

Migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan

A COUNTRY PROFILE 2013–2021



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Publisher: International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons
P.O. Box 171211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111
Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ROSSTAT	Russian Federal State Statistics Service
SCRI	State Committee on Refugees and IDPs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan
SSC	State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
State Agency	State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
Agenda 2030	The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
UMIS	Unified Migration Information System
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International migrants are a small, but important part of Azerbaijan's population and workforce. After years of high emigration, the country is experiencing annual positive net migration. Azerbaijan is a country of destination, especially for working-age migrants from neighbouring countries, such as Türkiye, the Russian Federation and Georgia. Foreigners are also visiting the country in greater numbers, especially for recreation and to conduct business; recent amendments to the country's migration rules may have helped to precipitate this.

The development of a positive net migration rate clearly reveals a consolidation of outflows and inflows of international migrants: inflows on average outweighed outflows by 1,300 a year between 2013–2021. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced migration flows in both directions across all migrant groups, as pandemic control measures and associated travel restrictions were imposed globally. However, on the whole the flows basically followed migration trends from previous years, with migration mobility increasing in 2021.

The establishment and development of Azerbaijan's Migration Code (MC: the main legal instrument governing migration for Azerbaijan), and the country's commitments to the global migration management frameworks – Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – position Azerbaijan to respond effectively to future challenges and opportunities.

These frameworks have some shared aims: to ensure the freedoms and rights of migrants; to harness the developmental benefits of migration and global partnerships, trade and investment, including through labour migration and international students; to prevent risks of irregular migration; to counter human trafficking; and to more effectively understand and manage migration by improving the robustness of, and access to, an evidence base on migration for policy action.

The Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan – which was approved on 2 July 2013 and entered into force on 1 August of the same year – establishes norms for implementation of state policy on migration, regulating migration and relations arising in this area, as well as the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Code was designed to enable evidence-based and effective policymaking in migration and to support the proper implementation of policy processes adapted to the national reality and priorities.

The Migration Code also outlines the management of migration data using the Unified Migration Information System (UMIS). The UMIS, which is administered by the State Migration Service (SMS), is a central database that houses migration records collected by SMS and other national agencies. Articles 8.2 and 8.3 of the Migration Code require that “a migration record is kept by the relevant executive authority through the Unified Migration Information System” and that “the relevant executive authorities transfer the relevant information to relevant executive authorities through the information resources and systems in their usage for migration record purposes.” This enables centralized access to the bulk of migration data held by national agencies, improving coordination and management practices.

This Migration Profile is a tool to support the policy processes. It has been compiled to present the available data on migration, discuss the impact of migration on Azerbaijan’s development, and outline ongoing policies, programmes and structures in relation to migration. The intention is for this report to be updated on a regular basis and, with each revision, to both evidence and precipitate the strengthening of migration management in the country. The Migration Profile comprises four parts.

Part A: Migration Trends analyses the key trends in foreigners,¹ stateless persons and citizens’ mobility to and from Azerbaijan. It also examines movements within the country and return migration.

Cross-border mobility: Between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021, 19.2 million foreigners and stateless persons entered Azerbaijan and nearly as many left (19.1 million). There was an average of two million trips a year, peaking in 2019, with 3.1 million trips; however, mobility slumped drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021.

Between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2021, 1,092,491 e-visas were issued through Azerbaijan’s ASAN visa system, 85 per cent of them in 2019 before the pandemic. The main countries of origin were the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, India and Pakistan.

Between 2013 and 2020, more than 14.6 million foreigners visited Azerbaijan for the purpose of tourism, making up 89.8 per cent of all travellers to the country. The top three purposes for tourism to Azerbaijan between 2013 and 2020 were leisure and recreation, business trips and private visits. Tourists for

¹ While the International Organization for Migration recommends the use of the term “migrant”, as defined below, the term used in the Azerbaijani legislation is translated as “foreigners” For the purpose of this Migration Profile, and in order to reflect the national legislation, we have kept the term “foreigners”.

business accounted for more than a quarter (26.8%) of all travellers who visited Azerbaijan in 2019.

Between 2013 and 2019 there were about 600 extensions of temporary staying period annually. Due to automatic extensions of the temporary staying period of foreigners who were unable to return to their countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020–2021 was exceptional, as in 2020, 91,659 extensions were issued, with a further 24,930 in the first 10 months of 2021.

Immigration: As of 1 November 2021, 11,730 foreigners and stateless persons were holding permanent residence permits (PRPs), 80.3 per cent of whom were between 18 and 59 years old. The main countries of origin were Georgia (3,873), the Russian Federation (3,488) and Türkiye (1,117). Women accounted for nearly 60 per cent of all PRP holders.

On 1 November 2021, 39,766 foreigners and stateless persons were living in Azerbaijan with temporary residence permits (TRPs). As with PRP holders, working age citizens of neighbouring countries constituted the bulk of these migrants: nearly 80 per cent were between the ages of 18–59; and the top countries of origin were Türkiye (9,670), the Russian Federation (8,866) and Georgia (8,104). Unlike PRP holders, however, over 60 per cent of all TRP holders were male.

In total, 3,115 foreign nationals and stateless persons (including children) from a total of 31 different countries acquired Azerbaijani citizenship by naturalization between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021. Stateless persons made up about 47 per cent of all naturalizations.

Between 1 January 2013 to 1 November 2021, 90,478 migrant workers from roughly 100 countries were issued work permits or had them extended; between them citizens of Türkiye and the United Kingdom accounted for 55 per cent of all work permits issued.

Over the period considered, a total of 53,504 TRPs for education and study purposes were issued. Nationals of Türkiye and Georgia account for more than half (52.4%) of all pupils and students with TRPs.

During the same period, 2,741 asylum claims (including family members) were filed by 1,475 principal applicants from a total of 32 countries of origin. In total, 70 asylum applications (including family members) have been approved for 24 principal applicants.

Emigration: Between 2013 and 2020, 10,547 Azerbaijanis left for permanent residence.² Of these, 62 per cent were women, and 86 per cent of citizens who emigrated left for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

Turkish Statistical Institute data for 2014 to 2019 reveal that 68,515 Azerbaijan-born persons reside in the country based on an issued first permit. The proportion of women is 52.5 per cent out of the total. In 2019, a total of 26,626 Azerbaijani emigrants received their first residence permit.

According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (ROSSTAT), about 25,000 Azerbaijanis migrated to the Russian Federation every year on average between 2013 and 2020.

In 2020, 20,422 Azerbaijani nationals were residing in 26 countries of the European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) including Switzerland, according to the European Statistical Office, based on data about all valid residence permits including 13,173 Azerbaijanis as long-term residents.

Irregular migration: Between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021, a total of 191,951 decisions were made on violations by foreigners and stateless persons of migration-related legislation. The decisions included voluntary departures (65%); administrative expulsions, restriction of entry and orders to leave (23%); and legalization of stay or residence (12%).

In total, between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021, 6,002 foreigners and stateless persons were placed in Detention Centres for Irregular Migrants. Of these, 5,023 people were placed in these Centres voluntarily and 979 people forcibly.

A total of 597 victims of human trafficking were identified in Azerbaijan between 2013 and 2020.

Return migration: Between 2014, when the first readmission agreement was signed, and 1 November 2021 a total of 3,014 readmission requests for 5,897 persons were received and 1,933 persons were effectively readmitted.

Internal migration: According to the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (SCRI), as of 1 November 2021, 651,458 internally displaced persons were registered. Of the internally displaced population, 6.3 per cent are children below 18 and 11.28 per cent elderly persons above 60.

² This category is defined as Azerbaijani nationals who have deregistered upon place of residence in Azerbaijan as having left Azerbaijan and permanently acquiring residence abroad. This figure does not capture those who have left Azerbaijan but failed to deregister upon place of residence.

There is relatively little information on voluntary internal migration in Azerbaijan; however according to the State Statistical Committee, in 2021 53 per cent of the overall population lived in urban environments.

Part B: Migration and human capital development examines the links between migration and various aspects of socioeconomic development.

Human development: Life expectancy at birth in Azerbaijan has steadily increased since 1995. The year 2020 interrupted the growth trend in both urban and rural areas. Between 2010 and 2019 life expectancy grew by 2.8 years to 76.4 years on average for both sexes; however, it dropped to 73.2 years in 2020.

The number of years of schooling that a child of school starting age can expect to receive in Azerbaijan is 13.5 as of 2020.

Migration and economic development: Income from other households or remittances has accounted for 2–2.5 per cent of monthly household income in the years up to 2020. Although important at micro level, remittances are less significant for Azerbaijan at macro level, as they made up 3.3 per cent of national GDP in 2020 according to the World Bank.

According to Azerbaijani Central Bank data on money transfers from and into Azerbaijan, about half a billion dollars is sent out of Azerbaijan a year during 2019–2021.

Migration, employment and the labour market: The economically active population increased by 388,600 to 5,303,900 between 2015 and 2021.

Azerbaijan issues annual quotas for foreign workers for various types of economic activity. Most labour migration quota places for foreign workers in Azerbaijan were for employment in construction, mining, manufacturing industry and education.

Migration and social development: Azerbaijan's social protection system comprises four broad categories: (1) social insurance; (2) social assistance; (3) social compensation; and (4) social services. Social support payments increased by 3.2 per cent or AZN 167 million (USD 98.2 million) between January and November 2021, and citizens were provided with pensions, allowances, and targeted social assistance worth AZN 5.4 billion (USD 3.1 billion) during the reporting period.

Migration and health: In 2020, budgetary allocations for health accounted for 6.4 per cent of the state budget, or 2.3 per cent of GDP; 1 percentage point more of GDP share than in the previous three years. Under national legislation migrants can receive immediate and special medical assistance without any restrictions and discrimination.

Part C: Migration governance describes Azerbaijan's key migration stakeholders, policies and laws that have an impact on migrants and migration.

The *policy framework* outlines the key instruments used to manage migration in the country, with emphasis on overarching policies and Azerbaijan's Migration Code.

The *legal and regulative framework* covers other legal instruments that regulate migration in the country.

Institutional framework and coordination outlines various coordinating bodies and working groups that encourage cross-sectoral and public participation in migration management in Azerbaijan.

Regional and international cooperation focuses on the major international and multilateral agreements that Azerbaijan has signed or ratified, as well as implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Global Compact on Refugees.

Part D: Key findings and recommendations summarizes the report's key findings. Recommendations are put forward on ways to improve the evidence base to better manage migration.

COUNTRY PROFILE

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a democratic, secular, legal and unitary state with presidential rule. According to the Constitution, power in the country is divided into the legislative branch: the parliament (Milli Mejlis); the executive branch: the President; and the judiciary: the courts.

At the end of 2020, 10,119.100 people lived in Azerbaijan, of whom 53.0 per cent lived in urban areas and 47.0 per cent in rural areas. Between 2015 and 2020 the national population increased by 0.9–1.2 per cent a year, and was consistently 0.9 per cent in the last three years. The sex ratio is stable in Azerbaijan, where 49.9 per cent are male, and 50.1 per cent female. Most of the population (91.6%) are Azerbaijanis; with Lezgins, Armenians, Russians, Talyshs and smaller nationalities and minorities making up the rest.



Source: United Nations, Department of Field Support Cartographic Section, map no. 3761 rev. 9.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Table 1: Key country and population data

Official name	The Republic of Azerbaijan
Capital	Baku city
Official language	Azerbaijani
Government	Republican
State boundaries	Azerbaijan borders on land and sea with 7 countries – the Russian Federation, Georgia, Armenia, Türkiye, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The total length of the state borders is 3370.4 km (765 km with the Islamic Republic of Iran, 390.3 km with the Russian Federation, 480 km with Georgia, 1007.1 km with Armenia, 15 km with Türkiye), including 713 km at sea (497 miles: 121 miles with Kazakhstan, 120 miles with the Islamic Republic of Iran, 76 miles with the Russian Federation, 180 miles with Turkmenistan).
Total area	86 600 km ² (land: 82 629 km ² , water basins: 3 971 km ²)

Population (at the beginning of the year)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total population (thousands)	9 593.0	9 705.6	9 810.0	9 898.1	9 981.5	10 067.1	10 119.1	10 156.4
Urban population (%)	53.1	53.1	53.0	52.9	52.8	52.8	53.0	52.9
Rural population (%)	46.9	46.9	47.0	47.1	47.2	47.2	47.0	47.1
Male population (%)	49.8	49.8	49.9	49.9	49.9	49.9	49.9	50.0
Female population (%)	50.2	50.2	50.1	50.1	50.1	50.1	50.1	50.0
Net migration (at the end of the year)	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.6	0.4	1.1	1.8	-

Source: SSC, 2021.

The positive net migration rate in the country is caused by factors such as economic development; the construction, energy and other sectors; and improvement and simplification of migration legislation, especially adoption of the Migration Code – the main legal instrument regulating migration in the country and beyond – in 2013; the launching of electronic services; and the issuance of electronic visas.

PART A: MIGRATION TRENDS

According to national legislation, foreigners and stateless persons³ can arrive in Azerbaijan with visas or under the visa-free regime. For those who intend to stay longer than the specified period, the designated authority offers several options for legal residence in the country. One of them is the extension of temporary stay period: this decision can be made for 30 or 60 days. The second possibility is to issue temporary residence permits (TRPs) starting from for a period of three months up to three years, if there are appropriate grounds. To obtain permanent residence permits (PRPs), foreigners and stateless persons should reside in the country for more than two years as holders of TRPs.

As a consequence of historical migration in the region, Azerbaijan has high numbers of nationals who were born abroad, and of foreign nationals born in its territory. That is why migration data in the country is based on citizenship, not place of birth. Thus, the difference between the stock of migrants according to national legislation and international statistics is significant.

This report presents key figures and trends on different types of migration and migrants, as well as migrant characteristics, without assessing how each of the trends and processes affects development (and vice versa) in the origin and destination countries.

The bulk of the data used to analyse migration trends in this report are collected, processed and/or held by national agencies; primarily they originate from administrative records, such as those derived from the issuance of PRPs and TRPs. The Republic of Azerbaijan's State Migration Service (SMS), State Statistical Committee (SSC) and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSP) contributed most of the data presented and analysed below. Other agencies that provided key data and information on migration included the Ministry of Science and Education (MSE), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the State Border Service (SBS), and the State Agency for Public Services and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Information on migration was also used that originated from and/or was compiled by sources other than Azerbaijan's national agencies:

1. Data from international agencies, such as IOM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.

³ This category does not include stateless persons who were registered as permanent residents of Azerbaijan before 1 January 1992 and their children who were born before entry into force of the "Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan" (7 October 1998).

2. Reports and databases from regional statistical bodies, such as the European Union’s Statistical Agency, EUROSTAT, and national statistical offices (NSOs), such as the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (ROSSTAT) and the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT).
3. Databases and ad hoc reportage from the research community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), especially with regard to hard-to-measure migrant-subgroups and phenomena.

These “international” data sources feature information that is timely, comparable and easily accessible. However, the figures presented are often estimates (rather than counts) and rely on national data sources. Used together, national and international sources can create a relatively comprehensive picture of migration in a country or region. This section presents a selection of key, up-to-date migration figures and trends to, from and within Azerbaijan, as well as the characteristics of those migrating between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021.

Table 2: Key migration statistics (stock data as of 1 November 2021)

International migrants present in the country (including those in regular and irregular situation)	129 836
Regular migrants (foreigners and stateless persons)	126 194
Permanently residing migrants (immigrants)	9 518
Proportion of regular migrants who are immigrants, %	7.5
Proportion of regular migrants who are female, %	43.9
Proportion of regular migrants who are 18 years and younger, %	26.4
Proportion of regular migrants who are 65 years and older, %	3.9
Irregular migrants (foreigners and stateless persons)	3 642
Proportion of irregular migrants who are female, %	35.5
Proportion of irregular migrants who are 18 years and younger, %	5.3
Proportion of irregular migrants who are 65 years and older, %	10.7
Internally displaced persons (registered)	651 458
Recognized refugees	75

Source: SMS, 2021.

A.1. Key driving factors of migration and general cross-border mobility

A.1.1. Historical background

The occupation of more than 20 per cent of Azerbaijani lands for almost thirty years, a difficult internal political and economic situation in the 1990s, as well as the historical context (especially being part of the Soviet Union) have all had significant impact on migration trends and dynamics in the country.⁴

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan experienced the return of ethnic Azerbaijanis from other Soviet Union countries, as well as migrating populations from neighbouring countries, because of internal conflicts that occurred there. Forced migration to and within Azerbaijan rose with the expulsion of ethnic Azerbaijanis from the Armenian SSR to Azerbaijan, and the subsequent occupation of Azerbaijani territories, which created as many as a million internally displaced persons and refugees in Azerbaijan. People from other neighbouring countries also migrated to Azerbaijan because of internal conflicts, such as Meskhetian Turks who fled from Uzbekistan.⁵

National legislation enacted in 1998 granted many of these stateless and foreign citizens the protection benefits accorded to internally displaced persons, as well as Azerbaijani citizenship.⁶ The economic hardships of the early 1990s led many working age Azerbaijani citizens to emigrate, seeking opportunities outside the country. From the late 1990s and 2000s, the burgeoning economic successes driven by the oil industry in Azerbaijan began to reverse this trend.⁷ The country secured upper-middle income status in 2009 and is still at this level.⁸

As opportunities at home blossomed, triggered by economic development, particularly in the oil sector, increased incomes and a favourable geopolitical

⁴ Decision No. 94 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 13 July 2004 on approving “Concept of State Migration Management Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, <https://e-qanun.az/framework/6306>.

⁵ Romyansev, Sergey (2013): Azerbaijan: Readmission, Return and Reintegration in the Socio-Political Context. CARIM-East Explanatory Note 13/06. Socio-Political Module, European University Institute, February 2013. (https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/62717/Explanatory%20Notes_2013-06.pdf?sequence=1).

⁶ Law on the Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Article 5, part 3, https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/IssueLibrary/AZERBAIJAN_Law%20on%20Citizenship.pdf.

⁷ Allahveranov, Azer et al. (2012): Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe: Final Country Report, European Commission.

⁸ World Bank Country and Lending Groups: historical classification by income in XLSX format, World Bank Analytical Classifications (<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>), accessed on 16.05.2023.

position, more citizens stayed at home, while international migrants began to arrive in search of jobs in huge infrastructure projects. Numerous migrant workers from South and East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and former Soviet countries came to Azerbaijan, recruited by Western oil companies and others. Azerbaijan was transformed from an origin country of migrant workers to a destination country for migrant workers.

Despite the improved country's living standards and the sustainable positive effects on the economy and people's well-being, some Azerbaijanis still emigrate. Major countries of destination are the Russian Federation and Türkiye, where language barriers are comparatively less than in other countries in the neighbouring region, there is no visa regime and economic and private ties exist. The United States of America, Türkiye and Germany are the most popular destinations outside the former Soviet countries.

With the liberation of Azerbaijani territories after the Second Karabakh War in 2020, the issue of return of persons originating from these areas who were displaced in the past has emerged as a new core issue, which is also specifically mentioned in the trilateral statement issued by the parties on 10 November 2020.⁹

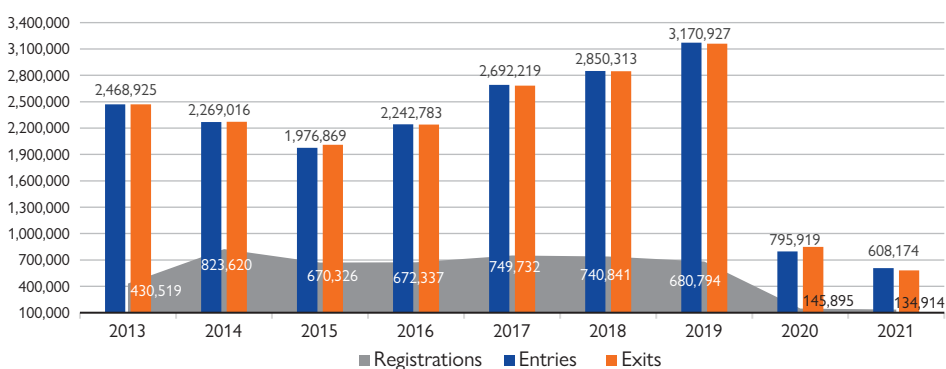
A.1.2. Recent trends in mobility

Migration to, from and within Azerbaijan continues to reflect the country's recent political and economic history. Migration has become driven more by economic and social ambitions than by political and humanitarian emergencies. Still, the country seeks to balance its migration management strategy to enhance human rights and economic opportunities, to ensure the peaceful development of society and the State. These two interlinked goals are reflected in recent amendments to Azerbaijan's 2013 Migration Code and in the strategic roadmap "Azerbaijan 2020: A Look into the Future" Concept of Development (2012)". The Vision up to 2020 identifies that management of both migration inflow and outflow are critical topics for the country's prosperity, and that demographics and development of labour supply are vital topics for the country's future. Conclusions include a need for indicators to enable ongoing monitoring and evaluation that capture the complex and mutual relationship between migration and demography in the context of socioeconomic development.

⁹ No: 406/20, Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation: <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/no40620-statement-by-the-president-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan-the-prime-minister-of-the-republic-of-armenia-and-the-president-of-the-russian-federation-enru>.

The general migrant mobility is assessed by the data on entry and exit, registration of foreigners and stateless persons upon place of stay and extension of temporary staying period. Data on migrant mobility is processed in the Unified Migration Information System (UMIS) run by the SMS and the interagency “Entry-Exit and Registration” automated information retrieval system. According to legal provisions in the Migration Code, foreigners or stateless persons who intend to stay for more than 15 days in Azerbaijan must register at their place of stay which could be any accommodation (lodging houses, hospitals and sanatoriums, flats, or other places of residence). Persons arriving with visas are registered for the period indicated on the visa, while persons arriving under visa-free regime are registered for 90 days. The temporary stay period with a visa or under the visa-free regime can be further extended by up to 60 days.

Figure 1: Entries, exits and registrations upon place of stay



Source: SMS, 2021.

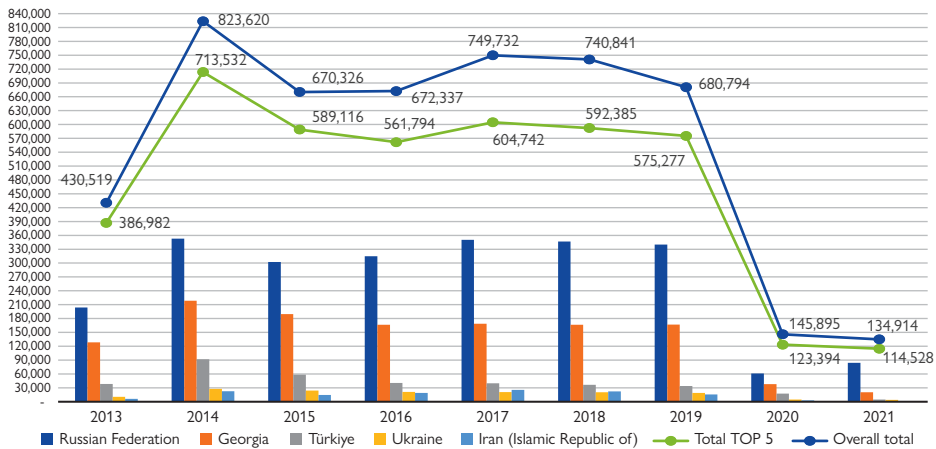
Note: 2013–2020 data until 31 December. 2021 data until 1 November.

Roughly equal numbers of border crossings into and out of the country occurred every year between 2013 and 2021. Between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021, 19.07 million foreign nationals and stateless persons entered Azerbaijan and 19.1 million left – on average 2 million trips a year. Mobility troughed in 2015, and recorded a peak in 2019 with 3.1 million trips, the highest in this period and significantly above the average. Afterwards a drastic slump occurred due to the worldwide restrictive travel regulations introduced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During their stay, an average of about 25.7 per cent of foreigners and stateless persons stayed longer than the period the registration upon place of stay was required (3 days until 17 October 2014, 10 days until 29 June 2018 and 15 days subsequently) over the observation period, with more than a quarter only in 2013 and 2014 due to the shorter registration period allowed. Notably, increasing the minimum time allowed for registration influenced the rate of registered migrants.

Thus, although trips in and out peaked in 2019, overall registration numbers were lower by 14 percentage points than in 2013 and have fallen after the registration period was extended to 15 days.

Figure 2: Registrations upon place of stay of migrants/visitors by citizenship, top five



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data until 31 December. 2021 data until 1 November.

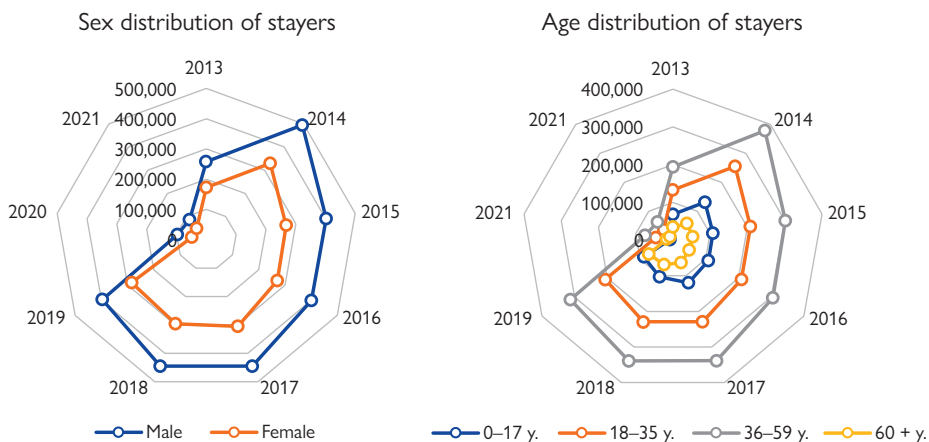
Although incoming migrants/visitors continue to come from all countries over the world, 80–90 per cent of all entries are from five countries. The most frequent countries of origin for registration upon place of stay are the Russian Federation and Georgia, followed by Türkiye, Ukraine and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the figure, the mobility pattern based on the registration upon place of stay can be seen running roughly parallel and close to the line of the top five countries.

Ten countries account for 90–95 per cent of all registered visiting migrants over the period, and mostly of these are countries of the former Soviet Union. Among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, Kazakhstan stands out and, like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, it has seen an increase in arrivals, especially in 2018, which was only interrupted by the pandemic. The 15 countries with the highest number of registrations also included the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States, and Italy and France also have significant numbers of registrations.

The age and sex distribution of migrants registered upon place of stay (see Figure 3 below) primarily shows a clear preponderance of male visitors – often aged 36 to 59 years – throughout the period. The sex ratio remained essentially the same over the period at 60:40 in favour of men, with fluctuations of up to one

percentage point up and down. The 2020–21 pandemic years visibly reduced the proportion of women among registered migrants, and the difference increased by 5 percentage points on average over the two years.

Figure 3: Distribution of registered migrants/visitors, by sex and age



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data until 31 December. 2021 data until 1 November.

On average 8.5 per cent of visitors were aged 60 years and older during the period: this grew steadily from 2017, to 11.4 per cent in 2019. In contrast, the proportion of children fell from 2018, with an average of 14.5 per cent; as with all age groups, the number of child visitors fell rapidly in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Foreigners and stateless persons who arrive and plan to stay in the Republic of Azerbaijan temporarily and do not have a residence permit are usually either tourists or short-term migrants. When a visa regime is applied,¹⁰ entry visas are issued for the following purposes: official visits, business trips, scientific or educational reasons, medical treatment, private visits, humanitarian stay, cultural and sports reasons, and tourism. In addition, labour visas are issued to migrants who intend to carry out paid labour activity. Depending on the purpose of stay, visas can be issued for a duration of between 30 and 90 days, and on certain grounds (official trip or business trip) even for 180 days.

Visas can be obtained by applying to the diplomatic representations and consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan abroad, on arrival in the international airports¹¹ or through the “ASAN Visa” system. The “ASAN Visa” system for issuing

¹⁰ Visas granted to foreigners and stateless persons are divided into entry and transit visas.

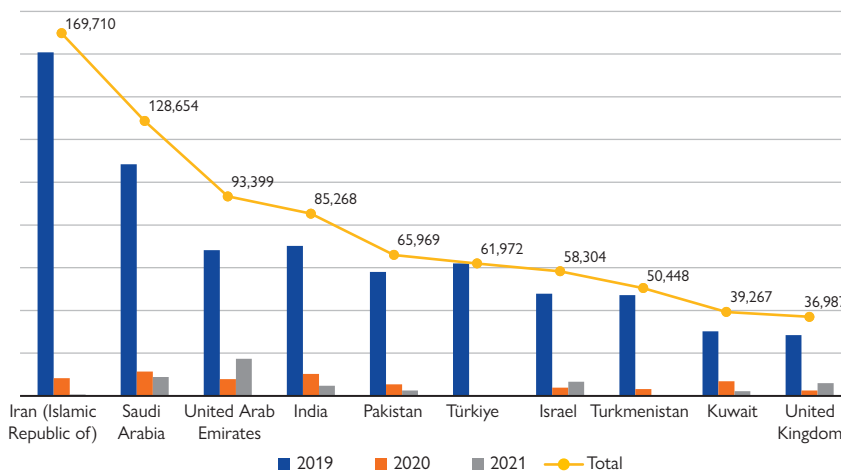
¹¹ The eligible categories and procedure were approved by the Decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 326 of 13 September 2010 and No. 1803 of 31 January 2018.

electronic visas was established to expedite the issuance of visas to foreigners and stateless persons visiting the Republic of Azerbaijan, and to create an e-visa system that ensures efficiency and transparency and applies modern information technologies. Currently, standard e-visas are issued within 3 business days; in the case of application for the urgent e-visa it is issued within 3 hours. E-visas are issued for single entry to the country. The Government approves the list of countries eligible for e-visas.¹²

Data available on ASAN Visas for the full 2019–2021 period (see Figure 6 below) shows a clear consolidation of about fifteen countries that account for the largest share of e-visas issued. During the observation period 1,092,491 e-visas were issued through the “ASAN Visa” system. Figure 4 focuses on the top ten countries, which accounted for just over 70 per cent of all visa tourists in 2019 and 2020. The Islamic Republic of Iran is first, followed by Saudi Arabia, India, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan. Türkiye was sixth on the list in 2019, before the visa-free regime was introduced in 2020. In 2021, the top ten accounted for little over 50 per cent and were led by Arab countries (the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia), with the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany also in the top ten.

Generally, the countries of the Arabian Peninsula and South Asia are important for domestic tourism under the e-visa regime. In 2019, before the pandemic, 925,825 e-visas were issued in total; during the pandemic affected 2020 and 2021, less than 10 per cent of the pre-pandemic level was issued each year.

Figure 4: Issuances of e-visas, by citizenship, top ten



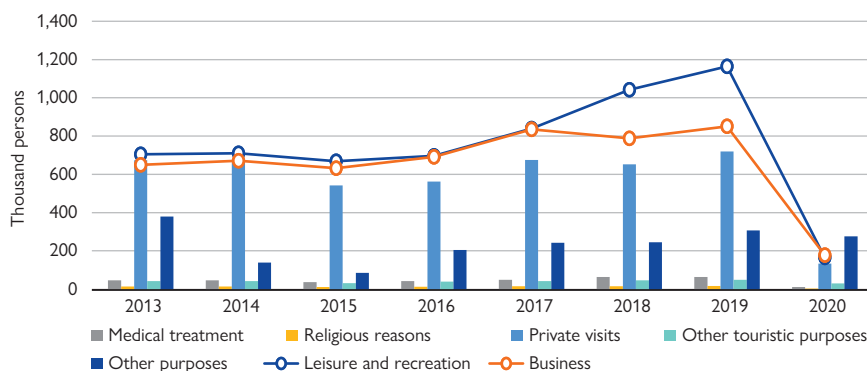
Source: State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2022.

¹² Republic of Azerbaijan Official electronic visa portal. Countries eligible for e-visa, available at: <https://evisa.gov.az/en/countries>.

Fewer females travelled with e-visas than males, who accounted for 69 per cent of e-visas. While in 2019 and 2021, around 77 per cent of all travellers were aged between 20 and 60 years, this increased to 84.5 per cent in pandemic year 2020, as other age groups were less likely to travel. Persons aged 30–39 were most likely to travel to Azerbaijan with e-visas.

According to SSC data,¹³ more than 14.6 million short-term migrants/visitors arrived in Azerbaijan for tourism between 2013 and 2020; and these made up 89.8 per cent share of all travellers (16.3 million) to the country.

Figure 5: Purposes of entry and stay of short-term migrants/visitors



Source: SSC, 2021 (Tourism data).

This aggregate figure, however, hides a shifting trend in the composition of visitors to the country. Since 2014, the proportion who visited for the purpose of tourism has increased by 34.5 per cent, while the proportion who visited for other purposes has fallen by 2.2 times. This may be related to the improvements to migration legislation, which reorganized the purposes of short-term stay. It is possible that an increasingly permissive state policy vis-à-vis tourists and developing of tourism sphere in the country has encouraged a greater share of tourists.

