

FUTURE MIGRATION
SCENARIOS FOR EUROPE

Report

HUNGARY

Migration and demographic patterns in Central-Eastern Europe



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Report

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ISBN (pdf) 978-91-8001-048-1

DOI [10.5281/zenodo.7781975](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7781975)

Funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Programme under Grant ID 870649

Cover photo: Joseph Sun/Unsplash.com

Layout: Kotryna Juskaite

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Abstract

This report has been prepared as a part of the Horizon 2020 FUME project – Future Migration Scenarios for Europe (870649) and its deliverable “D.6.2. Report on migration and demographic patterns in the EU CEE countries and potential source countries”. Its aim is to analyse the migration profile of Hungary and to assess the country’s migration potential in order to provide material for fine-tuning the FUME migration projection model. Some of the variables considered in this analysis are migrants’ gender, educational attainment, employment, formal status and country of origin. Moreover, the report is a first step in the analytical exercise which aims to determine migration movement potential both from and to Hungary.

Hungary, similarly to other Visegrad countries, is a relatively new immigration country. One of the key moments in its recent migration history is the accession to the European Union in 2004. The report briefly presents the historical context of migrations to and from Hungary in order to facilitate an understanding of the country’s current migration profile. It both sketches the demographic structure of the population of migrants residing in the country and refers to the issues around the Hungarian diaspora regionally and globally. Moreover, the presented analysis provides background information concerning particular institutions and laws that are crucial for the migration policy of the country.





Picture: Daniel Olah/Unsplash.com

1. The structure of the report

The following report commences with the methods' section, where the key definitions are explained and the used sources are outlined. The authors then provide the historical background for international migrations to and from Hungary since the mid-19th century and explain the development of migration policy in the country since the fall of communism in 1989. In the substantial part of the following analysis, quantitative data on foreigners' presence in Hungary is presented. Then, consecutively, the analysis of Hungarian citizenship acquisitions, foreigners' education in Hungary, and the data on international protection are provided. Finally, the authors of the report present data on migration flows provided by Abel & Cohen (2019) in comparison with the data gathered from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (hereafter: HCSO). The report concludes with a narrative migration scenario, where the authors aim to project future migration movements from and to Hungary and the pattern of demographic development of the country.

2. Methodology, definitions and sources

Methodological approach and data sources

This report is based on a desk research method. During 2021 the CASPAR team has been gradually gathering qualitative and quantitative data on immigration and emigration to and from Hungary and other EU countries in Central Europe. The research team that prepared the following report consisted of a senior researcher, a junior researcher and a research apprentice. Another researcher from our team prepared the narrative scenario concluding the analysis.

The main sources of data for this report are datasets published by the HCSO, supplemented with the existing academic literature on international migrations in Hungary. The report touches also upon the subject of the reliability of the available data, assessing it through comparative analysis of local data from Hungarian sources with the estimations provided by Abel & Cohen (2019). In the final step, the report has been cross-checked and assessed critically by the two remaining research teams (there were three project groups in total) to provide data comparability and high quality of the research outcomes.

Definitions of immigrants in Hungarian statistics

HCSO defines **immigrants** and **emigrants** through a broader notion of international migration. In order to be counted as an international migrant for the purposes of HCSO's statistics, an individual must reside in a certain country for at least 12 months, having had previously crossed a border between two, separate states. HCSO provides data on the stock of Hungarians and stocks of foreigners living in Hungary, as well as the data on migration flows both from as well as to Hungary. Importantly, however, the data on the stock of Hungarians living abroad is unavailable. Hence, when preparing this part of the analysis, the authors of this report have been drawing from alternative data sources, where estimations on the size of the Hungarian diaspora were available (HCSO 2021 c).

The number of foreigners immigrating to Hungary (immigrants' flow) is based on 'registrations of establishing a residence in Hungary' for the EU citizens, as well as nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. For the third-country nationals, this number is based on data on the number of residence permits issued to foreigners in Hungary. The size of the flow of emigrants from Hungary is determined by the HCSO based on 'the departure from the country with no intention to return, and on the expiration, revocation or non-renewal of the residence permit'. Foreigners' stock in Hungary is, on the other hand, understood by the HCSO as the number of persons who are citizens of the foreign states and reside in Hungary on the 1st of January of a given year holding a valid residence or settlement permit (HCSO 2021 c).



Picture: Julia Romanova/Unsplash.com

3. Historical background

The modern history of Hungary is strongly influenced by both voluntary and forced migration. Let us start by saying that in the mid-19th century popular German pamphlets recommended Hungary (next to America and Australia) as a settlement destination for Germans seeking a new country to live in. The influx of German settlers to the Hungarian territories, however, has been quickly taken over by the outflow of Hungarian emigrants. As argued by John Kosa, a Hungarian historian who himself migrated to North America after the Second World War, the impetus of the early Hungarian emigration was mostly stemming not from the increase of the local population, but rather from a palette of social problems witnessed in Central Europe (Kosa 1957: 502-503).

The abolition of serfdom and other feudal privileges in the mid-19th century paved the way for the development of the new social classes, such as the rural proletariat, and opened up the possibilities of social mobility. An increasing number of people started to emigrate from the country due to the low wages, periods of high unemployment and political oppression. An important example of such mobility was significant emigration resulting from the unsuccessful revolution in 1849. Those escaping the persecution to Turkey, through the Southern border of the country, soon dispersed over several countries and formed the first Hungarian colonies in Turkey, France and in the United States. The stories of their success quickly spread in the home country and turned into an important stimulus for further emigration (Kosa 1941, 1957: 504).

Nevertheless, until the last decades of the 19th century, the migration outflow from the country was minimal as the employment in one of the numerous development projects carried out in the Habsburg Empire (e.g. the large-scale construction works) was easy to find. The situation started to change from the mid-1880s and an average of 22,000 persons yearly began to leave the country. At the beginning of the 20th century, these figures increased further to an average of 110,000 persons leaving the Hungarian territory annually. It is estimated that between the mid 19th century and the end of the First World War between 2,5 and 3 million emigrants left Hungary. Only a small percentage of them (between 15-33%) decided to return to the country after a shorter or a longer sojourn abroad. It is estimated that among the diverse group of emigrants from the Hungarian territory up to could be 40% ethnic Hungarians while the rest of the group comprised emigrants of other ethnicities - most commonly Jewish and German. In the historical studies, it has been argued that at the time the Slovaks, Croats and Romanians all had bigger chances of obtaining emigration permits than the persons of Hungarian nationality. The policy had been introduced in order to "lessen the rate of national minorities in the total population of the country" (Kosa 1957: 504-506). Many ethnic Hungarians, however, defied the regulations and unregistered emigration was common and widespread.

It is estimated that even as many as 95% of Hungarian emigrants prior to 1920 were representatives of the poorer class and among them, the largest group was constituted by the landless proletariat. The emigrants were leaving for various European states (most notably to France, Germany, Austria and the Balkan states) as well as to the Americas (most commonly to the USA but with some migrants settling also in Canada and in Latin America) (Sonders 1922; Kosa 1957: 507).

After the 1920 Treaty of Trianon which significantly reduced the size of the territory of the new Hungarian state, the new political class tried to increase the size of the country's population. Limiting emigration became one of the key political goals. Thus the state tightened its emigration policy and withheld issuing of permits and passports to those intending to leave the country. It is estimated that in the first decade after the Treaty of Trianon only 42 thousand people were granted permission to leave the country. Moreover, leaving the country without the authorities' permission got much more difficult than it used to be in the pre-war period (Kosa 1957: 508).

The migration pressure strengthened significantly during the 1930s as a consequence of, among other reasons, the economic slowdown linked to the Great Depression and the introduction of the anti-Jewish laws. In contrast to the pre-war authorities, the Regency attempted to take all possible actions limiting the outflow of people from Hungary, among them the members of ethnic minorities, even in spite of the high unemployment witnessed in the country at that time. Paradoxically, at the same time anti-Semite laws were being gradually introduced in the country, and the Jews were not allowed to leave it. While those people who wanted to leave the country were railroaded into resorting to the illegal channels of emigration and despite the fact that most of those who managed to leave this way were Jewish (some members of the Jewish minority were capable of affording such an expensive journey) the vast majority were still unable to leave. During the Second World War, the Hungarian Jews were forcibly removed from their home country and transported to the Nazi extermination camps, including the largest one - Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is known that the Hungarian Jews constitute the largest group among the people who perished in the Auschwitz camp since 430 thousand of them died there. The second-largest group among victims of Auschwitz were the Polish Jew as the lives of 300 thousand of them have been taken in Auschwitz-Birkenau (70.Auschwitz.org).

