

A total of 1,839 applications for international protection were received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2017, a decrease of 4.6 per cent over the preceding year.

World Refugee Day: 20 June 2018

During 2017 no boat landings were recorded in Malta with 20 persons being airlifted out at sea and brought to Maltese shores (Table 1). All these persons were citizens of African countries (Table 2).

A total of 1,839 applications were lodged with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2017, a decrease of 4.6 per cent over the previous year (Table 3). When analysing asylum applications in the context of the European Union - applicants per million population - Malta ranks fourth after Greece, Cyprus and Luxembourg (Table 7). Almost two-thirds of the applicants were citizens of African countries, of which 37.3 per cent being Libyan citizens. A further 26.8 per cent of the applicants were Syrian citizens. A high proportion of the applicants (43.1 per cent) were males aged between 18 and 34 (Table 5).

During 2017, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner processed a total of 1,109 applications, 68.7 per cent were granted a positive decision at first instance, while the remaining applications were rejected (Table 8). When analysing positive first instance decisions in the European Union - decisions per million population - Malta ranks fifth after Austria, Germany, Sweden and Luxembourg (Table 11). Nearly two-thirds (62.7 per cent) of the applicants who were granted a form of protection status during 2017 were citizens of African countries, while a further 36.2 per cent were citizens of Asian countries. Of all the applicants granted a form of protection status during 2017, 39.9 per cent were of Libyan citizenship while 31.2 per cent were of Syrian citizenship (Table 9).

An increase of 34.2 per cent was registered in the resident population of open centres and other institutional households when compared to 2016. More than half of these persons were residing in Hal Far. A further 259 persons were residing in other institutional households, excluding open centres (Table 12). The majority of the residents were males while almost a third of the total residents (30.9 per cent) were Somali (Table 14).

Last year, 173 third-country nationals were resettled in another country – a decrease of 62.5 per cent over 2016. Another 19 persons benefitted from assisted voluntary return programmes (Table 16) ■

Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2005-2017

Year	Number of boats arriving	Number of people on board*
2005	48	1,822
2006	57	1,780
2007	68	1,702
2008	84	2,775
2009	17	1,475
2010	2	47
2011	9	1,579
2012	27	1,890
2013	24	2,008
2014	5	569
2015	1	106
2016	-	24
2017	-	20

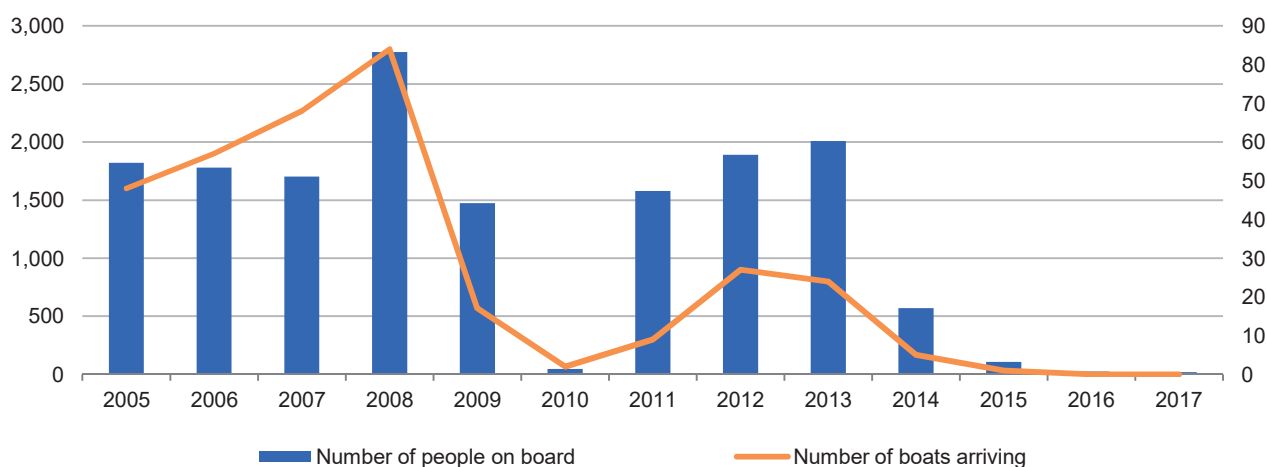
* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.
Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