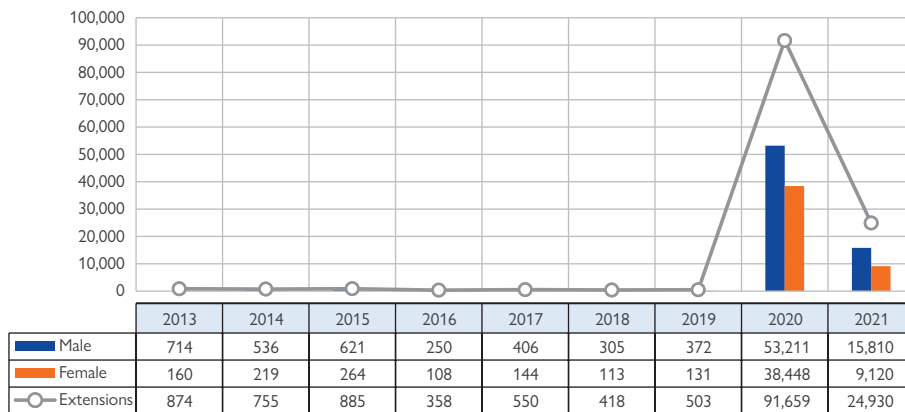
Analysis of the “for the purposes of tourism” category yields possible insights into the motivations of short-term migrants’ visits. The available data show that the top three purposes for tourism to Azerbaijan between 2013 and 2020 were leisure and recreation, business trips and private visits. Tourism for business accounted for 26.8 per cent of all travellers who visited Azerbaijan in 2019 compared to 25.9 per cent in 2013; the proportion of private visits was also relatively stable.

¹³ SSC (2021): Tourism; Breakdown of foreigners and stateless persons arriving to Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan citizens travelling abroad by purpose of trip and expenditures: www.stat.gov.az/source/tourism/?lang=en.

According to Article 42 of the Migration Code a short stay (temporary stay under a visa or visa-free regime) can be extended up to a further 60 days on diverse grounds, such as for instance for urgent medical treatment, serious disease or death of a migrant's close relative residing in the country, incompleteness of the intended work, or unexpected stop during transit (Migration Code Article 19.4).

The following table illustrates the applied exceptional level of extensions of short-term stays in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID-19. Between 2013 and 2019 there were about 600 extensions a year on average, with males accounting for more than two-thirds of extensions. During 2020 and 2021 the temporary stay period for foreigners in the country who did not want to go back to their countries for various reasons was extended automatically until the full opening of the borders without an additional application procedure. In 2020, 91,659 extensions were issued and in 2021 a total of 24,930. In 2020 males accounted for 58 per cent of extensions, and in 2021 64 per cent. Persons aged 36 to 59 years were proportionately far more likely to receive extensions in these years.

Figure 6: Total extensions of temporary staying period, by sex



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

In 2020, 84.6 per cent of total extensions were to Georgians (which had the highest figure) and citizens of the Russian Federation, with Türkiye, Ukraine and Kazakhstan far behind. In 2021, the Russian Federation was far ahead of Georgia, again followed by Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom: these five countries contributed 87.4 per cent of all extensions between January and 1 November 2021, the final date considered.

General mobility in Azerbaijan is overwhelmingly focused on short-term recreational tourism, while business tourism has a significant share. This is

reflected, on the one hand, in the balanced entries and exits and, on the other hand, in the relatively low share of short-term migrants who stay in the country for more than the number of days allowed before registration and – except during the pandemic years – in the very few extensions of temporary stay. Mobility takes place between neighbouring and other countries under the visa free regime, with particular emphasis on the Russian Federation and Georgia, is male-dominated and mostly characterized by working age people. Under the visa regime, the major countries of origin are the Gulf States and South Asian countries, while nationals of the United Kingdom predominate among Western countries.

A.2. Immigration

This section presents key migration trends in international migration to Azerbaijan, including stocks and flows of immigrants, migrant workers, international students and forced migrants.

A.2.1. Foreign and foreign-born population

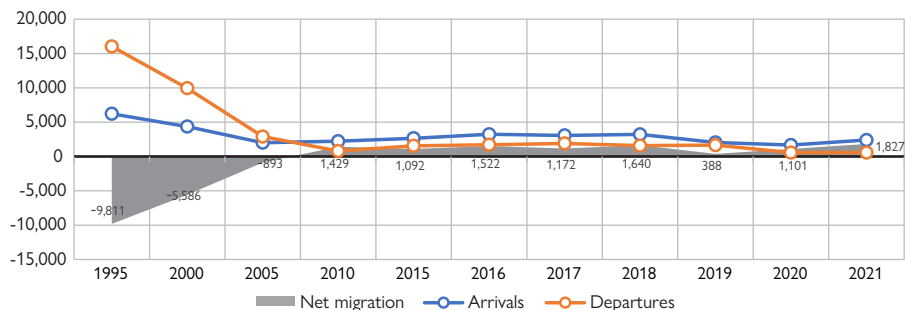
According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), “international migrant stocks” are calculations of “the total number of international migrants present in a particular country at a particular point in time”. Migrant flows (inflows and outflows) refer to the number of migrants entering and exiting a country over a particular period of time. This section will consider trends of the migrant stock present in Azerbaijan and the flows of migrants entering Azerbaijan (inflows).

The stock of migrants in a country is often derived from the country’s national population census, and, in intercensal years, calculated using a variety of methods, including estimates and representative surveys. The last national census in Azerbaijan was conducted in 2019; however, data have not been published yet. National data on the number of foreign citizens and stateless persons in Azerbaijan are sourced from administrative records of residence permits granted and extended.

In Azerbaijan, only those who hold valid permanent residence permits (PRP) – which are granted in specific cases after at least two years of temporary residence in the country – are taken in consideration for measuring the net-migration rate. Thus, migrant stock is calculated differently from the UN DESA definition. Based on national definitions, net migration is calculated as the difference between

the number of migrants permanently resident in Azerbaijan (“immigrants”) and the number of Azerbaijani nationals who leave for permanent residence abroad (“emigrants”).

Figure 7: Net migration 1995–2021



Source: SSC, 2021.

The evolution of the net migration rate clearly shows a consolidation of outflows and inflows with peace agreed and rising prosperity. From 2005 on, and from Azerbaijan’s classification as an upper-middle income country (2008), inflows clearly outweigh outflows and increase almost twofold by 2016, before declining again somewhat in 2019.

The annual growth rate averaged 1.2 per cent over the last 10 years, and was at its highest in 2018. Consequently, since the middle of the 2000s Azerbaijan has experienced a positive net annual migration flow. In absolute figures this would mean, that in 2021 about 2,400 “immigrants” (under the national definition) settled in Azerbaijan (based on PRPs) and 600 “emigrants” left for permanent residence abroad.

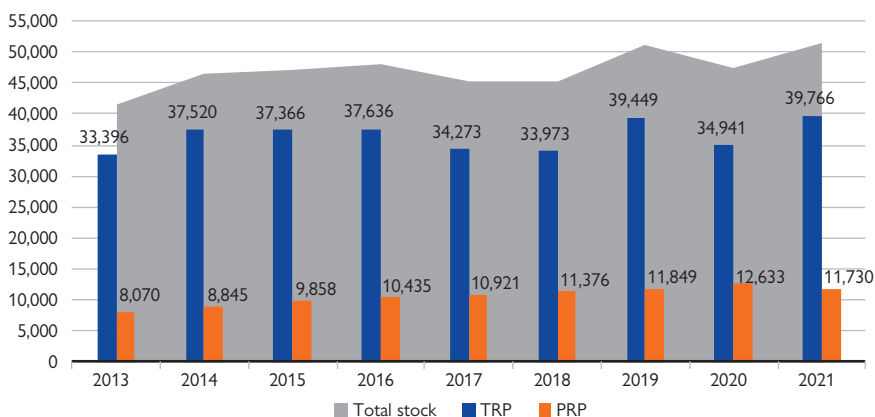
To better assess whether the country’s migration policy is having its intended effect, it is however important to take a cumulative view and to take into account valid temporary residence permits (TRP) in the analysis. Therefore, pursuant to the migration legislation of the country, for the purpose of this profile, migrant stock consists of foreigners and stateless persons who are holders of TRP and PRP. Based on this, the following picture emerges of the migrant stock in the population:

Table 3: Migrant stock in Azerbaijan, 2021

	total	male	female	<18 age	>60 age
Population of Azerbaijan, 2021	10.16 million	50.0%	50.0%	25.7%	13.5%
Temporarily residing foreign nationals (valid TRP, 2021)	39 766	61.0%	39.0%	11.8%	7.4%
Permanently residing foreign nationals (valid PRP, 2021)	11 730	43.0%	57.0%	4.2%	15.5%
Share of migrant stock in population, 2021	0.5 %				

Source: SSC, 2022, Population data. SMS, 2021. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Under the UN DESA definition of an international migrant, an unknown number of TRP holders would be considered long-term international migrants, while the others would fall under the definition of short-term international migrants. The Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan does not define immigrants and emigrants but distinguishes legally between temporarily staying persons who could be described as short-term visitors with no residence permit (and who were captured in Chapter A.1.2), and temporarily and permanently residing migrants who are foreign nationals or stateless persons with TRP or PRP issued. For those without grounds to settle permanently, a TRP can be extended upon application. The number of extensions is unlimited. After temporary residence of at least two years, a permanent residence permit can be applied for.

Figure 8: Migrant stock according to valid resident permits, by year

Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The trend graph shows that most immigrants to Azerbaijan are temporary. There were 39,766 TRP holders in 2021 (about 77% of total international migrant stock, compared to 80.5% in 2013). Although a relative fall, in absolute figures the

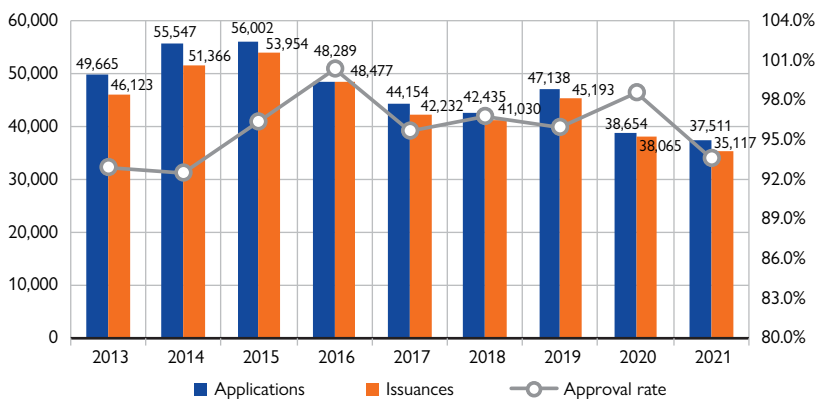
number of TRP holders grew by 19 per cent compared to 2013. No significant slump occurred during the pandemic years, so by 2021 the migrant stock was highest it had been over the period in question.

In addition, the steady increase in PRP holders since 2013 (a 45.4% rise over the period) indicates that long-term immigrants will also slowly but surely become the focus of more attention and policy development. On 1 November 2021, 9,518 PRP holders were present in the country.

A.2.1.1. Inflow and stock of immigrants based on temporary residence permits

The following figure charts all applications (including for extensions/renewals) submitted for TRPs against the number issued (including extensions) between 2013 and 1 November 2021.

Figure 9: Temporary residence permits issued (inflow)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

On average, approximately 46,600 TRP applications were filed each year during the period considered. Here, too, the more migration-intensive years 2014–2015 stand out with up to 56,000 applications, after which a trend reversal occurred, and the number of applications started decreasing. In 2019, it increased again.

On average, 44,600 TRPs are issued each year: the highest yearly figure was 53,954 in 2015, and the lowest 35,117 in 2021. The approval rate is high, averaging around 96 per cent. In 2016, there was a much higher approval rate, which may be linked to the processing of the applications from the previous year.

TRPs are essentially granted because of family ties, for economic and

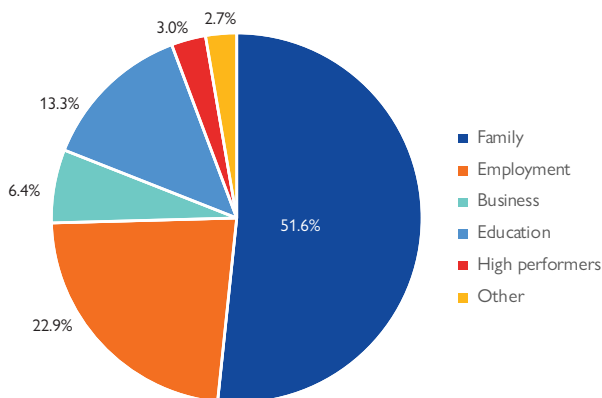
sociocultural reasons or for education and lecturing. Data collection had to be adapted due to a change in the Migration Code, as new grounds for residence have been added.

The following reasons for temporary residence are considered: close relative of a citizen, depositary, investor, real estate owner, highly skilled expert (no work permit required), family member of a migrant, head/deputy of a foreign company, entrepreneur, migrant worker (with work permit), full-time pupil/student, religious work and other grounds. On amendment, the following purpose was added: head/deputy of a local company with foreign ownership.¹⁴

Since 2014, the “other reasons” are no longer recorded statistically, but other purposes of temporary residence were introduced for the purpose of statistical processing from different points, such as for scientific, cultural, artistic, sports and teaching and lecturing activities, but also to record victims of trafficking and persons cooperating with law enforcement agencies, and specialists for extraordinary purposes as decided specifically by the Government.

To paint a clearer picture of reasons for residence, they can be grouped as follows: family-related migration (reunification), labour-related migration (employment), business-related migration (general managers, investors, entrepreneurs, and so on), education-related migration, migration of high performers or specialists in all kind of activities (such as science, education, sports, arts, culture, and highly skilled experts) and other (such as religious work).

Figure 10: Grouped purposes for temporary migration inflow



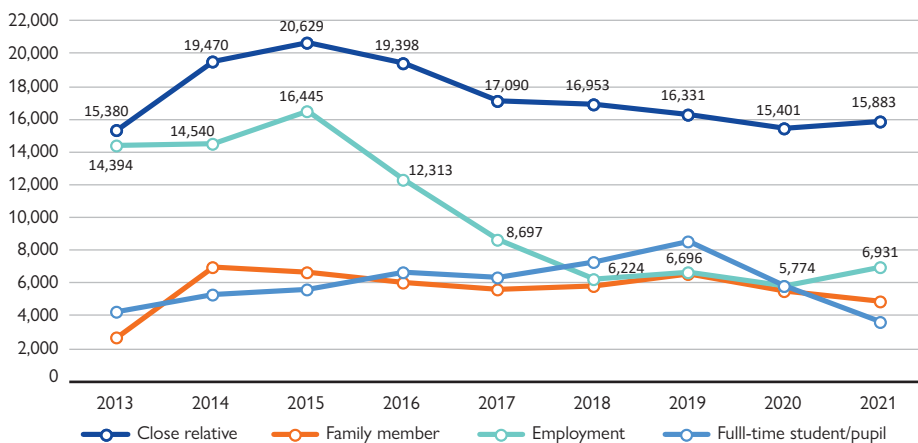
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

¹⁴ The law-abiding enumeration can be found under Article 45 of the Migration Code.

Full-time students and secondary education pupils enrolled at educational institutions account for a significant and growing share of issued TRPs (the pandemic years excluded), and are among the major four purposes for temporary residence inflows. They made up nearly 19 per cent of issued TRPs in 2019 and, together with family- and labour-related migration, account for almost 90 per cent of temporary migration flows in Azerbaijan during the period in question.

Figure 11: Major purposes for temporary migration inflow



Source: SMS, 2021.

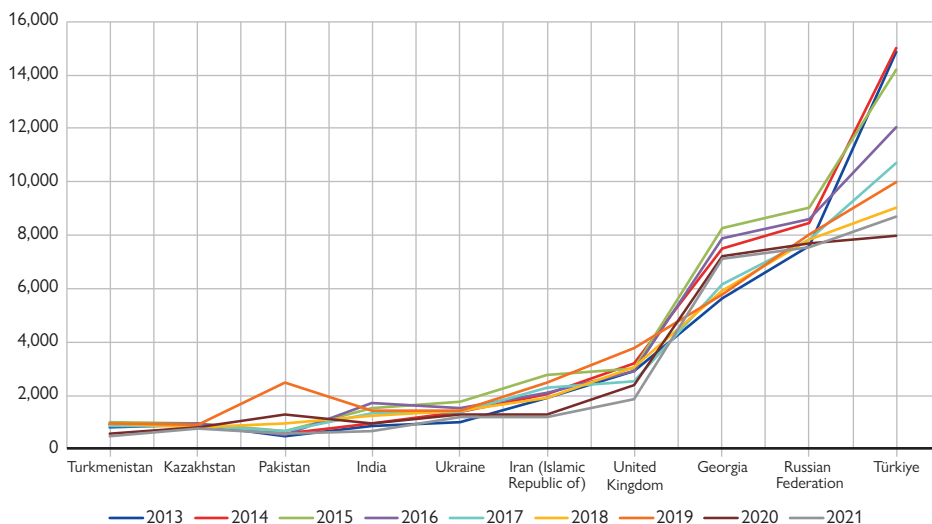
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

It is worth noting that just a quarter (24.4%) of family-related migration concerns the family members of migrants. Nevertheless, family reunification with a close relative has been the major component of temporary migration since 2015, as this category includes both family members of migrants and close relatives of Azerbaijani citizens.

Migrants from as many as 147 countries applied for TRP during the period in question. However, nationals of ten countries regularly account for around 80 per cent of those issued, with 72.4 per cent accounted for by three major states alone: Türkiye (by far the most throughout the years) followed by the Russian Federation and Georgia with a similar trajectory over the years.

The seven remaining states in the top ten include the United Kingdom in fourth place followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran; three States from former Soviet countries – Ukraine (with the most TRPs issued), Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (pretty much on a par), and India and Pakistan.

Figure 12: Issued TRPs, by citizenship, total temporary inflow



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

There are rather large numbers of TRPs issued to temporarily residing migrants from the United States and China, but these average about 500–600 permits per year, compared to about 2,800 permits per year on average from the United Kingdom. Beside the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and France are other western European countries represented in significant numbers. Nearly two-thirds of TRPs are issued to males, and 42.6 per cent are aged 18–36, with 80 per cent of all migrants of working age.

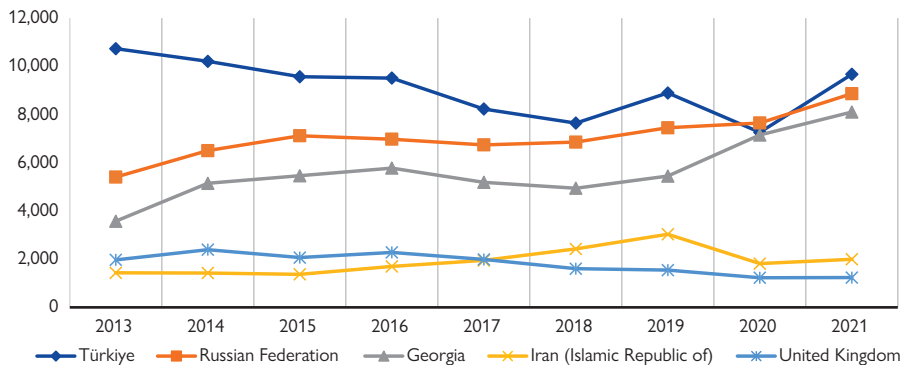
Figure 13 and 14 show the most common citizenship of holders of valid residence permits (both first issuances and renewals) as of December 31 of respective year, except 2021 (1 November), and indicate the migrant stock for each year. On 1 November 2021, 39,766 migrants from 144 different countries were living in Azerbaijan with valid TRPs, an overall growth of 19 per cent compared to 2013. largest stock of temporarily residing migrants come from the top five countries in the following graphic: they consistently accounted for around 70 per cent throughout the period, and, interestingly, in 2021 this increased to over 75 per cent.

While numbers of Iranian and United Kingdom citizens were flat at lower levels, the numbers of Russian Federation and Georgian nationals increased significantly over the period (up 64% and 126% respectively). Türkiye, with most TRP holders for years in the country at the maximum, provided for almost a third of all temporarily residing migrants. After years of decline (falling by 40%), it

started growing again from 2020 and now stands almost at a quarter of migrant stock, followed by migrants from the Russian Federation and Georgia.

There were 9,670 Turkish citizens, 8,866 Russian citizens and 8,104 Georgian citizens holding TRPs as of 1 November 2021; with the Islamic Republic of Iran (1,995) and the United Kingdom (1,237) the largest five contingents had a total of 29,872 valid TRPs in 2021.

Figure 13: Holders of valid TRPs, by citizenship (stock), top five

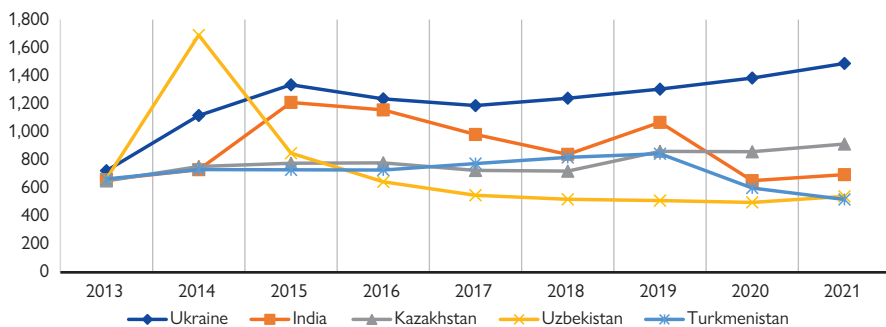


Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Another 12 per cent of the migrant population holding TRPs as of 1 November 2021 can be traced to five other nationalities (Figure 14). Citizens of Ukraine were issued an average of 1,200 TRPs a year, however this doubled over the observation period. Kazakhstan's figures steadily grew, even during the pandemic years, while Uzbekistan after a one-time high in 2014 steadily dropped and is almost on par with Turkmenistan at up to 550 TRP holders in 2021.

Figure 14: Holders of a valid TRP, by citizenship (stock), continued

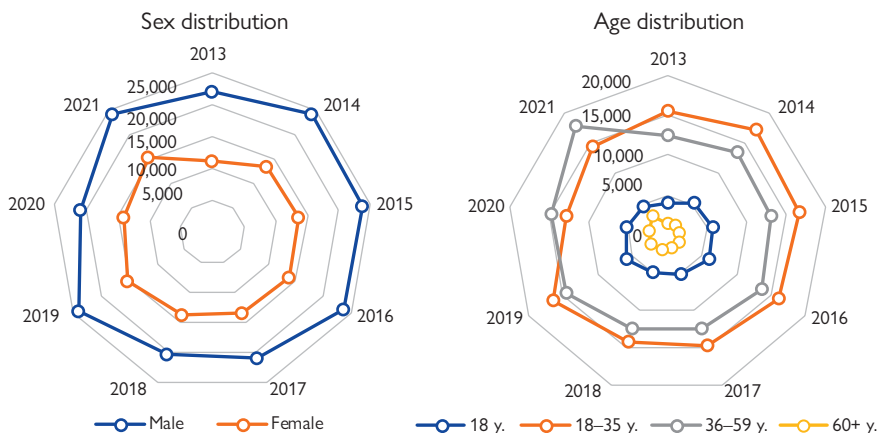


Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Most TRP holders are male migrants and the ages 18 and 35 years were the biggest contingent until 2020 when those aged 36–59 overtook them. The proportion of females increased from 34 per cent in 2013 to 39 per cent in 2021, with the absolute number of females with valid TRPs rising by 37.3 per cent since 2013. As opposed to the migrants with short-term stay, the 2020–2021 pandemic years did not reduce the proportion of women among TRP holders, with the ratio stable since 2017 with increases of 1 per cent every second year since then.

Figure 15: Distribution of TRP holders, by sex and age (stock)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Those aged 60 years and older made up 7.4 per cent of all valid TRP holders in 2021. This share is steadily growing, and the absolute number increased by 111 per cent in comparison to 2013. In contrast, the number of minor migrant TRP holders, who made up 11.8 per cent of all TRP holders in 2021, fell remarkably between 2016 and 2019, reversing in 2019 only to drop again in the pandemic years 2020–2021 almost to the 2013 level.

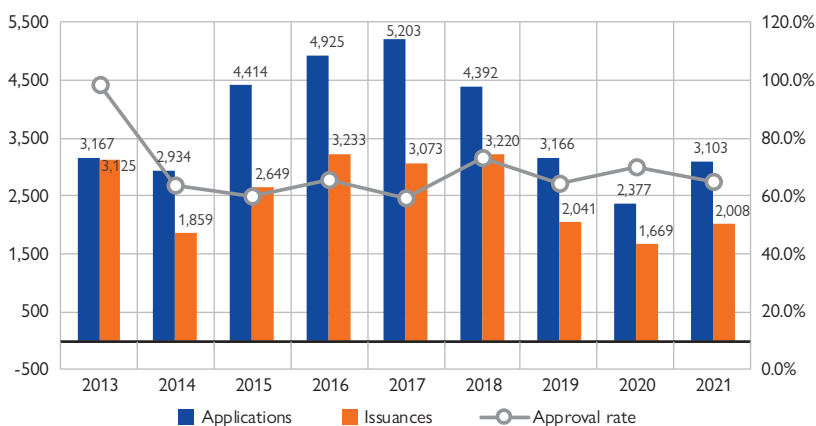
Those 32,121 TRP holders aged 18–59 in 2021 made up almost 80 per cent of this category of migrants. Although in the majority, the numbers of TRPs held by those of working age (18–35 and 36–59 years old) were volatile over the period in question. TRP holders aged 18–35 were significantly higher than those aged 36–59 between 2013 and 2019 (at about 56%); this fell in pandemic-affected 2020. However, the 36–59 age group increased steadily except for a dip in 2017–2018. Then 2019 was marked by an increase for both age groups, but the older age group continued to grow steadily, with an increase of 44.3 per cent between 2013 and 2021.

In general, temporary migration is dominated mostly by working age male migrants, while there is a change towards more females with more than 5 percentage point increase in their proportion of total TRPs issued between 2013 and 2021.

A.2.1.2 Inflow and stock of immigrants based on permanent residence permits

Figure 16 shows the total of all applications (including for extensions and renewals) submitted for a PRP in relation to the relevant issuances (including extensions) for the period between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021.

Figure 16: Permanent residence permits issued (inflow)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

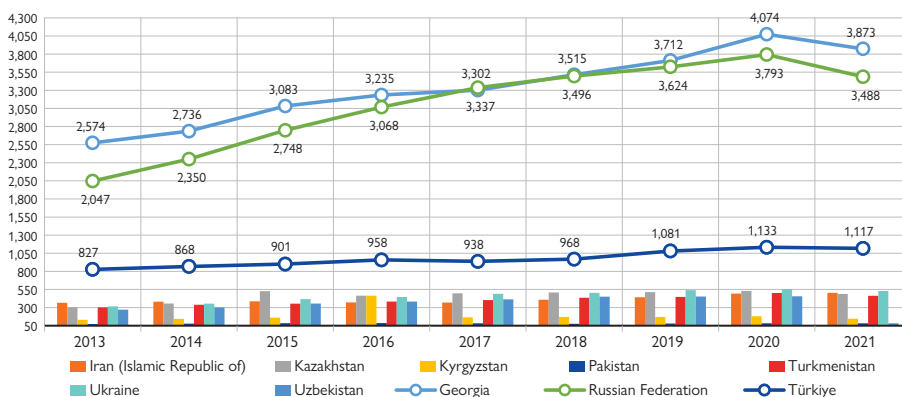
On average, approximately 3,750 applications for PRPs were filed each year during the period. In contrast to TRP where the years 2014–2015 showed a peak in applications, applications for PRP reached their peak in 2017 with more than 5,000 applications, and then showed a decreasing trend. In 2021, the figure rose again, with 3,103 PRP applications. The approval rate is moderate, averaging about 65 per cent when excluding 2013 (when 98.7% of requests were granted).

On average, 2,550 PRPs are issued each year. Most applicants are women, and this is reflected in approvals for the permits. During this period in question, 464 stateless persons applied for PRPs, of whom 408 were granted PRPs.

Figure 17 shows the countries with most holders of valid residence permits as of 31 December every year except 2021 (figure for 1 November). On 1 November 2021, a total of 11,730 PRPs were held by migrants from 58 different countries, more than 45 per cent more than 2013.

In 2021, Georgian citizens held 3,873 PRPs in Azerbaijan; together with citizens of the Russian Federation (3,488), and Türkiye (1,117) they made up 72.3 per cent of all PRP holders in 2021. Over the entire period, these three countries had as high as 75.8 per cent of all PRPs held by immigrants. A remarkable increase can be observed up to 2021, when Georgia and the Russian Federation experienced a slump in growth due to the pandemic, while Türkiye remained stable in third place, with moderate growth since 2018. The number of PRP holders with Georgian citizenship increased by 50.5 per cent between 2013 and 2021; increases were also noted among citizens of the Russian Federation (70.4%), and Türkiye (35.1%) over the same period.

Figure 17: Holders of valid PRPs by citizenship, top ten



Source: SMS, 2021.

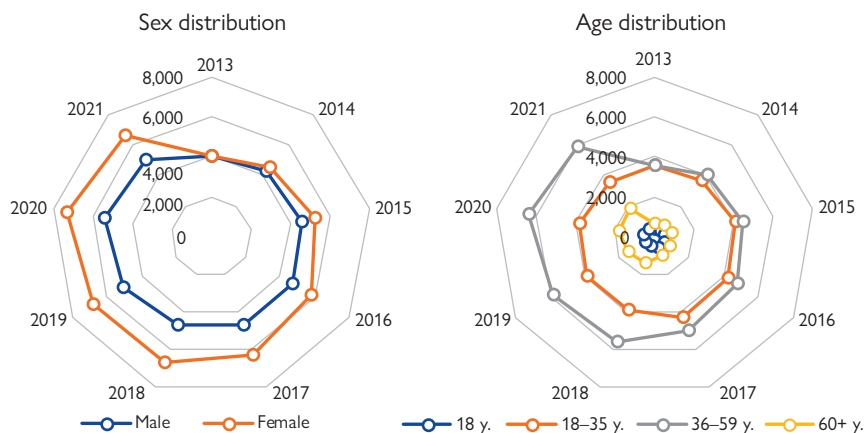
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Overall, the top ten countries account for an average of 92 per cent of all PRP holders. In addition to the three countries already mentioned, the rest are countries formerly part of the Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Like with TRPs, Ukraine regularly has the fourth largest number of PRPs (528 in 2021) followed by Kazakhstan (488) and Turkmenistan (462). There is an almost equal share of nationals of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan over the period.

The age and sex distribution of PRP holders (see Figure 18) primarily shows a clear surplus of female migrants and a plurality in the 36–59 age range. The proportion of females increased from 50 per cent in 2013 to 57 per cent in 2021, and the absolute number of females with PRPs increased by 60.6 per cent over that period. Like the trend among TRP holders, the 2020–21 pandemic years did not reduce the proportion of females among PRP holders, with almost no changes in the proportion except for 2018.

Persons aged 60 years and older made up 15.5 per cent of all holders of valid PRPs in 2021, twice as many as held TRPs in the same year. Their number is steadily growing and was 173 per cent higher in 2021 than in 2013. In contrast, PRP holders who are minors made up 4.2 per cent of PRP holders in 2021 – 7 per cent less than the proportion of TRP holders.

Figure 18: Distribution of PRP holders, by sex and age



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Those aged 18–59 made up 80.3 per cent (in absolute figures 9,419) of all PRP holders in 2021. Generally, there were more PRP holders aged 36–59 than 18–35 throughout the observation period, with a bigger difference since 2016. However, the 18–35 age group showed a slight increasing trend in absolute numbers until 2017 then started falling to reach the level of 2013 and holding 3,510 PRPs 2021.

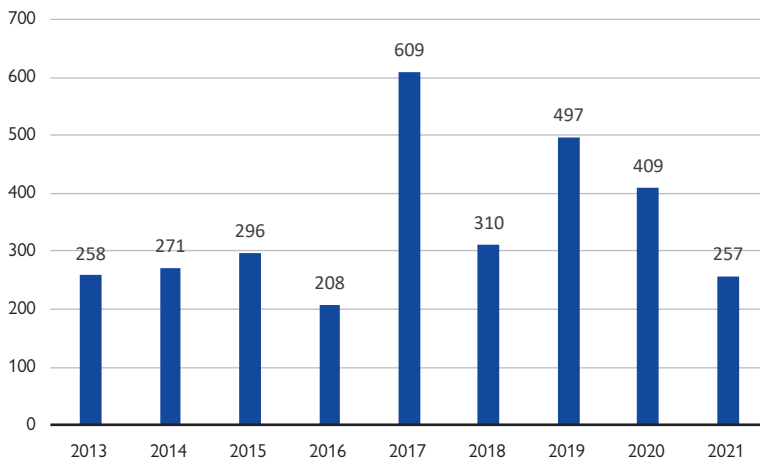
A.2.1.3. Citizenship

Data available from SMS for 2018–2021 show that a total of 88,656 persons' affiliation to the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan; of these 53.6 per cent (47,525 persons) were under 18 years, and the rest aged above 18 (41,131 persons). Males made up 54.5 per cent (48,291 persons) of all persons for whom citizenship was established.

In total, 3,115 foreign nationals and stateless persons (including children) from a total of 31 countries acquired Azerbaijani citizenship by means of naturalization between 2013 and 1 November 2021. In 2017 alone, around 20 per cent of all naturalizations took place, the peak of the observation period. Since acquisition of citizenship is dependent on formal procedures, annual fluctuations in the number

of naturalization cases remains less important. During the observation period, on average 346 persons have acquired citizenship, with an increasing trend in naturalizations in recent years.