The low levels of emigration from Hungary during the interwar period stemmed also from the increasing barriers witnessed in the traditional destination countries such as for example the USA. As a result of the new quota system on immigration introduced in the USA many Hungarian emigrants diverted to other destination countries, including Canada which admitted close to 30 000 Hungarians in a decade between 1921 and 1931 (Kosa 1957: 511).

After WWII the largest numbers of refugees of Hungarian origin were admitted by Australia and Israel. Significant groups moved also to the United States, as well as to Canada, Argentina and Brazil. The remaining part of the Hungarian refugees dispersed in over forty-odd countries on five continents. The new, communist authorities opposed any kind of emigration and tried to prevent the outflow of people from the country. Between 1949 and 1956 the migratory movements were officially restricted, thus thousands of Hungarians who wanted to leave the country had to cross the heavily militarised Austrian border without legal permission. The revolution of 1956 threw the borders open for a short time, and within a few weeks, a surging wave of escapees fled the country (Kosa 1957: 513-514). According to the estimations of Háblicsek and Illés (2007), during this brief period as many as 176,000 people left Hungary, either fearing persecution, in search of better life, or for both reasons. Although the political reasons were the predominant causes of this migration outflow, it needs to be emphasised that the mass emigration movement had an important, economic background as well which, however, did not prevent many Hungarian refugees from being granted the international protection in Canada, the United States, Austria and the other countries of Western Europe, in line with the 1951 Geneva Convention. The migration scholars in Hungary point out that such a significant outflow of young and skilled workers was a blow both to the Hungarian economy and demography. (Godri et al. 2014: 11).

Similarly to the other communist countries of the region the legal emigration and immigration to Hungary in the three decades after the suppression of the 1956 revolution was very limited. Total emigration (both authorised and unauthorised) during the whole period of socialism in Hungary (1945–1989) is estimated to have reached the level around 430,000 people. When it comes to the immigration the sum of all authorised immigrants during the socialist period (until 1987 and excluding the returning Hungarian citizens) reached approximately 52,000 (Tóth 1997).

The collapse of communism significantly diverted the migration flows to and from Hungary. From the late 1980s Hungary went from being a closed country with very low migration rates to a country with considerable immigration levels. Both the Hungarians living outside of Hungary started to more often decide to migrate to their homeland, and also the increased inflow of other countries' nationals has been witnessed, among them the refugees from the Balkans. As a consequence of these migration movements, Hungary started to note a positive migratory balance, gradually shifting from an emigration to immigration country. The accession to the European Union on 1st of May 2004 and opening the EU labour market to Hungarian nationals proved on the other hand an important stimulus for the outward migration (Godri et al. 2014: 12).



Picture: Benjamin Grull/Unsplash.com

4. Migration policy development since 1989

Before proceeding to the analysis of the current migration patterns in Hungary it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the policy background for international migrations to and from the country. Therefore, in this chapter, the summary of the development of the Hungarian migration policy and since the collapse of communism is presented.

Hungarian migration policy is sometimes characterised as one of the most diaspora-friendly national policies internationally. At the same time, it is decidedly malevolent towards some groups of third-country nationals (hereafter: TCNs). As Daniel Gyollai pertinently points out Hungary, over the last decades, has developed “a hierarchy of immigration policies”. On the one hand, the Hungarian state privileges and endorses links with the ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, it has adopted much less supportive policies for the TCNs from non-neighbouring countries and failed to establish a coherent integration strategy for foreigners arriving in the country. Gyollai argues that Hungary has been maintaining discriminatory, if not segregating practices in its migration policy on an institutional level. For example, the non-Hungarian migrants do not receive state support, such as vocational, language training or housing benefits. Moreover, even though the number of ethnically non-Hungarian immigrants living in the country, “foreignness-averse” narratives have been present in the public discourse and bolstered xenophobic feelings towards the foreigners (Gyollai 2018: 12).

What should be emphasised is that the Hungarian diaspora engagement policy reaches beyond the ‘standard’ range of policy tools usually implemented in this area. As Szabolcs Pogonyi argues, unlike other countries, Hungary engages with its diaspora in a way that reflects a symbolic, quasi-revisionist attempt of nation-building across borders. The aim here is to maintain the “cultural legacies” and “spiritual unity” of the historical Hungary in claiming responsibility for the Hungarians living abroad (Pogonyi 2015). At the same time a significant number of highly-skilled and young Hungarians decided to leave the country in the last decades, particularly after the country’s accession to the EU in 2004. Some Hungarian researchers point out that the Hungarian government has been failing to adequately address the issues of ageing of the society and the social and financial consequences of this trend. Daniel Gyollai for instance argues that the government instead of enhancing demographic revitalisation through the structural reforms, focused on the unregistered migration flows from the non-Western countries, supposedly threatening the already fragile welfare system. Right-wing populism has dominated the political scene in Hungary since the end of the 2000s, and the atmosphere of mistrust of the third-country nationals has been reinforced (Gyollai 2018: 13). This became particularly visible during the so-called “migration crisis” in 2015 (or, how we prefer to call it: the European solidarity crisis) and in the years that followed it.

Hungary governed by Victor Orbán has been described by Rogers Brubaker as the showcase of the shift from nationalism to “civilizationism” which has been driven by the notion of a civilizational threat from Islam (Brubaker 2017). As Brubaker aptly notices Hungarian “civilizationism” is a new articulation of nationalism rather than an alternative to it. He argues that “civilizationism can be understood as a form of nationalism, a way of talking about “the nation” (...) As an alternative principle of vision and division of the world, civilizationism does not supersede nationalism; it combines with nationalism. But it is not simply reducible to a form of nationalism” (Brubaker 2017). It is combined with a significant degree of authoritarianism linked with the subordination of the judiciary and the media to the ruling party.

The constitutional order and organisation of the state has been altered and restructured since 2011 according to the abovementioned rationale. Thus, the migration policy of Hungary is currently underpinned by the ideological, normative and institutional transformation of the country in the last decades. The adoption of the first key document of the legislative migration policy framework of Hungary followed the proclamation of the Third Hungarian Republic through the Constitutional Reform (Act XXXI of 1989). The relatively liberal regulations concerning immigration that it included were the aftermath of the expectation that the prospective migrants would be ethnic Hungarians (Godri et al. 2014: 13).

In 1993 the Act on Hungarian Citizenship (Act LV of 1993) and the Act on the Entry, Residence and Settlement of Foreigners in Hungary or "Aliens' Act" (Act LXXXVI of 1993) were passed, tightening the 1989 regulations. Act LV of 1993 stated that: "a foreign citizen can be naturalised after eight years of residence in Hungary", while the Aliens Act required a minimum of three years working and living in Hungary with a residence permit to obtain the settlement permit (status of immigrant"). A few years later, the Act on Border Control and the Border Guard (Act XXXII of 1997) significantly extended prerogatives of the border guards in order to boost their effectiveness in preventing unauthorised entry into the country (Godri et al. 2014: 13).

In the same year the Act on Asylum (Act CXXXIX of 1997) entered into force removing the geographical limitation introduced with the 1951 Geneva Convention for the refugees, extending the eligibility to apply for international protection in Hungary to other, previously excluded nationalities. The Act defined also the following three categories of refugees: "convention refugees" (menekült), the "temporarily protected" (menedékes) and "persons granted subsidiary protection" (oltalmazott). The Act was passed as a part of the pre-EU accession migratory legal framework, based on the European Agreement signed with the EU in 1994. At the same time, attempts have not been made to conceive of a comprehensive migratory policy that would go beyond the administrative issues. As Godri et al. argue during the period of pre-accession the national rules on migration were adapted to the EU legal norms, but not to its principles and values (Godri et al. 2014: 13-14).

