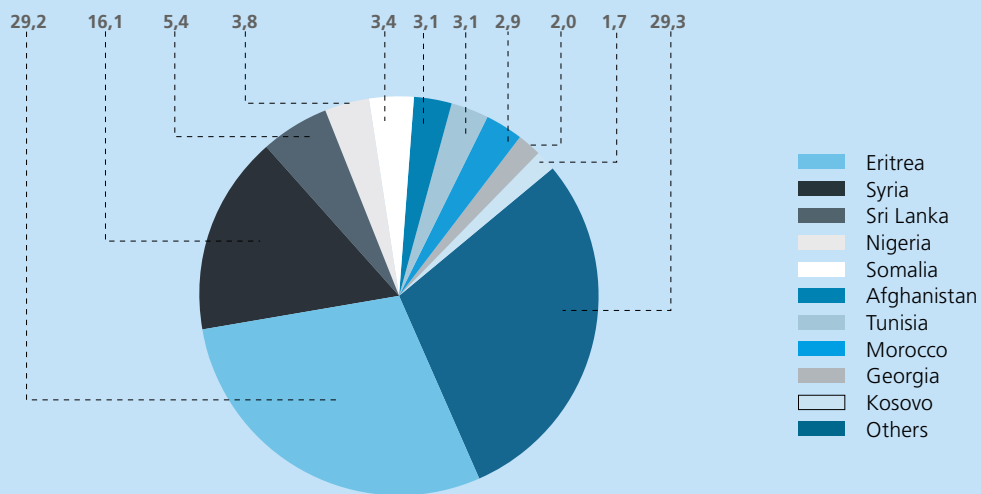
Asylum seekers

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



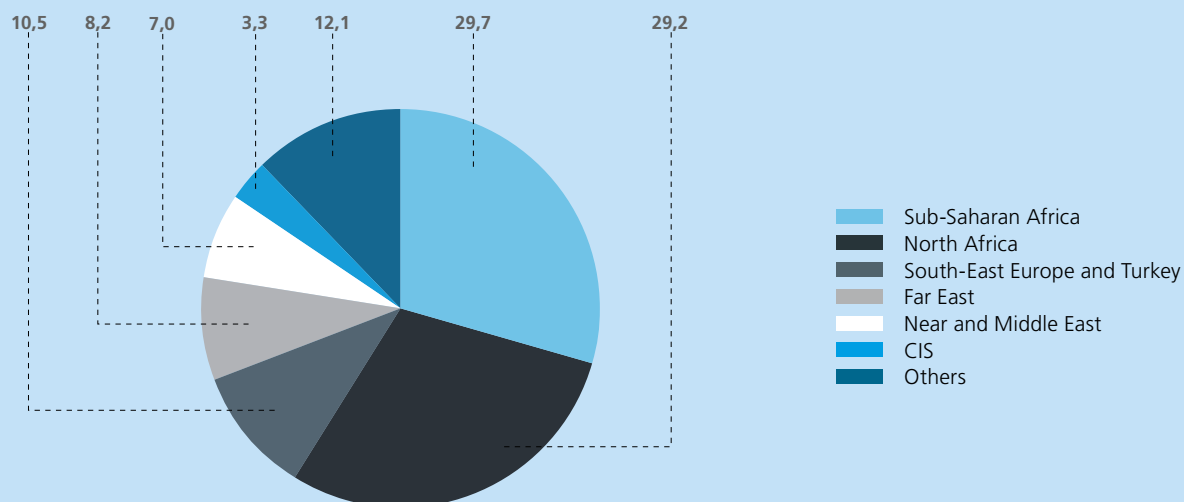
Asylum applications by country

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



Refugee status denied, departure pending, by region

(in %, on 31 December 2014)



Asylum applications per year