Table 2. Irregular immigrants arriving by boat* by nationality: 2017

Nationality	Number	% total
Africa	20	100.0
Eritrean	3	15.0
Nigerian	5	25.0
Somalian	3	15.0
Sierra Leone	3	15.0
Other African	6	30.0
Total	20	100.0

* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.
Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

Chart 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2005-2017



* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.

Table 3. Total applications for asylum and annual percentage change of applications filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2017

Year	Number of applications	% change
2006	1,261	8.2
2007	1,386	9.9
2008	2,608	88.2
2009	2,387	-8.5
2010	176	-92.6
2011	1,891	974.4
2012	2,080	10.0
2013	2,246	8.0
2014	1,352	-39.8
2015	1,844	36.4
2016	1,928	4.6
2017	1,839	-4.6

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 4. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2017

Month	Total	% total
January	137	7.4
February	151	8.2
March	174	9.5
April	120	6.5
May	177	9.6
June	160	8.7
July	187	10.2
August	142	7.7
September	144	7.8
October	186	10.1
November	150	8.2
December	111	6.0
Total	1,839	100.0

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 5. Total applications for asylum by sex, country of citizenship and age: 2017

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	41	33	74
Macedonia	6	5	11
Serbia	3	2	5
Turkey	9	9	18
Ukraine	21	17	38
Other European countries	2	-	2
Africa	837	259	1,096
Algeria	4	-	4
Burkina Faso	4	-	4
Egypt	14	1	15
Eritrea	79	38	117
Ethiopia	31	14	45
Gambia	8	-	8
Ghana	6	1	7
Ivory Coast	5	-	5
Liberia	6	-	6
Libya	274	135	409
Mali	12	-	12
Morocco	5	3	8
Niger	4	-	4
Nigeria	38	16	54
Senegal	4	-	4
Sierra Leone	3	1	4
Somalia	309	38	347
Sudan	19	3	22
Tunisia	7	4	11
Other African countries	5	5	10
America	27	17	44
Venezuela	25	12	37
Other American countries	2	5	7
Asia	405	220	625
Afghanistan	5	1	6
Armenia	3	2	5
Georgia	6	3	9
Iran	3	1	4
Iraq	43	12	55
Pakistan	18	3	21
Palestinian Territory Occupied	10	8	18
Syria	308	185	493
Other Asian countries	9	5	14
Total	1,310	529	1,839
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	242	222	464
18-34	792	220	1,012
35 or more	276	87	363
Total	1,310	529	1,839

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 6. Top 5 countries of citizenship of asylum applicants: 2017

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total applicants
1	Syria	493	26.8
2	Libya	409	22.2
3	Somalia	347	18.9
4	Eritrea	117	6.4
5	Iraq	55	3.0