Upon EU accession (2004), all EU regulations were transformed into the national regulation, in particular the Council Directive 2004/38/ EC. The Act on the Entry and Residence of Persons with the Right of Free Movement and Residence (Act I of 2007) provided the implementation of the Directive at the legislative level (Gellérné – Illés 2005). The Act XXXIX of 2001 defined the Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) as the competent authority in matters concerning visas, asylum and residence permits. The OIN was set up in 2000 as a specialised authority under the auspice of the Ministry of Interior, with a re-organisation of the former Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs. OIN institutionally incorporated the reception facilities for asylum seekers. With these measures, the migration issue was put in a unified framework in which aliens, police, citizenship and asylum issues were treated in parallel, with a clear focus on "maintaining the public order" (Godri et al. 2014: 14).

With the adoption of the Schengen acquis in 2007, and Hungary's entering into the Schengen Zone the Hungarian Government issued a "short- and medium-term migration strategy", thought to determine the principles and aims for migration management for the period until 2020. The strategy, however, had not been discussed publicly, nor practically implemented for the consecutive six years (Tóth 2012). Finally, with the Government Decree 1698 of 2013, the Hungary's Migration Strategy, has been adopted in October 2013. The strategy follows the earlier securitisation rationale of Hungarian migration policy by emphasising the foreigner's obligation to respect the European Union norms, the Fundamental Law and the laws and regulations of Hungary, as well as the rules of social coexistence (Hungary's Migration Strategy 2014).



KELETI PÁLYAUDVAR

1884

1984

Picture: Daniel Olah/Unsplash.com

5. Diaspora policy of Hungary and the data on Hungarian diaspora

Due to changes in borders in the 20th century, a significant Hungarian minority lives in the present territories of neighbouring countries. As of 2015, 460,000 Hungarians lived in Slovakia, 150,000 Hungarian people lived in Ukraine, 1.2 million in Romania and 254,000 in Serbia (Kovács 2020: 246).

It needs to be emphasised that for the migration scholars, determining the size of a particular diaspora is usually a substantially difficult task, and often it is hardly possible to establish an objective picture of it. This problem stems from the fact that the statistical data rarely adequately indicates people's ethnic identity. For the Hungarian diaspora specifically, there is a lack of precise data on the number of people leaving the Carpathian Basin during the consecutive, historic emigration outflows. Moreover, it is known that before the First World War many couples that emigrated from the historical territories of Hungary were ethnically mixed, while the receiving countries used to classify the immigrants of Hungarian nationality in the same category as non-Hungarian immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (Kőrösi Csoma Sándor program 2022).

The biggest Hungarian diasporic group outside of the Carpathian Basin is located in the USA, where approximately 1 400 000 persons of Hungarian origin live. The largest densities can be found in New York, Jersey, and Cleveland. The second biggest Hungarian diasporic group, constituted by approximately 200 000 people, lives in Israel. Ethnic Hungarians in Israel are usually settled in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Moreover, according to the HCSO, there were almost 100 000 Hungarians living in the UK in 2019, however this estimation is disputed by some organisations which argue that the actual number of Hungarians in the country is at least twice as high (Kaszas 2020).

Approximately 120 000 Hungarians live in Germany, where most frequently they reside in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Munich. Some members of the Hungarian diaspora in Germany are descendants of people who emigrated there when a large migration flow of around 30 000 people from Hungary to Germany took place shortly after the Second World War (Loránd 2017).

Moreover, approximately 75 000 Hungarians are known to reside in Brazil, with the highest Hungarian population density witnessed in Sao Paulo. Another Latin American country where a large Hungarian diaspora dwells is Argentina, with 40 to 50 thousand Hungarian-origin people living, mostly in Buenos Aires. In Australia, on the other hand, the Hungarian diaspora comprises approximately 65 000 people, most of them living in the largest cities of Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide. There are also around 30 000 ethnic Hungarians living in Benelux countries. It is known that in Belgium, most of the people of Hungarian origin are entrepreneurs, politicians or students. They live mainly in Antwerp, but also in Brussels, which offers many opportunities as the EU capital city (Loránd 2017).

As for the Hungarian state policy towards the diaspora, it became more open after 1989 as a result of the collapse of the communist regime in Central and Eastern Europe. Initially, the support was directed to the neighbouring countries in which people of Hungarian origin had found themselves after the change of borders. It was not until 2010 that the National Assembly passed the Dual Citizenship Act, which allowed Hungarians abroad to apply for a simplified procedure for obtaining citizenship, regardless of whether they live in or outside the Carpathian Basin (Kőrösi Csoma Sándor program).

Since 2011, Hungarians without permanent residence in Hungary can apply for Hungarian citizenship. To this end, members of the Hungarian community outside Hungary must prove their Hungarian origin and demonstrate knowledge of the Hungarian language (Kovács 2020: 247). The law on the election of deputies was also adopted, which gave Hungarian citizens the opportunity to vote abroad. In the same year, the Hungarian Diaspora Council was established, which became a space for cooperation between Hungarians and the Hungarian diaspora in the world (Kőrösi Csoma Sándor program). A year later, the Julianus Program was launched by the Hungarian Diaspora Council, to promote the 'Hungarian values' through the diasporic connections. Another two similar initiatives were created in 2013, with the aim to strengthen the relationship between the diaspora and the Hungarians living in their homeland - Kőrösi Csoma Sándor and Mikes Kelemen Programot (Nemzeti Regiszter 2016).

Last but not least, it should be added that the introduction of the simplified naturalisation procedure resulted in the significant rise in the number of Hungarian citizens. In the first four years after its implementation, 670 000 people have completed the registration (Gödri et al, 2014). The number of the new Hungarian citizens under the program reached one million in December 2017 (Gyollai 2018: 12).



6. Data on the stock of migrants living in Hungary

As for 2021, close to 10 million people lived in Hungary, among them 52% were females. Since 2011 those quantities have been remaining relatively stable, as the size of the Hungarian population shrank by approximately 2,5%.

Figure 1. Hungarian population - gender balance, 2011 - 2021.

Source: HCSO (2021 a).



According to the Eurostat prognoses, between 2020 and 2050 the number of people living in Hungary will further shrink by 5%, which is a change similar to the one expected for Slovakia. At the same time, the number of people living in neighbouring Czechia will decrease by less than 2% and the population of Poland will diminish by over 10%. Since Eurostat predicts that the overall population of the EU-27 states will decrease merely by around 1,5% in that period, it might be said that the Visegrad Group is expected to lose a substantially bigger share of its population than the European Union as a whole.

Figure 2. Projections of decline in the size of populations of Visegrad Group states, 2020-2050.

Source: Eurostat (2021).

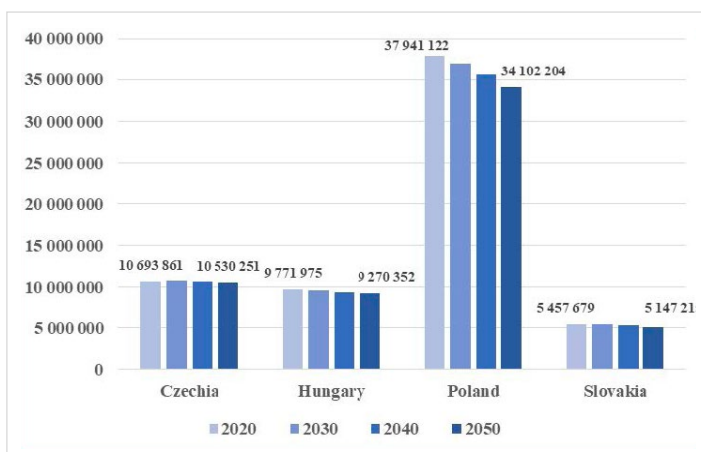
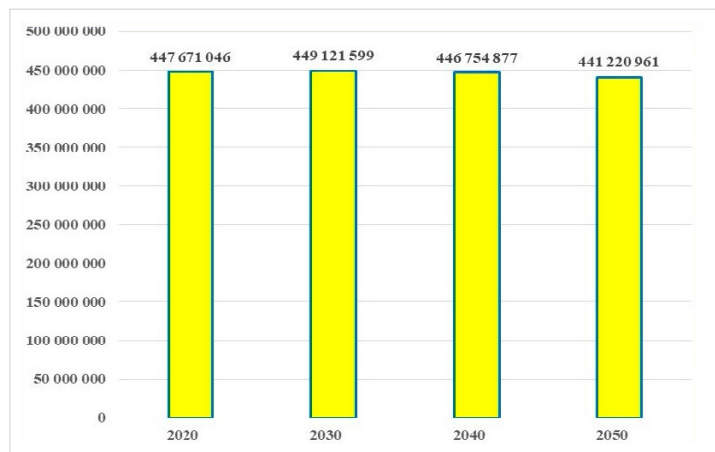


Figure 3. Projection changes in the size of EU27 population, 2020-2050.
Source: Eurostat (2021).