Figure 19: Acquisitions of citizenship by naturalization

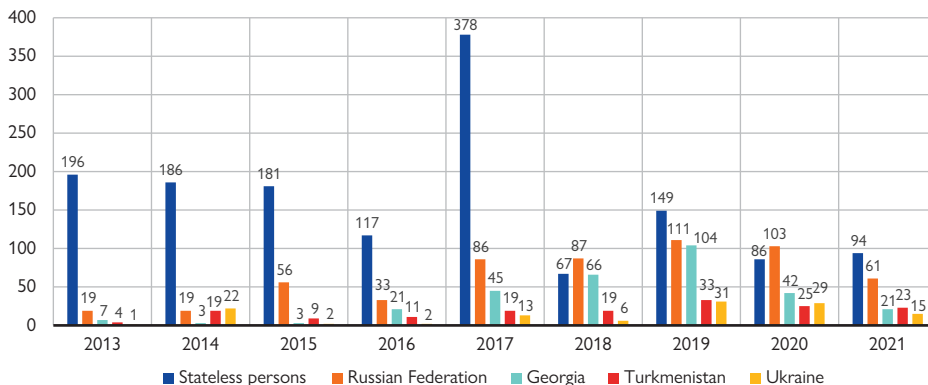


Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Stateless persons account 47 per cent of all the naturalizations, with top four countries, citizens of which adopted Azerbaijani citizenship, it covers almost 84 per cent of total naturalizations, for the period observed. The top four are previous Russian, Georgian, Turkmen and Ukrainian citizens, with the Russian Federation accounting for 18.5 per cent throughout the period observed, followed by previous Georgian citizens (10%).

Figure 20: Naturalizations by former citizenship



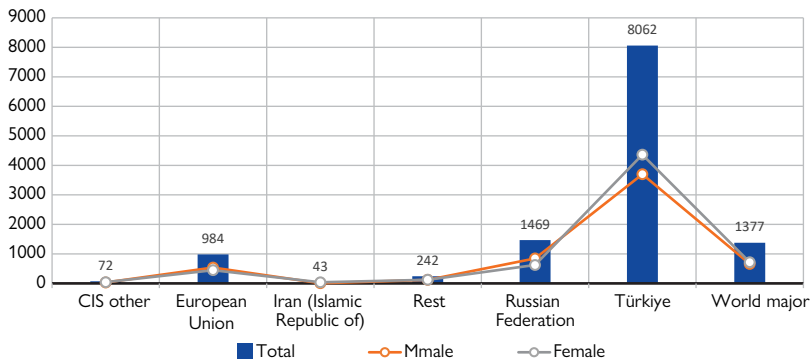
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The Law on Citizenship obliges citizens to notify the competent authority about any cases of dual citizenship within one month if citizenship of a foreign state is obtained. In total, 12,249 notifications have been issued in relation to 47 countries around the world. Almost 80 per cent of these notifications are made in relation to Türkiye and the Russian Federation, with Türkiye accounting for by far the largest number. Nevertheless, the number of notifications for the Russian Federation is still higher than the total number of notifications regarding all 20 countries in the European Union where citizenship was obtained.

Third in the list is the United States with 5 per cent of all notifications. Over a third of European Union notifications go to Sweden, at around 100 or slightly above a year. Other European Union countries, with roughly similar numbers, are France, Germany, Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Other classical countries of immigration – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, New Zealand and Japan – account for 11.2 per cent of notifications, although the latter two are much smaller.

Figure 21: Acquisition of other citizenship (notifications), by country of residence



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Overall, females and males are balanced in sex distribution. Only in Türkiye do women predominate slightly, with 54 per cent. In the Russian Federation this ratio is reversed, but not as drastically as for example in Germany, Belgium or Ukraine, where males outnumber females by almost two-thirds.

By age, 19–35-year olds make up the 41 per cent, followed by 36–50-year olds 28 per cent. Under 18s make up about 17 per cent, with those over 50 the smallest group.

A.2.2. Immigration for employment

According to national legislation “labour migration” means “a change of place of residence of a natural person who migrates legally from one country to another with the aim to carry out paid labour activity”. This natural person under the legal definition is called a migrant worker.

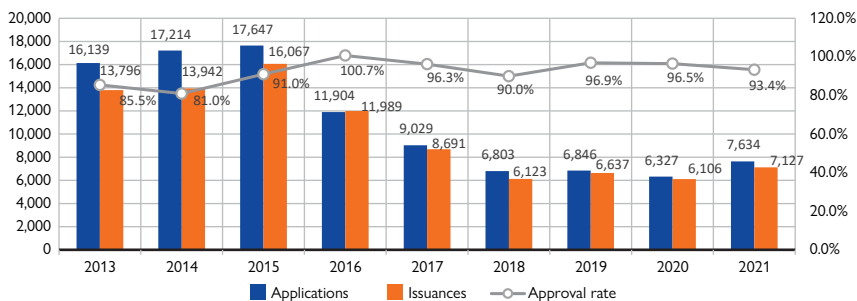
Well-managed labour migration, in terms of decent work conditions and fair and ethical recruitment mechanisms, is important for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 in Agenda 2030 (Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all) and to fulfil the sixth objective of the Global Compact for Migration (Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work). Understanding the composition and characteristics of migrant workers underpins the development of sensible, evidence-based policymaking across a broad spectrum of development areas, especially the economy and the labour market.

Much of the information presented in this section is based on work permits issued and extended in any given calendar year. A work permit is required to work, and extends to a wide range of services and occupations (economic activities), depending on need. A work permit may be issued for a duration of three, six, or twelve months.

Work permits are based on the labour quotas established by the Cabinet of Ministers, which reflect the country’s labour needs. According to national law, the purpose of this labour market-related quota is to control labour migration to Azerbaijan in accordance with foreign workforce demand. The quota is recalculated and decided annually.

Figure 25 shows the trends in applications submitted and issuances for work permits (including for extensions/ renewals) between 2013 and 1 November 2021.

Figure 22: Applications and issuances of work permits



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

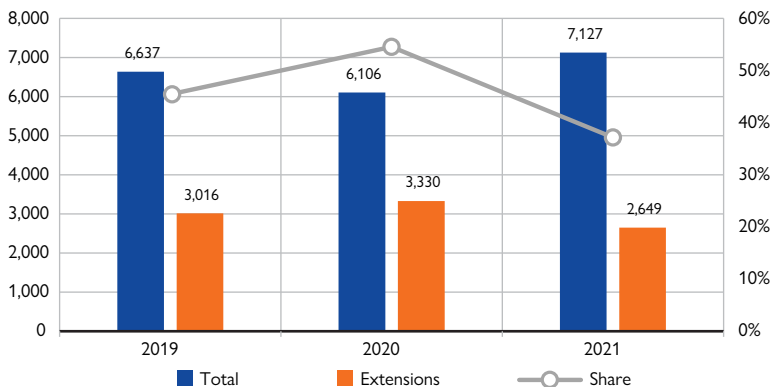
Altogether, 99,543 applications were filed during the period, on average about 11,100 applications a year. With up to almost 18,000 applications, a peak was reached in the migration-intense years of 2014–2015.

Between 1 January 2013 and 1 November 2021, 90,478 migrant workers from roughly 100 countries were issued work permits or had them extended. On average, 10,000 work permits are issued each year, with the highest number (16,067) issued in 2015, and the lowest (6,106) in 2020.

The approval rate is high, almost as high as for TRPs, averaging around 92 per cent. In 2016, a much higher approval rate was evident, which is linked to the processing of the application load from the previous year. The trend subsequently levels off above the average rate (96%), only interrupted in 2018 which had an approval rate of around 90 per cent.

Since 2019, data on extensions to work permits have been collected separately for statistical purposes. These clearly show (see Figure 23) that an average of 46 per cent of work permits issued are extensions. In 2020 more than half of all work permits issued were for extensions. However, the proportion fell by 17 percentage points in the first 10 months of 2021. A vanishingly small proportion of extensions were granted because of relocation by the same employer (Article 70.2 of Migration Code).

Figure 23: All issuances and extensions of work permits

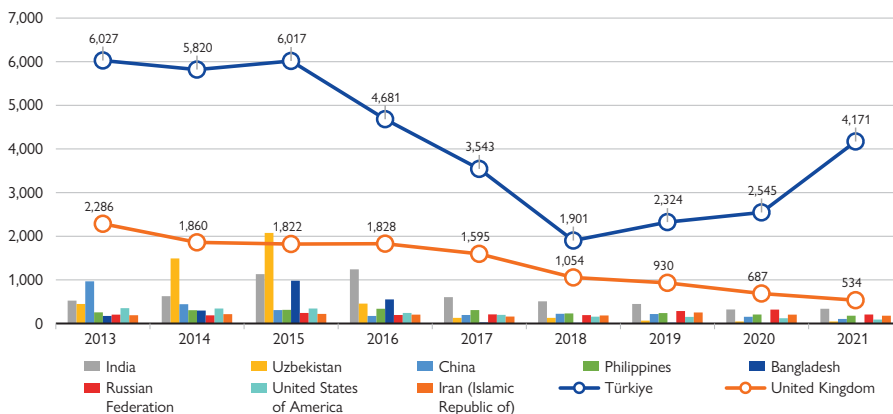


Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Ten countries account for around 81 per cent of work permit issuances and extensions in Azerbaijan. Citizens of Türkiye and the United Kingdom together receive 55 per cent of all work permit issued.

Figure 24: Issued work permits, by citizenship, top ten



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

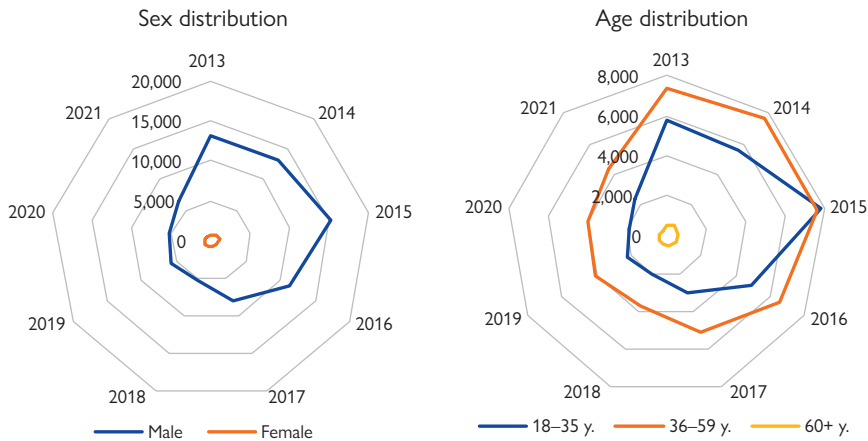
Over the observation period, citizens of Türkiye were the largest group of migrant workers every year, they account for just under 41 per cent of labour migrants from the top 10 countries. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of citizens of Türkiye issued with work permits was shrinking, but there has been a steady increase since 2020. On average, around 4,100 Turkish migrant workers with work permits were present in the country every year over the period.

Nationals of the United Kingdom were the second-largest working migrant group over the entire observation period, accounting for 14 per cent of all work permits issued. Overall, numbers of migrant workers from the United Kingdom have been falling, but their proportion of total work permits issued oscillated at 14–18 per cent before the pandemic.

With an average of between 640 and 540 migrant workers per year, nationals of India and Uzbekistan stand out; India has a higher share and a more entrenched stock. The other top ten nationalities have an average of less than 300 migrant workers per year and a stable trend. The top four nationalities together accounted for two-thirds of all migrant workers in Azerbaijan over the entire period.

Within the observation period on average about 8 per cent of migrant workers with issued work permits were women. Their proportion among migrant workers is rising, and the share was 21 per cent in 2019 (a pre-pandemic benchmark) than in 2013. On 1 November 2021, the proportion of migrant workers who were women was 10.6 per cent. While the number of men grew in 2021 compared with the previous year and returned to pre-pandemic levels, the share of women did not grow and solidified the pandemic induced downturn.

Figure 25: Issued work permits, by sex and age



Source: SMS, 2021.

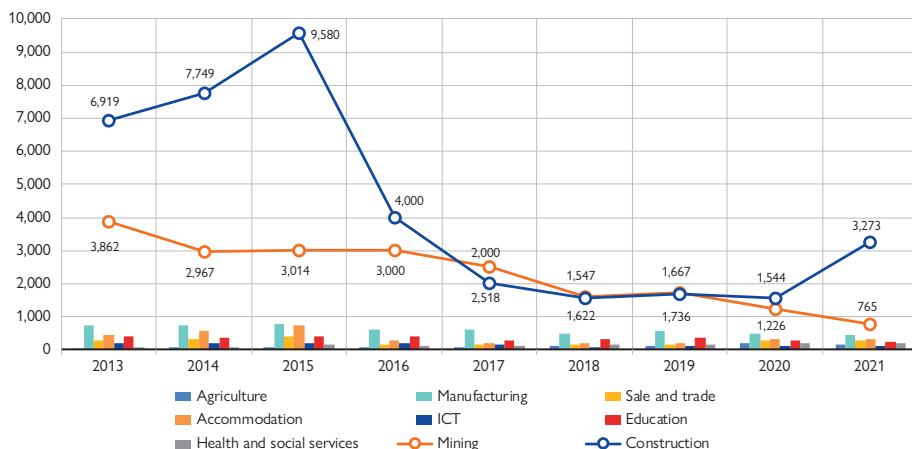
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Migrant workers aged 36–59 outnumbered 18–35-year olds throughout the period, except in 2015, when they were almost on a par. While the 36–59 years old initially made up around 55 per cent of migrant workers, their share solidified at about least 61 per cent toward the end of the period. Those over 60 account for less than 5 per cent on average over all the years.

Work permits are issued for 19 different economic activities (sectors) according to statistical classification. Highest on the list is the construction and mining sector, which accounts for about 72 per cent of all employed migrant workers with work permits. Other important industries include manufacturing, accommodation and utilities, education, trade/sales, ICT, and health/social services. These sectors employ 20.4 per cent of migrant workers; the nine sectors together account for 93.5 per cent of the overall migrant worker force (see Figure 26 below).

The remaining, 7 per cent, are distributed among the other sectors, which, however, always require just a few dozen employees during the observation period. However, this does not apply to the agricultural sector, which in recent years, more precisely since 2018, has shown increases, of more than 220 per cent between 2013 and 2021.

Figure 26: Major employment sectors of work permits issued



Source: SMS, 2021.

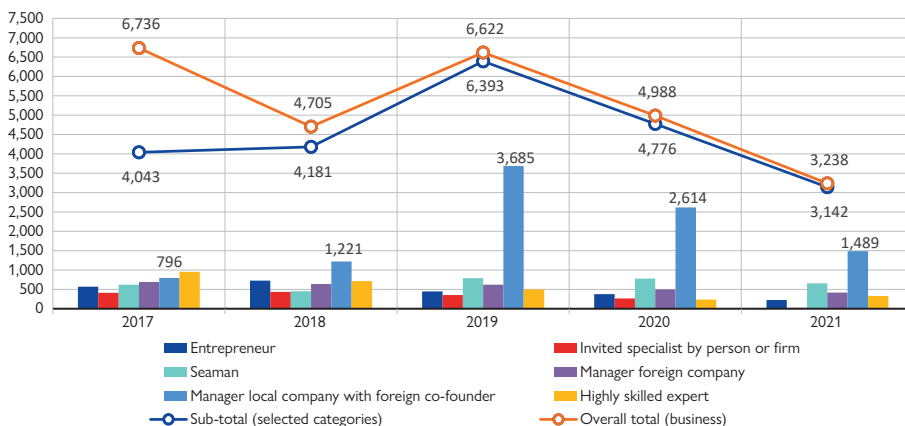
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The trend in the construction sector shows a high and growing labour demand, which drops off in 2015 after a peak and reaches its lowest level of 1,622 migrant workers in 2018, thus shrinking by 76.6 per cent in relation to 2013. Thereafter, the number of migrant workers in the construction sector stagnates somewhat until 2020, when the construction industry gets a boost, resulting in a growing trend for labour.

In contrast, the trend in mining is quite different. In 2013, this industry started at a figure 44.2 per cent lower than the construction industry, only to gradually decrease further over the observation period. With 765 migrant workers in 2021 in this industry, the number had fallen by 80.2 per cent since 2013.

Article 64 of the Migration Code specifies cases where work permits are not required. Figure 27 does not include all categories exempted from the obligation to obtain a work permit (such as permanent residents, refugees and asylum-seekers, and migrants married to Azerbaijani citizens). The focus is placed on business-related migration and high performers/specialists. This business and high-performance related migration comprises 9.4 per cent of the migrant inflow, as shown in the chapter on TRPs issued based on legal purposes of residence (Figure 10). As mentioned, due to legal changes, which resulted in a change in collection of statistics specifically about business-related migration, exact data are only available from 2017. Although this is not the case with the high-skilled migrant workforce, this approach was chosen for the sake of a unified picture, as the high demand in the years up to 2016 in particular – the migration-intense years – paints a different picture than the one that has emerged from 2016 onward.

Figure 27: High-skilled employment and business-related migration



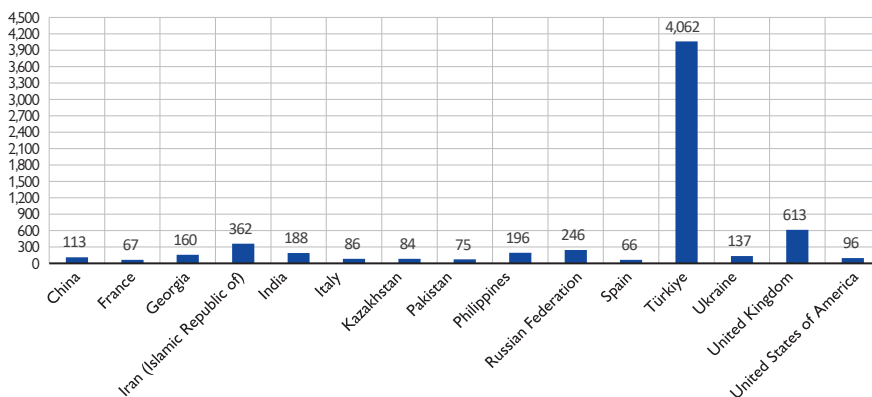
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

This category shows the same sex- and age-specific picture as for migrant workers: 91.5 per cent are male and 57.7 per cent are aged 36–59, with 37.2 per cent aged 18–35 years.

The legally secured incentives for high-ranking managers of private entrepreneurs with at least one foreign co-founder have been in force since the 2017 amendment. This targeted group make up 37.3 per cent of those issued with high-skilled and business-related work permits, followed by high-ranking managers of foreign companies. High-skilled experts and entrepreneurs make up roughly a 10 per cent share of these categories.

Figure 28: Work permit holders, by citizenship, top 15



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

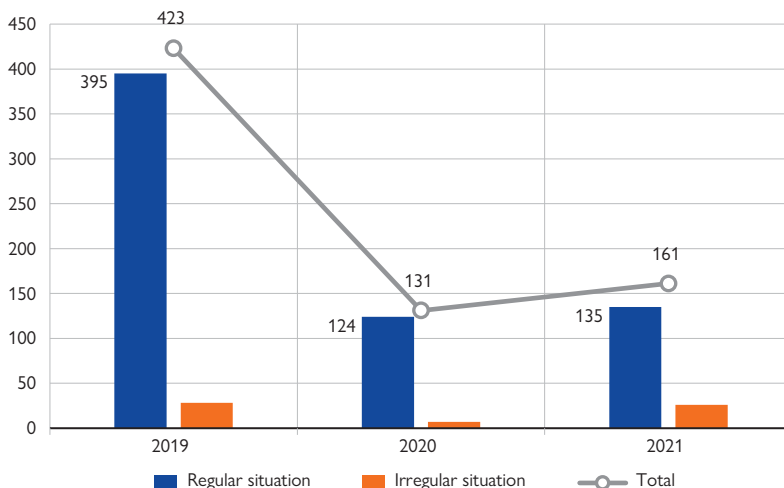
The most important stock of migrant workers can be essentially identified in the top 15 countries, which make up over 90 per cent of permit holders. Migrant workers from Türkiye alone account for 55.7 per cent of the total.

The second largest group are migrant workers from the United Kingdom with a share of 8.4 per cent, followed by India and the Russian Federation. These four countries account for 72.5 per cent of the migrant workforce.

As the number of work permits issued for 2021 is almost identical to the work permits valid as of 1 November 2021, the sex and age distribution will not be discussed in more detail here. Male migrants predominate (88.8%) as do 36–59 year olds (62.7%); the over-sixties play a marginal role.

Migrants can only work in the country after obtaining work permits. A valid visa, decision on extension of temporary staying period or TRP does not allow migrants to engage in labour activities, except for cases specified in Article 64 of the Migration Code, where a work permit is not required.

Figure 29: Migrant workers in irregular employment, infringements



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Data collected between 2019 and 1 November 2021 indicate that the vast majority of migrants involved in irregular labour activity were migrants with valid residence status violating declared purposes of arrival in the country. Over the observation period, they averaged just under 91 per cent of all identified cases for irregular employment (without work permit). In 2021, their share was 83.9 per cent, 9.5 percentage points less than in 2019.

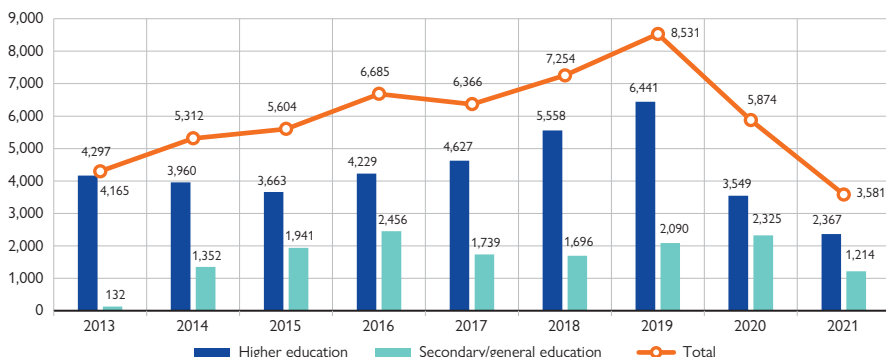
In total, nationals of 21 countries were identified over the period considered, and 715 infringements procedures occurred in total, the majority in 2019 (59.2%).

Since nationals of Türkiye make up the largest share of migrant workers, they are also most involved in irregular labour activity (57.5%). In addition to Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Georgia and China all had notable shares of administrative infringements; in 2021, in addition to Türkiye, this was only the case for Georgia.

A.2.3. Immigration for study purposes

Secondary or general school attendance and higher education enrolment are the third most important purpose of temporary residence after family- and labour-related migration, accounting for 13.6 per cent of all temporary residing migrants – more than twice as many as those staying for business purposes.

Figure 30: International full-time pupils/students enrolled, by TRPs issued (inflow)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Over the period considered, a total of 53,504 TRPs for education and study purposes were issued, an average of 5,944 TRPs a year. Of these, over 72 per cent were students rather than schoolchildren on average over the entire period, reaching an absolute peak in 2019 after a sustained increase since 2015.

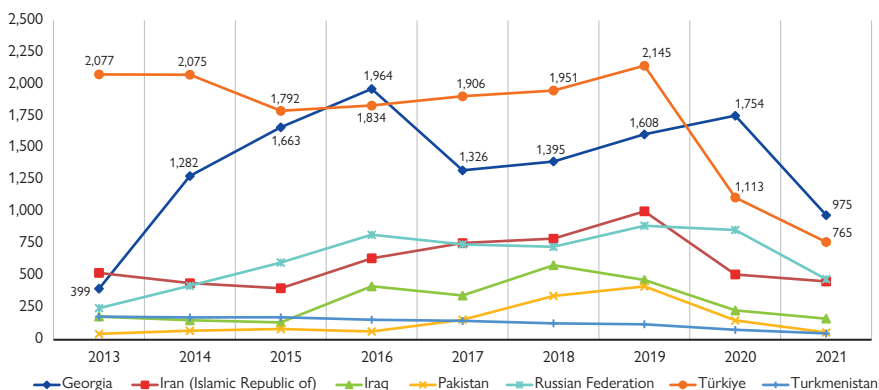
The number of students is on the rise, and only slumped during the pandemic years. In the pre-pandemic year (2019) the number of students was 54.6 per cent higher than in 2013 and 15.9 per cent higher than 2018. In 2019, a significant number of students were participating in Ministry of Science and Education student exchange programmes – with 3,900 admitted students, this was the highest figure since admission year 2013/14. Generally, there has been a notable increase of students participating in these programmes. According

Ministry of Science and Education data, in total, 19,200 students were admitted to higher education within student exchange programmes between 2013 and 2019, amounting to 55.8 per cent on average of the TRPs issued for higher education over the period in question (admission years).

Over the whole period, a total of 14,945 pupils (or an average of 1,660 a year) were issued with permits for temporary residence in Azerbaijan for secondary school attendance, with the highest number in 2016. Their number then fell by around 30 per cent, only to rise again in 2020 to a similar level to 2016. In contrast, the number of students fell to just over 60 per cent of total mobility the same year, or by 81 per cent from the previous year.

The top 15 countries of origin, which together account for 93.5 per cent of all TRPs issued for school and study purposes, have been divided into two figures for the sake of better visualization.

Figure 31: International full-time pupils/students enrolled, by citizenship



Source: SMS, 2021.

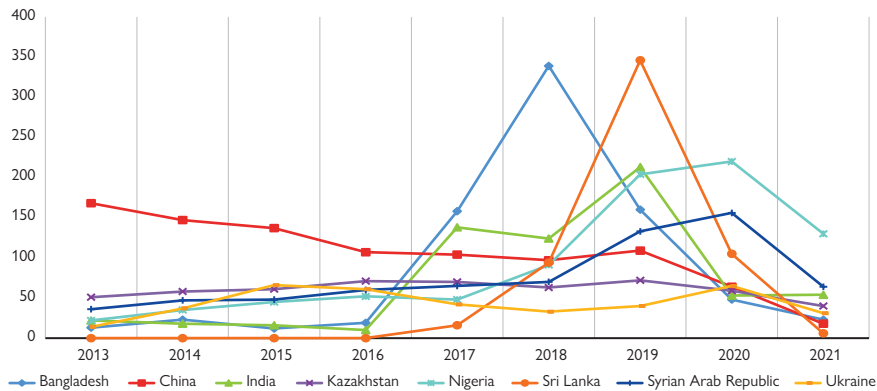
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Nationals of Türkiye and Georgia account for more than half (52.4%) of all temporarily residing international pupils and students. While the proportion of pupils and students from Türkiye has remained reasonably stable despite volatility over the period in question except for the two pandemic years (almost halving), the proportion of Georgian pupils and students rose rapidly from 2013 onwards, only to fall again in 2017 (by 38.3%) and rise again slightly by 2021. Overall, the number of pupils and students from Türkiye is over a quarter higher than that from Georgia.

The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran account for a further 21 per cent in this category; their trends over time are largely similar

and are fairly balanced in absolute terms. On average, 630 pupils and students from both countries stay in Azerbaijan each year for education purposes, with the number from the Russian Federation 5 per cent higher than from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Figure 32: Foreign full-time pupils/students enrolled, by citizenship, continued



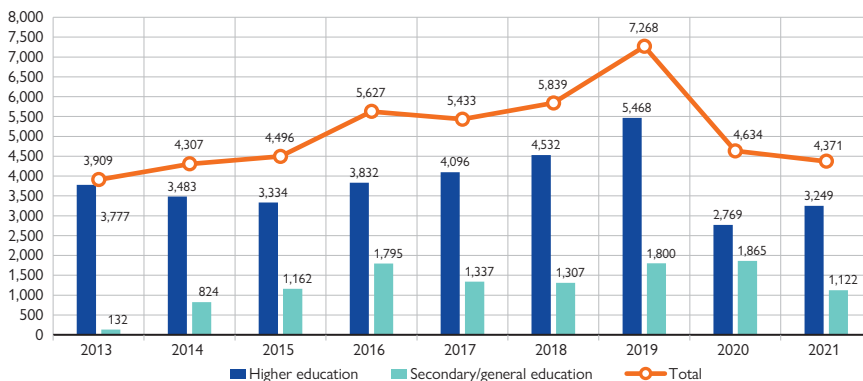
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine fall in the top 15, the latter two though at a low level with a few dozen pupils and students each per year. The same applies to South Asian countries (India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) as well as China, which together with Nigeria follows the top 7 on the lower rate with 105 and 95 pupils and students on average per year.

As of 1 November 2021, a total of 4,371 TRPs were held by students and pupils, of which 74.3 per cent (3,249) were for students enrolled at higher educational institutions and 1,122 for pupils attending secondary schools.

Figure 33: International full-time pupils/students enrolled by TRP holder (stock)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

While the number of pupils fell in 2021, the proportion of students increased compared to the previous year. Overall, there has been a steady upward trend in the number of students since 2015, which was only interrupted by the pandemic years. In 2019, there were almost 44.8 per cent more foreign students than in 2013. In contrast, the proportion of pupils is relatively volatile, with departures and arrivals into the education system by TRP holders alternating continuously.

A.2.4. Forced migration: refugees and asylum-seekers

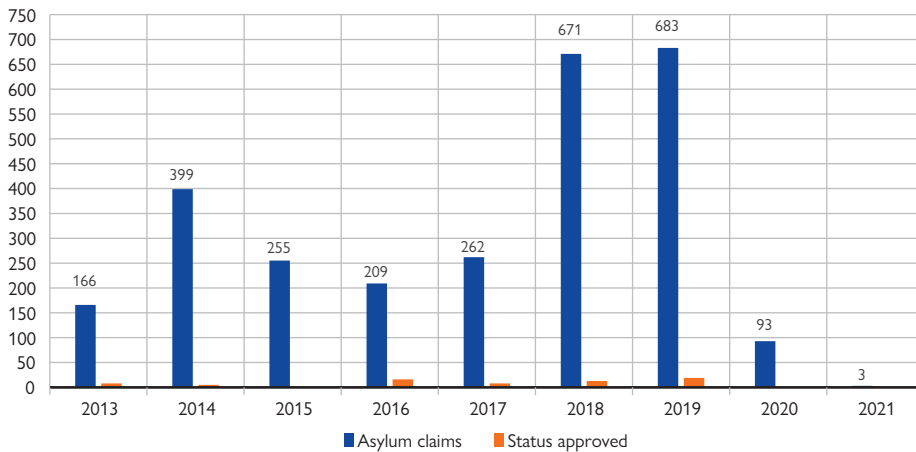
Asylum-seekers who apply for refugee status in the Republic of Azerbaijan as a host country under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol refer to the SMS, which is the first-instance decision-making authority. However, national legislation does not provide for any form of subsidiary protection or status on humanitarian grounds, and therefore no data will be provided on this.

Asylum-seekers may appeal against a rejection to the administrative court in Baku. The appeal process may then be further pursued in the second instance at the Court of Appeal and in the third instance at the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, refugees and asylum-seekers under the UNHCR mandate are not considered for this trend analysis, as Azerbaijan has had a national asylum procedure since 2007 and is party to the Refugee Convention. Additionally, UNHCR stopped assessing asylum applications as of 1 July 2020. Refugees recognized by UNHCR were tolerated by the Government, and asylum-seekers who had registered with UNHCR before 1 July 2020 received protection letters from UNHCR to protect them against refoulement.

Analysis of data on internally displaced persons, be it conflict induced, or disaster induced, is included in the chapter on internal migration (see chapter A.6). Figure 34 shows the development of asylum claims in relation to asylum status approvals between 2013 and 2021.

Figure 34: Asylum applications and status approvals



Source: SMS, 2021.

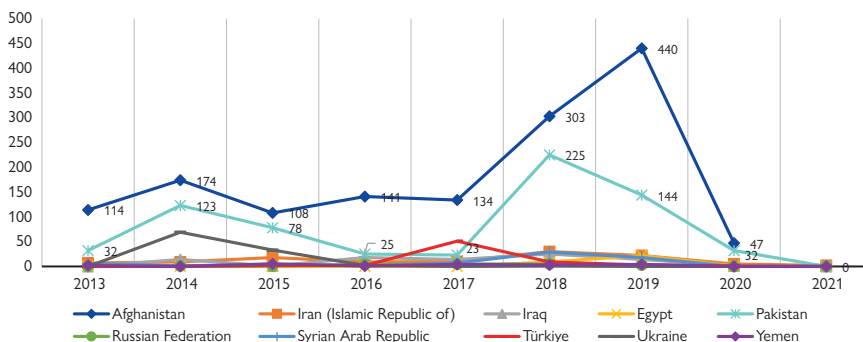
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

On average, about 300 applications for asylum are filed every year. In absolute figures 2,741 asylum claims (including family members) were made by 1,475 principal applicants from a total of 32 countries of origin during the period considered. The years 2018 and 2019 with close to 700 claims each year stand out as having the highest number of applications. In 2019, the number of applications was 304 per cent higher than in 2013 and 71.2 per cent more than in 2014, which was also a year with an above-average number of applications. The pandemic years recorded an all-time low for the observation period; in 2021 (until 1 November), three applications had been submitted.

In total, 70 asylum applications (including family members) have been approved for 24 principal applicants from six countries over the period considered. However, no refugee status was granted in 2015 or in 2021 (by 1 November).

Ten states account for about 97 per cent of the countries of origin of the asylum-seekers.

Figure 35: Asylum applications, by citizenship



Source: SMS, 2021.

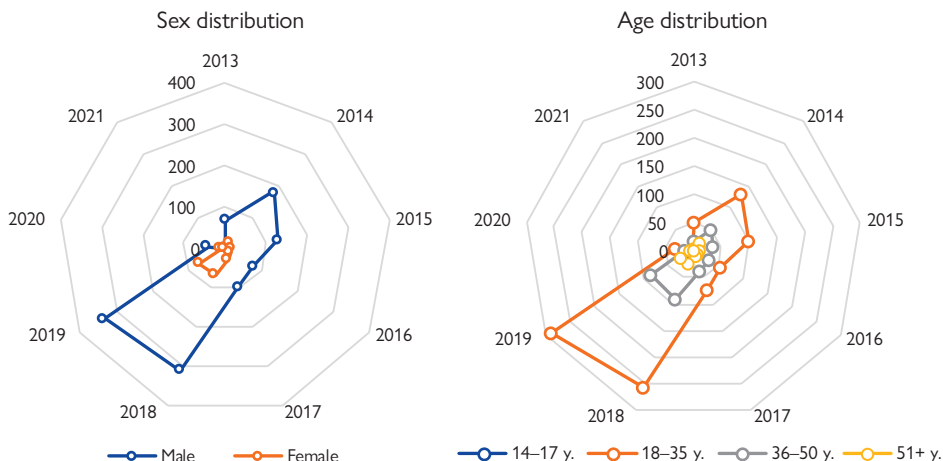
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Every year, the highest number of asylum applications comes from Afghan nationals, who accounted for 53.3 per cent of all applications over the observation period with 1,461 applications (including family members). Pakistan is second with less than half of this share, at 24.9 per cent (682 applications). With just over 100 asylum applications each in total, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ukraine follow, then Iraq, Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic; the latter three with 74 asylum applications a year on average over the period considered.