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

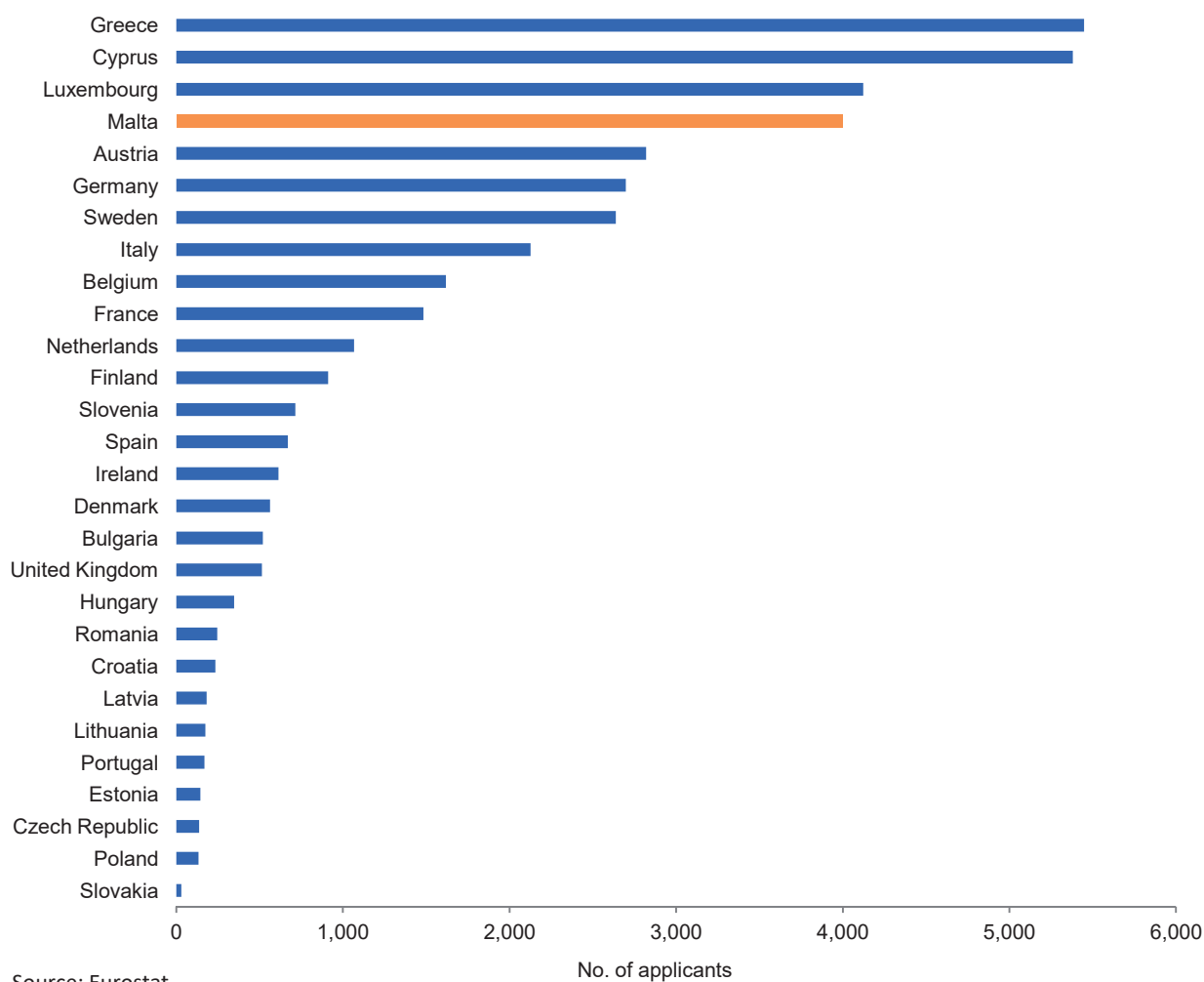
Table 7. Total asylum applicants by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2017

Reporting country	Total asylum applicants		
	Absolute ¹	per million population ²	Share in EU total (%)
Austria	24,735	2,819.5	3.5
Belgium	18,370	1,618.3	2.6
Bulgaria	3,695	520.3	0.5
Croatia	975	234.7	0.1
Cyprus	4,600	5,381.4	0.7
Czech Republic	1,450	137.1	0.2
Denmark	3,235	562.7	0.5
Estonia	190	144.4	0.0
Finland	5,020	912.2	0.7
France	99,330	1,482.8	14.1
Germany	222,625	2,697.8	31.5
Greece	58,660	5,447.5	8.3
Hungary	3,395	346.5	0.5
Ireland	2,930	612.4	0.4
Italy	128,855	2,126.7	18.3
Latvia	355	182.0	0.1
Lithuania	495	173.8	0.1
Luxembourg	2,435	4,122.5	0.3
Malta	1,840	3,997.4	0.3
Netherlands	18,210	1,066.1	2.6
Poland	5,055	133.1	0.7
Portugal	1,750	169.7	0.2
Romania	4,815	245.1	0.7
Slovakia	165	30.4	0.0
Slovenia	1,475	714.0	0.2
Spain	31,125	669.0	4.4
Sweden	26,370	2,638.3	3.7
United Kingdom	33,850	514.4	4.8