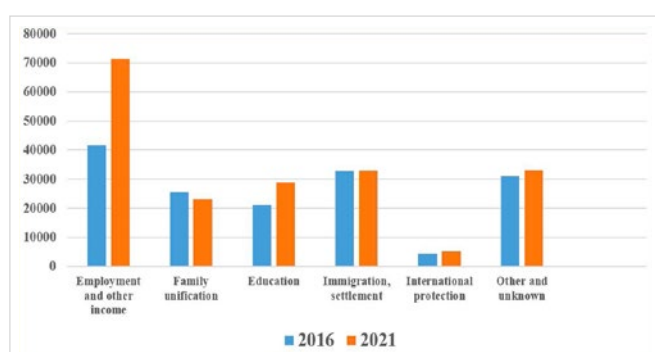


Most of the foreign-born residents of Hungary are staying in the country on a basis of 'employment and other income' residence permits. They constituted approximately 37% of all permit holders in 2021 (and merely 27% five years earlier) and their number increased by 71% since 2016, reaching 71 297 last year. At the same time the number of all residence permits held by foreigners in Hungary increased by 24%, hence it might be said that the increase in the number of employment-based permits has been disproportionately high.

Meanwhile, the share of permits based on education among all residence permits rose from over 21 000 to below 29 000 and currently those permits constitute below 15% of all such documents. The number of 'family reunification' permits and permits based on 'immigration, settlement' both decreased in their share among all permits, since absolute numbers of issued permits within both those categories remained roughly similar between 2016 and 2021. Currently there are over 23 000 people holding the permits of the first of mentioned categories, and below 33 thousand of the latter. Finally, the number of persons holding 'international protection' permits has increased insignificantly in Hungary, from over 4 400 in 2016 to more than 5 100 in 2021.

To sum up, it might be said that the three most important trends in the structure of residence permits held by foreigners were, firstly, substantial increase in the number (and share) of persons holding permits based on employment. Secondly, the number of foreigners staying in Hungary in order to receive education has increased significantly. Last but not least, the overall number of permits held by foreigners rose by approximately one fourth only in five years.

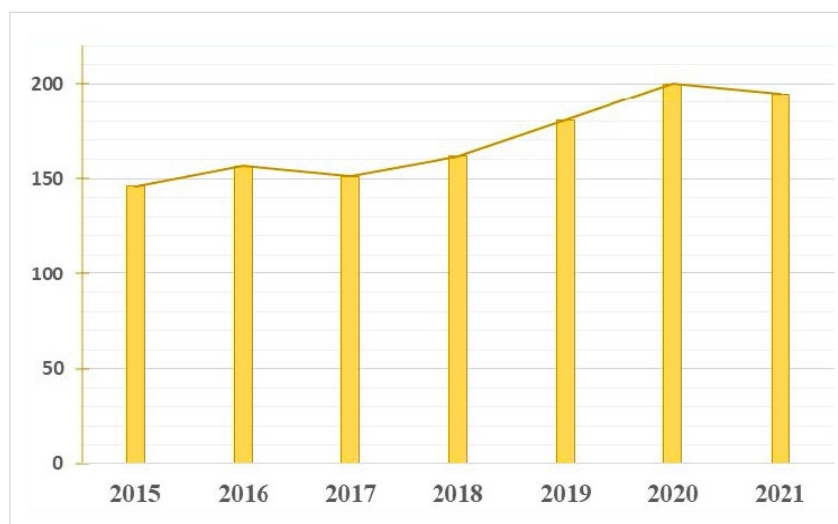
Figure 4. Foreigners residing in Hungary by a purpose of stay, 2016 and 2021.
Source: HCSO (2021 b).



More precise data on motivations of immigration of labour migrants to Hungary can be derived from Cseh Papp and colleagues' study, who examined 314 foreigners working in the country with a survey (the sample covered only migrants working in a registered manner). According to them:

When asked about the reasons for foreign employment, and specifically the motivations behind selecting this particular country, responses pointed out that most foreigners (38%) moved to Hungary for family reasons (marriage or partnership with a Hungarian citizen or family reunion). Family reasons are followed by three other motivational factors, in equal proportion (20%), such as personal reasons (favourable geographical location and climate, self-realization, career development or search for adventure, knowledge of the citizens, culture of an unknown country), work-related tasks (company assignment) and economic reasons (low price level, low subsistence costs) (2018:191).

Figure 5. Change in the number of foreigners residing in Hungary between 2016 and in 2021. Source: HCSO (2021 b).



Almost 64% of all foreigners living in Hungary are Europeans by citizenship. Interestingly, among Europeans, 124 422, as many as 59%, are males. Analogous, yet less significant gender disproportion is visible also in a second, most populous group of foreigners in Hungary - Asians. Asian men outnumber Asian women by close to 24%, constituting 55% of all foreign residents of Asian citizenship. Asians, in general, constitute 28% of all foreigners living in Hungary. Since there are only around eight thousand Africans (almost 66% of the males), 658 citizens of Australia and Oceania and merely 6933 Northern and Southern Americans (close to 54% among them are males) living in Hungary, one might say that Europeans and Asians constitute a bulk of a group of foreigners living in the country.

Figure 6. Foreign citizens residing in Hungary by continents & sex as of 1 January 2021¹.
Source: HCSO (2021 f).

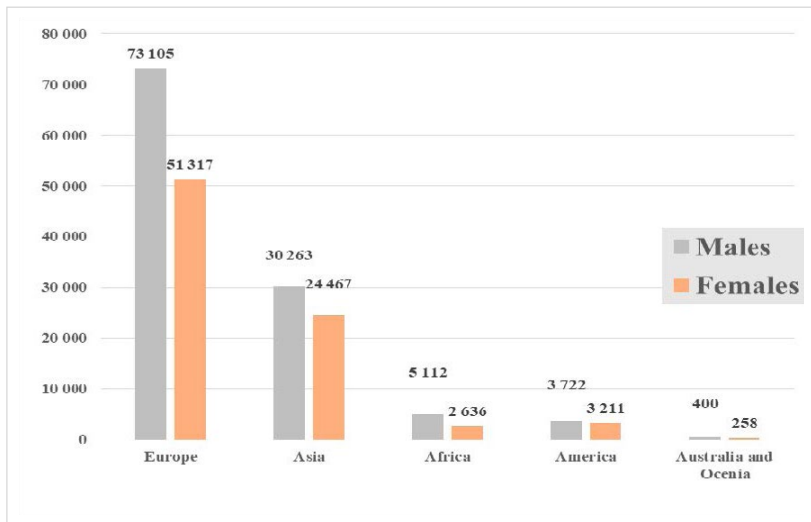
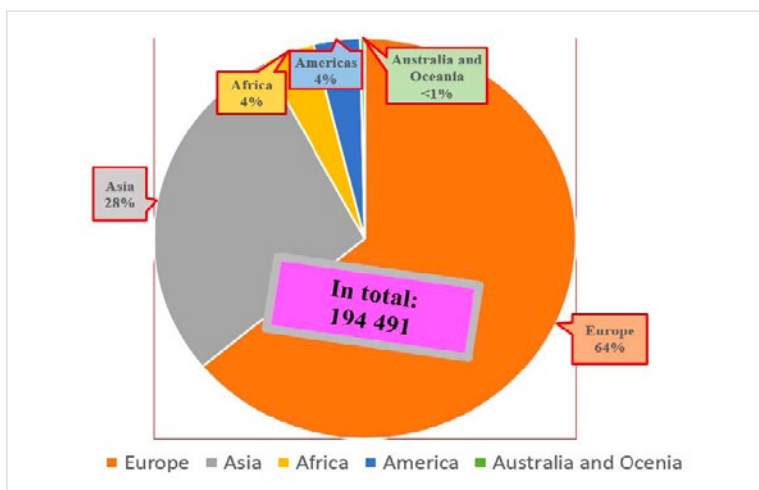


Figure 7. Foreign citizens residing in Hungary by continents as of 1 January 2021.
Source: HCSO (2021 f).