While the other countries fell, except for a few outliers such as in case of Ukraine in 2014, Türkiye in 2017 or the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018, the applications for Afghanistan and Pakistan showed a different picture. Applications from Afghan nationals, for example, showed a clear upward trend before the pandemic years, a steep one specifically since 2017. In 2019 alone, nearly a third of all applications were from Afghanistan, as applications were 286 per cent higher than in 2013. Pakistan has been more volatile in this regard; applications increased rapidly from 2017 and then began to decline in 2018 to the point where they reached 2013 levels in 2020 (32 applications a year).

The existing data regarding sex and age distribution refer to principal applicants over 14 years of age; others added as family members in the total count are not shown separately and therefore cannot be included.

Figure 36: Asylum applications, by sex and age



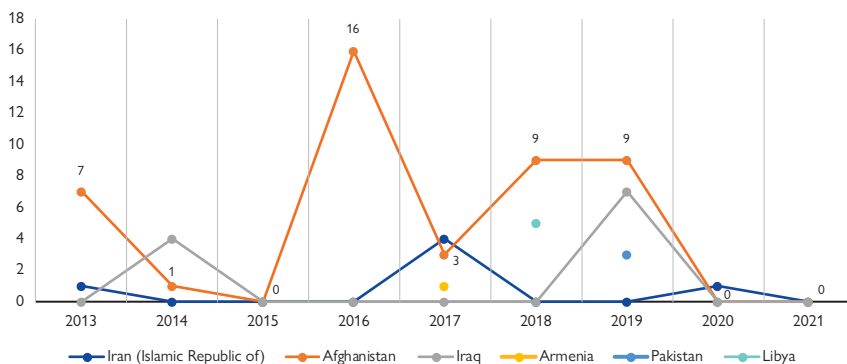
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

In terms of sex distribution, over the entire observation period, almost 85 per cent of the principal applicants were men. This is particularly the case for Pakistani applicants, where the proportion of women has only increased somewhat in recent years, since 2017. Women are more prominent among Afghan applicants, and were on the rise until the pandemic years. As with Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, women were mostly family members of a male applicant. This is also indicated by the large number of family members included in the overall count.

Almost 92 per cent of principal applicants are aged 18–50 years, with 67.2 per cent of all principal applicants aged 18–35 years. Less than 1 per cent are minors above 14 years of age.

Figure 37: Approved status, by citizenship



Source: SMS, 2021.

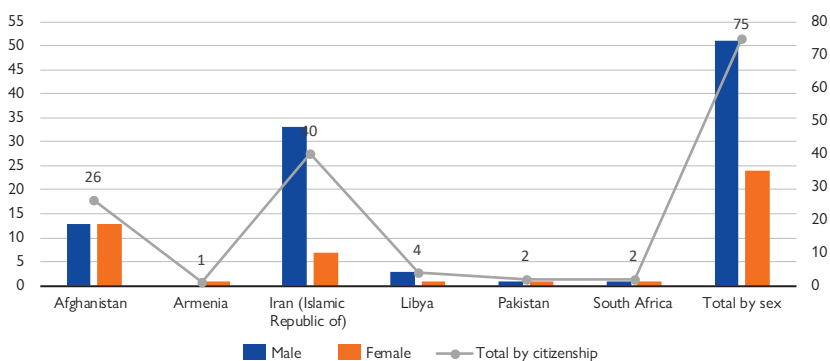
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

During the observation period, a total of 70 persons (including family members) from six countries of origin were granted refugee status. Almost two thirds of these (62.9%) were Afghan nationals, a third of whom were recognized in 2016 alone. In addition, Iranian and Iraqi asylum-seekers are repeatedly granted status. Refugees from Armenia, Libya and Pakistan were only granted asylum in one year each (see marks in 2017, 2018 and 2019) within the observation period.

In three asylum procedures, asylum was granted to individuals; most procedures are for families, with family members included in the total count. The sex ratio among those granted asylum is also almost evenly distributed: women account for 54 per cent. By age, 50 per cent are 18–35 while 22.7 per cent are 36–50. Only two principal applicants were older than this.

As of 1 November 2021, 75 persons with recognized refugee status from 6 countries of origin (according to citizenship) are in Azerbaijan; five persons more than what were approved over the period considered.

Figure 38: Refugee stock, by sex and citizenship



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

More than half of the recognized refugees originate from the Islamic Republic of Iran (53.3%) and 34.6 per cent from Afghanistan. These two countries account for almost 90 per cent of the refugee stock at the reporting date.

Measured by the total number of principal applicants, 68 per cent of the recognized refugees are male. The largest proportion of women come from Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The 36–59 age group accounts for over 40 per cent of refugees living in Azerbaijan. Young people up to the age of 18 make up just under 20 per cent. Those aged over 60 make up about 12 per cent and are exclusively from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

A.3. Emigration

This section presents key migration trends related to international migration from Azerbaijan, such as stocks of emigrants and net migration rates in foreign countries. Data on emigration are notoriously scant. The limitations of emigration data in part relate to the practical challenges associated with the data collection systems from which they are derived, such as border exit data and deregistration of residence. It is not always feasible to collect substantive data on every national exiting the country, and the process of deregistration is often neglected by those changing residence.

On the other hand, problems with data stem from the reliability and integrity of the information that is self-reported by nationals exiting the country. Even in cases where exiting nationals accurately report their migration intentions, and there are systems in place to record, relay and report these data, once they are in another country their plans can change. For example, a temporary job may turn into a permanent contract; students may remain in countries after completing their degrees; or tourists may secure permission for regular, legal employment and stay on for many more years than envisaged on exit.

Additionally, data that are not derived from the self-reporting of nationals exiting the country often reflect the type of visa or permit held by the national upon exit. These data reflect the administrative categories that exiting nationals are classified by, such as the type or period of validity of the visa they hold. The actual purpose and eventual length of their stay may differ from that set out in the visa. Lastly, once a citizen of a State has exited the country, it is difficult to continue to collect information on that person.

As such, immigration data collected by destination countries are of critical value to policymakers in countries of origin, to better understand and engage with their emigrant populations and their communities who have remained the home country. These data include information on flows and stocks, employment and registration permits, and other key demographic and developmental indicators.

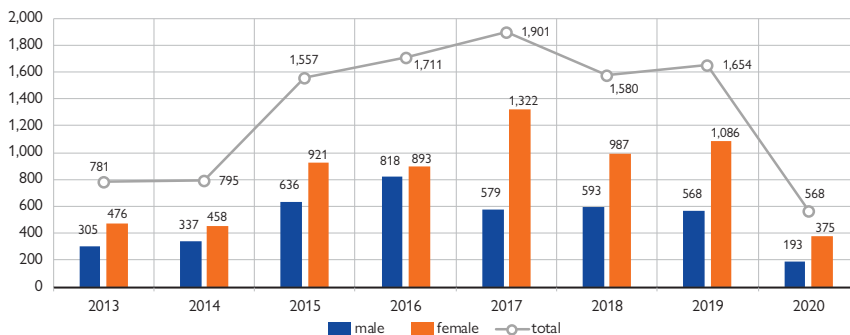
A.3.1. Citizens residing abroad

This section makes use of those data collected and made available by national stakeholders, as well as data from countries of destination of Azerbaijani citizens.

According to Article 13 of the Migration Code, Azerbaijani nationals who exit from the country to reside abroad temporarily or permanently shall register

at the relevant consulate, and annual registration at the consulate when returning. Official data from the State Statistical Committee (SSC) is available on the number of Azerbaijani citizens departing the country for permanent residence abroad.

Figure 39: Azerbaijanis leaving for permanent residence abroad, by sex

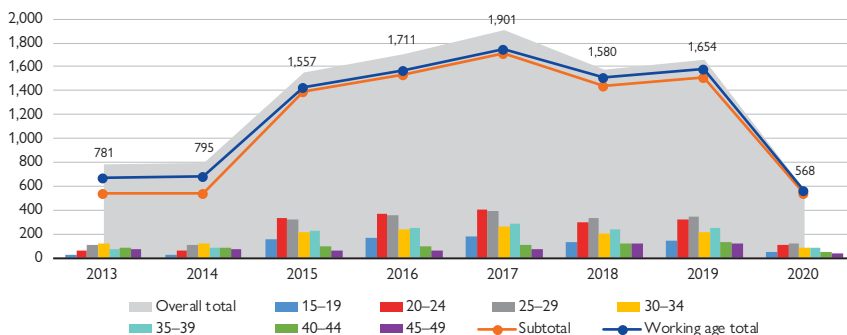


Source: SSC, 2021. Population, international migration.

Since 2013 a total of 10,547 Azerbaijanis left for permanent residence, about 1,318 persons on average a year. Of these, 62 per cent were female. From 2017 onwards, there was a drastic increase in the number of females: on average, they accounted for around two-thirds of the emigrants and were thus above the overall average for the period under review.

Half of all emigrants moved permanently to the Russian Federation, which was also the case in 2020. Most data are available for the CIS region, including associated countries; this is where 86.2 per cent of all Azerbaijanis emigrated to. There are isolated records for other states, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Figure 40: Azerbaijani leaving for permanent residence abroad, by age



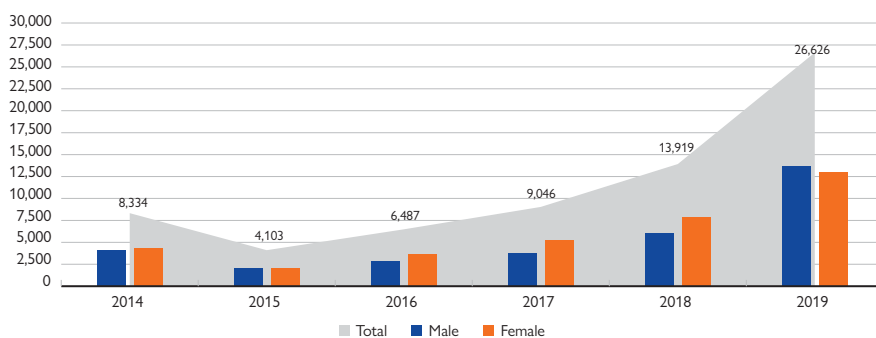
Source: SSC, 2021. Population, international migration.

Just over 92 per cent of Azerbaijani's living abroad are of working age (up to 60). Those over fifties are only account for 5 per cent of this population. Two-thirds are 20–40-year-olds, who also had the largest increase from 2015. However, emigrants in their twenties are by far the largest age category.

Moreover, the Azerbaijani Law on Citizenship obliges citizens to notify the competent authority about the voluntary acquisition of citizenship of another state, as detailed in the chapter on citizenship.

Starting with Türkiye, which accounts for most notifications, a growing emigration trend is evident since 2015. Based on data from the Turkish Statistical Institute on the first year of residence of foreign-born persons for the period from 2014 (and earlier) to 2019 (as the last published year),¹⁵ a total of 68,515 Azerbaijan-born persons reside in the country, based on an issued first permit. Women make up 52.5 per cent of the total, a slightly reduced proportion after several years of rising.

Figure 41: Azerbaijani emigrants in Türkiye, by sex



Source: TURKSTAT, 2021.

In 2019, 26,626 Azerbaijani emigrants received their first residence permit, almost twice as many (up 91.3%) as in 2018 and 219.5 per cent higher than in 2013.

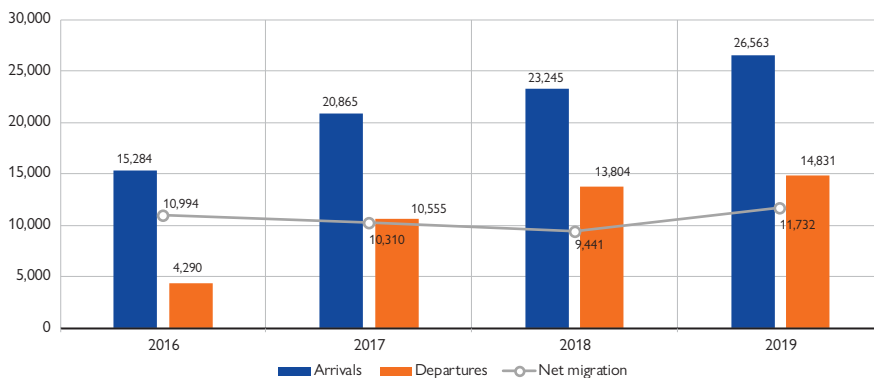
The Azerbaijanis are the second largest migrant group from the CIS region in Türkiye. The latest available data on net migration from the Turkish Statistical Institute for the years 2016–2019¹⁶ even show that Azerbaijani citizens are one of the top ten for international migration.

¹⁵ Turkish Statistical Institute, Population, Migration (2020): Foreign population by sex, country of citizenship and the first year of residence in Türkiye (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=nufus-ve-demografi-109&dil=2>).

¹⁶ Turkish Statistical Institute, Population, Migration (2020): Immigrants and Emigrants by country of citizenship (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=nufus-ve-demografi-109&dil=2>).

Each year on average, 21,500 Azerbaijanis migrate to Türkiye, and close to 11,000 leave the country. The net migration of the Azerbaijani population in the country thus shows a clear surplus of Azerbaijanis migrants every year over the period considered, and even increasing in 2019.

Figure 42: Net-migration of Azerbaijanis in Türkiye



Source: TURKSTAT, 2021.

In 2019, net migration of Azerbaijani citizens to Türkiye was 11,732, with 26,563 entering and 14,831 leaving according to the Address Based Population Registration System of Türkiye, with a growing trend. While women are on par with men in terms of arrivals in average over the entire period (49.9%), men make up 57.5 per cent of departures.

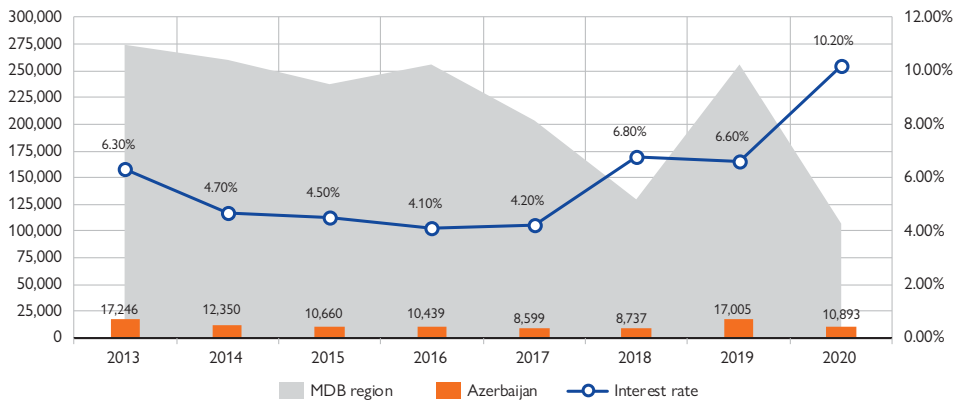
Based on population data of the SSC, 549 departures for permanent residence in Türkiye were registered between 2013 and 2020, for the sake of comparability between 2016 and 2019 the figure was 371.

In addition to this, official data are known on the basis of the notifications on naturalizations: 8,062 former emigrants have obtained Turkish citizenship, of whom 45.9 per cent were men. Minors accounted for about 20 per cent of naturalizations. Of those who notified of naturalizations, 43.2 per cent were 18–35.

Regarding the Russian Federation, the last census in 2010 found 439,000 persons with Azerbaijani ethnicity; based on information from the Pilot Population Census 2018¹⁷ there were 618,000 Azerbaijanis that year – a rise of 40.8 per cent.

¹⁷ Federal State Statistics Service (2018): Results of the Pilot Population Census (<https://eng.rosstat.gov.ru/folder/76215>).

Figure 43: Net migration of Azerbaijanis in the Russian Federation



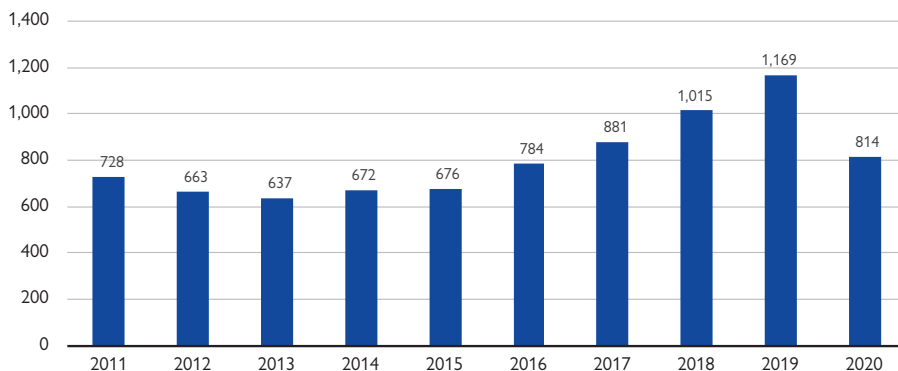
Source: ROSSTAT, 2021.

According to data published for 2013–2020 by the Federal State Statistics Service,¹⁸ roughly 25,000 Azerbaijanis migrate to the Russian Federation a year on average, and 12,000 leave with an increasing trend. There is a surplus of Azerbaijanis immigrants every year over the period considered. They constitute on average 5.9 per cent of “immigrants” from the CIS region in the Russian Federation, the most in 2020. After falling for several years from 2013, a trend reversal occurred from 2017, leading to an increase to 10.2 per cent among the CIS countries in 2020. That year, net migration was 10,893, in absolute figures however this was 36.8 per cent less than in 2013.

Based on SSC population data, 5,294 departures for permanent residence in the Russian Federation were registered between 2013 and 2020. In addition to this, official notifications for naturalizations indicate that 1,469 former emigrants have obtained Russian citizenship, of whom 57.6 per cent were men. Minors accounted for about 9 per cent of naturalizations, while 18–35 year olds had a share of 45.3 per cent based on notifications.

¹⁸ Federal State Statistics Service (2021): Russian Statistical Yearbook 2021) <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/210/document/12994>.

Figure 44: Azerbaijani emigrants in the United States (permanent residents)



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2021.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security¹⁹ for the years 2011–2020, 8,039 Azerbaijani emigrants obtained lawful permanent residence in the United States of America. On average, 800 Azerbaijani emigrate to the United States a year, with a steadily growing trend since 2013 until it fell in 2020. In 2020, 814 Azerbaijani emigrants obtained the status of permanent resident.

Close to a third (29.5%) obtained permanent residence on the grounds of being an immediate relative of United States citizens; however, 47.7 per cent obtained it through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program.

Based on SSC population data, 161 departures for permanent residence in the United States were registered between 2013 and 2020. Additionally, official data based on the notifications on naturalizations indicates that 614 former emigrants have obtained United States citizenship, of whom 50.2 per cent were men. Minors accounted for about 4.7 per cent of naturalizations, compared to 48.4 per cent aged 36–50, the largest group based on notifications.

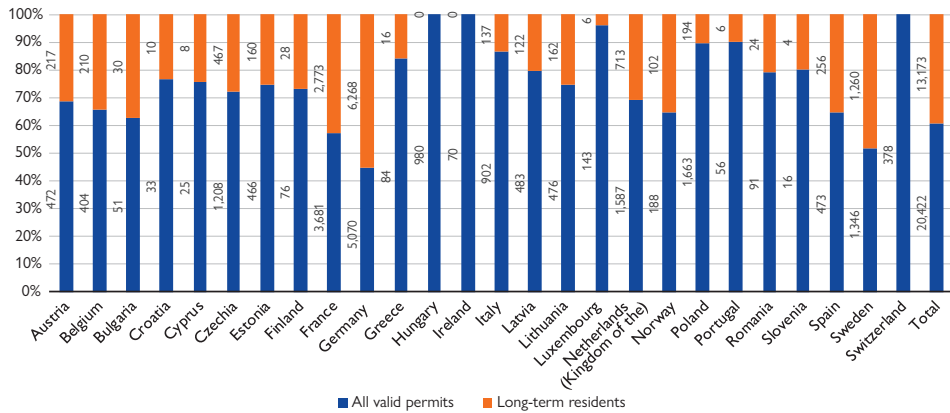
In the European Union and EFTA including Switzerland, according to the European Statistical Office, in 2020, 20,422 Azerbaijani nationals were staying in 26 countries, based on data about all valid residence permits²⁰ and including 13,173 Azerbaijanis were long-term residents²¹.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office for Immigration Statistics (2021): Fiscal Year 2020; U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents Annual Flow Report. [Lawful Permanent Residents | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#).

²⁰ EUROSTAT (2021): All valid permits by age, sex and citizenship 2020, except Sweden and Switzerland (data from 2019). Online data code: MIGR_RESVAS (last update: 09/11/2021 11:00). European countries not stated in the statistics had no data published (Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein).

²¹ EUROSTAT (2021): Long-term residents by age, sex and citizenship 2020 except Sweden and Switzerland (data from 2019). Online data code: MIGR_RESLAS (last update: 13/10/2021 11:00). European countries not stated in the statistics had no data published (Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein).

Figure 45: Azerbaijani emigrants in the European Union, EFTA and Switzerland, by all valid permits and long-term residence (stock)



Source: EUROSTAT, 2021.

The largest proportions of Azerbaijani emigrants settled long-term in Germany (47.6%), followed by France (21.1%), Sweden (9.6%) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (5.4%). These four countries host 83.6 per cent of all long-term settled emigrants (11,014 persons) from Azerbaijan in 2020. Males make up 54.6 per cent of this total.

Based on SSC population data, only 191 departures for permanent residence were registered between 2013 and 2020, with 8 in 2020 – just to Germany. Based on the notifications on naturalizations, 1,141 former emigrants have obtained citizenship of countries in region, of whom 54.3 per cent were male.

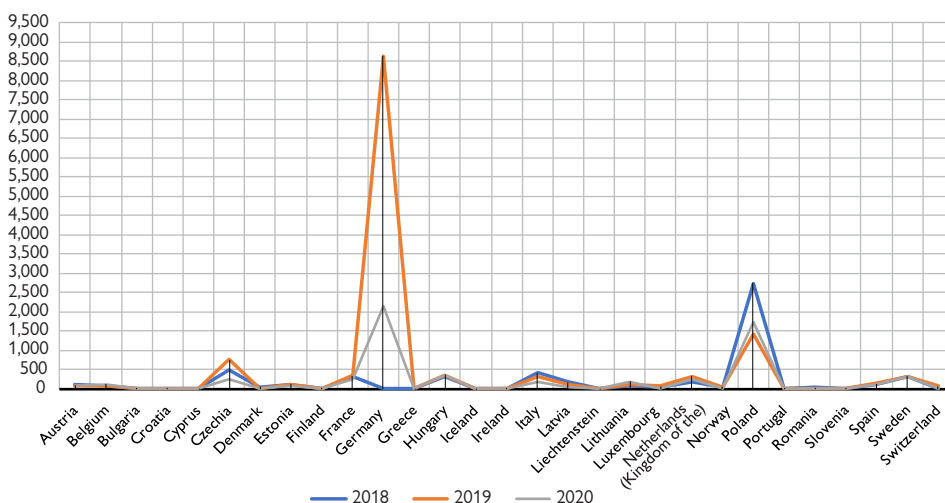
Regarding existing valid residence permits in 2020, the picture is more differentiated. Although Germany (5,070) and France (3,681) have taken in the most emigrants on first permit basis here as well (42.9%), Eastern European states are now also mixed in with the Western European ones. Poland (1,663), for example, has more resident Azerbaijanis than the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Sweden, followed by the Czechia, Hungary (980) and Italy (902) with significant numbers. It is also interesting to note that the three Baltic states have an average of 475 Azerbaijani emigrants each, roughly the same as Austria, Belgium and Spain.

The proportion of Azerbaijanis with long-term residence permits in these countries who are male is 53.8 per cent on average, but in the Baltic and some Eastern European countries it is higher (79.8% in Lithuania and 83.9% in Poland), while it is significantly lower in Slovenia (25%), Bulgaria (39.9%) and Greece (41.7%). Most of these emigrants are aged 20–39 (62%), with 25–29-year-olds the largest

subgroup. The majority of emigrants aged 35 and older are in Germany, Romania, France, Belgium and Estonia; around 29 per cent of the 2020 total are aged 40–59.

Inflow statistics cover first residence permits only, however, due to incomplete data only for the years 2018–2020.²² Over the period considered, on average 8,465 Azerbaijani emigrants or in total 25,035 persons were issued with first residence permit, of which more than half (53%) were issued in 2019, after Germany first reported its cases. That year, two thirds of the cases were for Germany (8,632).

Figure 46: Azerbaijani emigrants in the European Union, EFTA and Switzerland, by first residence permits issued



Source: EUROSTAT, 2021.

Almost two thirds (65.7%) of all first residence permits issued to Azerbaijani migrants were for Germany (10,768) and Poland (5,907), followed by Czechia (1,524) and Hungary (1,030). Sweden, France, Italy and the Kingdom of the Netherlands received just under 1,000 Azerbaijanis each. Less than 500 permits each were issued in the three Baltic States (321 permits on average) and Spain, Belgium and Austria (264).

To determine the reasons for residence as tightly as possible and to concretize motives for emigration, exceptionally, incompletely reported data from 2011 to 2020 for the European Union, EFTA and Switzerland were used. These show that most of the first residence permits were issued for the purpose of education (27.7%), with males accounting for 68.8 per cent. After that, remunerated activities follow (23.4%), and here a trend is very clear: 82.6 per cent are men who received

²² EUROSTAT (2021): First permits by reason, age, sex and citizenship. Online data code: MIGR_RESFAS (last update: 01/12/2021 11:00). All countries included; Germany and Finland had no available data published for 2018.

a first residence permit on this ground. In total, 20 per cent of all permits issued are family-related. Females account for 57.8 per cent of this group. Other reasons account for just under 29 per cent.

Using the annual average figures of the above selected countries or regions affected by Azerbaijani emigration to roughly estimate the dimension of outflows from Azerbaijan, it emerges that Azerbaijanis of prevalently younger age emigrate every year at least temporarily, the majority to the Russian Federation, although this is decreasing trend, and increasingly to Türkiye and Europe.

A.3.2. Emigration for employment

Data on emigration of Azerbaijanis for labour are notoriously scant, even within the realm of emigration data more broadly. No data are yet collected or compiled at national level in Azerbaijan on the emigrant workforce. Other data are scattered. However, according to Article 58.3 of the Migration Code, Azerbaijani citizens who carry out paid labour in foreign countries should register at the diplomatic representation or consulate of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This registration to protect workers' rights could provide information on the size and phenomenon of labour mobility and emigration of Azerbaijani working and residing abroad. As mentioned above, this data tends not to be self-reported by its own citizens and is thus not collected systematically.

Additionally, Article 60.1 of the Migration Code indicates that Azerbaijani citizen can register with national recruitment agencies who act as intermediaries for employment in foreign countries. Registration numbers, background information on motives and drivers are not systematically collected nor surveyed. Publicly available data will be discussed below.

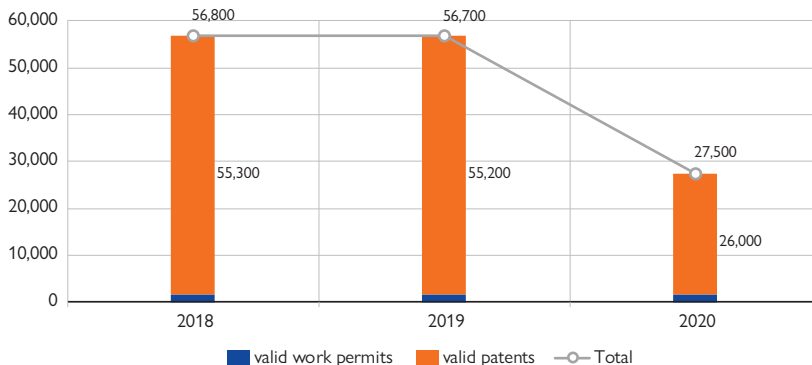
Labour data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation during a United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Workshop held jointly with the CIS Statistical Committee in 2021²³ indicate that in first half of 2021 about 101,700 Azerbaijani arrived in the Russian Federation to work. This was 45 per cent less than in 2018. Work patents offer an inexpensive and simple process for regularizing labour status for CIS citizens.

Following a series of amendments, which included further simplifying the procedure for obtaining a work patent as well as changes to the quota system, patents largely replaced the use of work permits by Azerbaijani citizens. Roughly

²³ Interstate Statistical Committee Commonwealth of Independent States, Migration and remittances in the CIS countries (current situation), https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/26.10%2010.10%20PPP_zbarskaya_CISStat_eng.pdf.

1,500 Azerbaijanis held work permits every year between 2018 and 2020, the data points available from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation.²⁴

Figure 47: Work permits and labour patents in the Russian Federation

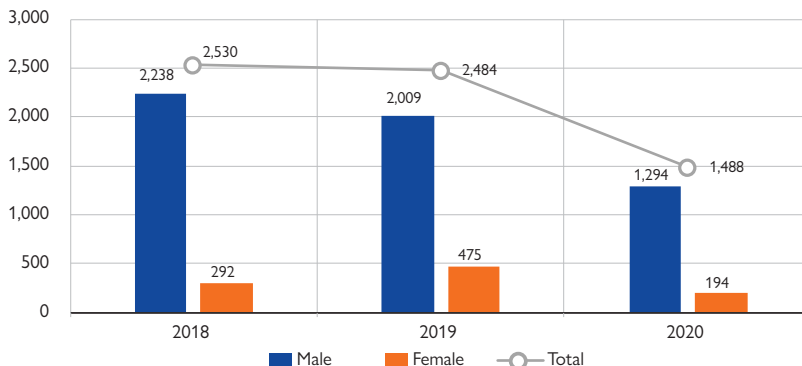


Source: ROSSTAT, 2021.

Azerbaijani citizens received a per year average of 43,000 permits and patents to work in the Russian Federation between 2018 and 2020. The 2020 figure of 27,500 was 51.6 per cent less than that of 2018. In total, about 97 per cent account for patents issued. While most of Azerbaijan’s migrant workers with work permits for the Russian Federation were aged 30–49, those with patents were mainly 18 to 39 years and typically in their twenties.

As statistics on residences above have shown, some labour migration is directed towards Europe, particularly from younger men.

Figure 48: Remunerated activities in the European Union/EFTA/Switzerland region, by sex



Source: EUROSTAT, 2021.

²⁴ Federal State Statistical Service of the Russian Federation (2021): Russian statistical yearbook 2021 (Статистические издания (rosstat.gov.ru)).

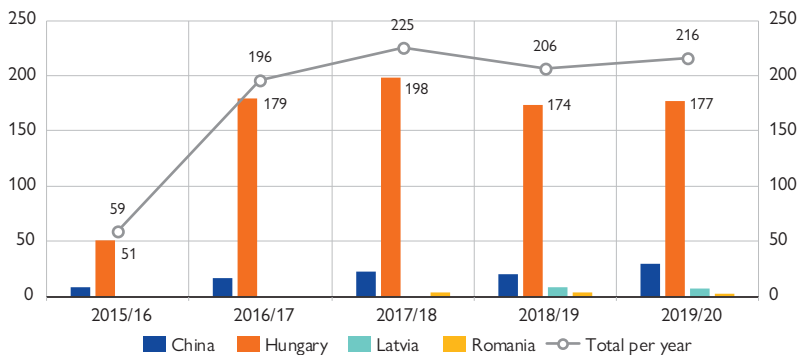
Between 2018 and 2020, the European Union / EFTA / Switzerland region granted on average 2,170 first residence permits for remunerated activities to Azerbaijani citizens. Of the 6,502 permits for remuneration, 63.8 per cent were issued by Poland (4,149) and about 10 per cent each by Czechia (658) and Germany (629). In 2020, the pandemic caused a 41.2 per cent drop in permits for remunerated activities compared to 2019.

Women accounted for 14.5 per cent of the permits on average over the period considered, with a peak in 2019 of 19 per cent. Like the total figures, most women, were working in Poland (41.4%), Czechia (9.9%) and Germany (28.9%) in this period.

A.3.3. Emigration for study purposes

Azerbaijan participates in international exchange programs for students. First, it has a Study Abroad under the Intergovernmental Scholarship Programme for its citizens. In recent years, according to data from the Ministry of Education, on average, 211 Azerbaijani students a year gain the right to study in different countries of the world, at all levels of education (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies).

Figure 49: Intergovernmental study programmes



Source: MoE, 2022.

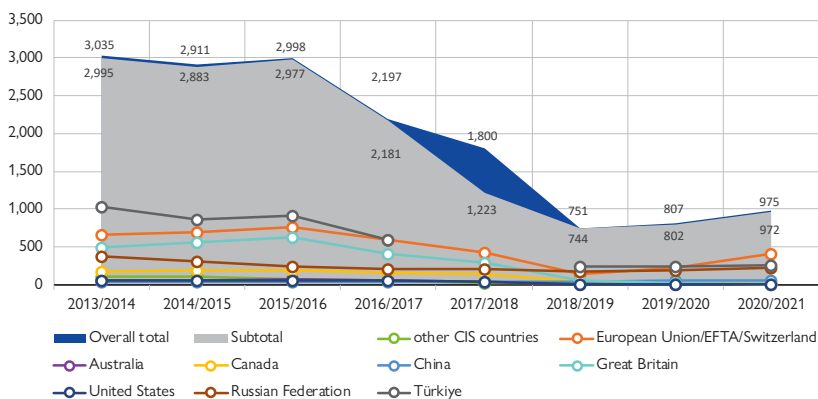
Under intergovernmental agreements signed by the Republic of Azerbaijan, some countries (including Hungary, China, Kazakhstan, Romania, Tajikistan and Latvia) allocate scholarship places for citizens of Azerbaijan every year. Between 2015 and 2020 (academic years), four countries, three of which are in the European Union, have been honouring the agreements. Hungary is at the top of all student intakes in every year of the observation period. Overall, it has received an average share of 86.4 per cent of all students on such programmes and holds a continuing

stable trend. The second most important receiving country admitting Azerbaijani students is China.