¹ Source: Eurostat [migr_asyappctza]

² Source: Based on Population on 1 January 2017. Eurostat [demo_pjan]

Chart 2. Asylum applicants by EU reporting countries per million population: 2017



Source: Eurostat

Table 8. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2017

Year	Positive decisions				Rejections		Total
	Granted refugee status	Other forms of protection status	Total		Absolute	%	
			Absolute	%			
2006	22	481	503	48.1	542	51.9	1,045
2007	7	623	630	65.7	329	34.3	959
2008	19	1,397	1,416	52.5	1,281	47.5	2,697
2009	20	1,671	1,691	65.7	884	34.3	2,575
2010	43	179	222	63.8	126	36.2	348
2011	70	814	884	55.0	722	45.0	1,606
2012	35	1,398	1,433	90.1	157	9.9	1,590
2013	43	1,563	1,606	84.3	299	15.7	1,905
2014	191	1,068	1,259	72.6	476	27.4	1,735
2015	263	987	1,250	83.8	241	16.2	1,491
2016	167	1,025	1,192	83.1	243	16.9	1,435
2017	167	595	762	68.7	347	31.3	1,109

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Chart 3. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2017

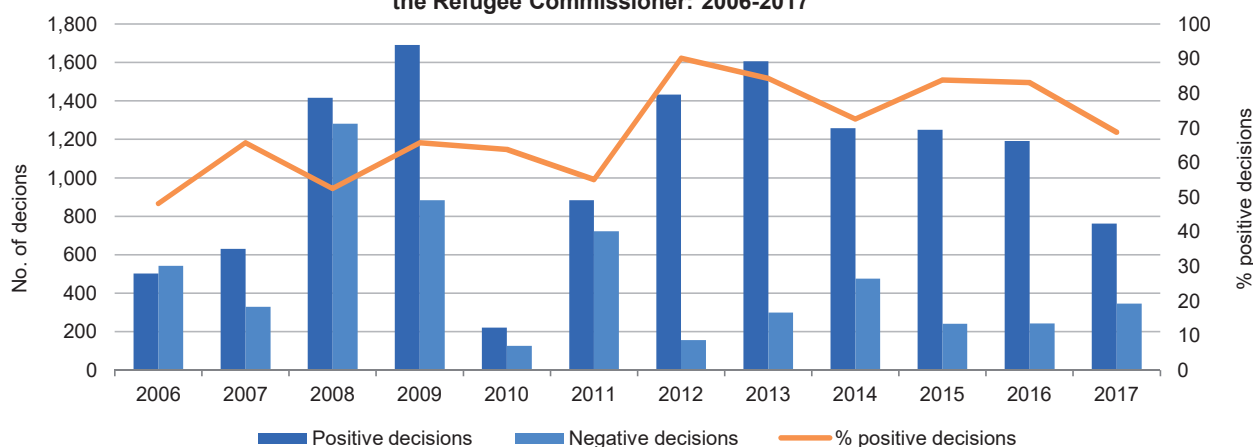


Table 9. Positive decisions (Refugee status, subsidiary status or equivalent decisions) taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by sex and country of citizenship: 2017