The most populous national group of Europeans living currently in Hungary are Ukrainians. Hungary, similarly to other countries of Central Europe, witnessed a major inflow of Ukrainian migrants over the last decade. Currently (2021), 27 380 Ukrainians constitute the biggest national group among foreigners living in the country.

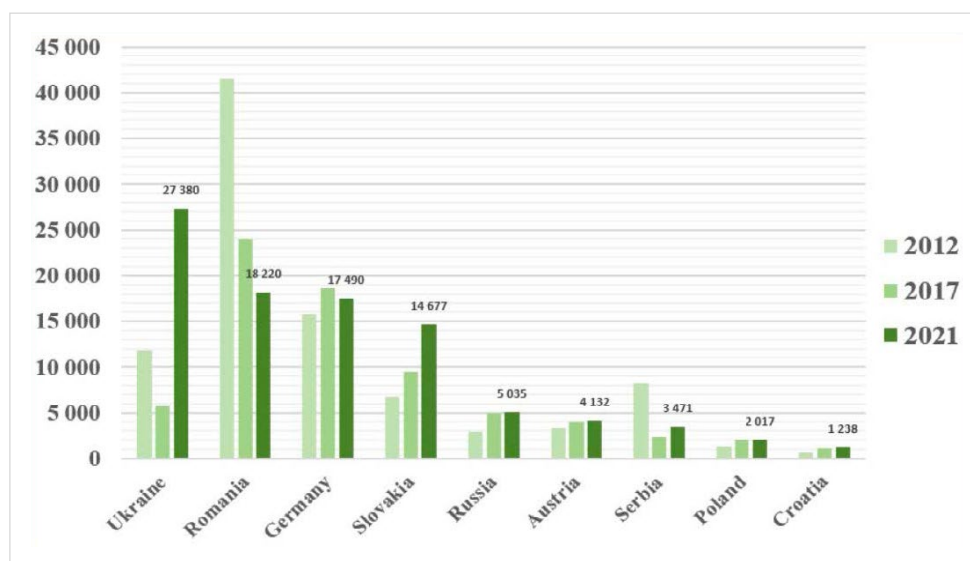
¹ Both for chart X and Y refugees and persons under subsidiary protection are included.

As emphasised by Gődri and Csányi, while the fact that the Hungarian language is not a slavic language discourages many Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking immigrants from choosing Hungary as a destination, still, the country has been witnessing quite a substantial inflow of immigrants from Eastern Europe. The Ukrainians are the biggest national group of immigrants from the former USSR, while a significant share of Ukrainian immigrants in Hungary are of Hungarian ethnic origin (and thus presumably speak Hungarian). Importantly, as seen in the chart below, the number of Ukrainians visible in Hungarian statistics decreased after 2012, due to the policy of mass naturalisations through a simplified citizenship-granting procedure introduced at that time. In result, the number of Ukrainian-born Hungarians increased significantly, outnumbering the number of Ukrainians living in Hungary. The size of a group of Ukrainian nationals in Hungary increased again after 2017, when the access to the local labour market for Ukrainians has been simplified (similar changes have been introduced in the whole V4 region) (2020: 506).

Smaller, but still relatively large groups of foreigners who lived in Hungary in 2021 are formed by the Chinese (18 558), Romanians (18 220), Germans (17 490) and Slovaks (14 667) (HCSO:2021 f). According to Cseh Papp, Bilan and Dajnoki: 'Hungary is attractive [for the neighbouring countries' nationals, e.g. Ukrainians and Serbs] due to better working conditions'. In result, the country often serves as a 'temporary solution for them while they seek employment in other countries situated west of Hungary' (2018: 187).

Figure 8. Changes in the size of the most populous national groups of European migrants living in Hungary, 2012-2021.

Source: HCSO (2021 f).



Interestingly, only in 2021 Southern Americans outnumbered US citizens living in Hungary. In the Asian group, on the other hand, there has been a substantially larger increase in the number of non-Chinese Asian citizens living in Hungary over the last six years, than in the number of the Chinese immigrants. In spite of that, the last group still constitutes around one third of all Asians living in Hungary.

Figure 9. Change in the number of Northern and Southern Americans, among them the US citizens, living in Hungary, 2012-2021.

Source: HCSO (2021 f).

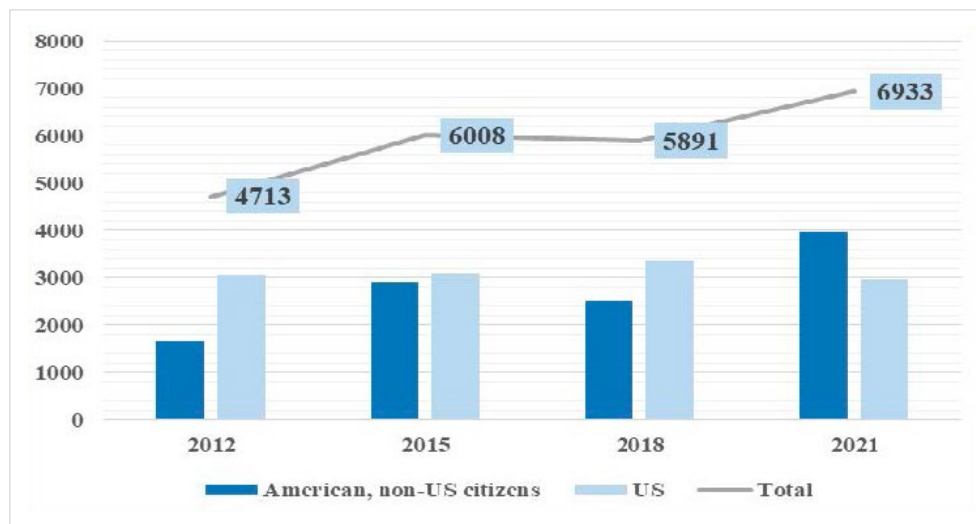
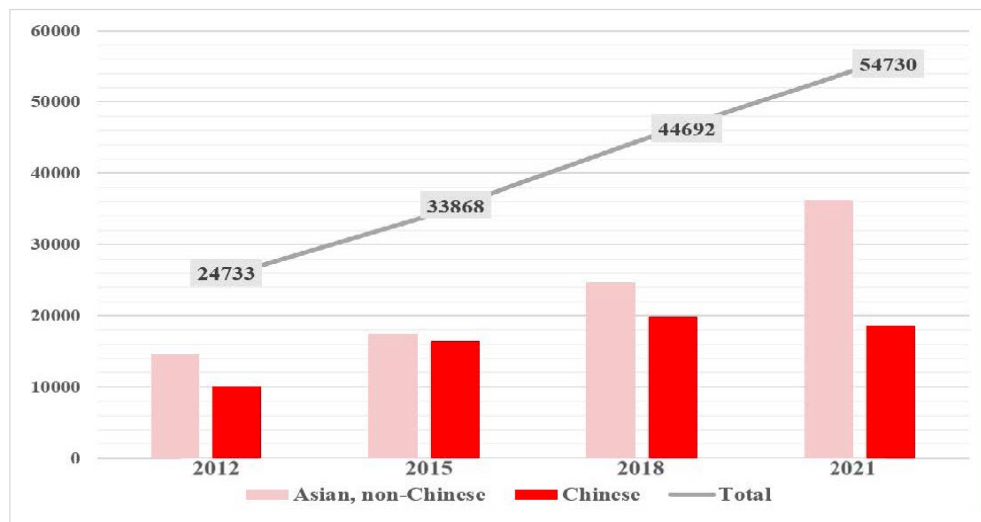


Figure 10. Change in the number of Asians, among them the Chinese, living in Hungary, 2012-2021.

Source: HCSO (2021 f).