The “State Program on Increasing the International Competitiveness of the Higher Education System in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019–2023” is yet another initiative building on a previous programme which covered the period 2007–2015. Between 2013 and 2015 a total of 1,733 Azerbaijani students benefited from this State Program, of whom two-thirds were men (67.7%). In 2019, 34 students went to study abroad under the new programme, of whom 58.9 per cent were men.

According to the SSC, 975 Azerbaijani students were enrolled in institutions of higher education abroad with state sponsorship during the 2020/21 academic year, which a relevant increase after years of decrease. The lowest number over the period considered was 751 students in the academic year 2018/19, which was 75.3 per cent less than enrolment in 2013/14.

Figure 50: Azerbaijani students in higher educational institutions abroad



Source: SSC, 2021.

The top country of destination for students studying abroad almost every year in the reporting period was Türkiye except in 2020/21, when it was overtaken by Hungary within the “European Union/EFTA/Switzerland” category with 370 students as opposed to Türkiye with 260. The declining trend already established from the beginning probably experienced a slump in the academic year 2017/18, for which no data is available; after this the number of students in Türkiye decreased significantly. In the academic year 2020/21, 74.7 per cent fewer students studied abroad than in 2013/14, but Türkiye still admitted the most students over the entire period, at 26.8 per cent.

Except for the Russian Federation, education in CIS countries have not played a significant role in State Programs over the years, with a total of seven students studying at their institutions in the last relevant academic year. Like Türkiye, the Russian Federation is seeing similar trends, and is experiencing an upswing in the last academic year after years of slight decline. Its share of total students is 12.7 per cent, which is 3.4 per cent less than the United Kingdom (16.1%). The academic year 2017/18 saw a drastic decline, shrinking by around 41 per cent in relation to 2013/14, and it was 82 per cent less than the next year (2018/19).

For European Union/EFTA/Switzerland countries, a similar picture emerges in recent years. From the academic years 2018/19 to 2020/21, there was a significant drop in admissions for all countries in all regions. This could be related to the fact that for Western European countries such as Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Switzerland and France, the number of students decreased very significantly and did not really improve. Within the European Union, the intake of students from Azerbaijan has only increased significantly in the case of Hungary, and this is clearly noticeable in the last two academic years. Of the 405 Azerbaijanis studying in the countries of this region in 2020/21, Hungary accounts for 91.4 per cent, and thus it also has the largest share of all Azerbaijani students abroad worldwide (37.9%). For the entire period, the region underperforms Türkiye with a total of 25.2 per cent of all Azerbaijani students studying abroad.

A.4. Irregular migration

This section reflects irregular migration and the nature of violations of migration-related legislation in Azerbaijan. Irregular migration is defined as acts of illegal entry to, transit through, exit from Azerbaijan, as well as the infringements of legislation regarding stay, residence and employment of foreigners and stateless persons in Azerbaijan.²⁵

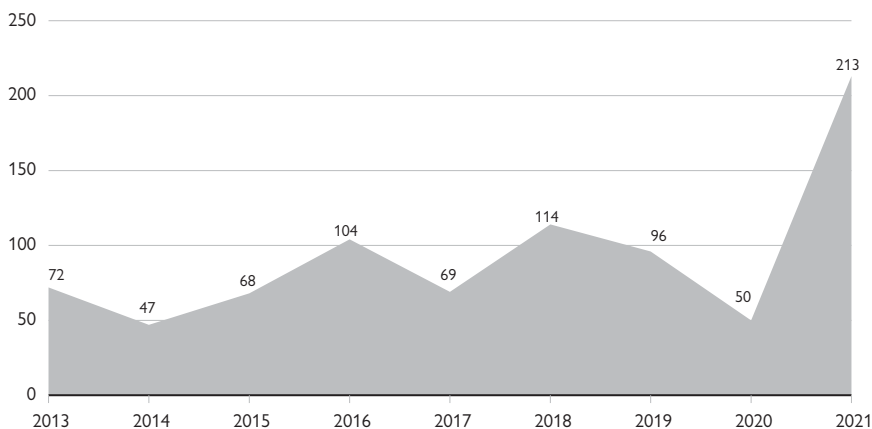
A.4.1. Refusals of entry and border apprehensions

Entry to Azerbaijan can be refused in several cases, such as non-possession of legal and valid travel documents, document fraud, a valid entry ban or violation of rules of stay or residence. Under the Criminal Code on illegal border crossings and Article 18 of the Migration Code, migrants who have attempted to cross the state border without a passport or visa, or with an invalid passport or other

²⁵ The Code of Administrative offences of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2015, Article 575 (www.e-qanun.az/framework/46960).

document, and thus violating legal requirements shall not be allowed to enter, but shall be returned to the country from which they arrived. Moreover, they are liable in law for attempts to cross the state border with fraudulent documents or with documents that belong to others.

Figure 51: Apprehensions at green borders

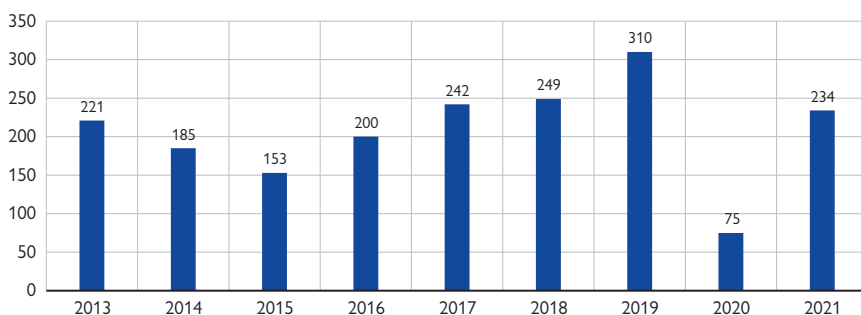


Source: SBS, 2022.

During 2013–2021, a total of 883 border violators were apprehended at the green borders, 438 of them while entering from the opposite country to the Republic of Azerbaijan, and 395 while exiting the Republic of Azerbaijan to the opposite country. During the observation period most of the people apprehended by the border guards while trying to violate the green borders (431 people) were identified in 2016, 2018 and 2021.

Citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran (279), Bangladesh (98), Georgia (88), Uzbekistan (31), Sri Lanka (29) and Pakistan (26) made up the majority of people apprehended at the green border during the reporting period.

Figure 52: Apprehensions at the state border checkpoints



Source: SBS, 2022.

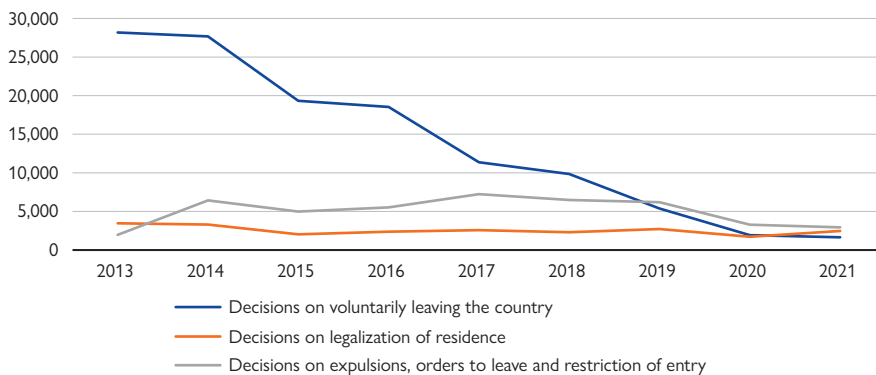
During the period of 2013–2021, a total of 1,872 border violators were apprehended at the state border checkpoints with fake and forged documents, 1,511 of them while entering from the opposite country to the Republic of Azerbaijan, and 361 while exiting the Republic of Azerbaijan to the opposite country.

During the observation period, citizens of Uzbekistan (442), the Islamic Republic of Iran (197), Pakistan (132), Nigeria (98), Tajikistan (86), the Republic of Moldova (75) and Afghanistan (49) made up the main part of the persons apprehended at the State border checkpoints.

A.4.2. Violation of migration-related legislation

Foreigners and stateless persons who have violated the rules on stay, residence in or transit through Azerbaijan – namely for staying or residing without necessary permits, registration and valid documents, failing to comply with the declared purpose of entry, engaging in illegal labour activity, or overstaying the permitted stay or residence periods – are issued with decisions to voluntarily leave the country or legalize their residence, or on restriction of entry to the country with or without of expulsion depending on the nature of the infringement.

Figure 53: Violation of migration-related legislation



Source: SMS, 2021.

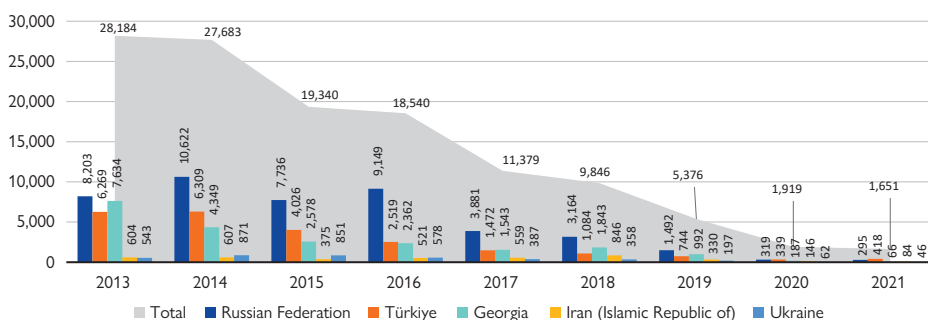
Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Between 1 January 2013 and November 2021, a total of 191,951 decisions (including entry bans) were made on violations of migration-related legislation by foreigners and stateless persons, of which 123,918 (65%) were issued on leaving the country voluntarily, and 45,054 (23%) on administrative expulsion from and/or restriction of entry to the country and orders to leave. Furthermore, stay and residence was legalized for 22,979 persons (12%).

A.4.2.1. Voluntary departures

Between 2013 and 2021, a total of 123,918 voluntary departures were ordered. This category of decisions constitutes 64.5 per cent of decisions related to irregular migration. While this follows a downward trend, it accounts for 38 per cent of all decisions in 2019 before the pandemic-affected 2020 and 2021. Most of these concerned nationals of the Russian Federation (44,861), Türkiye (23,180) and Georgia (21,554). These three countries account for more than two-thirds (72%) of all departures, with the top ten accounting for more than 83 per cent. The Islamic Republic of Iran (4,072) and Ukraine (3,893) are fourth and fifth but have significantly fewer departures.

Figure 54: Decision on voluntarily leaving the country, by citizenship

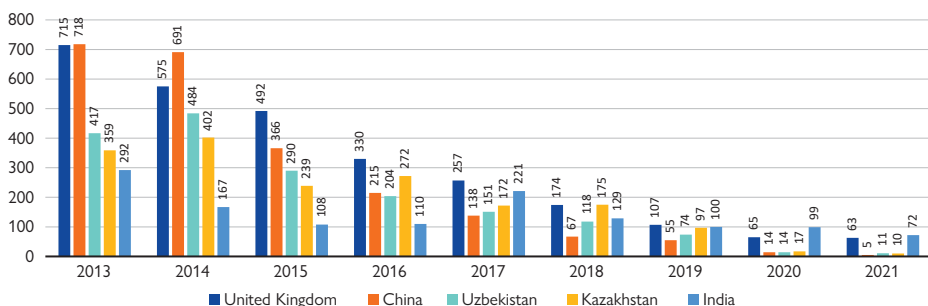


Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The top ten countries together account for a share of just under 86 per cent of the total, and also include the United Kingdom (2,778), China (2,269), Uzbekistan (1,763), Kazakhstan (1,743) and India (1,298).

Figure 55: Decision on voluntarily leaving the country, by citizenship (continued)



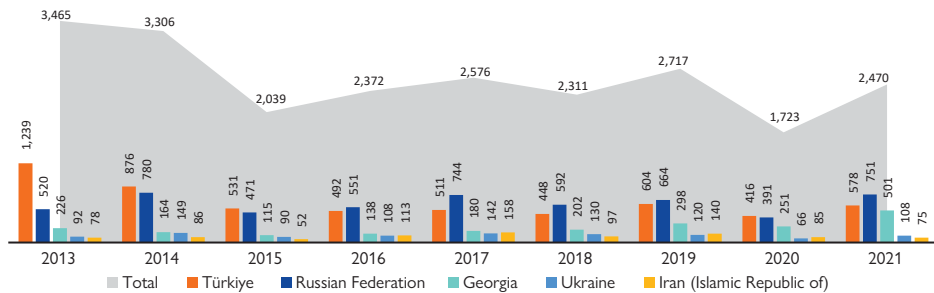
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

A.4.2.2. Legalization of residence

Another measure to combat irregular migration is the regularization of the residence of irregularly staying migrants. Legalizations of residence over the period concerned remained essentially stable, except for the first pandemic year (2020), when they dropped before increasing again in the first 10 months of 2021. Compared to 2013, legalization has fallen by slightly more than 28 per cent in 2021, and accounts for almost 12 per cent of all decisions regarding migrants who have violated the rules of stay and residence in the country.

Figure 56: Legalizations of residence, by citizenship



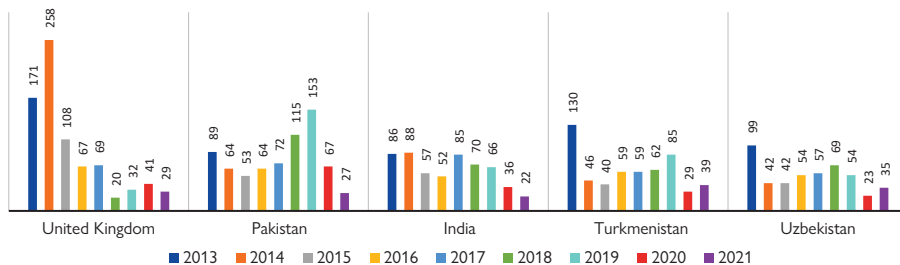
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

On average, around 2,553 legalizations were decided a year, with a total of 22,979. Most of them concerned nationals of Türkiye (5,695) and the Russian Federation (5,464). These two countries account for 48.5 per cent of all regularizations. The top five countries also include Georgia (2,075), Ukraine (1,005) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (884). The top five countries together account for a share of 66 per cent of the total, additionally including.

The top ten countries account around 80 per cent of all regularization decisions. They also include the United Kingdom (795), Pakistan (705), India (562), Turkmenistan (549) and Uzbekistan (475), which are almost at the same level throughout the research period.

Figure 57: Legalizations of residence, by citizenship (continued)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

A.4.2.3. Forced departures and restriction of entry

According to Article 78 of the Migration Code, forced departures of foreigners and stateless persons can be applied in three cases: compulsory expulsion as punishment for crime, administrative expulsion for committing an administrative offence, and orders to leave the country under Article 79 of the Migration Code.

Punishment in the form of compulsory expulsion for committing crime is applied in accordance with the Criminal Code with a court decision and implemented in the way envisaged by the Code of Execution of Punishments (Article 166) and the Migration Code (Article 80). Those who compulsorily expelled from the country face restrictions to enter the country in accordance with Article 16.1.3 of the Migration Code.

Decisions issued for violating the requirements of Articles 575.1 and 575.2 of the Code of Administrative Offences envisages either administrative expulsion from the country with a ban on entry into the country or voluntary departure without administrative expulsion (Section A.4.2.1), or legalization of residence (Section A.4.2.2). In each situation the decision includes an administrative fine (AZN 300–400). In case of administrative expulsion, entry to the country is restricted for between one and five years (Article 29.3 of Code of Administrative Offences).

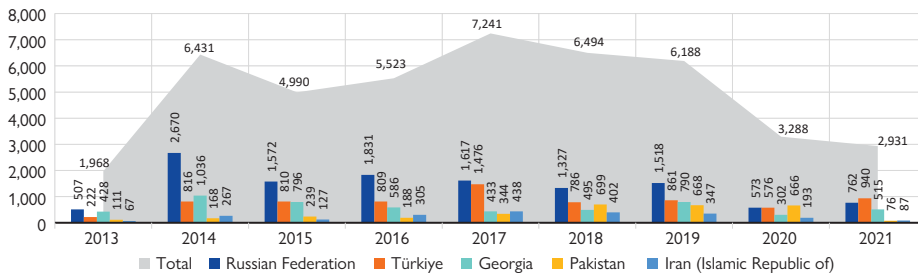
However, a decision on ordering to leave the country in accordance with the requirements of Article 79 of the Migration Code does not provide for expulsion or an administrative fine. Foreigners and stateless persons whose visas, decisions on extension of temporary staying period, TRP or PRP is cancelled, whose stay is considered undesirable, who have been released from imprisonment and do not have any grounds for residence in the country, as well as rejected asylum-seekers, are ordered to leave the country within a specified period for each category. Orders to leave also include an entry ban for up to five years, in case of cancelled TRP or PRP the ban is lifted once the grounds for the cancellation are removed.

An entry ban can be imposed for violations of the Code of Administrative Offences or the Migration Code. The period of entry ban depends on the type of infringement. For instance, entry bans under Article 16.1.6 (violation of declared purposes of arrival) or 16.1.7 (falsified information) are issued for five years, while entry ban under Article 16.1.8 (unpaid administrative fine) are issued until the fine and its calculated late payment interest are paid.

An average of about 5,000 such decisions have been issued each year, or a total of 45,054 decisions of forced departure and restriction of entry during the

period in question. Although the number fluctuated between 2013 and 2019, peaking in 2017 with 7,241 decisions, the numbers fell during the pandemic affected 2020–2021, in the context of less options for migrants to return. Around 80 per cent of decisions over the period in question were issued to migrants from ten countries, with the first five countries already accounting for almost 68 per cent. In first place, with the most expulsion decisions over the period, are Russian nationals with a quarter of the total decisions (12,377), followed by nationals of Türkiye (7,296) and Georgia (5,381). The top five also includes Pakistan (3,159) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (2,233).

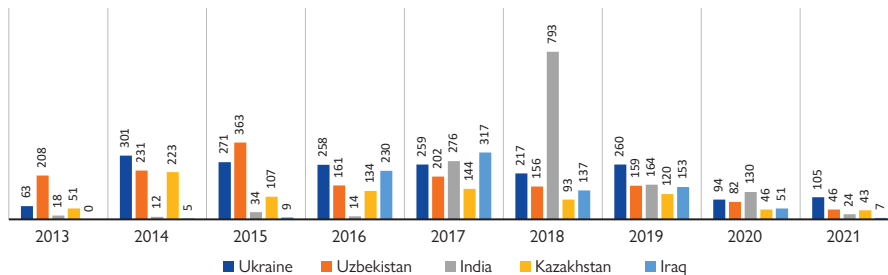
Figure 58: Forced departures and restriction of entry, by citizenship



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Figure 59: Forced departures and restriction of entry, by citizenship (continued)



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

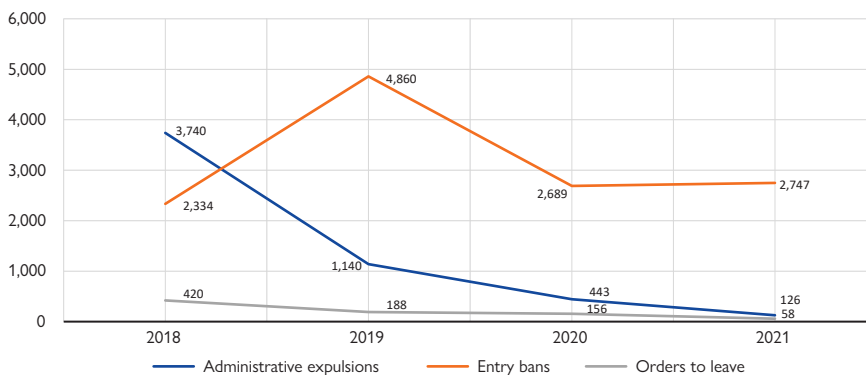
The top ten also includes Ukraine, Uzbekistan, India, Kazakhstan and Iraq. In 2018 there was a sudden increase (187% of the 2017 figure) in the number of Indian nationals issued with decisions on expulsion, orders to leave and restricting entry, accompanied by a similar trend with nationals of Pakistan (103%) and Nepal (409%).

Until 2018, data for forced departures and restriction of entry were collected together and it was impossible to explore them separately, but since 2018, due to changes in migration legislation, these data have been divided into three separate categories: administrative expulsions from the country in accordance with the

Code of Administrative Offences, orders to leave the country in accordance with Article 79 of the Migration Code and decisions on restriction of entry into the country (also including entry bans imposed on compulsorily expelled persons) in accordance with Article 16 of the Migration Code.

In 29 June 2018, Article 16.1.8 of the Migration Code was changed and the previous clause (restriction of entry of persons who have violated migration legislation two or more times in three years) was replaced with a new provision that envisages a temporary entry ban on migrants about whom administrative sanctions in the form of administrative fine have been imposed without enforcing administrative expulsion, for violation of rules of stay and residence until the fine is repaid (including calculated late payment interest).

Figure 60: Administrative expulsions, orders to leave and restriction of entry (2018–2021)



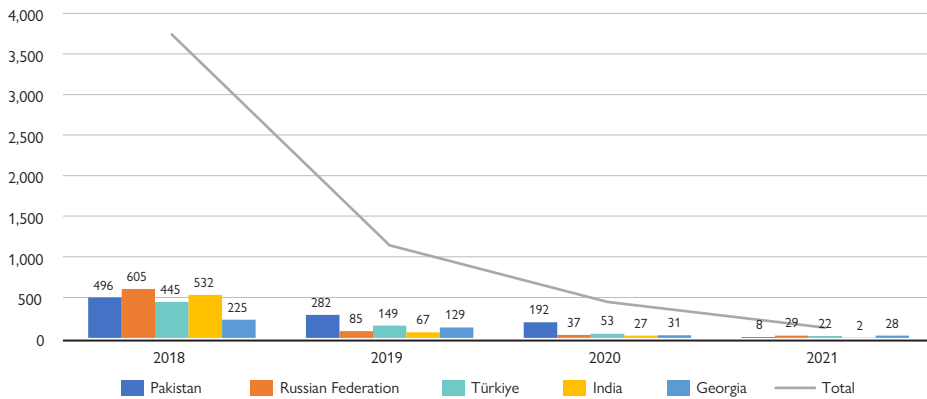
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The opportunity for payment of administrative fines after leaving the country has considerably decreased the number of administrative expulsion decisions. In 2017 a total of 7,241 decisions were made to restrict foreigners; and stateless persons' entry to Azerbaijan, 87.4 per cent (6,330) of which included expulsion from the country. Since the amendment was made, the number of administrative expulsion decisions has fallen by 41 per cent in 2018, and 82 per cent in 2019 compared to the 2017 figures.

In total, between 1 January 2018 and 31 October 2021, 5,449 decisions were made on administrative expulsion from the country for violations of migration legislation. Over the observation period expulsion decisions followed a downward trend, even before the pandemic-affected 2020–2021. The top five countries of origin for migrants who have been issued with expulsion decisions are Pakistan (978), the Russian Federation (756), Türkiye (669), India (628) and Georgia (413), which together account for 63 per cent of total expulsion decisions.

Figure 61: Administrative expulsions decisions, by citizenship



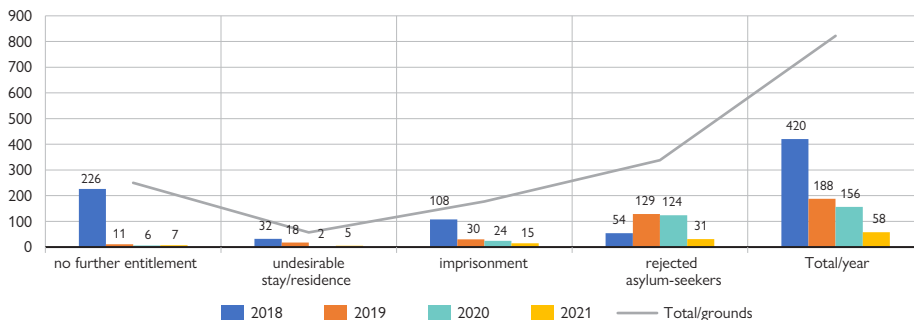
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

According to Article 79 of the Migration Code, decisions obliging persons whose decision on extension of temporary staying period is cancelled, who have no ground for residence after a prison sentence, or whose stay/residence is considered undesirable to leave the country are to be fulfilled within 48 hours. Migrants whose residence permits have been revoked, or rejected asylum-seekers, are ordered to leave within 10 days. The decision becomes valid once it is presented to the person.

The following analysis will focus on data on orders to leave based on legal grounds, which at the same time have a one-on-one informative value about the imposed obligation to leave the country and the ordered entry ban. Specific data available on the legal grounds for this analysis are available for 1 January 2017 until 1 November 2021.

Figure 62: Orders to leave, by legal grounds (Article 79 of the Migration Code)



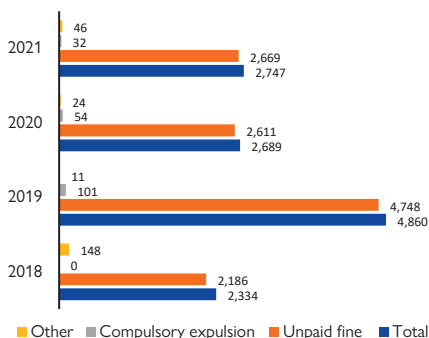
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Overall, most orders to leave under this Article were issued to rejected asylum-seekers over the period in question (41%); most in 2019 and 2020. Less than a third (30.4%) of all orders to leave referred to termination of stay or residence (“no further entitlement”) due to a cancelled visa, a revoked residence permit or no further extension of stay or legalization of residence; just over 90 per cent of these were issued in 2018 alone. Slightly less than a quarter (21.5%) of the orders to leave were issued due to prison sentences (“imprisonment”). More than half of these related to 2018. The least frequent reason for an order to leave was “undesirable stay/residence” of the migrants (6.9%).

Regarding restrictions of entry to the country, a total of 12,630 decisions were made during the observation period, peaking in 2019 with 4,860 decisions. According to the data provided, the entry of foreigners and stateless persons was restricted for unpaid administrative fine (Article 16.1.8 of the Migration Code), previous administrative expulsion, violation of declared purpose of arrival and considering the person’s stay undesirable. Temporary restriction of entry for unpaid administrative fines accounted for 97 per cent of all entry bans imposed. In 187 cases entry was restricted due to compulsory expulsions for crimes committed. Other grounds mentioned in Article 16 account for 229, 119 of which are restrictions imposed in 2018 under the previous text of Article 16.1.8 (restriction of entry of persons who have violated migration legislation two or more times in three years).

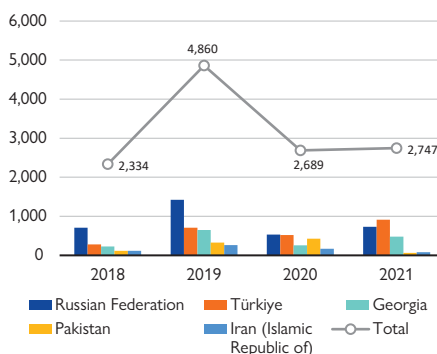
Figure 63: Entry ban decisions



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Figure 64: Entry ban decisions, by citizenship



Around 71 per cent of the restriction of entries over the period considered concerned nationals of five countries: the Russian Federation (3,400), Türkiye (2,423), Georgia (1,606), Pakistan (932) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (627).

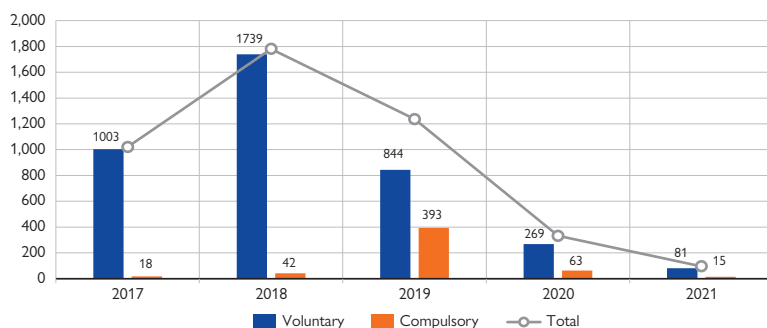
A.4.3. Detention

According to Article 82 of the Migration Code, Azerbaijan has two types of detention for irregular migrants: voluntary and compulsory. Asylum-seekers until finalization of the asylum procedure, recognized refugees up to three months upon approval of the status, migrants whose compulsory or administrative expulsion is ordered, or migrants who are ordered to leave and do not have any residential area or necessary funds to meet the minimal needs of themselves and their family members can be accommodated voluntarily in the Detention Centre for Irregular Migrants upon application.

Compulsory placement is foreseen for migrants with a detention order based on an administrative removal (for 24 hours), or a judicial removal (for up to three days). Other grounds are to impose a forced departure when there is risk of absconding or to ensure return (readmission) for a duration determined by law or a court decision in second instance, but no longer for than six months.

There are three Detention Centres for irregular migrants in Azerbaijan, in Baku, Yevlakh and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. In total, between 1 January 2013 and 31 October 2021, 6,002 foreigners and stateless persons were placed in Detention Centres for irregular migrants. Of these, 5,023 people were placed in the Centres voluntarily and 979 people forcibly.

Figure 65: Detention, by type



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

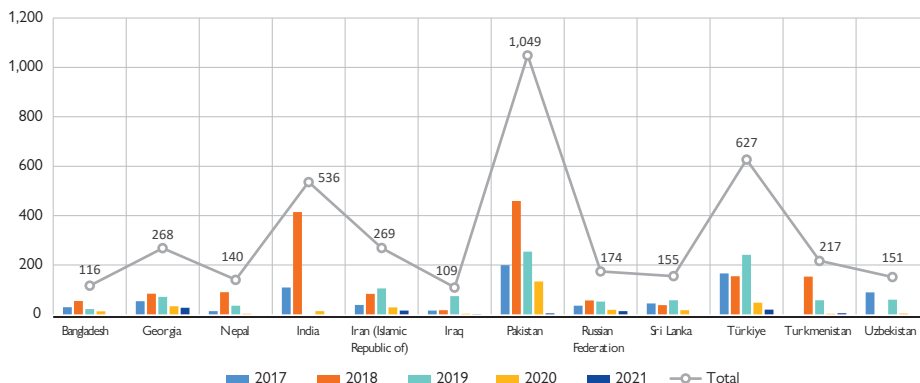
Data available for 1 January 2017 to 1 November 2021 show that the number of voluntary accommodations to the Detention Centre significantly exceeds that of compulsory ones. A total of 531 compulsory detentions were imposed, and voluntary placement occurred in 3,936 cases over the period considered.

On average, compulsory detention is just under 12 per cent, although this proportion is skewed upwards by the comparatively high imposition of detention

in 2018. They are thus significantly lower than the voluntary accommodation intake – though in 2019 the proportion of compulsory placements was 20 percentage points higher, at 31.8 per cent. After an increase through 2018, there was a rapid drop of 210 per cent in the number of voluntary placements in 2019, and this became entrenched into 2021. Compulsory detention reached a similarly low level in 2021 as in 2017.

Over the period in question, top twelve countries accounted for 85.3 per cent of all detentions, and in the years 2018 and 2020 even 90–95 per cent.

Figure 66: Detention by citizenship, top twelve



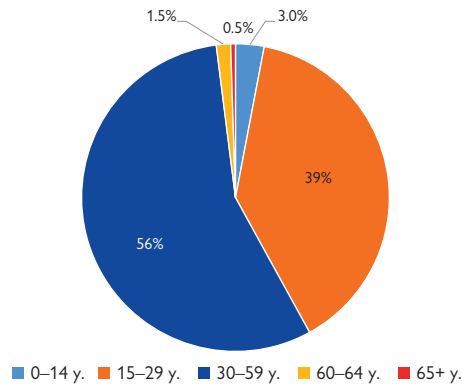
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

A good quarter of all detainees over the observation period are Pakistani migrants. They are the largest group of migrants in detention, followed by nationals of Türkiye and India. Georgia is also significantly affected by detention, albeit at a lower level, but still among the top five. Further countries are Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation. In addition to this region, there are countries from the South Asian region: besides Pakistan, these are Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, as well as India, which is even among the top twelve countries.

Compulsory detentions accounted for just over 12 per cent of detentions for the top twelve countries over the period in question, almost half a percentage point above the overall level, with almost 72 per cent of all detentions occurring in 2019 alone. Overall, nationals of Türkiye account for the largest share of compulsory detentions (38.6%), followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

Figure 67: Detention, by age



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

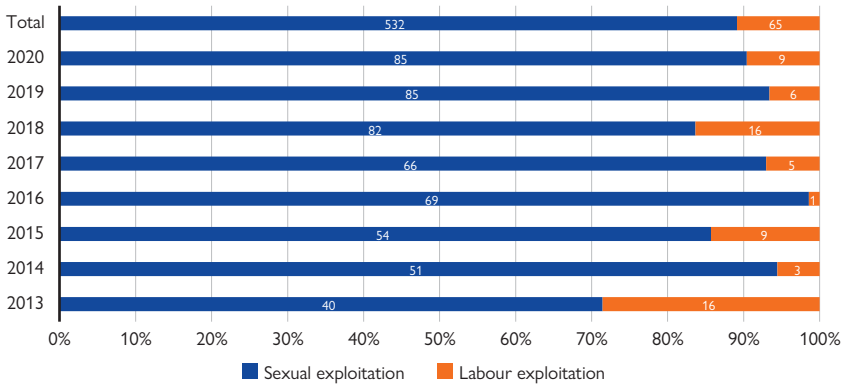
Ninety-five per cent of the detainees were migrants of working age, with the absolute majority (56%) in the 15–29 years age group. Minors below 14 years of age represented a quantitatively negligible share of 0.5 per cent of the total, and were part of family procedures under asylum legislation. The proportion of female detainees averaged 12.9 per cent during the observation period, and was generally stable before the pandemic years.