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	1	6	7
Ukraine	1	6	7
Africa	310	168	478
Eritrea	73	24	97
Ethiopia	5	6	11
Libya	191	113	304
Nigeria	4	4	8
Somalia	31	19	50
Other African countries	6	2	8
America	1	-	1
Other American countries	1	-	1
Asia	158	118	276
Iraq	21	6	27
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	3	5	8
Syria	132	106	238
Other Asian countries	2	1	3
Total	470	292	762
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	141	152	293
18-34	225	95	320
35 or more	104	45	149
Total	470	292	762

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Table 10. Top 5 countries of citizenship of beneficiaries of protection status: 2017

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total beneficiaries
1	Libya	304	39.9
2	Syria	238	31.2
3	Eritrea	97	12.7
4	Somalia	50	6.6
5	Iraq	27	3.5

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Chart 4. Applications and decisions filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2017

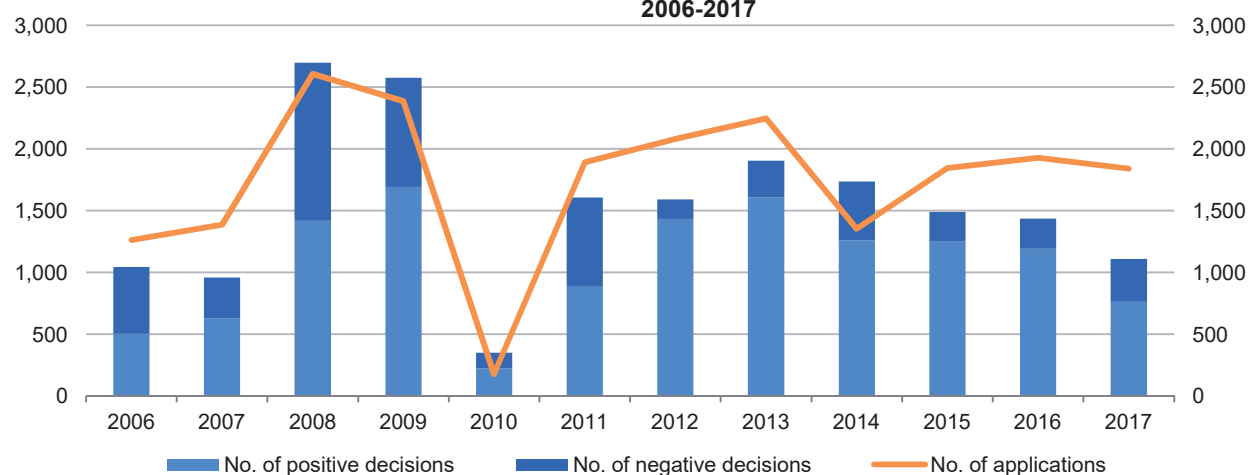


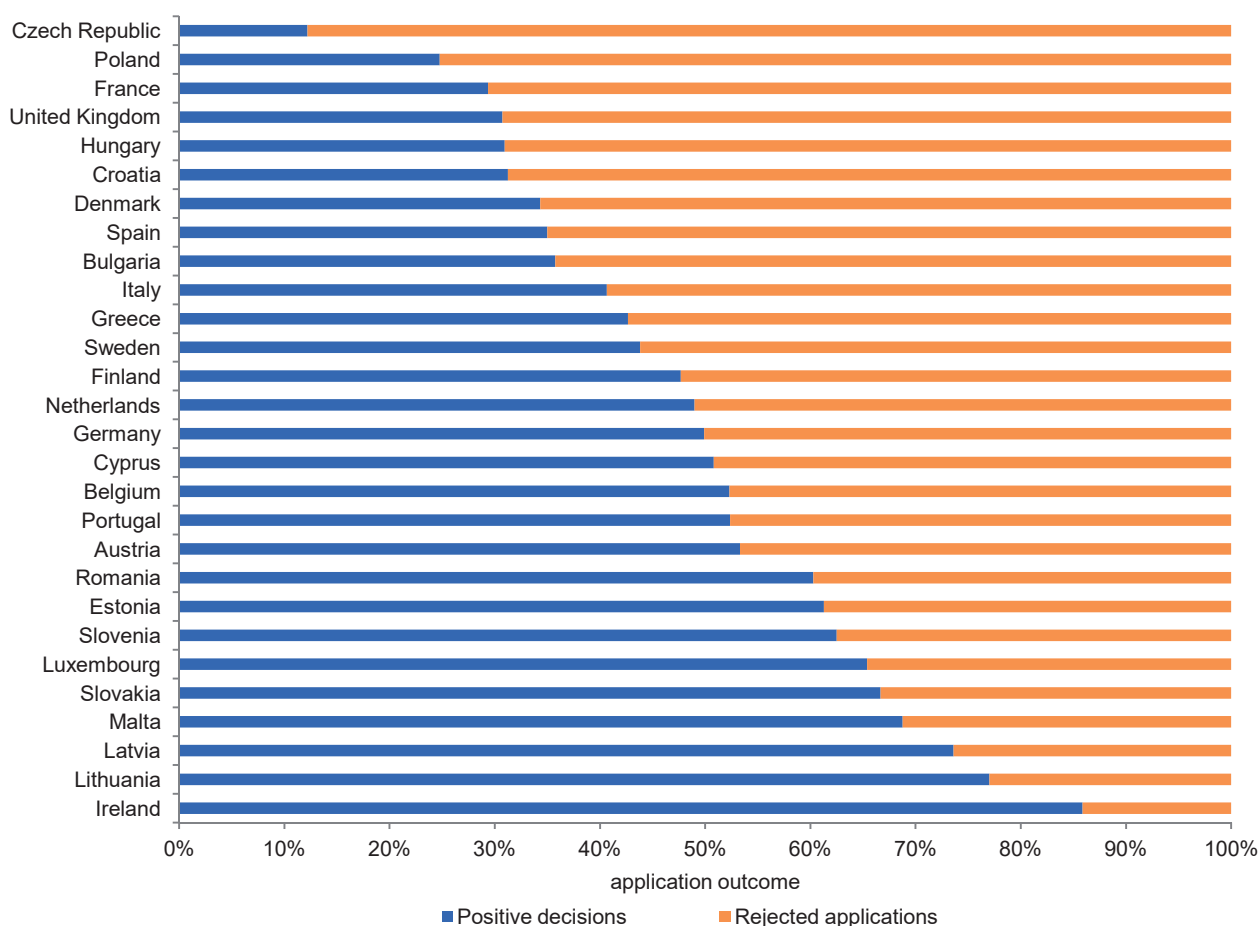