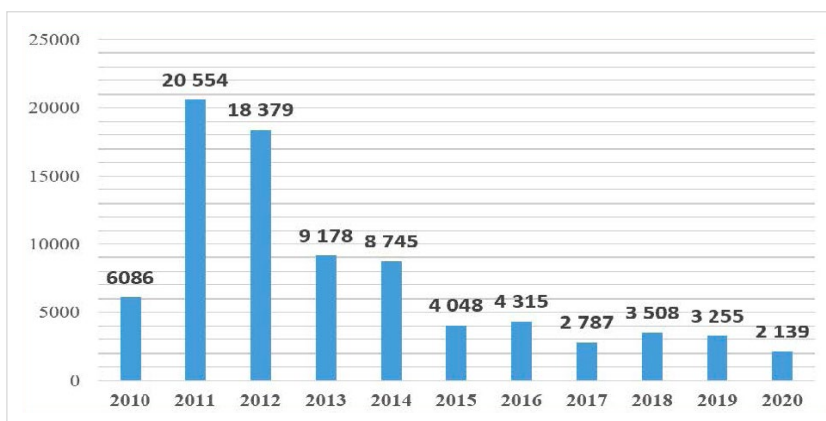
According to Cseh Papp, Dajnoki & Bilan, a group of foreigners (excluding asylum seekers) living in Hungary is characterised by a relatively young age structure, high rates of higher education, and high rates of economic activity. Similarly to the social networks of Ukrainian diaspora in nearby Poland, those created by foreigners living in Hungary are ethnically homogeneous. In general, foreigners relatively rarely have many Hungarian acquaintances. At the same time, network-based migration constitutes a substantial part of overall migration movement to Hungary (2018: 188), which stems also from the fact, that, as pointed out by Iren Gödri, a substantial part of immigrants coming to Hungary in the recent years, were nationals of the neighbouring countries (2018: 237, 243). That became predominantly apparent after the Russian invasion on Ukraine, when many young Ukrainians left the country and arrived in Visegrad Group states looking for safety and opportunities.



7. Hungarian citizenship acquisition

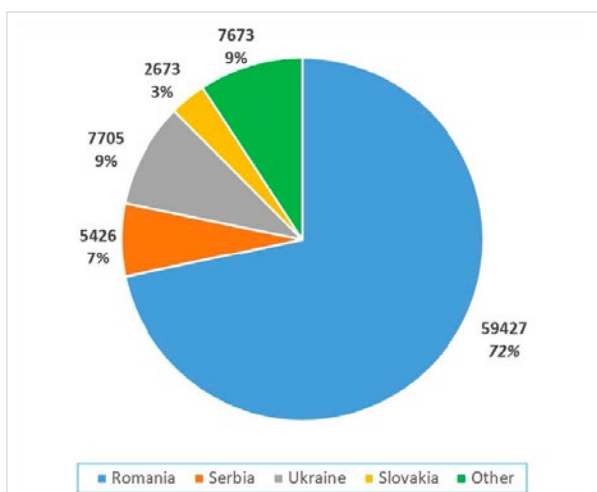
The amended Citizenship Act, which came into force on 1 January 2011, introduced access to a simplified naturalisation process for foreigners, which made it possible for ethnic Hungarians holding foreign citizenships residing in Hungary to apply for Hungarian citizenship, regardless of when they arrived in the country (Gödri 2018: 248). After this change in law had been introduced, the number of naturalisations increased; it tripled in 2011-2012, reaching a total of 18.000 - 20.000 annually. In 2013, the number of such cases dropped to the previous level, and decreased further after 2015 (Gödri 2018: 237). Those changes are visible in the data below:

Figure 11. Number of citizenships granted in Hungary to foreigners, yearly, 2011-2020.
Source: HCSO (2021 g).



With regard to the nationality structure of citizenship grantees, between 2011 and 2020 the Romanians received the most Hungarian citizenships of all foreigners, 59 427, which constituted 72% of all naturalisations in this period. 9% of people who obtained Hungarian citizenship were Ukrainians, 7% were Serbs, and 3% were of Slovak nationality. The rest of citizenships (9%) have been granted to the citizens of other countries:

Figure 12. Nationality structure of a group of foreigners who obtained citizenship in Hungary between 2011 and 2020.
Source: HCSO (2021 g).





Picture: Nguyen Minh/Unsplash.com

8. Foreigners in a Hungarian system of education

Over the past ten years, the percentage of foreigners at Hungarian universities doubled. According to the Statista portal, between 2009/2010 and 2019/2020 the number of foreign students in Hungary has been increasing in a fairly regular manner with an inflow of around 1880 people each year. The number of students holding foreign passports has been estimated at the level of 14 300 for 2009 and 33 100 for 2019 (Statista 2022).

In the recent academic year of 2020/21, the number of foreign students slightly decreased from 33 100 to 32 400, i.e. by about 2.1%, in comparison to the previous, 2019/20 year (Statista 2022). Most probably this was linked with the Covid-19 pandemic and the mobility restrictions².

Between 2010/2011 and 2020/2021 the share of foreign students among all students at Hungarian universities increased substantially and in 2021 amounted to 17%. Most of the foreign students pursue their education in the fields of health care and welfare. Students within those areas constitute 32% of all foreigners studying in Hungary. In the 2020/21 academic year the most popular educational choices for the foreign-born students in Hungary were engineering, production and construction (12%) as well as social sciences (10%).

Moreover, the number of foreigners undergoing PhD courses in Hungary has been ascending over the last years. As of 2020/2021 approximately 2800 foreign students have been attending doctoral studies. Consequently, it might be said that one third of all doctoral students in Hungary are foreigners (HCSO 2021 h). The table below outlines the universities most frequently chosen by the foreign students in Hungary, according to the Study Abroad Aide:

Table 1. The number of foreign students and the percentage of foreigners among all students in Hungarian universities, for 2017.

Source: Study Abroad Aide (2017).

University of Pécs	4 500	20%
Corvinus University in Budapest	3 600	20%
University of Szeged	4 000	19%
University of Debrecen	3 400	12%
Semmelweis University	3 500	12%
University of Eötvös Loránd	4 000	11%
Budapest University of Technology and Economics	1 000	5%

² For the analysis of the corresponding circumstances in the Polish context vide: Pędziwiatr et al. 2022.

As has been already mentioned, one of the important national groups among the foreign students in Hungary are the citizens of China, while the Chinese government is planning to open the first campus of the Chinese Shanghai Fudan University in 2024 (Direkt36: 2021). Importantly, the investment will be the first Chinese university campus in Europe. According to the announcement of the Hungarian authorities, the university will be able to provide education to 5 000 students. It is planned that the university's faculties will include: the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the Faculty of Public Policy and Business and the Faculty of Medicine. However, it should be noted that many Hungarians are opposing this initiative for the reasons which will not be described in this report as it would be beyond its scope.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned here that due to the political pressure one of the key trademarks of the Hungarian higher education attracting foreign students from around the world, the Central European University founded in 1991 by the Hungarian-born American billionaire philanthropist George Soros, has been forced to move out of Hungary, adjourning its major campus from Budapest to Vienna (Gall 2018).



Picture: Vianney Cahen/Unsplash.com

9. International protection

As seen on the charts below, the biggest numbers of persons seeking international protection in Hungary over the last decade have been witnessed between 2013 and 2016. The reasons for the increased migratory pressure on the Hungarian border were, firstly, a major outflow of Kosovars towards Western Europe around that time (due to 'uncertain livelihood and high unemployment' (Gödri 2019: 247), and secondly, destabilisation of the situation in Northern Africa during the years after the Arab Spring.

Table 2. Number of international protection seekers and recipients in Hungary, yearly, 2011-2020.

Source: HCSO (2021 e).

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Asylum seekers	1 693	2 157	18 900	42 777	177 135	29 432	3 397	671	500	117	321 586
Refugees	52	87	198	240	146	154	106	68	22	83	2 743
Subsidiary protection	139	328	217	236	356	271	1 110	281	31	43	3 296
Tolerated stay	14	47	4	7	6	7	75	18	7	4	3 945

According to Gödri, the relative number of asylum seekers (in relation to the size of the country's population) who arrived in the country, reached in Hungary the highest value across all the EU-28 states in 2015 (6.8‰). The later decrease in the number of filed applications was connected to construction of the wall on the Hungarian border (2019: 246). Of course, this decrease should be understood as an indication of diversion of the migration pattern, rather than a proof of 'successful' curbing of the migration movement itself.

Table 3. Asylum seekers arrived in Hungary, top 11 nationalities, 2011-2020.

Source: HCSO (2021 e).

Citizenship	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Afghan	649	880	2 328	8 796	46 277	11 052	1 432	274	197	25	71 860
Syrian	91	145	977	6 857	64 587	4 979	577	48	20	9	78 290
Kosovo	211	226	6 212	21 453	24 454	135	4	-	1	-	52 696
Pakistani	121	327	3 081	401	15 157	3 873	163	30	27	24	23 204
Iraqi	54	28	63	497	9 279	3 452	812	239	171	16	14 611
Bangladeshi	3	15	679	252	4 059	279	9	1	2	3	5 302
Iranian	33	45	61	268	1 792	1 286	109	29	23	8	3 654
Algerian	56	59	1 116	98	599	710	62	-	1	1	2 702
Palestinian	29	19	136	875	1 036	206	17	5	5	-	2 328
Moroccan	30	47	496	49	267	1 033	24	2	-	-	1 948
Nigerian	22	27	455	257	1 005	83	12	1	5	2	1 869

As pointed out by Gödri, in the period 2000 to 2017, (and particularly between 2013 and 2016, when 84% of all applications for this period have been filed) the international protection in Hungary has been granted to a very small fraction of all applicants:

A comparison with the rest of Europe reveals that the proportion of applications where a final decision is reached (i.e. the applicant is available in the later stages of the process) is the lowest in Hungary (HCSO 2016). However, the proportion of positive decisions is especially low: whereas in 2016 some 69–72% of applications assessed in Germany, Sweden and Austria, 39% in Italy and 33% in France had a positive outcome, the figure was only 8% in Hungary (2019: 247).



The reasons for the increased migratory pressure on the Hungarian border were, firstly, a major outflow of Kosovars towards Western Europe around that time (due to 'uncertain livelihood and high unemployment' (Gödri 2019: 247), and secondly, destabilisation of the situation in Northern Africa during the years after the Arab Spring.





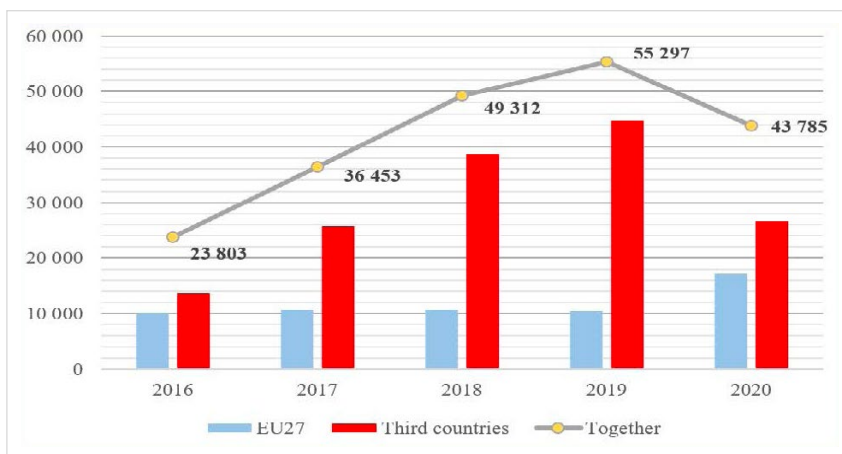
Picture: Daniel Olah/Unsplash.com

10. Migration flows, data provided by Abel & Cohen

According to the Hungarian Statistical Office, 208 650 foreign citizens immigrated to Hungary between 2016 and 2020. Roughly 28% of them were citizens of one of the EU27 states.

Figure 13. Yearly inflow of foreigners immigrating to Hungary by citizenship, EU27 and Third countries, 2016-2020.

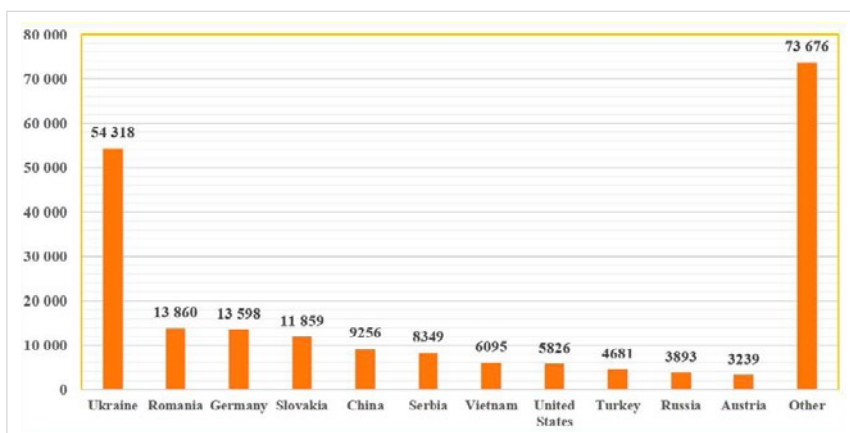
Source: HCSO (2021 d).



The biggest group of immigrants who moved to Hungary in that period are Ukrainians. The differences in numbers between the other national groups are less significant, as presented in the chart below:

Figure 14. Foreigners that immigrated to Hungary between 2016 and 2020, by citizenship.

Source: HCSO (2021 d).



Finally, when it comes to Abel and Cohen’s estimations of the number of foreigners who arrived in Hungary in the period of 2011-2015, it might be said that in this regard their calculations might be even more accurate than the statistics gathered from the HCSO (see: both tables below). The considered period followed the introduction of amendments to the Law on Hungarian Nationality, which facilitated obtaining citizenship to individuals of Hungarian ethnicity living outside of Hungary, as has already been pointed out in this report (see: chapter 8). The naturalisation rate (according to Eurostat: the number of citizenships granted to foreigners relative to the number of foreigners inhabiting the country) for this period reached 7,8%, one of the highest values across the EU (Tóth 2018), while in the very 2012 naturalisation rate for Hungary was known to have reached 12%, the value four times higher than the one for the whole EU-27.

This, perhaps, might be reflected in the statistics below. We assume that the statistics on the number of immigrants sourced from the HCSO, which are based on a ‘citizenship of an immigrant’, and not on a ‘country of their previous residence’ might fail to account for the actual numbers of people emigrating to Hungary from the particular sending countries. For example, a significant share of persons who emigrated from Romania to Hungary after 2011 can be identified in HCSO statistics as people of Hungarian citizenship immigrating to Hungary, which makes them invisible in the statistic accounting for Romanians migrating to Hungary. The issue has been discussed extensively by Anzhela Popyk in her 2021 work published by the CMR:

Because of the new citizenship legislation, it has been hard to evaluate the exact data of naturalization of ethnic Hungarians because naturalisation can be applied by both, Hungarian descendants residing abroad and immigrants <Tóth, 2018>. [...] in 2009-2010, the number of Hungarian citizenship granted was around 6,000, while in 2011 and 2012, the number reached 20,500 and 18,300 respectively <European Commission, n.d.>. Nevertheless, some data (Tóth, 2018) indicates that from 2011 till 2017 about one million people were naturalized in Hungary, the majority (about 70%) of whom were citizens of neighbouring countries.

Hence, conceivably, the differences between datasets concerning volume of immigration to Hungary, as indicated by the comparison of the tables below:

Table 3. Abel and Cohen’s estimation of the number of immigrants who arrived in Hungary between 2011 and 2015. Top 5 sending countries.

Source: Abel & Cohen (2019).

Romania	61 823
Germany	9 002
Ukraine	8 401
Serbia	7 121
Slovakia	6 381

Table 3. The number of immigrants who arrived in Slovakia between 2011 and 2015, by citizenship. Top 5 nationalities. Source: Abel & Cohen (2019).

Romania	21 255
Germany	10 412
Ukraine	4 557
Serbia	3 079
Slovakia	5 748

Unfortunately, the data on the number of immigrants who have arrived in Hungary, disaggregated by the countries of immigrants' previous residence, is not available. Thus, verification of Abel and Cohen's estimates through comparison with a corresponding dataset provided by the different party is not possible.

11. Narrative scenario for Hungary

In this chapter, we will focus on the existing migration potential of Hungary as a sending and as a host country. We will consider the important push and pull factors such as the demographic structure, the economy, the social attitudes toward immigrants, governance indicators, environmental factors and existing cultural, economic and geographical bilateral relations between the important sending and host countries. As such, these scenario narratives do not aim to foresee the future of migrations to and from Hungary, but rather to outline the possible future directions of demographic processes, including international migration movements.

11.1 Analysis of factors influencing international migration

Starting with the size of Hungarian population, for the last decade it has been fluctuating around 9.7 million people (Eurostat, 2021a). At the same time, the fertility rate for the country has been rising, though still it remains at low level, in 2010 having equated to 1.2, in 2015 to 1.4 and in 2019 to 1.5 (Eurostat, 2021b). The life expectancy in Hungary in 2020 was 75 years old – 72 for males and 79 for females (Eurostat, 2021c). In the light of these words, the Hungarian society can be described as ageing, hence the local labor market's demand for labour in the health and care sectors is expected to increase in the future, presumably creating more jobs for the immigrants.

Regarding the economic aspects, the Hungarian economy has experienced a period of dynamic economic growth over the last two decades (World Bank, 2020). This positive trend has been ceased by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing of this report, it is difficult to precisely predict how the pandemic and the economic crisis that might follow it will influence the Hungarian labour market as well as demand on foreign workers in the country.

Regarding the structure of the annual gross domestic product, in 2020 the agriculture contributed to 3% of the annual GDP, industry to 25% and services sector to 72%. (World Bank, 2020). At the same time, the agricultural sector was giving employment to 4,7% of the working-age population, 32% of the working-age persons in Hungary were employed in the industry and 63% in the services sector (World Bank, 2021 a; World Bank, 2021 b; World Bank, 2021 c). Based on that, it may be concluded that the sectors where migrants might potentially find employment of Hungary can be industry and services.

While analysing the migration potential of a country, we also must consider the political situation. The political scene of Hungary have been dominated by the far-right, very conservative and Eurosceptic Fidesz party. The fraction led by the Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán has been criticised for introducing controversial amendments to the Hungary's constitution. Among the legislations introduced under *Fidesz*, some very strict laws on foreign immigration have been adopted. Orbán and his party over the last years have been scrutinised and repeatedly admonished by the European Commission or the UNHCR (Sadecki, 2018), concerned with the democratic backsliding witnessed in the whole region, but in Hungary and Poland decidedly to a biggest extent. There is a hope for a change in the narrative on foreigners in Hungary, if the parliamentary elections of 2022 will be won by the opposition candidate, Péter Márki-Zay. It might be assumed that in a long term the anti-immigration discourse together with the changes introduced in the Hungarian immigration policy might reduce the migration inflow to the country.

Another important point to discuss is a negative social perception of immigrants witnessed in Hungary. Such attitude is being reinforced by the actions of the government such as construction of the fence on the country's border with Croatia (in 2015) and with Serbia (in 2017) (Menedek Hungarian Association for Migrants 2018: 4). The xenophobia of the Hungarian society has been reported in the academic literature for years, but the recent surveys depicted a drastic increase in the negative attitudes to foreigners since the outbreak of the so-called migration crisis in 2015. It is not a controversial statement to say that the Hungarian government's strategy of capitalising of the fear and prejudice played a key role in boosting this negative trend. According to Tárki's research, before 2012 the answers indicating respondents' xenophobic orientation had been chosen by around 30% of them, while this rate increased to 40% by 2015, to reach as much as 58% in 2016 - the level previously unobserved (Ibidem: 8). According to the study conducted by Migration Research Institute in Budapest in 2016, 79% of the respondents (N=1001) agreed that the 'illegal migration represents a threat to women and children,' while only 18% said that they 'rather disagree with the statement' (Ibidem: 8). At the same time, 84% of the interviewees believed that 'Hungarian' and 'Islamic' cultures are not compatible and cannot live next to each other (Ibidem: 8). Decidedly, the anti-immigrant and anti-refugee political discourse together with the attitude towards migrants observed in Hungary might lower the number of people potentially immigrating to Hungary.

The last context which will be considered here is the natural environment and the climate changes impacting it. Hungary is located in the temperate zone. According to the climate projections published by the World Bank, until 2050 the annual mean temperature will rise by approximately 1 Celsius degree for the winter periods and around 2 Celsius degrees for the summer periods. The mean precipitation will significantly decrease in the summer, provoking droughts negatively affecting the agricultural sector, while the average precipitation for the periods from December to April is expected to amount to around 5 mm per month, which will perhaps result in sudden storms and floods witnessed across the country (World Bank, 2021 d). As Hungary is relatively not at a high risk of the most dramatic effects of the climate change, such as those witnessed in some other parts of the world, it is possible that it will become a destination for the climate refugees.

11.2 Migration prospects

From the migrant communities living currently in Hungary, we will highlight the situation of those, which are the largest in the population size, namely: Ukrainians, Germans, Romanians, Slovaks and Chinese (HCSO, 2021 d).

The biggest of all national groups of foreigners residing in Hungary is a group of Ukrainian citizens. The largest recent migration flows of Ukrainians to Hungary have been witnessed in 2018, when almost 17 thousand persons holding Ukrainian passports arrived, and in 2019, when 21,1 thousand Ukrainian citizens migrated to Hungary. After the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, for 2020, the number of Ukrainian migrants decreased to roughly 9 thousand (HCSO, 2021 d). The number of Ukrainians residing in Hungary totalled 10 thousand in 2018, 24 thousand in 2019, 30 thousand in 2020, and 27 thousand in 2021. (HCSO, 2021 f). The feminisation rate among Ukrainians in Hungary, the indicator which sometimes helps to predict the development of the migrant network in a particular destination, oscillates between 35% and 41% (HCSO, 2021 f). Considering the growth of the size of the group even during the recent period of Covid-19 pandemic, the relatively high feminisation rate and a strong push factor of the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine, it can be expected that the Ukrainian migrant network might expand in the next thirty years.

The next-largest migrant network in Hungary is constituted by Chinese, whose number during the last decade have been oscillating between 10 and 20 thousand (HCSO, 2021 f). Importantly, the feminisation rate in this group is relatively high and increasing - from 45% in 2010 to 49% in 2020. Considering those factors and adaptability of the Chinese migrants witnessed in Europe, we can assume that this community can further grow over the next thirty years.

Another important group to discuss are the citizens of neighbouring Romania. The decrease in the number of Romanians residing in Hungary is visible in the statistics, however it is also strongly connected to the simplified naturalisation procedure described earlier in this report. The official size of the group of Romanian nationals totalled 72 thousand in 2010, nearly 28 thousand in 2015 and 22 thousand in 2020 (HCSO, 2021 f). Feminisation rate in the group has also declined, from 46% in 2010, 37% in 2015 and 32% in 2020, but again, it is possible there might be a gender bias in the group of Romanians willing to undergo naturalisation in Hungary (HCSO, 2021 f). It is expected that the size of the Romanian network in Hungary may perhaps diminish in the next three decades, however the Hungarian diaspora policy might also further attract the Romanian nationals of Hungarian ethnicity to immigrate to the country (the same applies to all other neighbouring countries with significant Hungarian diasporas).

The number of German citizens in Hungary has been at the level of around 18 thousand over the last decade (HCSO, 2021 f). The unchanging size of the group, even during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, can be underpinned by the fact that the German immigrants are mostly employed in highly-qualified jobs in the international companies. Therefore, in the following thirty years it is expected that the group will perhaps not change in size significantly.

Finally, the number of Slovaks in Hungary has been increasing year to year. For instance, in 2010 it had equalled 6,4 thousand, in 2015 – 8,7 thousand, in 2020 – 10 thousand, and in 2021 – 14,7 thousand (HCSO, 2021 f). The significant inflow has been reported for both Slovak males and females, while the feminisation rate during the last decade oscillated between 56% and 61% (HCSO, 2021 f). Considering the increase in the size of the Slovak community indicated by the official statistics and a significant share of females in the group, it can be presumed that the Slovak network in Hungary might be further growing during the following three decades.

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