A.4.4. Trafficking in persons

Goal 10 of the Global Compact for Migration refers to actions to be taken against trafficking in persons that include, among others, to investigate, prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons, and end impunity in trafficking networks. It also calls upon parties to enhance the identification and protection of migrants who have become victims of trafficking.

Over the observation period, from 2013 to 2020, two forms of exploitation have been manifesting in Azerbaijan: sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. There are no statistically specific indications of other forms of exploitation, especially regarding organized begging or forced criminal acts, or also in connection with debt bondage and more broadly with smuggling of migrants.

Figure 68: Identified victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation

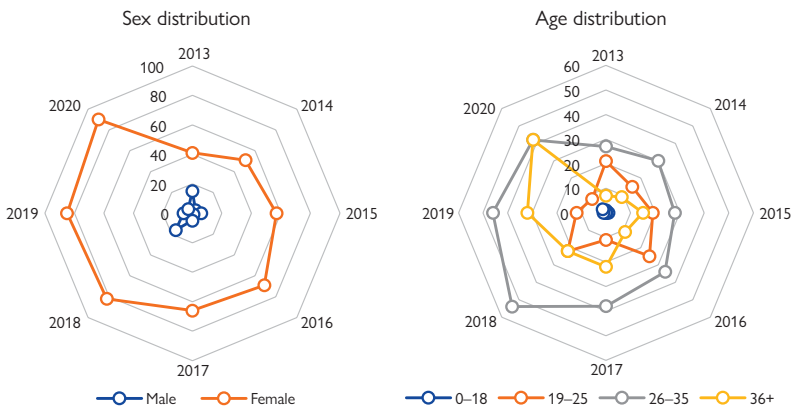


Source: MIA, 2021.

A total of 597 victims of human trafficking were identified; about 90 per cent of all those identified were related to sexual exploitation, and in this case exclusively of women. Most cases of labour exploitation in absolute numbers were identified in 2013 and 2018, and they related mainly to men. A total of 56 victims were identified, of whom women accounted for about 14 per cent.

Men account for a total of 9.3 per cent of all cases and, apart from the outliers in 2013 and 2018, this is relatively stable. On average, seven cases of trafficking of men are identified a year. For women, there is a growing trend in cases identified, which has not been interrupted despite pandemic-related restrictions and limitations. The proportion of identified women victims in 2021 was 119.5 per cent higher than in 2013. An average of 67 cases of women victims are identified every year.

Figure 69: Identified victims of trafficking, by sex and age

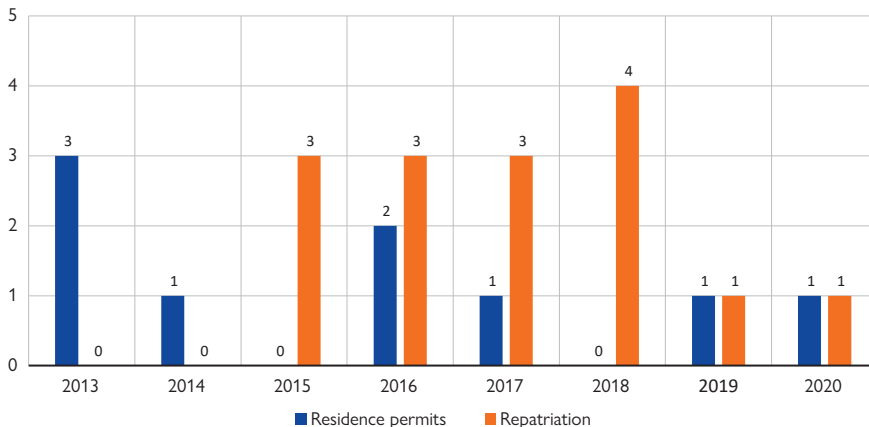


Source: MIA, 2021.

In total, 72.4 per cent of victims are aged 19–35, with most (around 50%) aged 19–25. More than a quarter of the cases (26.8%) are aged over 36. Minors account for just 0.8 per cent.

Around 3.5 per cent of all identified victims of trafficking (20) were migrants. Most foreign victims came from Uzbekistan (36.9%), and the Russian Federation and Ukraine (21.2% each). Nationals of other CIS countries were also affected in isolated cases (from Turkmenistan and Tajikistan), and there were also victims from the Philippines and China. Most of the cases where migrants are victims of trafficking were identified in 2017 and the majority (71.4%) came from Uzbekistan. Only 10 per cent of the foreign victims of trafficking identified over the period were referred to victim support organizations, of all of these coming from the CIS region.

Figure 70: Residence permits and repatriation of victims of trafficking



Source: MIA, 2021

In 45 per cent of cases a specific residence permit for a victim of trafficking was issued or renewed to citizens of the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Ukraine or the Russian Federation. Of nine such permits in total, more than half were issued in 2013 and 2016.

Criminal proceedings were opened against 228 perpetrators in total over the entire period. Of the suspects, almost 78 per cent were women. More than half (53.5%) of the perpetrators were over 35 years old. Only in 2019, were two persons of a foreign nationality (aged 50 or older) charged. Data on convictions were not reported.

A.5. Return migration

Readmission came into the focus of migration activities when Azerbaijan signed a series of readmission agreements, with the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and Montenegro from 2014. Further agreements are under preparation with 13 more countries.²⁶ Therefore, statistical data are only available for a few years in retrospect. According to Article 80.3 of the Migration Code, readmission applies to persons who are expelled and return to countries with which a readmission agreement exists.

According to Goal 21 of the Global Compact for Migration, Azerbaijan implemented the “Reintegration support to Azerbaijani returnees (RESTART)” project for its own returned and vulnerable nationals, which has been launched in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Goal 21 of the Global Compact for Migration calls for a safe and dignified return with human rights guarantees, including non-refoulement, so that nationals are duly received and readmitted, by also creating conducive conditions for their reintegration in their countries of return.

A.5.1. Voluntary return of foreigners and stateless persons

As opposed to a forced removal from a country, foreigners or stateless persons may choose to leave the country on a voluntary basis if there is no further entitlement to legal stay or residence. These data are analysed in the chapter on irregular migration (A.4).

For those who decide to return voluntarily to their country of origin or destination, based on an expulsion decision, the “Assistance for the voluntary return (AVR) of migrants from Azerbaijan” pilot project was launched in 2017 and was carried out in partnership with the IOM. It focused on operational return support including reintegration support in some cases.

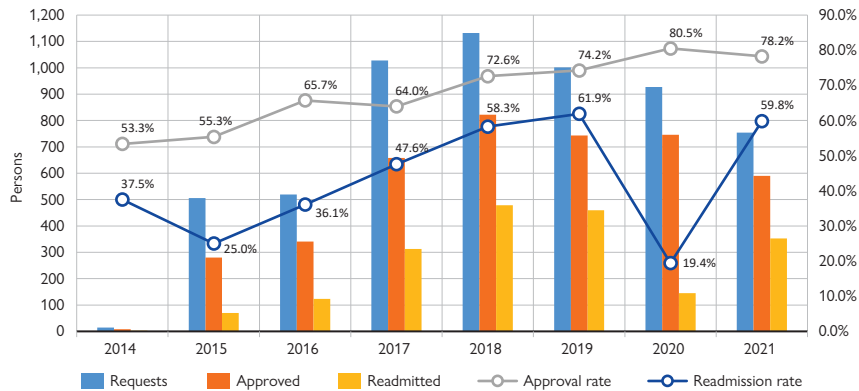
In total, 90 refused asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants have been returned on a voluntary basis to and reintegrated in their countries of origin since the initiation of the AVR project.

²⁶ These countries are: Bangladesh, Belarus, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

A.5.2. Readmitted nationals from sending countries

Between 2014, when the first readmission agreement was signed, and 1 November 2021, readmission requests were received for 5,882 persons, with a peak in 2018 (1,132) following a steady increase.

Figure 71: Readmitted nationals to Azerbaijan, by requests



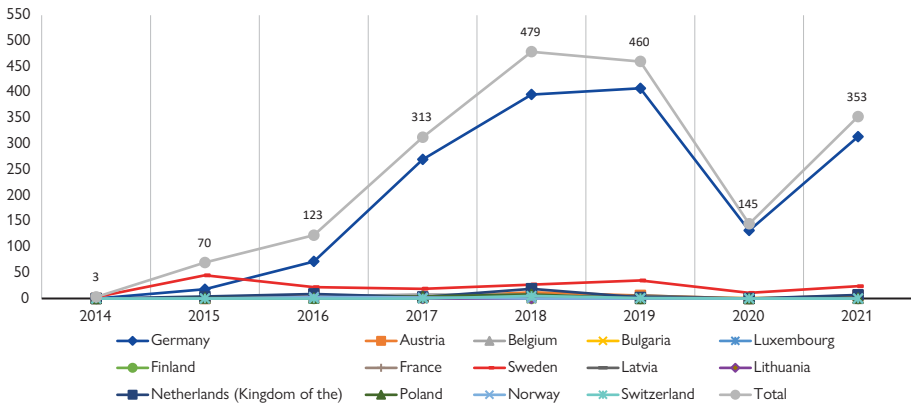
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

Between 2018 and 2021, requests fell by 33.4 per cent to 754; however, this is still higher level than the initial years (up to 2017). The approval rate has averaged just under 70 per cent over the years, and has steadily increased over the years, apart from 2017, when it once dropped slightly. Most recently, the approval rate was around 80 per cent, and included a total of 4,188 persons.

A total of 1,946 persons were effectively readmitted over the entire period, with almost half of all requests approved (46%) and an average readmission rate of 43.2 per cent. Overall, however, the rate has been above 50 per cent for the last four years, except in the first pandemic year (2020), when there was a sharp break in the trend. Here, only a fraction (19.4%) of people could be readmitted, due to the global travel restrictions. In 2021, effective readmissions returned close to the high level of 2019 (59.8%).

Figure 72: Readmitted nationals, by sending countries



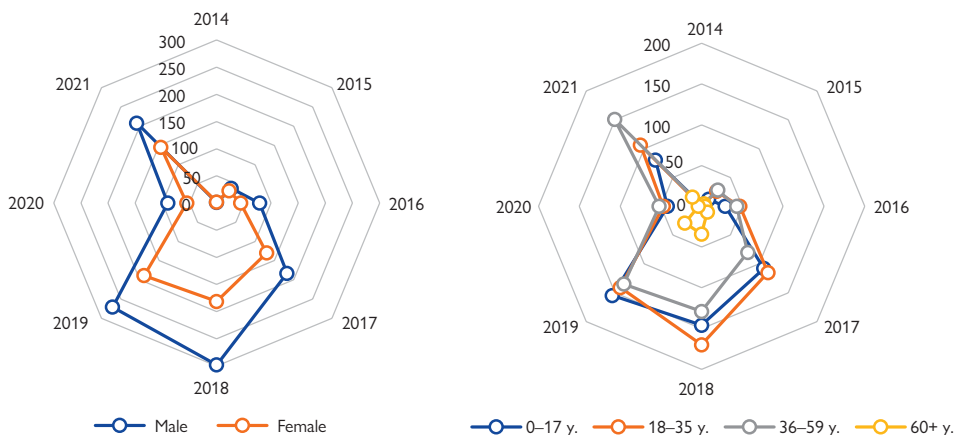
Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

The readmitted persons came from 14 countries, 12 of them from the European Union and the others from Switzerland and Norway. Almost 83 per cent of all readmissions over the entire period were due to requests from Germany (1,610) and follow the pattern described above. In second place is Sweden, which repatriated 186 Azerbaijani nationals; on average, or about 23 persons per year. All other countries repatriated less than 50 persons over the entire period, only Austria (33) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (44) had significant numbers.

Males were more likely to be readmitted every year. Females make up an average of 39.9 per cent of those readmitted; with the ratio largely stable. In terms of age, there is a distribution in almost equal thirds among minors and those aged 18–35 and 36–59, with the 18–35 age group being the largest in total over the entire period (33.5%). In the two pandemic years, however, the older age group had larger numbers. Persons over 60 years of age account for 5.1 per cent of those readmitted.

Figure 73: Readmitted nationals, by sex and age



Source: SMS, 2021.

Note: 2013–2020 data accurate for 31 December. 2021 data accurate for 1 November.

In the context of the mentioned RESTART project, which was finalized in April 2021, 87 Azerbaijani returnees from vulnerable groups received reintegration support over the project duration (28 months). This accounts for roughly 10 per cent of all readmitted persons during the period analysed, starting with 2019.

A.6. Internal migration

There is no single global standard definition of internal migration. Internationally comparable indicators require a consistent time dimension for change of residence and spatial dimension (movement). According to the “State Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Policy of Migration Management” the following types of internal migration are defined: forced migration and social and economic migration. The main subjects of internal forced migration are internally displaced persons who migrated from occupied territories and life-threatening settlements of the regions bordering the Republic of Armenia. So-called “social and economic migrants” are defined as the able-bodied population that moves from rural districts to large cities, and are thus considered as rural–urban migration.

Most forced migrants in Azerbaijan are internally displaced persons, due to the occupation of 20 per cent of the country’s territory by Armenia in early 1990s. There are also environmentally displaced persons, displaced in the course of natural disasters, such as landslides and mudflows. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates the risk of future displacement for sudden onset hazards in Azerbaijan at approximately 11,000 persons per year, the majority

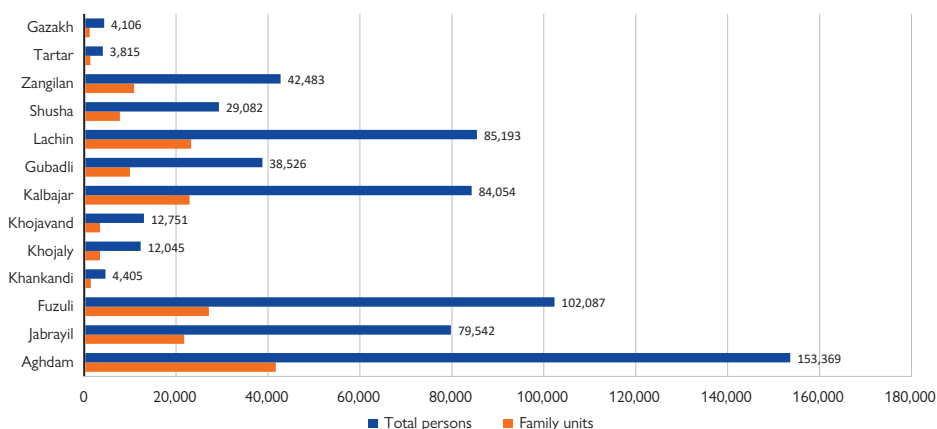
(60%) owed to earthquakes and the remainder to floods.²⁷ IDMC uses information about the probability of future hazard scenarios to model displacement risk based on probable housing destruction.

A.6.1. Internally displaced persons (conflict-induced)

A specific legal and institutional framework relating to internally displaced persons has been successively developed throughout the years of the conflict settlement process. The established State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (SCRI), which has branch offices in the regions, is the organ that registers, grants status and delivers documentation to internally displaced persons. The most important pieces of legislation are the 1999 Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Status of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons and the 1999 Law on Social Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and those equivalent to them. The voluntary return and resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees is a core element of regulating the internal migration process.

According to the Law on the Status of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons an internally displaced person (a person displaced within the country) is a person who was forced to leave his/her permanent place of residence and move to another place as a result of military aggression, natural or man-made disaster in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Figure 74: Registered IDPs, by district of origin

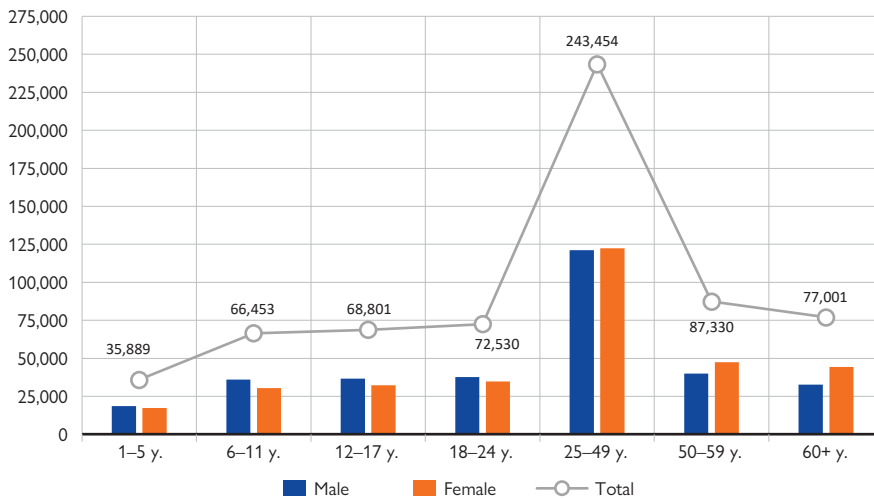


Source: SCRI, 2021.

²⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, www.internal-displacement.org/countries/azerbaijan (13.11.2021).

As of 1 November 2021, 173,101 internally displaced family units from 13 different districts in three different economic regions (Karabakh, Eastern Zangazur and Kazakh-Tovuz) were registered, totalling 651,458 internally displaced persons. This was around 7 per cent more than the 2013 figure (609,029). A quarter of the internally displaced population are children below 18 (26.3%) and 11.8 per cent are elderly persons above 60.

Figure 75: Registered internally displaced persons, by sex and age



Source: SCRI, 2021.

In terms of age distribution, the 25–49 age group is the largest, making up 37.4 per cent of the total. The sexes are roughly balanced. In the lower age groups 53 per cent are male, while in older age groups women make up 66 per cent. The sex ratio among internally displaced persons is almost balanced, and only half a percentage point more are women.

With regard to environment induced displacement, IDMC recognized weather-related hazards due to floods in 2009–2010, during which more than 32,000 people were displaced and hundreds more were displaced during landslides in 2018 in Baku. Other events included earthquakes in 2012 where about 36,000 people lost their homes and in 2019 in Shamakhi with some 100 people affected.²⁸

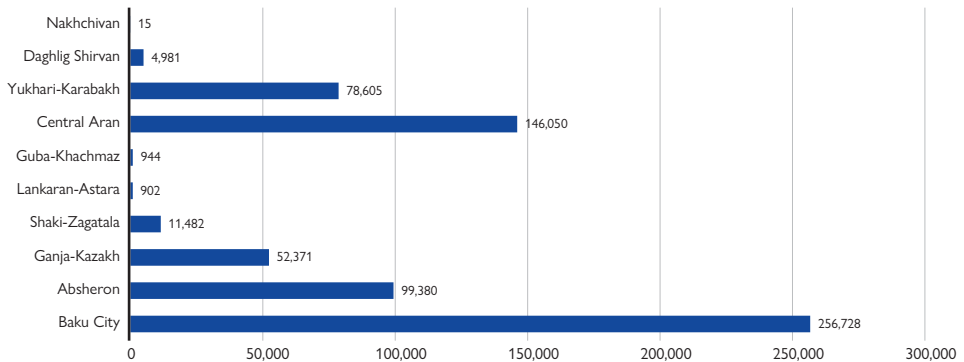
While many internally displaced persons initially lived mostly in internal displacement camps, in dormitories or public buildings, the Government has over the course of time provided for temporary settlement sites, and largely completed the construction of new settlements in various regions of the country. Between

²⁸ www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data (13.11.2021).

2001 to 2021, 122 modern settlements and housing estates, consisting of multi-storeyed buildings all with social and technical infrastructure, were constructed for refugees and internally displaced persons at the expense of State Oil Fund and other sources in more than 35 cities and regions of the country.²⁹ The housing and living conditions of 315 thousand IDPs have been improved so far. At present, 27 thousand families (15%) have temporarily settled in facilities such as dormitories, administrative sanatoria, boarding houses, etc., in the country. In total, as of 1 November 2021, 651.458 IDPs have been resettled, dispersed across Azerbaijan in numerous locations.

About two thirds (62.7%) of internally displaced persons have been resettled in and around urban areas. Baku city alone accounts for 39.4 per cent of the total, including settlements and villages around the Absheron and Ganja-Kazakh region. Many others are spread over various districts close to the former line of contact. They live in 59 districts of Azerbaijan, with the largest groups living in Baku (256,728), followed by the Central Aran region (146,050) and Absheron (99,380).

Figure 76: Resettled internally displaced persons, by economic regions

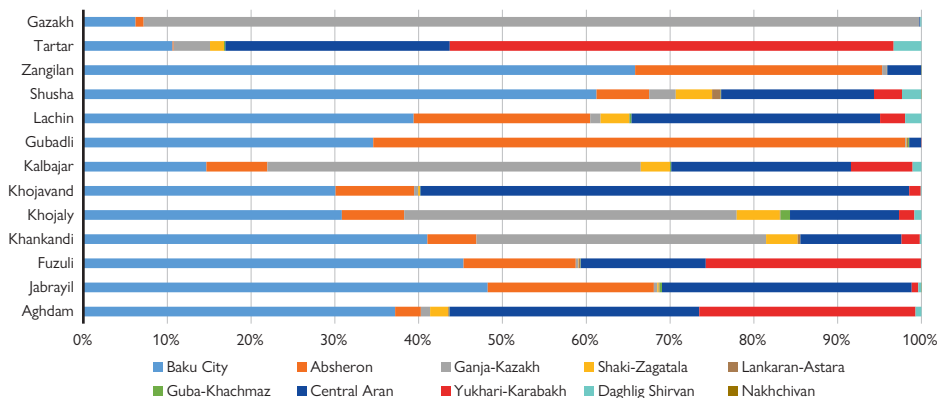


Source: SCRI, 2021.

Based on their original residence districts, the following chart shows to which urbanized regions the internally displaced persons were resettled. For example, the 153,369 internally displaced persons from the Aghdam district, who are also the largest resettled group, were mainly accommodated in Baku City, Aran and Yukhari-Karabakh regions. The latter is where the internally displaced persons from the Tartar district were most often accommodated.

²⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Fourth periodic report submitted by Azerbaijan under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2018 [Date received: 27 December 2018]. UN document E/C.12/AZE/4.

Figure 77: Resettled internally displaced persons, by district of origin and resettlement



Source: SCRI, 2021.

The Government of Azerbaijan has taken a series of social protection measures to improve the living conditions of internally displaced persons during the conflict settlement process, implementing not only a resettlement programme, but also an internally displaced persons return concept with a focus on voluntary return. The policy of the Government and internally displaced persons themselves is overwhelmingly oriented towards the return of affected populations to their land of origin. Throughout the conflict settlement process, few have been able to return. In 1994, families were returned to liberated villages (21) of Fuzuli district, and in 2016 to liberated villages of Jabrayil; in total 31,774 persons. Resettlement processes are therefore intended to only provide temporary accommodation, until such time that the internally displaced persons can return to their original communities. The Government dedicates substantial resources and attention to improving the situation of internally displaced persons, despite the complications posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 alone, it decided to improve the living conditions of internally displaced families further by increasing the budget of the State Committee to be used for completing constructions of new housings. In 2020 on average 489,541 internally displaced persons received a unified monthly allowance every month.

The main priorities of the Government of Azerbaijan after the liberation of its territories are to clear these territories from mines and other unexploded ordnances, to restore the cities and settlements totally destroyed during the conflict, and to create necessary conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return of the internally displaced persons. The rehabilitation of liberated territories is hindered by heavy landmine contamination and destruction of infrastructure. Following the signing of the trilateral statement by Armenia and Azerbaijan 276 citizens of Azerbaijan fell victim to mine explosions, among them many internally

displaced persons who were impatient to visit their liberated lands after three decades of forced relocation. The Government of Azerbaijan has started demining and reconstruction works in the area, in order to provide the internally displaced persons with the possibility of safe and dignified return. Given the huge scale of the return to the liberated lands, currently the process is being realized through pilot projects. The first project is being realized in Aghaly village in Zangilan, which has been totally rebuilt on the “smart village” model and will house 200 internally displaced families. So far, 66 internally displaced families have returned to Aghaly village.

A.6.2. Internal migration and urbanization

Urbanization or “urban transition” refers to “a shift in a population from one that is dispersed across small rural settlements, in which agriculture is the dominant economic activity, towards one that is concentrated in larger and denser urban settlements characterized by a dominance of industrial and service activities”.³⁰

This definition overlaps with the understanding of “social and economic migration”, as defined in Azerbaijan’s legislation, which is essentially driven by the desire to escape poverty or existence-threatening ecological changes on the living environment, mostly in rural areas or some less developed regions. Therefore, urbanization and internal migration are inextricably linked with each other and the process of socioeconomic development. Most countries are experiencing a large shift of population from rural areas to cities, as well as migration between urban areas. This is also the case with Azerbaijan.

Population distribution has also been affected significantly by forced internal displacement because of occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan in early 1990s, as mentioned above. Consequently, the level of urbanization in Azerbaijan has rapidly increased and is forecasted to continue in the coming years.

A.6.2.1. Urbanization profile

Azerbaijan has 14 economic regions according to the Presidential Decree on New Division of Economic Regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan of 7 July 2021. Based on the 2009 Population Census and projections at the beginning of 2021, Baku city is the most populated town and region in Azerbaijan, with a

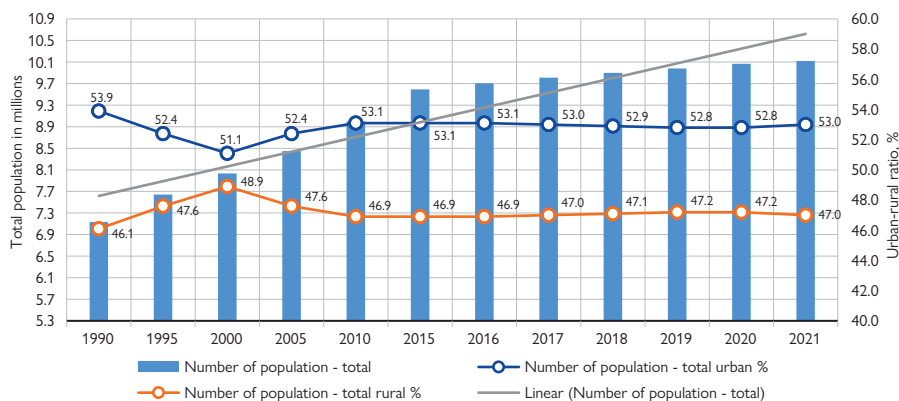
³⁰ United Nations, 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration UN Document E/CN.9/2018/2.

current population of 2.3 million, amounting to 23 per cent the total population of Azerbaijan, similar to the proportion in the 2009 Census.

From 1990 Azerbaijan's population grew steadily at an average annual rate of 1.2 per cent until 2016, only to experience a noticeable decline in growth from 2017 almost stagnating at 0.8 per cent annual growth rate between 2017–2020. The weaker population growth of only 0.5 per cent in 2020 was particularly noticeable, and to a significant extent connected to lower birth rates and higher death rates in 2020. Nevertheless, overall, the population has grown by 25 per cent in the last 20 years, leading to a population increase of about 13 per cent since 2010, and a population stock of slightly more than 10 million inhabitants.

Over the last twenty years Azerbaijan has maintained a highly urbanized population, although almost equal to the rural share of population in 2000. Overall, the urban population increased by approximately 25 per cent and the rural population by about 22 per cent. Significant disparities exist, however, in nationwide urbanization levels, ranging from Baku (92%) to the former Ganja–Gazakh region (46%) to the largely rural border regions (20–30%).³¹

Figure 78: Population trends, by urban–rural distribution (at the beginning of the year)



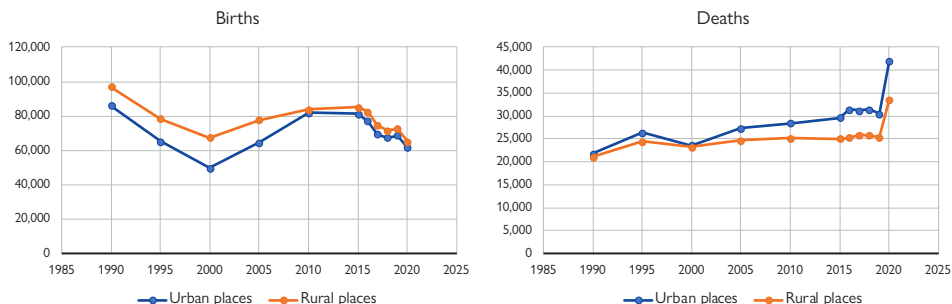
Source: SSC, 2021. Population.

Regarding the population distribution by urban and rural parameters it can be concluded that outside the over 2.3 million urban population of Baku, Absheron-Khizi (including Syngayit city) and Ganja-Dashkese (including Ganja city) have sizable urban populations, with the other economic regions having populations of about 71,600 to 304,500 urban inhabitants. The largest rural population is in the Lankaran-Astara economic region (701,600).

³¹ ADB (Asian Development Bank), 2018: Strengthening functional urban regions in Azerbaijan; www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/480176/azerbaijan-national-urban-assessment-2017.pdf.

In 2021, 53 per cent of the overall population lived in urban environments, slightly more women than men. Men were a small majority in rural environments. In the context of population development since 1990, it is evident that until 2005 the birth rate in the countryside was much higher than in towns.

Figure 79: Births and deaths, by urban–rural distribution

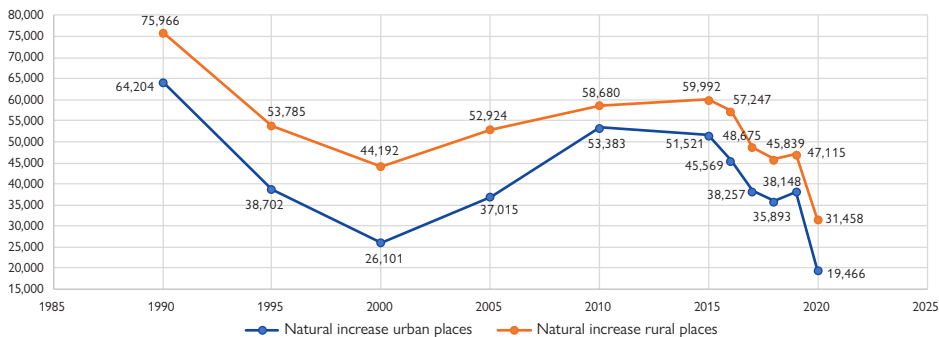


Source: SSC, 2021. Population.

From the year 2000 on, a change in birth patterns in urban areas occurred, which produced a huge increase in births over ten years, creating almost an equilibrium in births between rural and urban areas in 2010. With no change in birth pattern since then, overall a steady annual decline in births can be observed, with urban and rural birth rates falling by almost the same amount (30%), with births in rural areas having reached their lowest level in the last 30 years.

A closer look at deaths reveals that, with the same starting point for rural and urban areas in 2000, the number of rural deaths is lower than the number of urban deaths, and it has essentially stagnated over the years, whereas urban deaths have been steadily growing. This is even more true for the years after 2015, where the difference with rural deaths almost doubled.

Figure 80: Natural increase of population, by rural–urban distribution



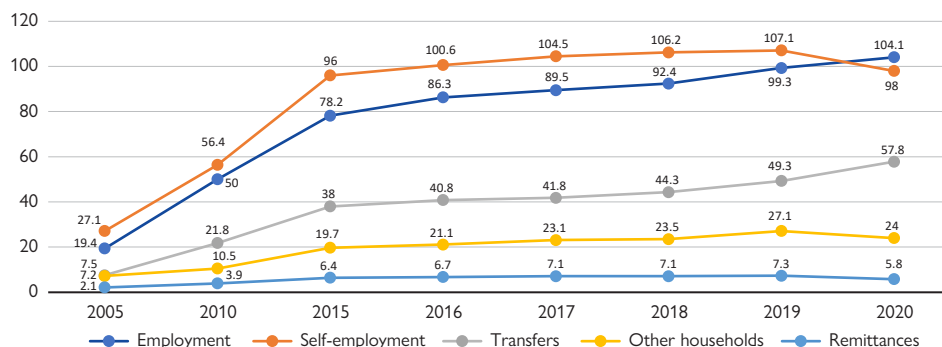
Source: SSC, 2021. Population.

The natural increase since 1990 – with an increasing trend from 2000 onward in the cities – was higher in the countryside because of the birth rate until 2010. Subsequent years saw not only a convergence between rural and urban regions, but also a decline in both urban and rural areas experiencing an almost equal decline of about 30 per cent. While natural increase of the population still continues overall, since 2010 – the all-time peak after 1990 – growth has significantly slowed, because of reduced but still higher births in the countryside and significantly increased deaths in towns.

A.6.2.2. Urbanization and socioeconomic development

According to an overview of urbanization by the Asian Development Bank, in Azerbaijan “inequality and poverty have declined significantly, the income difference between urban and rural areas is relatively small, and its social protection system is strong”³²

Figure 81: Sources of income generation, in per cent



Source: SSC, 2021. Budget of households. Basic source of the incomes of population by living place 2020.

With steady growth, income from self-employment accounts for a third of monthly per capita income for all types of income of Azerbaijani households, with rural households generating 43.8 per cent of their income from self-employment and urban households 20.2 per cent. Agricultural activities included in this figure produce again on average a third of the share of per capita income on a stable level. In 2020 a noticeable decline occurred in self-employment, the first in fifteen years; however, this is still at a high level compared to 2005–2010.

³² ADB (Asian Development Bank), 2018: Strengthening functional urban regions in Azerbaijan; www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/480176/azerbaijan-national-urban-assessment-2017.pdf (13.11.2021).

Baku city alone has an almost 20 per cent share of income generation through self-employment, despite the fact that only about 12 per cent of its income-receiving population is self-employed. Together with the Absheron region, Baku city generates the highest proportion in household income through hired work particularly in the public sector, in which slightly more than 20 per cent of their population were employed in public sector in 2020. In general, income from hired work is continuously increasing and holding the trend even in 2020.

Although a critical issue in Azerbaijan, data on internal migration are extremely scarce, and thus it is difficult to estimate the scale of out-migration. This is due in part to the failure of internal migrants to register at their new places of residence and deregister at their former places of residence. This affects even national data, which reflect official registrations rather than the “real picture”. In this, however, Azerbaijan is hardly alone; the scarcity of available indicators for measuring internal migration is part of a broader phenomenon and is experienced by many countries, according to IOM.³³

³³ IOM Migration Research Series, No. 19, Internal Migration and Development: A Global Perspective, 2005 (https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_19_2005.pdf).

PART B: MIGRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

As national prosperity grew, the Government of Azerbaijan put a stronger focus on human capital development (HCD) tagging the efforts “transforming black gold into human gold”. Against this backdrop it has adopted numerous policy papers and decrees, most notably the “Azerbaijan 2020” vision in 2012. It is continuing to do so with the updated “Azerbaijan 2030” strategy, adopted in 2021.

Human capital is understood as development of the knowledge, skills, and health of the population over their lifetimes to create value in an economy. There is a strong link between the human development approach and the SDGs, though the two are different things. While the SDGs are a “globally agreed tool for assessing development progress, the Human Development Index (HDI) provides an alternative single-number measure, capturing progress in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and living standards.”³⁴ However, the HDI is useful for summarizing progress towards Agenda 2030, as it directly addresses relevant aspects covered by it, offering a rough indication of whether a nation is progressing against many of the SDGs.³⁵

B.1. Human development

According to the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 2020, Azerbaijan ranked 88th out of 189 countries in 2019. The HDI was 0.756, which in a longer perspective still represents a modest annual HDI growth of 0.036 since 2010 (0.732).³⁶

Nevertheless, Azerbaijan holds steady with most other CIS countries in the high human development range (which goes up to 0.800). Compared to other CIS countries and the broader neighbourhood (according to latest data available from international sources), only the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Türkiye reached very high human development, all of them ranking among the top 55 countries in the world.

³⁴ UNDP, Human Development and the SDGs (2019): <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-and-sdgs>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ UNDP Human Development Indices: A statistical update 2019. <https://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?q=HUMAN+development+index&id=418>.

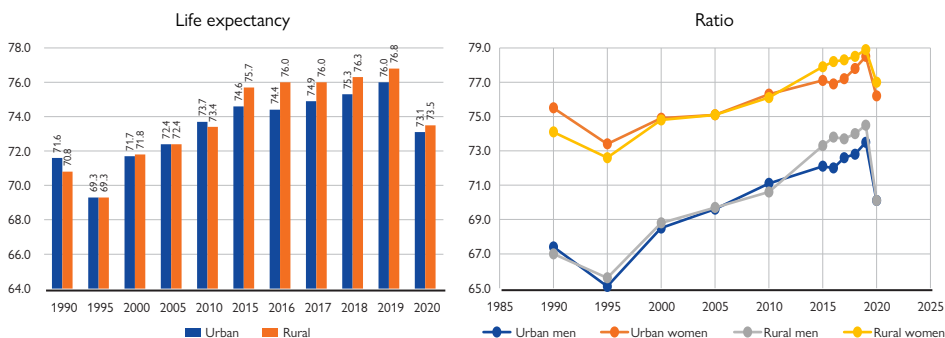
B.1.1. Life expectancy at birth

The first relevant indicator for the HDI is the life expectancy at birth,³⁷ which in Azerbaijan has steadily increased since 1995 when it was at a historic low, particularly for the male population (rural and urban). The year 2020 interrupted the growth trend in both urban and rural areas.

From 2010 to 2019 life expectancy grew by 2.8 years (in absolute terms) to 76.4 years in average for both sexes (or in relative terms by 3.8%). Life expectancy for male newborns was 4.7 years lower than for female newborns (78.7 years) in 2019. In 2020, the gap widened further to 6.4 years in favour of females.

Life expectancy at birth dropped to 73,2 years – the level prior to 2010 – in 2020 because of the global downturn associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 82: Life expectancy at birth, rural–urban, by sex



Source: SSC, 2021. Population. Reproduction.

A closer look at urban–rural trends over the past ten years reveals that the original lower life expectancy of rural newborns experienced a trend reversal from 2015. However, by 2020 life expectancy in rural and urban areas has almost equalized.

Particularly striking is the difference in life expectancy between the sexes in favour of female newborns, both in rural and urban areas. Although life expectancy has risen steadily for both sexes since 2000, the difference in life expectancy between sexes has not decreased significantly. Moreover, since 2015, both sexes have a higher life expectancy at birth in rural areas than their counterpart in the cities.

³⁷ State Statistical Committee (2021): General indicators of population reproduction. www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en.

B.1.2. Education

Educational attainment, as defined by expected years of schooling – is the other important indicator of human development, and a determinant that matters for predicting both individual earnings and economic growth. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) – a tool to map national education systems between UIS and its member states – the number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive in Azerbaijan was 13.5 as of 2020. This figure corresponds to the world average. Boys can expect to complete 13.38 and girls 13.63 years of primary and secondary education by the age of 18.³⁸

Net enrolment rates in education are also relevant indicators for measuring development progress. The overall pre-primary enrolment rate of children aged one to five years in preschool institutions (public and private) involved in training was 44.7 per cent in 2020.³⁹ In the last 10 years the proportion of girls in pre-primary education steadily increased by about 1 per cent a year on average, and was at 47.7 per cent in 2020.⁴⁰

The literacy rate was 99.8 per cent for those aged 15 years and older, dropping to 99.6 per cent for those aged above 65 years. According to the Sustainable Development Report challenges remain to reach SDG 4 and the score is decreasing.

The education index⁴¹ is an average of mean years of schooling (of adults) and expected years of schooling (of children), both expressed as an index obtained by scaling with the corresponding maxima. In 2019, according to UNDP,⁴² Azerbaijan's education index was 0.711 which, was 0.071 higher than in 2000. Azerbaijan's score is well above the world average, and also equates to high human development.

³⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Country Profile Azerbaijan, 2021, <https://uis.unesco.org/en/country/az?wbdisable=true>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ State Statistical Committee (2021): Education. Main indicators. www.stat.gov.az/source/education/?lang=en.

⁴¹ UNDP, Human Development Reports, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/103706>.

⁴² HDRO calculations based on expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020) and other sources.

B.2. Migration and economic development

The combination of Azerbaijan's high birth rates and low mortality rates means that immigration is not needed for population substitution, and an anticipated rise in the natural working-age population by roughly 500,000 between 2000 and 2050 has implications for the emigration potential of its population.

To access the effects of economic factors on migration, several variables will be considered to determine economic performance, which can either trigger emigration or create pull factors for immigration.

According to a recent ILO working paper regarding attainment of SDG 8: "it is expected that Azerbaijan will be able to achieve targets on all indicators".⁴³

GDP per capita increased by 252 per cent from USD 1,579.80 in 2005 to USD 5,561.50 in 2015, then dropped by 23.0 per cent in 2020 to USD 4,280.80, thus reaching the 2017 level. GDP per capita increased by 27 per cent in 2021 in relation to 2020 reaching USD 5,452.50.⁴⁴

Monthly household income is most frequently generated through hired work (36%), followed by self-employment (34%) of which one third relates to agricultural activities. Other sources of income are public transfers (the vast majority pensions), and no less relevant income from other households or remittances. Remittances account for 2–2.5 per cent of monthly household income in recent years, in 2020 however this fell to 1 per cent, which certainly must be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, including loss of work for remittance providers in host countries.

Although impactful at micro level, remittances are less significant at macro level for Azerbaijan, accounting for 3.3 per cent of national GDP in 2020 according to the World Bank.

According Azerbaijani Central Bank data on money transfers from and into Azerbaijan, approximately around half a billion dollars is sent out of Azerbaijan every year during 2019–2021. On average, around 26 per cent of this is sent to the Russian Federation, and around 22 per cent to Türkiye. The rest goes to many countries around the world, including: Georgia (6–11%), the United States (8–10%), the United Kingdom (4.5–5.5%), Qatar (4–6%) and Germany (4–4.5%).⁴⁵

⁴³ Valiyev, Anar (2020): Attaining SDG 8 in Azerbaijan. The challenges of economic transformation and job creation. Working paper No. 6. International Labor Organization. Geneva, 2020.

⁴⁴ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): System of national accounts and balance of payments. Gross domestic product. www.stat.gov.az/source/system_nat_accounts/?lang=en.

⁴⁵ Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan - External sector statistics (cbar.az).

Incoming transfers amount around one billion US dollars, close to USD 780 million in the first nine months of 2021 (latest available data). Here the money flows prevailingly from the Russian Federation by a share (53–60%), followed by Türkiye (7–10%), the United States (4–6%), and below 3 per cent on average from Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and Ukraine.⁴⁶

The fast-growing Azerbaijani economy, with double-digit GDP growth at the beginning of the 2010s, allowed the country to invest heavily in infrastructure projects. This growth expressed itself also in the need for an increased foreign workforce (as has been presented in the trend analysis in Part A, where a peak in residence permits and hired migrant workers occurred in 2013–2014). Most of them were employed in the construction, mining and manufacturing sectors.

Given the population growth that Azerbaijan is expected to experience, the development of other economic sectors will be critical for retaining working-age youth: encouraging the immigration of highly skilled and entrepreneurial foreign nationals could be seen as a strategy. Recent policy decisions by the Government of Azerbaijan – which for example, simplify administrative requirements for visitors and foreign entities doing business in the country – are an important step in this process.

B.3. Migration, employment and the labour market

One of the main trends in Azerbaijan's socioeconomic policy in recent years is the development of the labour market and effective use of the labour force. In 2021, the economically active population was 5,303,900, an increase of 388,600 compared to 2015. Of these, 4,915,300 were engaged in economic activity, and 315,700 persons were unemployed. In 2021, 2,551,700 persons (51.2% of those in employment) were engaged agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and construction, while 2,436,500 (48.8%) worked in the service sector.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Labour market <https://stat.gov.az/source/labour/?lang=en>.

Table 4: Main socioeconomic indicators of the labour market

	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>Population (thousands)</i>	9 649.3	9 854.0	9 939.8	10 024.3	10 093.1	10 137.8
<i>Economically active population (thousands)</i>	4 915.3	5 073.8	5 133.1	5 190.1	5 252.5	5 303.9
<i>Employed population (thousands)</i>	4 671.6	4 822.1	4 879.3	4 938.5	4 876.6	4 988.2
<i>Unemployed population (thousands)</i>	243.7	251.7	253.8	251.6	375.9	315.7
<i>Demand for workforce (persons)</i>	12 959	14 049	13 582	17 360	13 870	-
<i>Unemployment rate (%)</i>	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.8	7.2	6.0
<i>Average monthly nominal wages and salaries of employees (AZN)</i>	466.9	528.5	544.6	635.1	707.7	732.1

Source: SSC, 2021.

Broken down by sector, this means that almost 97 per cent of the labour force in agriculture are self-employed, over 60 per cent in construction and transportation, and over 50 per cent in manufacturing and trade, with the latter two showing a steadily declining trend since 2005, in contrast to construction, which has seen a proportionally larger increase.⁴⁸ Sectors dominated by state entities or private legal persons, in contrast, show a significantly lower level of self-employed labour. Overall, of the 5.3 million economically active people in 2020, only 1.7 million wage-earners (around 32%) with formal contracts were registered in 2020 as working for “State-owned” or “non-State-owned” enterprises.⁴⁹

The Government’s employment policy involves creating jobs and supporting small entrepreneurship to discourage people from migrating to urban areas to escape poverty caused by low wages and underemployment.

Generally, there has been an increase of around 20 per cent in the number of economically active people since 2005, which “is explained mainly by the fact that a high number of young people entered the labour market and there was a high number of working pensioners”.⁵⁰ The unemployment rate has remained stable over the last fifteen years, except 2020 which recorded an increase by 2.4 percentage points (to 7.2%) compared to 2019 (4.8%), almost reverting to the 2005 level (7.3%).

⁴⁸ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Labor market. Employment. Employed population by economic activities and Employees by economic activities. www.stat.gov.az/source/labor/?lang=en.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Valiyev, Anar (2020): Attaining SDG 8 in Azerbaijan. The challenges of economic transformation and job creation. Working paper No. 6. International Labor Organization. Geneva, 2020, p. 19.

Employment of migrant labour in Azerbaijan is carried out through issuance of work permits, within the framework of the labour migration quota approved for each year. The quota is applied to ensure efficient usage of local labour resources, and increase the effectiveness of regulation of labour migration. The quota is calculated based on the situation in the domestic labour market, demand for manpower, the existence of vacancies that have not been applied for by the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan with professional skills and qualifications meeting the requirements of the job, the ability of employment service bodies to meet requirements of employers for manpower at the cost of local labour resources, as well as need to attract highly qualified foreign specialists.

According to the “Rules for determining the labour migration quota”, every year employers intending to recruit migrant workers must submit forecast information on demand for migrant labour by indicating required professions under the Employment Classification by 1 May. The forecast information form on demand for migrant labour is posted in the official SMS website, and received online. Forecast information are summarized by the SMS collated by types of economic activity, showing the number of employers submitting information, and the professions under the Employment Classification. The Commission established to prepare proposals for determining quotas and coordinating work in this field forecasts demand for foreign labour in accordance with the Rules, and submits proposals regarding the quota for the next year by types of economic activity to the Cabinet of Ministers by 15 September every year. The quota is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers at the end of September. The quotas can be adjusted on an ad hoc basis at the request of state bodies. The SMS provides updated statistics on the quota by economic areas on its website. Foreigners and stateless persons who do not require work permits under the Migration Code can work in Azerbaijan outside the quota.

The table below shows the labour migration quotas approved for each economic area based on the forecast information provided by the employers during previous years and the demand of the national labour market. Construction and mining were the main economic areas for which migrant workers were needed in the country.

Table 5: Labour migration quotas approved by economic area

Economic areas	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Construction	5 300	5 650	5 650	4 000	2 000	2 000	2 000	2 000	3 930
Mining	3 500	3 500	3 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	2 500	1 700	1 000
Manufacturing	650	650	600	600	615	615	600	600	500
Education	470	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	350
Accommodation	300	300	300	300	200	200	200	350	400
Trade	350	280	150	150	150	150	150	350	340
ICT	300	200	200	200	150	150	220	200	150
Health and social services	150	150	100	100	150	150	150	200	210
Agriculture	75	60	100	90	90	110	120	230	205
Transportation	100	150	100	100	100	100	100	120	115
Finance	150	100	100	100	70	70	70	70	70
Administration	75	75	75	75	60	60	60	115	130
Art and entertainment	75	100	80	80	60	60	60	120	90
Professional activities	150	100	100	80	50	50	50	80	35
Other services	100	100	85	60	60	50	40	115	85
Electricity and gas	85	55	70	60	60	50	50	50	45
Water and waste management	70	90	80	60	60	40	30	20	30
Real estate	75	25	15	10	5	5	5	15	50
Domestic services	25	15	25	15	10	10	10	5	5
Total	12 000	12 000	11 230	9 480	7 290	7 270	6 815	6 740	7 740

Source: SMS, 2021.

Changes in employment and the labour market contribute to emigration from, immigration to, and internal migration within Azerbaijan. The specific impact on the labour market should be seen in the context of internal and international migration.

B.4. Migration and social development

Azerbaijan's social protection system comprises four broad categories: (1) social insurance; (2) social assistance; (3) social compensation; and (4) social services.

Social support payments were increased by 3.2 per cent (AZN 167 million; USD 98.2 million) in January–November 2021 and citizens were provided with

pensions, allowances, and targeted social assistance worth AZN 5.4 billion (USD 3.1 billion) during the same period.⁵¹ Between 2019 and 2021, Azerbaijan increased social payments to citizens to AZN 6.4 billion (USD 3.7 billion), an increase of AZN 2.4 billion (USD 1.4 billion) or 60 per cent.⁵² It should be noted that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has expanded social programmes to cover more than 4.8 million citizens.⁵³

Social assistance for children has also played an important role in the successes of the social protection system. Since 2015, an average of around 66,000 children have been receiving health-related social benefits, with the highest number in 2019 (72,979) and a decreasing trend thereafter. At the beginning of 2022 (52,645 children), 24 per cent less children were included in the transfer scheme due to health-related issues than at the beginning of 2019 (72,979 children), and around 4 per cent than at the beginning of 2010 (58,122 children).⁵⁴ Notably at the beginning of 2022, the average monthly benefit per capita increased by 85 per cent from AZN 63.68 (USD 36.6) in 2019 to AZN 118.16 (USD 68).

Families who have suffered the loss of the breadwinner or family head are also eligible to receive social benefits. Since 2010 the number of recipients in this category have been steadily on the rise, so that at the beginning of 2021 (49,190 families), around 64 per cent more family members were receiving social benefits than at the beginning of 2010 (33,057 family members), and 18 per cent more than at the beginning of 2019 (46,002 family members) as a pre-pandemic relevant benchmark.⁵⁵

Other benefits provided by the Government include monthly compensation because of labour injuries or occupational injuries, allowance granted to guardians of orphan and children deprived of parental care, social benefits for women with more than 5 children, etc. A lump sum childbirth allowance was provided to 75,996 families in 2021 (AZN 190,12/USD 111.8), at a rate around 84 per cent higher than in 2019 (AZN 103.48/USD 60.90) and a funeral allowance, which was

⁵¹ Ödenilən pensiya, müavinət, təqaüd və ünvanlı yardımların həcmi açıqlandı (The amount of paid pensions, allowances, stipends and targeted assistance was announced). (2021, December 25). AZTV.az. <https://aztv.az/az/news/17187/odenilen-pensiya-muavinet-teqaud-ve-unvanli-yardimlarin-hecmi-aciqlandi>.

⁵² Azerbaijan boosts social payments by 60pct in past three years. (2021, August 2). Azernews.Az. <https://www.azernews.az/nation/181834.html>.

⁵³ Social Research Centre (2020). Analytical report: Anti-crisis policy of the state in the fight against the pandemic in public opinion. <https://stm.az/storage/common/1620818416.a364e-pandemiya-2.pdf>.

⁵⁴ State Statistical Committee (2021). Health, Social Protection, Sports. Social security. Pensions and social benefits. 2.1.7. Social benefits allocated by government for population, <https://stat.gov.az/source/healthcare/?lang=en>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

provided to 4,258 people in 2021, and had risen in value by 130 per cent since 2010(1853 people).⁵⁶

Social insurance and social assistance have helped to reduce poverty levels in Azerbaijan, particularly among displaced populations. Between 2005 and 2015, Azerbaijan's overall poverty rate declined from 29.3 per cent to 4.9 per cent, it then increased by 1 percentage point in 2016, steadily dropped until 2019, and then increased again in 2020 by 1.4 per cent (to 6.2%).⁵⁷

Data on the nexus between migration and social development is extremely limited in Azerbaijan, primarily due to the lack of surveys conducted in recent years and the unavailability of administrative data disaggregated by migratory status, which can be derived from social programmes, hospitals and schools. In accordance with the State Program on Improvement of Official Statistics of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018–2025 approved by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan no. 3672 of 14 February 2018, it is planned to conduct a Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in the country. The main goal of conducting the MICS is to obtain statistical information that provides international comparability for assessing the social welfare of mothers and children in the country, assessing human development and measuring the achievement of the goals set by the Sustainable Development Goals. It is planned that the survey will be held in May–July 2023, and the work related to the preparation, publication and broadcasting of the report on its results will be completed in March–June 2024.

B.5. Migration and health

Policymakers need high-quality data on the intersections between migration and health to better manage migration and to ensure the health of migrants and the general population. Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Migration call for harnessing the potential of national data to improve health outcomes for migrants and the general population as a priority. An evidence base to understand the ongoing and potential effects of migration on the health of migrants and members of host communities would be timely. Unfortunately, no national health data include information on migrant health like, for instance, occupational injuries or immigrants' health status.

⁵⁶ State Statistical Committee (2021). Health, Social Protection, Sports. Social security. Social benefits allocated by Government for population. [Health, Social Protection, Sport | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

⁵⁷ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Budget of households. www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/?lang=en.

Table 6: Main health indicators

	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	72.4	73.6	75.2	75.2	75.4	75.8	76.4	73.2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	75.1	76.2	77.6	76.6	77.8	78.2	78.7	76.5
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	69.6	70.9	72.7	72.8	73.1	73.3	74.0	70.1
Health life expectancy, female (years)	67.8	67.7	67.7	68.1	68.5	67.2
Health life expectancy, male (years)	62.8	62.8	62.4	62.6	63.6	60.9
Health expenditure (% of GDP)	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.1	2.3
Mortality rate, female adult (per 1 000 people)	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.2	6.7
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	12.7	11.2	11.0	11.4	11.1	11.1	11.0	9.8
Mortality rate, male adult (per 1 000 people)	6.7	6.4	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.0	8.4
Mortality rate, under-five, girls (per 1 000 live births)	16.5	13.7	11.8	11.9	11.9	11.7	10.9	9.6
Mortality rate, under-five, boys (per 1 000 live births)	18.6	14.6	14.7	15.4	15.3	14.3	14.8	12.5

Source: SSC, 2021. Population.

Under the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the “Protection of Health of the Population”, migrants residing in Azerbaijan have equal rights to national citizens to health care. According to Article 10, medical services are provided free of charge in public health care institutions. Migrants can receive immediate and special medical assistance without any restriction or discrimination.

The main causes of adult mortality and morbidity in Azerbaijan are essentially non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with a predominance of circulatory system diseases (55.8% in 2020). However, Azerbaijan has also to deal with communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and HIV.

Since 2010, an annual average of around 568 new HIV infection cases has emerged; in 2020, there were 547 cases and 104 were diagnosed with AIDS. The number of cases registered for treatment is steadily increasing, up to 8,395 treated persons living with HIV in 2020 (up by 320% since 2010), as are morbidity cases. In 2020, 2,481 persons died due to HIV, equivalent to 30 per cent of those treated that year.⁵⁸ In a survey and voluntary testing carried out by IOM in 2018 among 300 migrants, 1 per cent of them were diagnosed with HIV. Due to the small sample size, this figure cannot be generalized.

⁵⁸ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Health, Social Protection, Sport. Morbidity of population. [Health, Social Protection, Sport | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

Medical assistance (including specialized medical assistance) for citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan living with HIV, stateless persons permanently residing in the country, and persons to whom the country has granted refugee status, is provided in state medical institutions at the expense of the state budget to the amount determined by the relevant executive authority.

Regarding tuberculosis, Azerbaijan is listed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the ten countries with the highest estimated multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) rates. It has more than 1,000 cases per year (4,070 cases annual average since 2010). In 2020, 2,558 new tuberculosis cases emerged, of which close to two thirds occurred among men. No disaggregated figures are available for migrants. Migrants and everybody on the territory of Azerbaijan have access to tuberculosis services; the country has equal rights and access to health care services and free-of-charge treatment for tuberculosis.

Starting in 2016 the Government introduced a mandatory health insurance programme. The programme was rolled out in three pilot regions (Mingachevir, Yevlakh and at a later stage Agdash) over a three-year period with the aim of gradually introducing mandatory nationwide health insurance. By the end of 2018, a State Agency of Mandatory Health Insurance (SAMHI) was established, which included a new Administration of the Regional Medical Divisions (TABIB).⁵⁹

After that, at the beginning of 2021, more than a dozen other regions were included into the new health programme, thus enabling health coverage for all citizens across all health providers, whether public or private (under the management of the Azerbaijani Management Union of Medical Territorial Units as the legal SAMHI entity). After expanding this programme to other regions, the same year, Baku became the last included in spring 2021. During these first five years, all contributions to the mandatory health insurance were state funded, while following final implementation employers and employees (wage-earners and self-employed) started paying contributions from 1 January 2021.⁶⁰

The mandatory insurance programme ensures free, high-quality medical care and precludes out-of-pocket payments for all Azerbaijani residents, including legally residing migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. In accordance with the Law on Medical Insurance of Azerbaijan the basic benefits package includes primary care, emergency care, specialized outpatient care, laboratory services, physiotherapy, invasive radiology and inpatient care.

⁵⁹ UNDP (2020): Azerbaijan socioeconomic assessment for Covid-19. Final report, p. 22.

⁶⁰ From today, compulsory health insurance will cover the entire population of the country | 1news.az | News.

In 2020, budgetary allocations for health amounted to 6.4 per cent of the state budget, or 2.3 per cent of GDP – an increase of more than 1 per cent of GDP share compared to the previous three years. The public expenditures was more than twice as high in 2020 (AZN 1.7 billion/USD 1 billion) as in 2017 (AZN 705 million/USD 414 million).⁶¹ Health-related allocations covered the infrastructure of 342 public hospitals, 1,663 state-run outpatient services (polyclinics) and 1,593 medical stations in rural areas in 2021.⁶² Also, there are about 700 private medical facilities throughout Azerbaijan, covering almost all areas of medicine, which are mostly located in Baku.⁶³

Table 7: Main indicators of health care (at the beginning of the year)

	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physicians, total (thousands)	30.1	32.8	32.8	32.5	32.2	31.9	32.5	31.8	31.8
per 10 000 population	36.1	36.9	34.6	33.9	33.2	32.6	32.9	32.0	31.8
Allied health care staff (thousands)	59.7	62.9	56.1	54.9	54.5	52.8	54.0	55.7	54.8
of whom: nurses	32.3	35.0	39.0	38.0	38.1	37.3	37.6	38.3	37.7
per 10 000 population	71.7	70.9	59.3	57.3	56.2	54.0	54.8	55.9	54.8
hospitals	732	756	566	559	569	566	563	570	518
Hospital beds (thousands)	68.4	67.4	46.4	44.9	45.3	44.1	44.0	44.3	44.5
per 10 000 population	82.1	76.0	49.0	46.9	46.7	45.1	44.7	44.5	44.5
Outpatient departments (thousands)	105.3	102.7	106.3	107.0	106.9	105.2	104.9	106.5	105.1
per 10 000 population	126.5	115.7	112.2	111.6	110.4	107.6	106.4	107.0	105.1
Ambulatory-polyclinics	1 594	1 692	1 746	1 750	1 758	1 737	1 741	1 726	1 723

Source: SSC, 2021. Health, Social Protection, Sport. Health and Sport. Healthcare development.

In 2021, there were 31,958 physicians in total (all specializations) in Azerbaijan, or about 32 physicians per 10,000 persons; women have accounted for about one third on average (35%) over the last ten years. Close to two thirds of all physicians are practising in Baku area respectively around 92 physicians per 10,000 persons in Baku city alone. In the Absheron-Khizi economic region there were 30 physicians per 10,000 persons and in the Ganja-Dashkesen economic region close to 22 physicians per 10,000 persons practising in 2021. There were 38,069 nurses in the country, who accounted for more than two-thirds (71%) of all staff allied to medicine.⁶⁴

⁶¹ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Health, Social Protection, Sport. Health and Sport. Health care development and medical staff. www.stat.gov.az/source/healthcare/?lang=en#.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Gabulova, Rahima (2018). Country report State of Azerbaijan – July 2018. Prepared for the EAPC “Country of the Month” initiative. www.escardio.org/static-file/Escardio/Subspecialty/EAPC/Country%20of%20the%20month/Documents/azerbaijan-country-of-the-month-full-report.pdf.

⁶⁴ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021): Health, Social Protection, Sport. Health and Sport. Economic regions and administrative-territorial units. www.stat.gov.az/source/healthcare/?lang=en#.

To better manage migration and ensure the health of migrants and the general population policymakers need high-quality data on the intersections between migration and health. Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Migration advocate for harnessing the potential of national data to improve health outcomes for migrants and the general population as a priority. An evidence base to comprehend the ongoing and potential impacts of migration on the health of migrants and members of host communities would be timely.

PART C: MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

This section describes Azerbaijan's national policies, legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements governing migration, including ongoing cooperation with international actors in the field of migration governance and programming related to migration.

C.1. Regional and international cooperation

Azerbaijan is party to Agenda 2030, which recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development at global level for the first time. Agenda 2030 calls upon States to implement well-managed migration policies, and facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. Stronger, more comprehensive data and analysis on migration are critical to meet these calls and ensure that vulnerable groups, including migrants, are not left behind and that countries are able to meet their development potential.

Starting with 2017, Azerbaijan has participated in the two-yearly Voluntary National Review (VNR) on implementation of Agenda 2030. The VNR is drafted by the above mentioned NCCSD for submission to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In 2021, it compiled the latest review of the national development priorities and challenges. The major focus therein with derived cross-cutting issues to migration policy refers to challenges in developing competitive human capital through expansion of the scope of active labour market programmes, increasing investment in education, and ensuring full accessibility to the compulsory health insurance system; other issues raised included sustainable resettlement in liberated territories and the improvement of data collection with regard to sustainable development down to local level.⁶⁵

Complementary to ongoing efforts in this regard, Azerbaijan has come to agreement with the United Nations on planning and implementing United Nations development activities in Azerbaijan in support of Agenda 2030, and agreed the so-called “United Nations-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025”. One of the most important migration-related priorities and outputs of this cooperation agreement relates to enhancing human capital and skilled workforce in key sectors, which is important for eventually limiting the push factors for emigration.

Azerbaijan has also been a part of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration negotiating process. Adopted by 152 countries in December

⁶⁵ UN SDG development platform: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/azerbaijan>.

2018, the Global Compact for Migration is a non-legally binding document that covers all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The Global Compact for Migration committed governments through its 23 objectives and 10 guiding principles to fostering international cooperation, acknowledging that no state can address migration alone.

The United Nations Network on Migration was established in May 2018 to ensure effective, coordinated system-wide support to implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and to promote effective migration management and governance. It assists in the development of a voluntary review report for the regional and global review meetings. Like for Agenda 2030 voluntary reporting, Azerbaijan in 2020 submitted a voluntary Regional Review Report on its progress on implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, ahead of the regional review conference for Europe and North America that took place in November 2020, and updated the report ahead of the International Migration Review Forum 2022. Azerbaijan is the first country in South-East Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia to join the “Champion Countries” initiative established under the leadership of the United Nations Network on Migration to support, monitor, and review implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. Azerbaijan is one of the first countries in the region to establish an United Nations Network on Migration at national level, thus enabling direct support for implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

Following a Global Compact for Migration call for action on strengthening the evidence base on migration and inform policy through the establishment of regional centres (see above), the SMS, with support from IOM Azerbaijan, initiated the establishment of the Regional Training Centre on Migration (RTCM). The RTCM was established to enhance capacities at different levels relating to migration management, not only in Azerbaijan, but also in other countries in the region through training, exchange and networking. In the future, migration research shall be part of the mandate. The RTCM will also serve as a major knowledge and innovation hub, delivering for exchange of best practices and acting as a forum for regional policy dialogue.⁶⁶

Azerbaijan has also joined the Global Compact on Refugees since its negotiation phase. During the Global Refugee Forum and High-Level Segment on Statelessness held in 2019, the Government made four pledges in total:

- Facilitating legal employment and access to decent employment for refugees and persons under UNHCR protection;

⁶⁶ For more information see: www.rtcn.az.

- Granting tertiary education scholarship to a person per year who has been granted refugee status in Azerbaijan;
- Inclusion of refugees, as well as persons under UNHCR’s protection into the national health insurance scheme in Azerbaijan;
- Naturalizing 545 stateless persons permanently residing in the territory.

At international level, Azerbaijan is a member and supporter of diverse initiatives like:

- the “Prague Process” which was launched in order to trigger cooperation among European Union countries, Schengen countries, Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan states, Central Asian countries, the Russian Federation and Türkiye in the migration sphere;
- the “Budapest Process” in which more than 50 governments and ten international organizations come together to find solutions to ongoing challenges with the endeavour to establishing a system of constant regulation of migration; and
- the Almaty Process, a regional consultative process that promotes sustained dialogue and exchange of information on migration issues and on refugee protection challenges in Central Asia and the wider region.

Given the active engagement and efforts of the country in migration management at both national and regional levels, Azerbaijan has been elected as a member of the Steering Group of the Global Forum on Migration and Development as of April 2020.

Azerbaijan has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 1999. On 4 and 5 October 2021, within the framework of the 33rd session of the United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the third periodic report of the Republic of Azerbaijan on implementation of the Convention was reviewed.

In addition, Azerbaijan has also signed up to or ratified the following international treaties and agreements on or related to migration and migrants:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 1992);
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified in 1992);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified in 1995);

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1996);
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 1996);
- The Optional Protocols to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (ratified in 2000);
- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (ratified in 2003);
- The Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (ratified in 2003);
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified in 2009);
- The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (ratified in 2010) (from Becker, 2018).

C.2. Policy framework

As can be seen from the analytical part of this migration profile, migration policy is a cross-sectoral matter and has many content-related points of contact with other sectoral policies. Evidently, Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees are continuing to contribute to the development of national policies, and to shaping them in a sustainable fashion.

In Azerbaijan, therefore, sectoral strategies and action plans exist in all migration-relevant policy areas, which consider migration-related aspects, accordingly, bearing in mind international guidelines and recommendations. As the analysis in this migration profile shows, this relates at the forefront to social and economic development respectively labour market policies in connection with promoting legal and decent work and related to it legal stay and residence based on the labour market needs. The same can be stated in relation to social security, health and education where policies are shaped to enable unified services to all, regardless of their citizens' status. Accordingly, in all these policy areas, significant improvements have been made in recent years and shall be enhanced in the years to follow.

C.2.1. Overarching strategic priorities

A major policy paper with large national reach was “Azerbaijan 2020: A Look into The Future’ Development Concept”. The paper was issued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2012 and outlined the Government’s main strategic goals concerning development of the economy, infrastructure, information technologies, human capital and social security, institutional management, civil society, cultural heritage and ecological issues. It includes calls for:

1. International cooperation to better regulate the immigration and emigration of labour migrants;
2. An adept system to regulate “the use of social allowances by refugees, prevent the illegal influx of foreign labour force into the country and strengthen the social security of our citizens working abroad;”
3. Enhanced foreign trade and investment policy;
4. Upskilling and training to be organized in foreign countries to improve staffing in the health system; and
5. A new state programme on the education of youth in third countries for the period 2015–2020.

By Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2021 this policy paper was replaced by: “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development”. In its introductory chapter it states: “Azerbaijan is entering a strategic phase, [...] which is qualitatively new to the post-pandemic and post-conflict era and which spans from 2021 to 2030. [...] deep structural and institutional reforms must further increase the power of the Azerbaijani state via the discovery of sources of high economic growth, the establishment of a more prosperous society, and the historical return to liberated regions with permanent resettlement therein.”⁶⁷

With the heading: “A powerful state with exemplary social welfare” it draws the main pathways to socioeconomic development, and sets out five corresponding national priorities.

- A steadily growing, competitive economy with stable and high economic growth and resilient to internal and external factors. Measures shall include diversification of the economy, higher exports, strengthening public–private cooperation, a revitalized and bustling private sector with small- and medium-sized businesses becoming the primary source of economic growth and employment. Together

⁶⁷ Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on approval of “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development”, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/50474>.

with enhancing the economic efficiency of public investments, among others, these should lead to high income levels and well-paid jobs. Importantly, the paper mentions that a new and transparent privatization strategy shall be envisaged to also minimize the shadow economy and achieve a high level of transparency in both the private and the public sectors.

- A dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice for the benefit of every citizen by increasing social well-being, growing wages and determining the volume of existent informal employment. Efforts must include more generous and fairer social security and more equitable, decent levels of minimum pensions and other social benefits. A balanced development of both the capital and regions are also included to bring regional development into line with that of the capital.
- Modern innovations and competitive human capital shall be created by strengthening education policies for lifelong learning, fostering preschool education, integrative educational practices and digital competences, and developing the vocational training system. Measures should include increasing the technological capacities and healthy lifestyles of citizens, as measured by increasing life expectancy.
- “The great return” to the territories liberated from occupation by achieving sustainable resettlement of citizens with the living standards they enjoyed prior to the occupation, including labour market reintegration supported by both public-private and private initiatives.
- A clean environment and country of “green growth”, by increasing the number of green spaces throughout the country, covering the need for quality water and creating spaces for green energy where environmentally friendly green technologies can proliferate. Measures should focus on increasing the share of alternative and renewable energy sources in primary consumption and environmentally friendly vehicles.

Even if not explicitly mentioned, aspects relevant to migration policy can be clearly derived from the defined priorities, which are also important for achieving the SDGs and Global Compact for Migration objectives.

- In the field of labour migration (international and rural–urban), the concrete objective of minimizing the informal economy is set out. On the hand this requires surveying the extent of informal employment, and on the other hand it calls for more transparency measures in the labour market, enhancing the achievement of decent work conditions.

- In a broader sense, and in the context of education and social protection, the Strategy is also intended to raise social well-being – an important pillar of migration governance. The wellbeing of migrants includes indicators such as labour migration management, skills and qualification recognition schemes, student migration regulation, bilateral labour agreements and migrant remittances.
- In terms of internal migration, the Strategy is clearly seeking balanced development of both the capital and regions, to bring regional development in line with that of the capital in a cross-sectoral approach.
- The “Great Return” and the sustainable resettlement measures to be implemented address internally displaced persons and refugees permanently or temporarily resettled across the country. Thus, this very important national priority is designed to finally resolve the pressing issue of internally displaced persons and refugees, but also may diversify internal migration patterns in terms of destination regions.

As regards human rights and non-discrimination in general, the “National Programme for Action to Raise the Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms” in the Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted by the President of the Republic in 2011 also calls for action on several migration-related measures:

- Migrant detention conditions to match international standards;
- Vulnerable groups, such as children, the disabled, internally displaced persons and refugees to receive legal advice and training to defend their human rights, in line with UNESCO’s principle of “Education for all”;
- Boost the legal status and regulate the rights of Azerbaijani migrants abroad by way of treaty extensions;
- Enhance cooperation and joint activities with United Nations agencies.

C.2.2. Safe, orderly and regular migration

Azerbaijan’s Migration Code, which was adopted in 2013 and amended in 2017, outlines a strategic, whole-of-government approach to the management of migration in the country. Encompassing 95 articles across 15 chapters and 5 sections, it establishes, “norms on implementation of the state policy in the sphere of migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan, regulation of migration processes and relations arising in this sphere as well as legal status of foreign nationals and stateless persons in the Republic of Azerbaijan”.

Access to citizenship is regulated in the Law on Citizenship, with recent amendments to facilitate naturalization of stateless persons living in the country, including operative rules for determining citizenship. The Law provides access to naturalization of foreign nationals.

Overall labour migration management is covered by relevant long-term programmes of labour market development, employment and social protection strategies and thematic roadmaps.⁶⁸ The Labour Code addresses all issues related to the social and economic rights of workers, employment relationships, occupational safety and health, collective bargaining and other matters. It provides identical labour rights to all, irrespective of their citizens' status, and the same is the case for social security. The Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for determining the labour quota in accordance with the provisions of the relevant regulation, while the SMS is in charge of conducting work permit procedures (the one-stop shop principle).

Regular migration

The Migration Code specifically prescribes provisions regarding eligibility and admission criteria: legal entry and stay including visa provisions and exemptions, registration of stay, issuance of residence permits (temporary and permanent), issuance of work permits and exemptions from it; it also regulates coercive provisions with executive powers related to return policy and combating irregular migration (expulsions, removals, detention (voluntary and involuntary), and voluntary returns).

Several amendments have been made to the Migration Code, including changes made in June 2018. Those changes represent increasing permissiveness towards, and better understanding of, the use of regular migration channels to maximize the economic and social benefits of migration; for example, simplifying visa and registration procedures for foreign nationals and stateless persons to encourage tourism, and lifting bans on re-entry for foreign nationals and stateless persons who committed administrative violations in certain circumstances.

In addition to the Migration Code provisions, specific issues regarding combating irregular migration are covered by strategies, including action plans and relevant laws under the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the State Border Service (SBS). This particularly relates to border control and

⁶⁸ National Information Portal on Sustainable Development Goals of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://sdg.azstat.org/en/national-implementation-mechanism1/8/promote-sustained-inclusive-and-sustainable-economic-growth-full-and-productive-employment-and-decen>.

protection, integrated border management, combating trafficking in human beings, and organized crime in general.

Combating trafficking in human beings

The National Action Plan (NAP) for 2020–2024 on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved in 2020 and is being implemented by the MIA. It follows up on the previous NAP (2014–2018) with a focus, among other aspects, on institutional strengthening, strengthening current awareness-raising mechanisms, enhancing the activities of shelters and assistance centres operating in this field including prevention, and the financial security of specialized NGOs involved in combating human trafficking.

Border control and protection, and combating the smuggling of migrants

The Law on the State Border of the Republic of Azerbaijan defines the procedure for crossing the state border and the border regime. Moreover, the Migration Code includes procedures on entry to and exit from the country, in relation to both citizens and foreigners and stateless persons. Registration of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the country is carried out through the “Entry-Exit and Registration” interagency automated information-search system (IAMAS).

Article 318 of the Criminal Code defines the legislative ground for punishing the facilitators of migrant smuggling. The Code envisages that facilitating illegal migration – that is organizing illegal entry, stay, transit and departure of any person – is punishable by a fine, corrective action or imprisonment for up to three years. The crime is punished more severely if committed by an organized group, by an official, repeatedly, or in a way dangerous to human life.

Readmission management and return migration

The Migration Code includes provisions regarding the return of migrants from Azerbaijan. A cooperation agreement with IOM on assisted voluntary return of migrants from Azerbaijan was signed at the end of 2016, the first policy development in this field. Together with the IOM Office in Baku, the SMS handled return programmes operationally within the pilot project implemented in 2017–2020. Within the cooperation framework, the overall objective is to offer favourable conditions for the successful return of rejected asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants who wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

National legislation does not provide provisions on the return process concerning socioeconomic assistance upon repatriation in support of the reintegration of former emigrants. However, national policymaking takes place within the framework of project-funded international cooperation via IOM or the ICMPD in accordance with international standards and in line with the objectives of the SDGs and Global Compact for Migration.

Readmission management came into the focus of migration activities when Azerbaijan signed a series of readmission agreements with the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and Montenegro from 2014. Further agreements are under preparation with 13 more countries.⁶⁹

Additionally, in cooperation with the ICMPD and with the beginning of 2019, Azerbaijan implemented the “Reintegration support to Azerbaijani returnees (RESTART)” project for its own returned and vulnerable nationals. The project envisages the establishment of an Electronic Readmission Case Management System (ERCMS), capacity-building and preparation of statistical reports on readmitted Azerbaijani citizens, with the support of EURCAP, the European Union Readmission Capacity-Building Facility.

C.2.3. Emigration and diaspora communities abroad

The strategic framework concerning the Azerbaijani diaspora is contained in the 2002 Law On State Policy on Azerbaijanis Living Abroad, which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the responsible the State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Azerbaijan Republic to provide “organizational, informative, material and cultural assistance to Azerbaijanis living abroad, the organizations and mass media established by them for the purpose to contact with their historical lands, to study, preserve and develop the mother tongue and national-cultural values”.

A major recent policy-shaping effort in this field, achieved with the support of IOM, European Union and the State Committee on Work with Diaspora, is the “Mapping the Azerbaijani Diaspora: Insights from Big Data” compilation. This compilation enabled development of a comprehensive report on the skills of Azerbaijanis living abroad and provided demographic profiles of Azerbaijani diaspora communities. Concretely, it elaborated data on the top sectors of employment in selected host countries, and surveyed the quality of education

⁶⁹ These countries are: Bangladesh, Belarus, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

and work environments in Azerbaijan including interest in skills transfer initiatives. Notably, comprehensive research methodology has been applied in collecting and analysing the data, thus enabling an exercise into big data analysis.

C.3. Legal and regulative framework

At the national level, the Migration Code is the primary legislative document on migration. Other legal instruments include:

- The Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Law 787-IQ of 30 December 1999);
- The Code on Administrative Offences of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Law 96-VQ of 29 December 2015);
- The Code on Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Law 908-IQ of 14 July 2000);
- The Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Law 618-IQ of 1 February 1999);
- The Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Law 905-IQ of 11 July 2000);
- Law 527-IQ on Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 30 September 1998);
- Law 813 on Passports of the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 14 June 1994);
- Law 55-IQ on Registration based on Residence and Actual Address of the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 4 April 1996);
- Law 421-IQ on the Approval of Regulation on Special Documents of Stateless Persons Permanently Residing in the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 30 December 1997);
- Law 527-IQ on Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 30 September 1998);
- Law 668-IQ on the Status of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (of 21 May 1999);
- Law 223-IIQ on State Duty (of 4 December 2001);
- Law 551-VIQ on Investment Activities (of 22 June 2022);
- Law 958-IIQ on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons (Law of 28 June 2005);
- Law 1197-VQ on State Dactyloscopic and Genome Registration in the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 29 June 2018);

- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 69 on the application of the “single window” principle in migration management (of 4 March 2009);
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 78 on approval of permit cards for temporary and permanent residence on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, also description, specification and samples of a decision on extension of a term for temporary staying of foreign nationals and stateless persons (of 8 April 2009);
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 326 on some issues related to the issuance of visas to foreigners and stateless persons coming to the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 13 September 2010);
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 133 on travel documents of 2 April 2014;
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 1256 on approval of the “List of officials authorized to review cases of administrative violations” (of 23 February 2017);
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 94 on “State Migration Management Policy Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan” of 13 July 2004”;
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 39 on “Rules for accounting of the work permit form issued to foreigners or stateless persons to engage in paid labour activities in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a serious reporting document” and “On the approval of the description, specification and sample of the work permit issued to foreigners or stateless persons to engage in paid labour activities in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (of 7 February 2014);
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 40 on approval of application-questionnaire samples for extending the period of temporary stay of foreigners and stateless persons, granting temporary or permanent residence permit, including work permit (or extension of the period) in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan (of 7 February 2014);
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 387 on “List of activity areas where obtaining work permit is not required for foreigners and stateless persons who are on an assignment in the Republic of Azerbaijan for a period not exceeding 90 days” (of 4 December 2014);
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 8 on approval of the form of the Application-questionnaire for providing information about it by a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan who has accepted the citizenship of a foreign state (of 29 January 2015);

- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 17 on approval of the “Internal Disciplinary Rules of the Detention Centre for Illegal Migrants” (of 24 August 2016);
- Decision of Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 124 on “Rules for determining the labour migration quota” (of 14 March 2016);
- Regulations on implementation of Law 773-IQ “On Registration at Place of Residence and Stay” (of 8 December 1999);
- Regulations on the rules for considering and resolving issues of citizenship of the Azerbaijan Republic (approved by Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic 189, of 30 August 1999);
- Regulations “On Establishment of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 560, of 19 March 2007);
- Regulations “On the Entry-exit and Registration inter-departmental automated information retrieval system” (approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 744 of 22 April 2008);
- Regulations on “Ensuring the Activity of the Unified Migration Information System of the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan Republic” (approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 276 of 4 June 2010);
- Regulations on the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking (approved by Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan Regulation 123, of 11 August 2009);
- Regulations on Procedure for Issuing the Certificate on Return to the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan 267-IIIQ, of 10 April 2007);
- Rules on establishing a person’s citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic 84, of 18 March 2015);
- Rules of considering the petition for issuing “Refugee” status (approved by Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic 419, of 13 November 2000);
- Decision of the State Migration Service Board of the Republic of Azerbaijan 22 on “Rules of operation of the Commission on checking the rights and duties of foreigners and stateless persons applying for a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as their knowledge of the state language, provided for by the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (of 20 September 2013).

C.4. Institutional framework and coordination

As mentioned before, migration management is a cross-cutting issue and involves several public actors as mentioned throughout the document. In particular, the SMS, SBS, MIA, MFA, and MLSPP need to closely coordinate policy development and achieve objectives related to migration management. The public actors also include the Ministry of Education (on student mobility or skill recognition schemes), and the State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (on internally displaced persons). So far, internal migration has not been managed as a separate policy area by a state actor.

C.4.1. Major public stakeholders

The following national bodies are responsible for various aspects of migration management in the country:

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan leads the strategic development of the country's migration policy, including legislation and the passing of decrees, as well as matters concerning foreign affairs. Executive decisions regarding the acquisition of citizenship and authorization of political asylum are within his remit.

Azerbaijan's SMS, established in 2007, is the key actor responsible for migration management in the country. It works towards the prevention of irregular migration and improves migration management procedures and structures, including return migration, to better harness the developmental benefits that migration can bring to the country. In cooperation with other national bodies, procedures under SMS's purview include:

- Registration upon place of stay of foreign nationals and stateless persons arriving to stay in Azerbaijan for periods longer than 15 days;
- Extension of foreign nationals and stateless persons' temporary staying period;
- Issuance and extension of permanent and temporary residence permits to foreign nationals and stateless persons;
- Issuance and extension of work permits to foreign nationals and stateless persons;
- Establishment of citizenship;
- Participation in citizenship issues;
- Determination of refugee status;

- Readmission issues;
- Combating irregular migration and detention.

Furthermore, the SMS coordinates, analyses and disseminates migration data collected from a variety of agencies, including overseeing the United Migration Information System (UMIS). The UMIS is a central database that houses migration records collected by SMS and other national agencies under the provisions of the Migration Code regarding data collection and data exchange principles. Hotels, sanatoriums, rest homes, boarding houses, camping, tourist bases, hospitals and other similar public facilities in Azerbaijan transfer relevant data to UMIS. This database enables a global overview of the bulk of migration data held by national agencies, improving coordination and management practices. For example, previously scattered information required to inform the issuance of entry bans, administrative fines or temporary and permanent residence permits are accessible through this system. The system is accessible in real time for several public agencies. UMIS is integrated with the “Entry-Exit and Registration” interagency automated information-retrieval system and the State Register of the Population.

The MFA is responsible for processing visa applications of foreign nationals and stateless persons abroad; administering consular services for Azerbaijani citizens abroad; maintaining the register of Azerbaijani citizens living temporarily and permanently abroad; advocating and advancing cooperation on migration issues with foreign states and international organizations; registering of State Civil Acts of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan and conducting notary acts in foreign countries; issuing travel documents (passport, return certificate) to the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan temporarily or permanently residing or staying in foreign countries; providing legal and consular assistance to the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The SBS according to the existing state legislation takes measures to ensure the security of the country’s borders, the security of hydrocarbon deposits and oil and gas infrastructure in the Caspian Sea, as well as to fight against international terrorism, irregular migration, illegal drug trafficking, arms and ammunition smuggling, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their components.

With its migration-related responsibilities, the MIA issues Azerbaijani passports and identification cards, combats irregular migration and human trafficking, and issues documents to certify the identity of stateless persons.

The MLSPP manages the national labour market. In relation to migration, it develops and implements policies on migrant workers, regulates labour market quotas for migrant workers, ensures that appropriate social protections and

labour laws are in place for migrant workers and being followed, appraises work permit applications, and negotiates bilateral labour migration agreements. The professional integration of migrant workers is also addressed by the Department for Employment Policy and Demography and the State Employment Service, housed within the MLSPP.

The main activities of the State Committee on Work with Diaspora (the Committee) are to work with the Azerbaijani diaspora to form and implement policy, engage in business, protect their rights and freedoms, invest in the economic, social and cultural life in their home country, and establish communities in destination countries. The Committee is also responsible for collecting and analysing information about Azerbaijanis abroad and, to this effect, establishing a database.

Success depends very much on will to implement policies and to cooperate across the network using a whole-of-government approach provided for by the Migration Code. In certain policy areas this also includes continuous cooperation with civil society organizations (CSOs), the media and academia. Coordinating bodies and working groups have been convened to, among other things, encourage cross-sectoral and public participation in migration management in Azerbaijan.

C.4.2. Coordination bodies and mechanisms

All migration-related state authorities in Azerbaijan are coordinated by the SMS, which oversees state policy in this area. The Public Council – established by SMS in 2015 under the National Action Plan on Promotion of Open Government for 2012–2015” and the Law on Public Participation – operates towards safeguarding and improving public engagement with, and transparency in, the work of SMS. This group, which consists primarily of CSOs, has contributed successful proposals to SMS to expand the rights of and protections accorded to foreign nationals and stateless persons, and boost the regulation of migration management processes.

Similarly, the Advisory Board under the SMS operates with the aim of bringing together representatives of the private sector (entrepreneurs), the public sector and civil society (such as labour unions) to assess the impact of migration policy in the business and entrepreneurship field and assess needs for improvements in legislative and operative matters.

The Government of Azerbaijan established the Migrant Council under the SMS in 2022. In line with the whole-of-society approach promoted by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the key purpose of the

initiative is to enhance active participation of migrants residing in the country in the management of migration in Azerbaijan. The engagement of the Council is intended to improve the effectiveness of the protection of migrants' human rights and freedoms, to improve the quality of services provided to foreigners and stateless persons, to ensure transparency, and to assess the impact of the decisions taken in the field of migration on the daily lives of foreigners. Currently, the Migrant Council comprises eight representatives of migrant communities from Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Germany, Georgia, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Pakistan, and Türkiye.

National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NCCSD) was established in 2016 with the aim of coordinating implementation of the SDGs among national agencies tasked with a range of SDG-related assignments. The NCCSD also helps to identify and work towards meeting key national priorities within the SDG framework. In accordance with the reporting mechanism formed, it is responsible for submitting national progress reports to the country's leadership and the High-Level Political Forum.

“At the request of the Council, central and local executive authorities and legal entities where the state is the majority stakeholder (shareholder) must, once in a year, ensure submission of statistical data on indicators of achievement of SDGs to the State Statistical Committee and a report on the work performed to the Council.”⁷⁰ The NCCSD has also begun to stimulate partnership building between the Government and CSOs around the SDG agenda, and to develop possible models of cooperation between these two actors for possible scale-up or replication.

Task forces and working groups

An SMS-led inter-agency working group on readmission was established in 2016 when readmission management became a policy issue as aims were set to improve the reintegration of returning migrants to Azerbaijan.

Moreover, in order to increase efforts to identify stateless persons, a Working Group on Statelessness was established, made up of relevant government agencies, the Ombudsperson and the UNHCR Representation in Azerbaijan.

⁷⁰ SDG National Coordination Council: <https://sdg.azstat.org/en/national-implementation-mechanism/452/national-coordination-council>.

There is also a High-level Working Group on Human Trafficking which was established under, and coordinated by, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.

The Interministerial Working Group on Socioeconomic Integration of Refugees was set up in 2016 to establish a platform for the exchange of information and interdisciplinary cooperation in the area of refugee integration. The overall working plan of the Group is to meet regularly to discuss the most difficult challenges in managing the migration process, and to shape integration policy and consult on possible changes to national legislation in this regard.

PART D: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section reviews the report's findings and presents recommendations. Key migration trends will be reviewed. Strategies to boost migration statistics and management will be put forward.

D.1. Key findings

With its emergence as an upper-middle-income country in 2008 and continued good economic situation, Azerbaijan became an attractive destination for immigration, reaching its peak in 2014–2015. The increase in the net migration rate clearly shows a consolidation of outflows and inflows with a continuing peace settlement process on liberated territory and rising prosperity: inflows clearly outweighed outflows and were increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected migration flows in 2020 and 2021. This not only reduced migration flows, but also changed their characteristics to some extent.

Azerbaijan is a net-positive country in terms of annual migration flows and based on departures for permanent emigration; international migrants constitute a small, but very important share of country's population. In 2021 temporary and permanently residing migrants including stateless persons made up 0.5 per cent of the overall population.

Despite this level of migration flow, and the small number of long-term immigrants (in terms of permanent residence), it can be assumed that migration will have an impact on further socioeconomic development in the country in the near future. Therefore, the findings of the data analysis are key core statements that can be used as baseline information for further policymaking.

Short-term migration and general mobility

- Azerbaijan is succeeding to increase general mobility in short-term visits. The major determinants are recreational tourism (rising) and business tourism (stagnating).
- About a quarter of all visitors stay longer than fifteen days.
- Administratively simplified and highly automated entry procedures (ASAN Visa and UMIS) including fast track proceedings (one-stop shop) are drivers of success.

- Immediate neighbourhood and countries from the Arab Peninsula and South Asia dominate short-term migration.

Temporary migration (based on temporary residence permits)

- Temporary migration is the focus of migration management: 77 per cent of all immigrants are temporary residents.
- Family reunification with a close relative is the major string of influx since its peak in 2015 (more than half), with employment the second largest.
- The policy applied towards intake is characterized by high receptivity (a 96% permit approval rate).
- Temporary migration is highly influenced by the surrounding neighbourhood: 72 per cent of all migrants under this category originate from Türkiye, the Russian Federation and Georgia.
- Males dominate throughout (at a steady 61%). The age group 18–35 is the largest and there is a significant share of minors (12%).

Permanent migration (based on permanent residence permits) and citizenship

- Permanent migration is steadily rising, with a moderate policy applied (65% permit approval rate).
- The stock is basically strongly neighbourhood-based: Georgia, the Russian Federation and Türkiye are on top with 72 per cent. The top ten countries provide 92 per cent of the stock, including former Soviet countries and Pakistan.
- Females make up the majority (57%) of migrants under this category. The dominate age category is 36–50, and there is a significant proportion aged 60 and older.
- Two per cent of permanent residence permits were issued to stateless persons. But every second naturalized person (47%) had been stateless previously.
- Eighty-five per cent of who changed citizenship were from four countries: the Russian Federation, Georgia, and to a far lesser extent Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

Labour migration

- The approval rate for work permits is very high (93%), correlating to the basing of temporary residence permits on the one-stop shop principle.

- Labour migrants are predominantly citizens of Türkiye, followed by the citizens of the United Kingdom; they are mainly male (nine out of ten), of older working age (36–59), and predominantly working in construction or mining (72%).
- High-skilled labour and business-related migration is in growing demand. Currently this business- and high-skilled related migration comprises 9.4 per cent of the overall migrant inflow, and they are exempted from obtaining work permits.
- Under this category the same sex- and age-specific picture exists as for migrant workers: 91.5 per cent are male and the majority (57.7%) are in the working age group.

Student mobility

- Student mobility is one of the three major components of migration inflow, and before the pandemic was steadily on the rise.
- Temporary residence permits issued to students of higher education prevails over the TRPS issued to pupils in school education.
- The usual countries of citizenship of international students/pupils are Türkiye, Georgia, the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Forced migration

- Few asylum applications are registered (from various countries) and the recognition rate is very low (2.5%).
- The typical (principal) applicant is male (85%), and from Afghanistan or Pakistan, while the number of women is somewhat larger with Afghan nationals. Less than 1 per cent are below 14 years of age, and the huge majority are between 18 and 50 years of age (92%).

Emigration

- Overall, emigration is back on the rise since 2016/17. The Russian Federation, Türkiye and Germany are the major countries of destination for temporary and permanent emigration. Younger emigrants, mostly in their twenties, make up by far the largest group, with women in surplus generally.
- Emigration to the Russian Federation is more employment related, less permanent (fewer citizenships) and dominated by younger men (18+). There is a net migration surplus from the host's perspective.
- Emigration to Türkiye is more family related, more permanent, with a higher share in women (52%). There is a net migration surplus from the host's perspective.

- Emigration to the European Union based on first residence permits data is in more than a quarter of cases (28%) for education purposes with men predominating (68.8%). Employment follows with less than a quarter (23%), and this is overwhelmingly dominated by men (82.6%). Twenty per cent is family-related emigration with women in the surplus (58%).
- Almost two thirds of all working Azerbaijani nationals are employed in Poland, followed by Czechia and Germany with 10 per cent each. Emigration is dominated by the 20–39 age group (62%), with 25–29-year-olds most significant. The majority of middle-aged (35+) emigrants are in Germany, Romania, France, Belgium and Estonia.
- Emigration data are scant and scattered. Overall, the limitations of emigration data are in part related to the practical challenges associated with the data collection systems from which they are derived, such as border exit data, deregistration of residence or notification on citizenship change. It is not always feasible to collect substantive data on every national exiting the country, and the process of deregistration is often neglected by those changing residence.

Irregular migration including trafficking in persons

- Border crossing points are the major spot to combat irregular migration, in the main to prevent irregular entry.
- The majority of those violating migration-related legislation are ordered to voluntarily leave the country.
- Recent legislative changes improved the situation regarding leaving the country. The introduction of temporary entry bans under new Article 16.1.8 of the Migration Code significantly reduced the number of administrative expulsions and long-term restrictions of entry. In parallel with the legal changes, statistical recording was also adjusted and improved.
- Throughout the observation years most accommodation in detention centres was voluntary.
- Only a few dozen victims of trafficking from the broader neighbourhood were identified over the years; the majority (90%) related to sexual exploitation of young women only, but a few women are also victims of labour exploitation.
- An updated and valid National Action Plan against trafficking in persons is in place.

Return migration

- Readmission requests peaked in 2018. The approval rate (the proportion of positively reviewed request in all readmission requests) is high (up to 80%), the readmission rate (the proportion of readmitted persons in all positively

reviewed request) is at 40 per cent, significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Every year, men make up 40 per cent of the readmitted, on average. The age group 18–35 is the most represented.
- Readmitted Azerbaijanis belonging to vulnerable groups (10%) received project-funded reintegration support. National legislation does not provide for socioeconomic assistance upon repatriation in support of reintegration.

Internally displaced persons

- The size of the internally displaced population is stable, and their quality of life is improving; the return of internally displaced persons to their homelands has started.
- Azerbaijan still has a large population of internally displaced persons as a result of occupation of its territories in early 1990s, reaching nearly 655.000 in 2021 more than 3 per cent more than in 2013.
- In total, as of 1 November 2021, 651,458 internally displaced persons had been resettled, dispersed across Azerbaijan in numerous locations. Most (62.7%) were resettled in and around urban areas. Again, growing urbanization reinforces this trend.
- The policy of the Government and internally displaced persons themselves is overwhelmingly oriented towards their return to their land of origin. Few have been able to return. The recent “Azerbaijan Agenda 2030” national strategy plans for “The Great Return”, a sustainable programme of resettlement to the territories liberated from occupation at the level of living standards enjoyed prior to the occupation. Resettlement processes so far are therefore intended to only provide temporary accommodation.
- However, the return process of internally displaced persons is hampered significantly by huge number of mines and explosives placed in the formerly occupied territories.
- Positive developments concern an increase in budget allocation and shifts in the internally displaced person assistance policy: (a) from a status-based to a more needs-based approach; and (b) from in-kind to cash-based assistance.

Internal migration

- Internal displacement following the occupation of territories of Azerbaijan in early 1990s has significantly affected population distribution to the point that urbanization in Azerbaijan has rapidly increased.

- Urbanization is centred around Baku and the Absheron peninsula, which became the major internal migrant receiving areas and accommodated most internally displaced persons. The two regions experienced positive net migration, while other (primarily rural) regions have had a negative migration track record.
- Although a critical issue in Azerbaijan, data on internal migration are extremely scarce and thus it is difficult to estimate the scale of outmigration. This is due in part to the failure of internal migrants to register at their new places of residence and deregister at their former places of residence.

D.2. Recommendations concerning improvements to migration statistics and management

Recommendation 1

The contents of the Unified Migration Information System (UMIS) database should be subjected to an internal review, the results of which would make up an inventory. This inventory would be useful for staff of all contributing agencies, in addition to the research community and the general public. The inventory should be publicly available on the SMS website or on request based on a Data and Transparency policy.

Recommendation 2

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and templates should be developed for agencies providing data to internal and external actors. Notes and metadata should be included in all instances to clearly explain the data source, measurements, time period, terminology and methodology used. A single standardized template in a widely accessible format (such as .csv or .xls) should be used to provide migration data across all agencies, with adjustments as required.

Recommendation 3

Agencies should also share migration data in a way that is clearly and comprehensively understood, reducing the chances of misinterpretation. Standardized migration data request templates could be developed as a part of the SOPs and templates under Recommendation 2. Different versions could be produced for internal and external actors, enabling those making a request to choose from the contents and variables of UMIS that are available to them and enter appropriate identifying details. Primarily, requests should be lodged and addressed online, through an Excel template, a protected PDF file, or an online portal.

Recommendation 4

National migration agencies should consider producing explanatory notes to accompany past and future changes to data collection, analysis or reporting practices. These notes could include discussion on the feasibility (and limitations) of time series analysis in light of changes. Longitudinal data, accompanied by metadata and explanatory notes on the limits of comparability, should be provided whenever possible.

Recommendation 5

An online hub should be created for migration data in Azerbaijan. This could be incorporated into the new Regional Training Centre on Migration, and also to enhance research activities and online surveys including instant feedback from the public to inform policy.

Many statistical and migration agencies now feature publicly accessible online databases of up-to-date migration data with instant top-level analysis functionality. While this may be a long-term goal, in the short-term the SMS, in collaboration with other agencies, could consider producing a monthly or bimonthly factsheet that outlines the most recent figures, focuses on a particular migration topic of interest and promotes government programmes and ongoing collaborations with international actors in the field of migration.

Recommendation 6

Data and statistics produced by foreign countries on Azerbaijani emigrants should be inventoried and made available on a regular basis to national policy makers. In the short term, this could involve the compilation of existing tables produced by statistical agencies such as ROSSTAT and EUROSTAT for regular incorporation and analysis into SMS reports. In the longer term, bilateral data exchanges with major countries of destination could be pursued.

A piloting project should be considered via the Regional Training Centre on Migration to identify and consolidate regional government agencies migration statistics into one location and eventually further develop the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee towards a regional migration statistics data portal, including a Data and Transparency policy.

Recommendation 7

Household surveys should be undertaken in Azerbaijan to yield key information in areas where data are particularly scarce, such as internal migration and migration and development; cross-sectoral impacts, and the outcomes and motivations of (internal and international) migrants, including the impact of remittances on national development.

Recommendation 8

Administrative data sources should be interrogated for viability. These sources include for example, health or education records indicating changes in catchment area, and tax and voting records.

Recommendation 9

Consideration should be given to reinstating the Caucasus Barometer Azerbaijan, a household survey on socioeconomic issues and political attitudes conducted by the Caucasus Resource Research Centre in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Although it was terminated after the 2013 survey round, reinstating it would not only provide data on Azerbaijan but also data that can be compared within the region. Before reinstatement, certain technical modifications should be made to its design to better capture migration and its effects.

Consider collaboration between the Regional Training Centre on Migration and the Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD) on migration research matters. The Caucasus Analytical Digest analyses the political, economic and social situation in the three South Caucasus states within the context of international and security dimensions of the region's development. Another option would be to join forces with the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC-Georgia), which is actively participating in the analytical digest together with the Research Centre for East European Studies (FSO) at the University of Bremen, the Centre for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich, the Centre for Eastern European Studies (CEES) at the University of Zürich and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO).

Recommendation 10

The impact of the Migration Code should be quantified, so far as possible. The development of a framework to assess the effectiveness of the Migration Code would enable more informed policy decisions and amendments.

International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 171211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int