Table 11. First instance decisions on applications by EU reporting countries¹ (rounded): 2017

Reporting country	First instance decisions			
	Total	Positive decisions	Rejected applications	Positive decisions per million population ²
Austria	56,285	30,000	26,285	3,419.6
Belgium	24,065	12,585	11,480	1,108.6
Bulgaria	4,740	1,695	3,045	238.7
Croatia	475	150	330	36.1
Cyprus	2,450	1,245	1,205	1,456.5
Czech Republic	1,190	145	1,045	13.7
Denmark	6,890	2,365	4,525	411.4
Estonia	155	95	60	72.2
Finland	7,195	3,430	3,765	623.3
France	110,945	32,565	78,380	486.1
Germany	524,350	261,630	262,720	3,170.4
Greece	24,515	10,455	14,055	970.9
Hungary	4,170	1,290	2,880	131.7
Ireland	885	760	125	158.9
Italy	78,235	31,795	46,440	524.8
Latvia	360	265	95	135.9
Lithuania	370	285	85	100.1
Luxembourg	1,720	1,125	595	1,904.6
Malta	1,110	760	345	1,651.1
Netherlands	15,945	7,810	8,135	457.2
Poland	2,060	510	1,550	13.4
Portugal	955	500	455	48.5
Romania	2,065	1,245	820	63.4
Slovakia	90	60	30	11.0
Slovenia	240	150	90	72.6
Spain	13,350	4,670	8,675	100.4
Sweden	61,115	26,775	34,340	2,678.8
United Kingdom	27,855	8,560	19,295	130.1

¹ Source: Eurostat [migr_asydcfsta]

² Source: Based on Population on 1 January 2017. Eurostat [demo_pjan]

Chart 5. First instance decisions recognition rates by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2017



Source: Eurostat

Table 12. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by locality as at end of year: 2013-2017

Locality	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Open centres	1,255	685	339	401	644
Birkirkara	20	12	-	-	-
Fgura	20	7	6	48	33
Floriana	15	3	20	30	69
Hal Far	905	460	253	209	517
Marsa	295	203	60	114	25
Other institutional households	244	79	265	272	259
Total	1,499	764	604	673	903

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

Table 13. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex: 2013-2017

Year	Males	Females	Total
2013	1,156	343	1,499
2014	649	115	764
2015	442	162	604
2016	486	187	673
2017	657	246	903

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

Table 14. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex and country of citizenship: 2017

Country of origin	Males	Females	Total
Europe	12	7	19
Turkey	12	6	18
Other European countries	-	1	1
Africa	508	161	669
Egypt	4	-	4
Eritrea	90	75	165
Ethiopia	50	41	91
Ghana	6	-	6
Guinea	5	-	5
Ivory Coast	14	2	16
Libya	26	9	35
Mali	9	-	9
Nigeria	22	6	28
Senegal	2	2	4
Somalia	255	24	279
Sudan	10	-	10
Other African countries	15	2	17
Asia	137	78	215
Afghanistan	3	1	4
Iraq	41	9	50
Pakistan	8	1	9
Philippines	5	3	8
Syria	71	64	135
Other Asian countries	9	-	9
Total	657	246	903

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

Table 15. Top 5 countries of citizenship of open centre residents: 2017

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total residents
1	Somalia	279	30.9
2	Eritrea	165	18.3
3	Syria	135	15.0
4	Ethiopia	91	10.1
5	Iraq	50	5.5

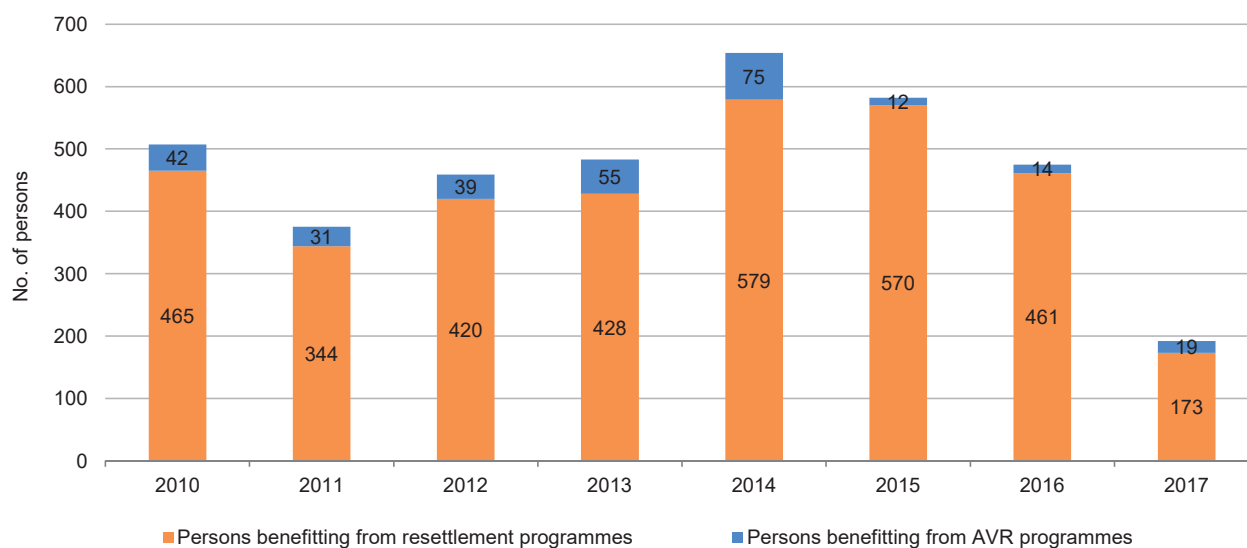
Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

Table 16. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes: 2010-2017

Year of departure	Number of persons resettled	Number of persons returned
2010	465	42
2011	344	31
2012	420	39
2013	428	55
2014	579	75
2015	570	12
2016	461	14
2017	173	19

Source: Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

Chart 6. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return programmes: 2010-2017



Methodological Notes

1. This news release makes reference to various sources available to the NSO, including:
 - **Office of the Refugee Commissioner:** the main source of data related to applications for asylum and asylum decisions in Malta.
 - **Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS):** the main source for data related to open centres.
 - **Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section:** the main source of statistics on boat arrivals and on forced returns involving third-country nationals.
 - **Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security:** the main source of statistics on resettlements and assisted voluntary returns.
2. Asylum data are being presented in alignment with Eurostat guidelines provided in relation to Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007. Methodological information regarding applications can be accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asyapp_esms.htm and methodological information regarding Decisions on applications can be accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asydec_esms.htm.
3. **Definitions**
 - **Asylum seeker:** A person who has requested asylum in a country and is awaiting a decision on the application under relevant national and international processes. This definition generally refers to all who apply for protection on an individual basis, irrespective of whether they lodge their application on arrival at an airport or land border, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether they entered the territory legally or illegally (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
 - **Asylum applicant:** A person having submitted an application for international protection.
 - **Application for asylum:** The application made by a third-country national or a stateless person which can be understood as a request for international protection from a Member State under the Geneva Convention. Any application for international protection is presumed to be an application for asylum unless a third-country national or a stateless person explicitly requests another kind of protection that can be applied for separately. An application for asylum is deemed to have been lodged once a form is submitted by the applicant for asylum or a report prepared by the authorities has reached the competent authorities.
 - **Assisted voluntary returns (AVR):** Programmes which provide administrative and financial support to non-nationals residing in the country who wish to return permanently to their country of origin. Such support also ensures that their return is sustainable.
 - **Geneva Convention status:** Refugee status granted within the meaning of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28th July 1951 to a person "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
 - **Person granted authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons:** A person covered by a decision granting authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons under national law concerning international protection. It includes persons who are not eligible for international protection but are nonetheless protected against removal.
 - **Person granted subsidiary protection status:** A person who is eligible for subsidiary protection is a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his/her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his/her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country (Art.2(e), Directive 2004/83/EC).
 - **Refugee:** A third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reason as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (Art.2(d), Directive 2004/83/EC).

- **Rejected applicant:** A person covered by a decision rejecting an application for international protection under consideration by the responsible national authority.
- **Resettlement:** The transfer of third-country nationals or stateless to another country where they are permitted to reside with a secure legal status.
- **Third-country national:** Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union.
- **Unaccompanied minor:** An asylum applicant considered to be an unaccompanied minor is a minor (aged less than 18) who arrives unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him.. It includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he has entered the country. In the case that an age assessment procedure is required, the age reported shall be the age determined by the mentioned procedure.

4. Geographical information

- The **European Union (EU)** includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

5. Other information

- Past News Releases can be accessed at https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration_Statistics/Pages/World-Refugee-Day.aspx
- Metadata can be accessed at <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/reports.aspx?id=38>.

6. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:

Statistical concept: <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/concepts.aspx>

Sources and methods:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration/Pages/Migration-Statistics.aspx

7. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

8. A detailed news release calendar is available on:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx