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## **International Migration in Ireland, 2018**

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# International Migration in Ireland, 2018

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## *Abstract*

This working paper is the Irish report to the OECD Expert Group on Migration. As such, the focus of the report is largely shaped by the reporting requirements for the preparation of the annual OECD International Migration Outlook. The purpose of the paper is to outline major developments and trends in migration and integration data and policy. The principal reference year is 2017, although information relating to early-2018 is included where available and relevant. The Executive Summary provides an overview of the main findings of the report. Section 2 discusses the main developments in migration and integration policy in Ireland in 2017. Section 3 discusses the statistics on inward and outward migration movements. Section 4 examines trends in the population. Migration and the labour market are discussed in Section 5.

# 1. Executive Summary

## Legislation and Policy

In September 2018 the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation published a review of Ireland's economic migration policy., which underpins the employment permits system. Key recommendations include:

- Changes to the current twice-yearly review of the Highly Skilled and Ineligible Employment Lists dealing with labour market access for non-EEA workers - to make the system more responsive.
- Introduction of a Seasonal Employment Permit to facilitate certain categories of short-term workers.
- Review of salary thresholds and other criteria for employment permit.

Following the coming into force of the International Protection Act 2015 in December 2016, the New International Protection and International Protection Appeals Tribunals were established with enhanced capacity. Transitional arrangements were introduced for existing applications for refugee status and subsidiary protection.

In June 2018, following the *2015 Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision<sup>1</sup> and other Supports for Asylum Seekers*, and a court case on labour market access in May 2017, Government announced that asylum seekers would be allowed to work from nine months after their application for asylum is lodged if they have not received a first-instance decision on their case and have not appealed a decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Direct provision is the system of reception for asylum seekers in Ireland, whereby asylum seekers are offered accommodation on a full-board basis in a reception centre and a small weekly allowance is paid.

In October 2018 the Government announced a limited temporary regularisation programme for immigrants from outside the European Economic Area, who held a valid student permission from January 2005 to December 2010, but had subsequently become undocumented, to apply for permission to remain in Ireland.

### Trends

The number of immigrants to Ireland was just over 90,000 in the twelve months to 2018. The number of emigrants in the same period was 56,300, indicating net migration of 34,000. The year 2018 was the first year in the last decade when the number of Irish immigrants (28,400) exceeded the number of emigrants (28,300).

In April 2018, there were an estimated 593,500 non-Irish nationals resident in Ireland, representing almost 12% of the total population. The 2018 figure exceeded the previous peak of 575,600 recorded in 2008 before the Great Recession brought about a decline in the number of immigrants in Ireland.

## 2. Major Developments in Migration and Integration Policy

### Review of Economic Migration Policy

In September 2018 the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation published a review of Ireland's economic migration policy, which underpins the employment permits system<sup>2</sup>.

Key recommendations deriving from the Review include:

- Changes to the current twice-yearly review of the Highly Skilled and Ineligible Employment Lists - which deal with labour market access for non-EEA workers - to make the system more responsive in real-time.

While the twice-yearly system will still operate, sectors experiencing severe labour shortages will be able to submit a business case for consideration via their line Department as they arise. A temporary scheme of this nature was piloted for the agri-food sector earlier in 2018. This included the following allocation of employment permits for workers in the agri-food sector from outside the EEA:

- 500 permits for horticulture workers, 250 for meat processing operatives and 50 for dairy farm assistants in May 2018.
- An additional 500 permits for meat processing operatives in August 2018.
- Introduction of a Seasonal Employment Permit to facilitate certain categories of short-term workers.
- A review of salary thresholds and other criteria for various employment permit types to respond to changing skills and labour market needs.
- A modernisation and extension of the Labour Market Needs Test.
- It is recommended that the labour market needs test, which requires that in order to hire an employee from outside the EEA, vacancies must be

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2018, *Review of Economic Migration Policy*. <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Review-of-Economic-Migration-Policy.pdf>

advertised for at least 2 weeks with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Employment Services, and the EURES network, should be extended to 4 weeks.

- Adjusted requirements for balanced hiring practices to meet a broader range of enterprise needs which would enable relaxation of the '50:50 Rule' which requires that at least 50% of employees in an enterprise seeking hire a non-EEA national should be from Ireland or the EEA, in cases of new or early stage companies working with Irish development agencies.

### Employment Permits Regulations

During 2017 the Economic Migration Policy Unit of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation conducted reviews of the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL) which regulate employment permits in the context of skill needs in the labour market.<sup>3</sup> The reviews are conducted occasionally to ensure the lists of occupations eligible for employment permits are matched to skill needs in the economy and are informed by research conducted by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. Occupations on the HSEOL are eligible for Critical Skills Employment Permits. Occupations that appear on neither list are not considered to be eligible occupations and are subject to a labour needs test. Following policy reviews in 2016, changes were introduced to the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL). These included:

- Under HSEOL: the addition of academics holding a qualification equivalent to the Irish National Framework of Qualifications Level 10 (i.e. Doctoral level, equivalent to ISCED 8) in awarded no less than two calendar years prior to the date of application for an employment permit,

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 2016, "Call for submissions to the review of the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL)". [www.dbei.gov.ie](http://www.dbei.gov.ie)

with a minimum of one academic year of relevant teaching experience, for employment at an Irish institution of higher education;

- Under ICEL: Heavy goods vehicle drivers, subject to a maximum quota of 120 General Employment Permits; and Meat Deboners, providing for a second tranche of 160 General Employment Permits.

### [The International Protection Act, 2015](#)

The International Protection Act 2015 came into force from 31 December 2016. The Act provides for the introduction of a single application procedure, replacing the former sequential asylum application process, and bringing Ireland into line with other EU Member States. The 2015 Act provides for applications for international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) as well as permission to remain cases to be processed as part of a single procedure by one decision maker. The key provisions of the Act are as follows:

- the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) has been subsumed into the Department of Justice and Equality as part of the new dedicated International Protection Office (IPO).
- the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT) is established as an independent tribunal that decides appeals of those persons whose application for International Protection status has not been recommended by the IPO. IPAT also determines appeals under the Dublin System Regulations. IPAT replaces the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT).

In January 2017 the IPO published guidelines on transitional arrangements for existing applications for refugee status and subsidiary protection not finalised before the commencement of the 2015 Act<sup>4</sup>.

- Category 1 – Refugee applications for refugee status lodged with the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner in respect of which a recommendation had not be made. These applications were transferred to the IPO for determination under the International Protection Act 2015 of whether the applicant is entitled to refugee status or subsidiary protection.
- Category 2 – Applications of refugee status that were on appeal to the RAT before the commencement date but had not been decided by the RAT are deemed to have applied for international protection under the 2015 Act. The file is transferred to the IPO for consideration of entitlement to subsidiary protection only. The previous determination on the refugee status application made by ORAC is preserved and remains in place. The previous appeal to the RAT is preserved and transferred to the new IPAT. If the application for subsidiary protection is refused, this may also be appealed to the IPAT and the two appeals are considered together. If the applicant is refused permission to remain by the IPO, the decision cannot be appealed to the IPAT.
- Category 3 – Applications for subsidiary protection made prior to the commencement date where investigation had not been by the ORAC by that date are deemed applications for protection under the 2015 Act and the file is transferred to the IPO for consideration of subsidiary protection matters only.

Applications for subsidiary protection made prior to the commencement date where investigation had been started by the ORAC by that date are not affected by the 2015 Act, apart from the fact that the IPO takes over

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<sup>4</sup> International Protection Office (January 2017), Information Note: Transitional Arrangements. IPO 12. [www.ipa.gov.ie](http://www.ipa.gov.ie)



the functions of the ORAC. The pre-existing legislation continues to apply, and the IPO examines the application under the old procedures.

There were 1,550 asylum cases and over 400 Subsidiary Protection cases pending in the ORAC at the commencement of the new legislation at end December 2016<sup>5</sup>. In addition, more than 1,800 appeals against a recommendation of the ORAC that refugee status be refused, which were pending before the RAT were transferred to the IPO for consideration of entitlement to subsidiary protection and of granting leave to remain. Many of these can be expected to be appealed to the IPAT in due course. Capacity of the IPAT was significantly enhanced with the appointment of 74 part-time tribunal members by end 2017, that represented a substantial increase on the 35 part-time members that had held office in the former RAT in 2016.

#### Direct Provision for Asylum Seekers

The *Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision<sup>6</sup> and other Supports for Asylum Seekers* (the McMahon Report) was published in June 2015. In June 2017, the Department of Justice and Equality published a progress report claiming that 133 of the 173 recommendations had been implemented and a further 36 had been partially implemented.<sup>7</sup>

Reforms introduced to the system include:

- Implementation of the International Protection Act (2015), discussed above

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<sup>5</sup> International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2018, *Annual Report*. Available at <http://www.protectionappeals.ie/>

<sup>6</sup> Direct provision: the system of reception for asylum seekers in Ireland, whereby all asylum seekers are offered accommodation on a full-board basis in a reception centre and a small weekly allowance is paid.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, (2017), *Report of the Working Group to Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports for Asylum Seekers. 3rd and Final Progress Report on the Implementation of the Report's Recommendations June 2017* [http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/3rd\\_WG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_-\\_July\\_2017.pdf/Files/3rd\\_WG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_-\\_July\\_2017.pdf](http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/3rd_WG_Progress_Report_-_July_2017.pdf/Files/3rd_WG_Progress_Report_-_July_2017.pdf)

- Reduction in the proportion of residents living in Direct Provision (DP) for more than 5 years – from 38% of all DP residents in 2014 to 13% in 2016 and about 8% in 2017.<sup>8</sup>
- From August 2017, weekly allowances paid to residents of Direct Provision increased from €19.10 per adult and €15.60 per child to €21.60 per resident. The McMahon Report had recommended that the rates be increased to €38.74 per week for adults and €29.80 for children.
- Prescription charges for residents of DP for medications issued on a doctor's prescription are waived.
- The pilot scheme to allow education-grant support children in DP to access further and higher education was extended for the 2016-17 academic year for students who had been in the Irish education and the asylum system for five years or more.
- The remit of the Office of the Ombudsman and that of the Ombudsman for Children is extended to residents of DP, allowing them recourse to those office in the case of complaints about service in DP centres

In May 2017 a Burmese man who spent eight years in DP won his appeal against the legal ban preventing him from working, with the Supreme Court determining that in an international protection system with no temporal limits as to when the application process will be concluded an absolute prohibition on the right to work for persons in the protection process is contrary to the right to seek employment under the Constitution. The Court adjourned consideration of its Order for six months to enable the State to consider its response. An intergovernmental taskforce recommended that the best option available to the State to comply with the judgement would be to opt into the EU (recast) Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU)

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<sup>8</sup> Arnold, S., and McGinnity, F., (2018) "Introduction, Policy and Context" in F McGinnity, E Quinn, É Fahey, S Arnold, B Maitre and P O'Connell, Monitoring Report on Integration. Dublin: ESRI.

which lays down standards for the reception of international protection applicants.<sup>9</sup> In June 2018 the Government announced that asylum seekers would be allowed to work from nine months after their application for asylum is lodged if they have not received a decision on their case. Hopefully, this may help to bring to an end a grudging approach to the treatment of asylum seekers seeking protection in Ireland, a policy stance that has had lasting negative impacts on their labour market prospects.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of 2017 there were just over 5,000 residents in 34 Direct Provision centres. The Reception and Integration Agency reported that this represented a 93% occupancy rate, with a total capacity of just over 5,500.<sup>11</sup> Problems of the capacity of the system arose during 2017. In July 2018 it was reported that increasing numbers of asylum seekers who had had their claims for refugee status accepted by the State, were nevertheless still resident in Direct Provision Centres. The 591 who had achieved refugee status and remained in DP represented 11% of the 5,442 people in direct provision centres in mid-2018<sup>12</sup>. This can be attributed to the national housing crisis, which, with soaring rents, has led to increasing difficulties for new refugees with limited funds or access to employment, to find their own accommodation. In September 2018 it was reported in the media that the majority of direct provision centres are operating at nearly full capacity, due both to an increase in the number of applicants and to difficulties encountered by refugees with status in securing housing<sup>13</sup>. It was reported

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<sup>9</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, November 2017:

[http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Access\\_To\\_Work\\_for\\_International\\_Protection\\_Applicants](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Access_To_Work_for_International_Protection_Applicants)

<sup>10</sup> O'Connell, P., 2018, "Why Are So Few Africans at Work in Ireland? Immigration Policy and Labour Market Disadvantage." Geary Working Paper, WP2018/16  
<https://ideas.repec.org/p/ucd/wpaper/201816.html>

<sup>11</sup> Reception and Integration Agency, 2017, *Reception and Integration Agency Annual Report December 2017*, [www.ria.gov.ie](http://www.ria.gov.ie).

<sup>12</sup> The Journal, July 16, 2018, <https://www.thejournal.ie/direct-provision-housing-4130661-Jul2018/>

<sup>13</sup> Irish Times, Sept 17, 2018, Irish Daily

that 20 asylum seekers had been refused accommodation in Direct Provision centres due to lack of places and were referred to homeless services.<sup>14</sup>

### Student Migration

The *International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016 – 2020* was published in October 2016. As part of that strategy, draft legislation for the development of an International Education Mark (IEM) was approved in May 2017, and, remains in draft form in autumn 2018.

The Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP), set up in 2015 restricting the list of eligible educational programmes for immigration purposes, has been extended on several occasions since, with the latest in mid-2018.<sup>15</sup> Non-language programmes eligible for inclusion on the list have been mainly limited to higher education programmes leading to educational awards at NFQ6/ISCED4 or above; ACCA professional accountancy programmes at designated institutions; and, until 2016, currently registered overseas accredited post-graduate degree programmes (at ISCED5 and 6). Private English language education providers seeking to have their programmes listed on the ILEP are expected to comply with certain additional requirements before they can be included on the ILEP. These requirements include transparency of ownership, good governance, and adequate learner protection and quality educational products. All programmes for which non-EEA students are now eligible to apply for residence are included on a single list.<sup>16</sup>

The Third Level Graduate Scheme, which allows international graduates to work while remaining in Ireland to seek employment and to apply for an

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<sup>14</sup> Irish Mirror, Sept 20, 2018, <https://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/politics/asylum-seekers-refused-beds-ireland-13281191>

<sup>15</sup> See Reform of the International Education Sector and Student Immigration System Government Policy Statement May 2015, available at: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Interim%20List%20of%20Eligible%20Programmes%20-%20ILEP>

<sup>16</sup> Sheridan, A. and Whelan, S., 2016, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2015: Ireland*. Dublin: EMN and ESRI

employment permit, was revised in 2017.<sup>17</sup> The revised programme allows new graduates at NFQ Level 8/ISCED5 or above to live and work full-time for up to 12 months after graduation, albeit with a total limit of 7 years overall duration of residence in the state (including studies). Graduates at Level 9/ISCED6 can work for up to 2 years past-graduation, subject to a total cap of 8 years residence in Ireland.

### Residence Permits

Non-EU/EEA nationals aged 16 and over who are present in the Irish State for longer than 90 days are required to register for immigration purposes. The registered person receives a registration certificate, previously known as the Garda National Immigration Bureau “GNIB card.” From December 2017, the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) card was replaced by the Irish Residence Permit (IRP).

The new IRP is the Irish EU Common Format Residence Permit.<sup>18</sup> It includes a new design based on EU colour and layout rules; new information including a brief description of the immigration permission and the permission stamp number, and a microchip containing photo, fingerprints and personal details. The new IRP does not give rise to any changes to rights or entitlements for the non-EEA national.

### Limited Regularisation Scheme for Undocumented

In October 2018 the Government opened a three-month window for certain immigrants from outside the European Economic Area to apply for permission to remain in Ireland.<sup>19</sup> The scheme is targeted at non-EEA nationals who held valid student permission from January 2005 to December

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Justice and Equality: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (31 May 2017) *Third Level Graduate Programme Immigration Rules for Non-EEA students* Available at: [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)

<sup>18</sup> See Department of Justice and Equality (6 February 2018) Response to Parliamentary Question 5708/18. Available at: [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

<sup>19</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, Oct 2018, <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/press-release-special-scheme-for-students-launched-151018>

2010 but have not obtained alternative immigration permission since then. The decision follows concerns raised by the Supreme Court in two cases and is intended to address the difficulties facing a significant number of people who arrived in Ireland on valid student visas but who subsequently became undocumented through no fault of their own.

Between 15 October 2018 and 20 January 2019, applicants can apply for the new scheme which provides a pathway for this specific group former students who have become undocumented through losing their previous permission to remain in the State. Successful applicants will be granted a "4S" stamp permitting them to live and work in Ireland for two years without an employment permit. At the end of the 2 year permission period applicants will be granted a Stamp 4 permission for 1 year if they can provide evidence that they have complied with the terms of the temporary stamp 4S conditions.

Family reunification is not permitted under the scheme, so a spouse or partner and dependent children living outside the State, cannot seek to join the applicant in Ireland. However, the Department notes that the family circumstances of persons present in the State will be taken into consideration. This means that where a person qualifies under this Scheme, the family unit who have been residing with them in the State may be given permission to remain under the scheme.

A non-refundable administration fee of €250 must be paid at the time of application. An additional €450 fee must also be paid at the time of application, and this will be refunded if the application is unsuccessful. Successful applicants will be issued with an initial 2 year registration at a reduced fee of €300 (normal fees would be €600 i.e. €300 paid annually).

## Migrant Integration Strategy

The *Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future* published in February 2017 setting out the Government’s approach to migrant integration for the period from 2017 to 2020.<sup>20</sup> Led by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality, the Strategy envisages a whole-of-Government approach involving actions by all Departments. It is targeted at all migrants, including refugees, who are legally residing in the State as well as those who have become naturalised Irish citizens but who were born outside Ireland.

Integration is defined in the current Irish policy as the ‘ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity’. The Strategy (p. 11)

“envisages integration to encompass participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the State. Integration recognises the right of migrants to give expression to their own culture in a manner that does not conflict with the basic values of Irish society as reflected in Ireland’s Constitution and in law. As a two-way process, integration involves change for Irish society and institutions so that the benefits of greater diversity can be fully realised.

General provisions of the Strategy involving all Government Departments include:

- information to migrants in language-appropriate formats;
- ongoing intercultural awareness training for all frontline staff,
- signage in public offices indicating where interpretation is available;
- clear information on how to make a complaint about racist behaviour by staff or another customer.

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, *Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future*.

[http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant\\_Integration\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf/Files/Migrant\\_Integration\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf/Files/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf)

Specific actions set out in the Strategy include:

- The setting of a target of 1% for the employment of EEA migrants and people from minority ethnic communities in the civil service (in most cases civil service employment is not open to non-EEA nationals).
- Schools outside the established education system will be encouraged to network with the aim of providing information on child protection and health and safety regulations to them and of developing relationships with them.
- The establishment by local authorities of networks aimed at reaching out to hard-to-reach migrant groups so to help them to engage with Government Departments and to provide information on their needs.
- The development of the second National Intercultural Health Strategy.
- The establishment of a Communities Integration Fund intended to support organisations in local communities (sports organisations, faith organisations etc.) to undertake actions to promote the integration of migrants into their communities.
- The monitoring of current school enrolment policies over time to assess their impact on the enrolment of migrant students. • the inclusion of a language component in education and training programmes for unemployed migrants with poor English proficiency.
- The development of initiatives to ensure that migrant needs in relation to skills acquisition and labour market activation are addressed.
- The development of initiatives to encourage the business sector to play a role in promoting integration.
- The establishment of a working group to examine data gaps in relation to migrant needs and experience.



### 3. Recent Migration Statistics

The number of immigrants to Ireland was just over 90,000 in the twelve months to 2018. The number of emigrants in the same period was 56,300, indicating net migration of 34,000. Ireland returned to positive net migration for the first time in the 2015 after experiencing net outward migration for the previous 5 years. Inward migration increased until 2007 but declined thereafter during the Great Recession. It has increased steadily with the economic recovery since about 2012. Emigration increased sharply during the crisis, to 83,000 in 2012: it fell to 56,300 in 2018.

**Table 1: Gross and New Migration Flows, 1988 to 2018**

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

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Census of Population. <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

### 3.1. Inward Migration

Immigration declined from a high of over 150,00 in 2006-7 to a low of less than 42,00 in 2009-10. In more recent years the inflow has resumed and was over 90,000 in the twelve months to 2018.

**Table 2: Estimated Immigration by Nationality, 2001-2018**

	Irish	UK	Old EU 13	EU NMS	Rest of World	All
<i>12 months to:</i>				<i>1,000s</i>		
2001	26.3	9.0	6.5	--	17.3	59.0
2006	18.9	9.9	12.7	49.9	16.4	107.8
2007	30.7	4.3	11.8	85.3	19.0	151.1
2011 <sup>1</sup>	19.6	4.1	7.1	10.1	12.4	53.3
2012	20.1	3.9	7.9	7.7	17.7	57.3
2013	21.7	4.1	8.8	8.3	19.8	62.7
2014	22.8	4.2	9.4	11.1	19.0	66.5
2015	26.6	5.0	10.2	12.2	21.9	75.9
2016 <sup>1</sup>	28.4	5.9	11.4	13.2	23.6	82.3
2017 <sup>2</sup>	27.4	6.1	10.8	10.9	29.4	84.6
2018 <sup>2</sup>	28.4	7.3	11.6	12.2	30.9	90.3
				%		
2001	44.6	15.3	11.0	--	29.3	100.0
2006	17.5	9.2	11.8	46.3	15.2	100.0
2007	20.3	2.8	7.8	56.5	12.6	100.0
2011 <sup>1</sup>	36.8	7.7	13.3	18.9	23.3	100.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	34.5	7.2	13.9	16.0	28.7	100.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	32.4	7.2	12.8	12.9	34.8	100.0
2018 <sup>2</sup>	31.5	8.1	12.8	13.5	34.2	100.0

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Census of Population. <sup>2</sup> Preliminary

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

In the early years of the Great Recession, returning Irish nationals represented the single largest group of immigrants, thus returning to a long established trend that obtained prior to EU enlargement in 2004. That pattern altered again in the economic recovery since about 2013, when non-EU nationals became the single largest group of immigrants. In the 12 months to 2018, there were almost 31,000 immigrants from the Rest of the World

(34%), followed closely by 28,400 of Irish nationality (32%). The year 2018 was also the first in the recent period when the number of Irish immigrants exceeded the number of emigrants (28,300).

In 2007, at the peak of the inward migration flow, 85,000 individuals migrated to Ireland from the new EU Member States (NMS), almost half total net immigration in that year. Immigration from the NMS fell to about 8,000 during the economic crisis but increased only to about 12,000 in the year to April 2018.

**Table 3: Estimated Immigration by Country of Origin, 2008, 2011 and 2018**

12 months to April:	2008		2011		2018 <sup>1</sup>	
	1,000s	%	1,000s	%	1,000s	%
UK	19.4	17.1	11.9	22.3	20.1	22.3
Old EU 13	14.5	12.8	9.7	18.2	14.9	16.5
New EU 12	45.5	40.1	9.8	18.4	11.0	12.2
Australia	7.1	6.3	4.5	8.4	7.2	8.0
Canada	2.0	1.8	1.3	2.4	2.5	2.8
USA	5.0	4.4	3.3	6.2	7.3	8.1
Rest of World	20.0	17.6	12.9	24.2	27.4	30.3
Total	113.5	100.0	53.3	100.0	90.3	100.0

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Preliminary

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

Table 3 shows estimated immigration by country of origin in 2008, before the Great Recession; 2011, during the depths of the crisis in Ireland; and 2018, after several years of economic recovery. Immigration from all countries of origin declined between 2008 and 2012. Similar to the patterns in immigration by nationality, the share of immigrants from the New EU member states (NMS) fell sharply, from 40% to about 18%. The number of immigrants from the Rest of the World (excluding the EU, Australia, Canada and the USA) fell, but their share of total immigration increased to 24% in 2012 and then to 30% (27,400) in 2018. Given that the non-EU immigrants

would have needed employment permits to work in Ireland, their increased shares in total immigration may relate to high skilled migration to fill skills shortages in the Irish labour market as well as an increase in the number of international students.

**Table 4: Estimated Immigration Flows by Age-group, 2001 to 2018**

	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
All	1,000s					
2001	7.9	16.4	29.5	4.3	0.8	59
2006	11.5	31.6	57.2	6.1	1.4	107.8
2011	6.1	14.6	26.9	4.3	1.3	53.3
2016	9.9	18.2	44.7	7.1	2.4	82.3
2017 <sup>1</sup>	8.8	18.6	47.1	7.8	2.3	84.6
2018 <sup>1</sup>	10.6	24.1	44.2	8.3	3.3	90.3
Males						
2016	5	8	23.1	4	1.1	41.2
2018 <sup>1</sup>	5.4	11.4	21.8	4.2	1.7	44.5
Females						
2016	4.9	10.2	21.6	3.1	1.3	41.2
2018 <sup>1</sup>	5.1	12.7	22.4	4	1.6	45.8

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Preliminary

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

Almost over half (49%) of all immigrants were in the prime working age group, 25-44 years in the 12 months to April 2018. Another 27% of the gross inflow relates to those aged 15-24 years.

## Other Indicators of Immigration

### PPSN Allocations

The Irish Department of Social Protection issues Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) which are necessary for employment and access to social services. The number of such PPSNs issued to non-Irish nationals exceeded 227,000 in 2006 at the height of the economic boom, and then fell to 67,800

in 2011. It has increased in recent years with the recovery in the labour market and was almost 190,000 in 2017.

An analysis by the Central Statistics Office that compares PPSN allocations and employer end-of-year (P45) returns to the Revenue Commissioners for non-Irish nationals reveals the extent to which those allocated PPS numbers took up and retained insurable employment over time.<sup>21</sup> The analysis shows that in 2016, almost 55% of foreign nationals with new PPSNs issued in that year had employment activity during the year, an increase on the 'employment rate' of new arrivals compared with previous years. About 24% those who were allocated a PPSN in 2011 were in employment at some stage during 2016.

**Table 5: Personal Public Service Numbers Issued by Nationality, 2006-2018**

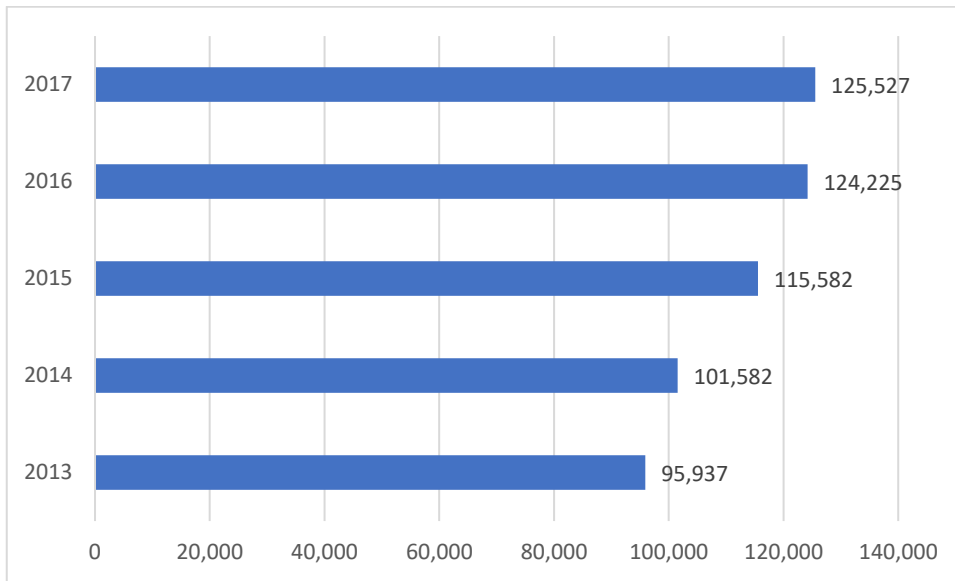
	Irish	Non-Irish National	Total
		<i>1,000s</i>	
2006	84.7	227.2	311.9
2011	85.2	67.8	153
2012	81.3	73.3	154.7
2013	78.6	85.6	164.2
2014	76.1	96.4	172.5
2015	75	94.7	169.7
2016	73.3	107.7	181.0
2017	72.7	116.3	189.0
2018 <sup>1</sup>	24.3	87.7	112.0

Note: <sup>1</sup> January to July only.

Source: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

<sup>21</sup> Central Statistics Office (2017). *Foreign Nationals: PPSN Allocations and Employment, 2015*. Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie).

**Figure 1: Visa Applications**



In 2017 the Irish Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INIS) received 125,527 applications for short-stay and long-stay visas - a 1% increase on 2016, and a cumulative increase of 41% since 2012. The approval rate for entry was 89%. The top five nationalities applying for visas were: India (21%), China (13%), Russia (11%), Pakistan (5%), and Nigeria (5%).

### **Inflows of Workers from Non-EEA Countries**

It is possible to derive information on the trends in the numbers of non-EEA nationals<sup>22</sup> entering the country to take up employment by analysing annual data for the numbers of employment permits issued and renewed by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. This programme is based on the provisions of the *Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014*. Work and employment permits apply to all engagements for financial gain involving non-EEA citizens, including those of short duration. The system is employer-led. The application must relate to a specific job and to a named individual. In

<sup>22</sup> EU citizens and citizens of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein do not require Employment Permits in order to take up employment in Ireland.

the period leading up to EU enlargement on 1 May 2004, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, in accordance with the *EU Accession Treaty*, encouraged employers to source their potential work permit requirements from the EU-25 countries.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 6: Employment Permits, selected years 2002-2017**

year	New	Renewed	Total
2002	23,759	16,562	40,321
2003	22,512	25,039	47,551
2004	10,821	23,246	34,067
2006	8,254	16,600	24,854
2013	3,034	829	3,853
2014	4,861	634	5,495
2015	6,076	1,177	7,253
2016	7,691	1,682	9,373
2017	9,401	1,,960	11,361

Source: Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie)

**Table 7: Employment Permits by type, 2017**

Type of Permit	New	Renewal	Total
Contract for Services Employment Permit	106	37	143
Critical Skills Employment Permit	5110	0	5110
Dependant/Partner/Spouse Employment Permit	471	206	677
Exchange Agreement Employment Permit	19	0	19
General Employment Permit	2904	1453	4357
Internship Employment Permit	28	0	28
Intra-Company Transfer Employment Permit	639	242	881
Intra-Company Transfer (Training) Employment Permit	33	0	33
Reactivation Employment Permit	34	12	46
Sport and Cultural Employment Permit	57	10	67
All	9401	1960	11361

Source: Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

<sup>23</sup> Post-Accession in 2007, Ireland initially applied transitional arrangements and continued to require Bulgarian and Romanian nationals to hold an employment permit to access the Irish labour market (excluding self-employed and economically self-sufficient persons and students). The restrictions ceased after 1 January 2012.

The impact of the Great Recession can be seen in the sharp decline in employment permits from 2006 to 2013. The impact of the recovery is also apparent, with the number of employment permits increasing to over 11,000 in 2017.

The *Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014*, which amended the 2003 and 2005 Employment Permits Acts, created 9 new types of employment permits, as listed in Table 7. The most common form of employment permit is the Critical Skills Employment which accounted for over 5,100 permits (or 45% of the total) in 2017. General Employment Permits accounted for another 38% of the total.

**Table 8: Employment Permits Issued and Renewed by Country of Nationality, 2016 and 2017 (Major Sending Countries)**

	2016	2017		Total
		New	Renewal	
Australia	109	98	8	106
Brazil	561	635	40	675
Canada	158	136	51	187
China	322	260	37	297
Egypt	257	269	80	349
India	2990	3316	511	3827
Israel	199	60	67	127
Japan	97	106	35	141
Malaysia	242	217	69	286
Nigeria	179	173	64	237
Pakistan	1046	644	364	1008
Philippines	376	752	16	768
Russian Federation	188	186	27	213
South Africa	207	293	36	329
Sudan	357	280	189	469
Turkey	157	187	30	217
Ukraine	194	146	19	165
USA	835	724	119	843
<b>Total</b>	<b>9373</b>	<b>9401</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>11361</b>

Source: Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie)



Table 8 shows the number of employment permit holders by nationality in 2016 and 2017. As in previous recent years, India stands out as the single largest nationality with 34% of the total. Pakistan accounts for another 9% and the USA for 7%.

Under the Atypical Working Scheme, a total of 2,781 of 2,923 applications were approved in 2017 providing for short-term (up to 90 days) contracts that are not covered by the employment permits system.<sup>24</sup> The main sectors covered were in health, engineering and information technology.

## Refugees and Asylum Seekers

**Table 9: Asylum Seekers, 200 to 2017**

Year	Number of Applications
2000	10,938
2001	10,325
2002	11,634
2003	7,900
2004	4,766
2005	4,323
2006	4,314
2007	3,985
2008	3,866
2009	2,689
2010	1,939
2011	1,290
2012	956
2013	946
2014	1,448
2015	3,276
2016	2,244
2017	2,926

Sources: 2000-2016: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. [www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie)

2017: International Protection Office. [www.ipso.gov.ie](http://www.ipso.gov.ie)

<sup>24</sup> Sheridan, A., 2018, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2017: Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI

A total of 2,926 people applied for asylum in Ireland to the International Protection Office (IPO) during 2017, an increase of 30% over the number of applications in 2016.<sup>25</sup> This total includes relocation cases from Greece under the EU relocation programme. As was the case in 2015, Syria was the most common nationality among asylum seekers in 2017, accounting for 19% of all applications.

**Table 10: Asylum Applications by Nationality, 2016 and 2017**

2016		2017	
Syria	244	Syria	545
Pakistan	233	Georgia	302
Albania	222	Albania	282
Zimbabwe	192	Zimbabwe	262
Nigeria	176	Pakistan	200
Others	1,177	Others	1,335
Total	2,244		2,926

Sources: 2016: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. [www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie)

2017: International Protection Office. [www.ipo.gov.ie](http://www.ipo.gov.ie)

Asylum applications to ORAC were suspended in October 2016 to make way for transitional arrangements for the commencement of the new Protection legislation. The new International Protection Office (IPO) made a total of 885 first instance decisions in 2017. There were 760 positive decisions, including 640 grants of refugee status under the Geneva Convention, 50 grants of subsidiary protection, and 20 of humanitarian status.<sup>26</sup> There were 125 rejections, 14% of all first instance decisions.

The IPO also inherited about 1,550 asylum cases from ORAC to be processed under the transitional provisions of the International Protection Act 2015. Another 1,800 appeals, pending at end 2016 were transferred from the

<sup>25</sup> With the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 in 2016, the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) was subsumed into the Department of Justice and Equality as part of the new dedicated International Protection Office (IPO), which also took over responsibility for publishing statistics on first-instance applications for asylum.

<sup>26</sup> Sheridan, A., 2018, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2017: Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI.

Refugee Appeals Tribunal to the IPO for consideration of subsidiary protection or leave to remain.<sup>27</sup>

With the transfer of the functions of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT), the Tribunal started 2017 with a caseload of 454. The number of appeals to IPAT totalled 887 in 2017. In 2017, 602 decisions were issued, leaving 653 on hand at end 2017. IPAT affirmed the first instance recommendation in 294 cases and set aside 76 recommendations relating to international; protection, subsidiary protection, subsequent appeals and inadmissible appeals, 21% of the total decisions.<sup>28</sup>

The average length of time taken by IPAT to process and complete Substantive International Protection Appeals, including transition cases in 2017 was 125 days. The average length of time to process all categories of appeal, including legacy asylum appeals in 2017 was 133 days.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 11: Asylum Appeals Received by Type, 2017**

Type of Appeal	
Dublin III	1
Subsidiary Protection	124
Single Procedure: Refugee Status and Subsidiary Protection	627
Single Procedure: Refugee Status only	8
Single Procedure: Subsidiary Protection only	53
Legacy Asylum Appeal	24
Subsequent	40
Inadmissible	10
Total	887

*Source: International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2018 Annual Report 2017*

Table 11 shows the number of appeals received by IPAT by type in 2017. The largest category related to 627 appeals dealt with by way of the new

<sup>27</sup> International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2018, Annual Report 2017.

<sup>28</sup> International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2018, Annual Report 2017, pp. 39-48.

<sup>29</sup> International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 2018, Annual Report 2017.

‘Single Procedure’ introduced in the International Protection Act 2015, assessing entitlement both to refugee status and, if the person was found not to be entitled to refugee status, to subsidiary protection. This category included appeals to the Tribunal as ‘transition appeals’ pursuant to s.70(2)(d) of the International Protection Act or as ‘new’ appeals pursuant to s.41(1)(b) of the Act.<sup>30</sup> Another 124 were legacy subsidiary protection appeals.

**Table 12: Asylum Appeals by Country of Origin, 2016 and 2017**

Country	2016	Country	2017
Pakistan	618	Pakistan	168
Nigeria	220	Nigeria	161
Albania	175	Zimbabwe	110
Bangladesh	162	Malawi	55
Zimbabwe	141	South Africa	46
Malawi	97	Georgia	34
Afghanistan	90	Bangladesh	30
Algeria	80	Albania	28
DR Congo	80	DR Congo	22
South Africa	73	Algeria	20
Other	438	Other	191
Total	2174	Total	865

*Source:* International Protection Appeals Tribunal, Annual Report 2017.

In 2017 Pakistan was the main stated country of nationality of applicants for appeal, accounting for almost 20% of all appeals. Nigeria followed closely, with 161 appeals (19% of the total).

#### Resettlement and Relocation

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was approved by Government in September 2015 and the Government undertook to take in a total of 4,000 persons by the end of 2017 in respect of relocation under the EU relocation mechanism, and resettlement under the UNHCR programme resettling refugees from Lebanon. This was to include 520 programme

<sup>30</sup> See Section 2 above.

refugees by the end of 2016 under Ireland’s Refugee Resettlement Programme. In response to pressure from civil society and public opinion, in November 2016 the Government also undertook to allocate up to 200 places for unaccompanied minors who had been living in the Calais refugee camp. These places are included within the commitment of 4,000 places in the IRPP.

**Table 13: Arrivals under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme**

	Relocation	Resettlement
2015	--	163
2016	240	356
2017	515	273
Total Arrivals	755	792

Source: A. Sheridan, 2018, *Annual report on Migration and Asylum in 2017: Ireland*.

Dublin: EMN/ ESRI

A total of 273 people of Iraq and Syrian nationality were resettled in Ireland under the UNHCR Resettlement programme in 2017, and 785 refugees had been admitted from Lebanon under the resettlement strand of the IRPP programme. It was anticipated that the commitment to a total of 1,040 under the Resettlement programme will be met with the arrival of about 285 additional refugees in early 2018.<sup>31</sup>

As the expected numbers provided for under the Relocation scheme did not materialise, in November 2017 the Government announced a Family Reunification Humanitarian Assistance Programme (FHRAP) to be provided within the exiting commitment of 4,000 under the IRPP. FHRAP provides for up to 530 places from immediate family members of people from conflict zones recognised by UNHCR.

<sup>31</sup> Sheridan, A. (2018), *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017: Ireland*.

By end 2016, a total of 240 refugees had arrived in Ireland from Greece under the EU relocation programme, although the Department of Justice and Equality announced that 400 refugees would have either arrived or been cleared for arrival by end 2016 (Sheridan, 2017). There have been no arrivals from Italy due to difficulties raised by Italian authorities relating to the conduct of security assessments of applicants by the Irish Garda (police) in the Italian jurisdiction.

### 3.2 Outward Migration

Emigration increased during the recession and peaked at 83,000 in 2012 and subsequently declined, to 56,000 in the twelve months to April 2018.

**Table 14: Estimated Emigration by Nationality, 2006-2018**

	Irish	UK	Old EU 13	EU12 NMS	Rest of world	Total
<i>To April</i>			<i>1,000s</i>			
2006 <sup>1</sup>	15.3	2.2	5.1	7.2	6.2	36.0
2007	12.3	3.7	8.9	12.6	8.2	46.3
2008	13.1	3.7	6.0	17.2	9.0	49.2
2009	19.2	3.9	7.4	30.5	11.0	72.0
2010	28.9	3.0	9.0	19.0	9.3	69.2
2011 <sup>1</sup>	42.0	4.6	10.2	13.9	9.9	80.6
2012	49.7	6.7	6.9	9.0	10.7	83.0
2013	48.3	6.7	7.2	8.2	10.9	81.3
2014	45.0	5.8	6.3	7.6	10.2	75.0
2015	42.5	5.6	6.0	7.1	8.8	70.0
2016 <sup>1</sup>	37.1	5.2	5.7	6.8	11.4	66.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	30.8	4.0	6.7	9.6	13.7	64.8
2018 <sup>2</sup>	28.3	4.1	6.8	7.1	10.0	56.3
			%			
2016 <sup>1</sup>	56.0	7.9	8.6	10.3	17.2	100.0
2017 <sup>2</sup>	47.5	6.2	10.3	14.8	21.1	100.0
2018 <sup>2</sup>	50.3	7.3	12.1	12.6	17.8	100.0

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup>Census <sup>2</sup>Preliminary

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

There was a marked surge of emigration among nationals of the new EU Member States at the onset of the recession - 31,000 left in 2009 and 19,000 in 2010 - but the outflow has slowed in more recent years to about 7,000 in 20-18. The increase in the share of emigrants with nationalities from the Rest of the World has increased in recent years, reflecting an increase in immigration flows during the same period.

**Table 15: Estimated Emigration by Country of Destination, 2006-2017**

	UK	Old EU13	EU 12 NMS	Australia	Canada	USA	Other	Total
<i>To April</i>				<i>1,000s</i>				
2006	8.8	5.7	2.3			3.3	15.8	36.0
2011	20.0	13.9	10.4	13.4	2.1	4.7	16.2	80.6
2012	18.1	13.7	9.2	17.4	2.8	8.2	13.7	83.0
2017	12.1	12.9	9.7	5.3	3.7	6.5	14.5	64.8
2018	11.4	12.3	6.5	4.5	3.9	5.8	11.9	56.3
Males	20.2	21.8	11.5	8.0	6.9	10.3	21.1	100.0
2017	6.5	5.9	5.2	2.8	2.1	4.3	7.4	34.2
2018	5.0	4.7	3.0	2.6	2.1	3.0	6.0	26.4
Females								
2017	5.6	7.0	4.5	2.5	1.6	2.2	7.3	30.6
2018	6.5	7.6	3.6	1.9	1.6	2.8	5.8	30.0

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup>Census <sup>2</sup>Preliminary

Table 15 shows emigration by country of destination. Well over half of all emigrants from Ireland went to European destinations in 2017, about 17% went to North America, 8% to Australia and 21% to rest of the world. The UK

has been the country destination of the largest number of Irish emigrants for many years. There appears to have been a slight shift in that pattern in the last two years when the number emigrating to the old EU Member States exceeded those travelling to the UK. This may be an early indication of the impact of Brexit, in the course of which the UK may become a less popular destination for Europeans in general.

**Table 16: Estimated Emigration by Age Group**

End	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
April						
All	1,000s					
2006	2.2	15.9	14.1	2.1	1.7	36.0
2011	5.3	34.5	31.3	6.1	3.4	80.6
2016 <sup>1</sup>	10.2	18.3	31.3	4.6	1.7	66.2
2017 <sup>2</sup>	8.2	16.2	34.5	4.4	1.4	64.8
2018 <sup>2</sup>	6.3	12.5	28.3	7.8	1.5	56.3
Males	11.2	22.2	50.3	13.9	2.7	100.0
2018 <sup>2</sup>	2.8	5.5	13.7	3.7	0.6	26.4
Females						
2018 <sup>2</sup>	3.5	6.9	14.6	4.0	0.9	30.0

Source: Central Statistics Office (various years), *Population and Migration Estimates*. Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup>Census <sup>2</sup>Preliminary

Irish emigration mainly involves young people. The most recent estimates available show that about 50% of emigrants were in the 25-44 year age group in the twelve months to 2018. Another 22% was in the 15-24 year age group, which shows some decline for this younger age group. The number of emigrants aged less than 14 has also fallen in recent years, which may reflect a decline in the number of families emigrating, which may be partly due to the improvement in economic and labour market conditions in Ireland.



## 4. Population Trends

Table 17 shows population data for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The population of Ireland continued to increase during 2018, to an estimated 4,557,00 in April 2018. Natural increase was positive throughout this century, peaking at almost 50,000 in 2010. Net emigration has fluctuated in line with economic conditions: it peaked at almost 143,000 in 2007, mainly due to a surge of immigration during the economic boom and fell below -27,000 in 2010 and 2011 during the Great Recession.

**Table 17: Components of Annual Population Change, 2000-2017**

Year ending April	Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Immigrants	Emigrants	Net migration	Population change	Population
	'000							
2000	54.0	32.1	21.8	52.6	26.6	26.0	47.9	3,789.5
2001	55.1	30.2	24.8	59.0	26.2	32.8	57.7	3,847.2
2002	58.1	29.3	28.8	66.9	25.6	41.3	70.0	3,917.2
2003	60.8	28.9	31.9	60.0	29.3	30.7	62.6	3,979.9
2004	62.0	28.6	33.3	58.5	26.5	32.0	65.3	4,045.2
2005	61.4	27.9	33.5	84.6	29.4	55.1	88.6	4,133.8
2006 <sup>1</sup>	61.2	27.0	34.2	107.8	36.0	71.8	106.0	4,232.9
2007	66.6	28.4	38.2	151.1	46.3	104.8	142.9	4,375.8
2008	73.0	28.0	44.9	113.5	49.2	64.3	109.2	4,485.1
2009	75.3	28.6	46.7	73.7	72.0	1.6	48.3	4,533.4
2010	77.2	28.4	48.8	41.8	69.2	-27.5	21.4	4,554.8
2011 <sup>2</sup>	75.1	27.7	47.5	53.3	80.6	-27.4	20.1	4,574.9
2012	73.2	28.7	44.5	57.3	83.0	-25.7	18.8	4,593.7
2013	69.4	29.8	39.6	62.7	81.3	-18.7	21.0	4,614.7
2014	68.4	29.2	39.2	66.5	75.0	-8.5	30.8	4,645.4
2015	66.4	29.9	36.5	75.9	70.0	5.9	42.3	4,687.8
2016 <sup>2</sup>	65.4	29.8	35.6	82.3	66.2	16.2	51.8	4,739.6
2017 <sup>3</sup>	63.9	30.8	33.1	84.6	64.8	19.8	52.9	4,792.5
2018 <sup>3</sup>	61.2	30.7	30.5	90.3	56.3	34.0	64.5	4,857.0

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>1</sup> Up to and including 2005, the annual population estimates are on a de facto basis. From 2006 onwards, the concept of usual residence is used. <sup>2</sup> Census <sup>3</sup> Preliminary

Recent years have seen a return to positive net migration following the improvement in macro-economic conditions. In the twelve months to April 2018, the estimated inflow of 90,300 was offset by an outflow of 56,300, resulting in net inward of 34,000. This added to a natural increase of 30,500 led to an increase in the population of 64,500, to 4,857,500.

**Table 18: Total Population by Nationality, selected years 2008-2017**

	2008	2011	2014	2016	2017	2018
	<i>1,000's</i>					
Irish	3909.5	4017.9	4117.6	4189.1	4225.9	4263.5
Non Irish	575.6	557.0	527.8	550.5	566.6	593.5
UK	117.9	114.9	107.1	105.7	107.7	110.8
Rest of EU15	50.8	49.4	56.9	64.9	69.0	73.7
EU12/13	247.7	231.5	242.8	249.4	250.3	255.0
Rest of world	159.2	161.2	121.0	130.4	139.6	154.1
Total	4485.1	4574.9	4645.4	4739.6	4792.5	4857.0
	<i>%</i>					
Irish	87.2	87.8	88.6	88.4	88.4	88.2
Non Irish	12.8	12.2	11.4	11.6	11.6	11.8
UK	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.2
Rest of EU15	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4
EU12/13	5.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.2
Rest of world	3.5	3.5	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

The number of foreign residents in Ireland peaked in 2008 at over 575,000, or 12.8% of the total population. Their number declined during the Recession, to less than 528,000 in 2014, but has been growing again since. By April 2018 the number of non-nationals resident in Ireland, 593,500, exceeded its pre-Recession peak, although non-nationals accounted for just under 12% of the total population in 2018, one percentage point less than the 2008 share, due to strong growth in the indigenous population. The single largest group of non-nationals is from the 12/13 New EU New Member States, just over 248,000 in 2008 and 255,000 in 2018: the new EU MS nationals have accounted for over 5% of the population throughout the

period considered here. The number of immigrants from other European countries has also increased, from just over 50,000 in 2008 to 74,000 in 2018. Nationals from the Rest of the World (outside Europe) have increased in number since 2014 – to 154,000 in 2018. This is consistent with the data on immigration presented in Table 2 and may be partly related to the influx of highly skilled immigrants to meet skill demands in particular sectors, particularly Information Technology and Health, and to the growth in the number of international students.

Over 128,000 residence permits were registered at the end of 2017 (an increase of 15% on the previous year). Permits on most grounds were buoyant, particularly in respect of remunerated activities and refugee status, both of which increased by 25% or more.

**Table 19: Valid Residence Permits by Reason, 2016 and 2017**

	2016	2017	% change
Family reasons	27,243	30,184	10.8
Education reasons	35,323	39,779	12.6
Remunerated activities	20,973	26,133	24.6
Refugee status	1,117	1,420	27.1
Subsidiary protection	542	563	3.9
Other	25,729	29,987	16.5
Total	110,927	128,066	15.5

Source: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

Table 20 shows that, once again, Brazil was the nationality with the most residence permits issued in Ireland at the end of 2017 (18,590). India was the second most numerous nationality. The number of individuals of these nationalities increased by almost 30% between 2016 and 2017. There is a great deal of stability from year-to-year in the distribution of permits by nationality.

**Table 20: ‘Top Ten’ Nationalities of Permits, 2016 and 2017**

Nationality	2016	2017	% change
Brazil	14,324	18,590	29.8
India	13,319	17,182	29.0
China including Hong Kong	10,322	11,634	12.7
United States	9,203	10,217	11.0
Pakistan	6,592	7,230	9.7
Nigeria	4,834	5,292	9.5
Philippines	3,826	4,541	18.7
Malaysia	3,412	3,436	0.7
Canada	2,917	3,300	13.1
South Africa	2,650	3,144	18.6

Source: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

#### Change of Immigration Status

Table 21 shows changes in immigration status during 2016. A total of 7,610 persons changed status during the year, an increase of this form of mobility of almost 30% over the previous year. Most changes of status involved changes from education status, with 683 changing to family reason, 1,073 changing to remunerated activities, and 2,137 to ‘other’ reasons: for a total of 3,893 status changes.

**Table 21: Change of Immigration Status, 2016**

<i>From Reason</i>	<i>To reason</i>			
	Family	Education	Remunerated Activities	Other reason
Family		15	22	69
Education	683		1073	2137
Remunerated Activities	312	356		660
Other Reasons	850	376	1057	

Source: Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_reschange&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_reschange&lang=en)

A total of 1,328 persons changed from remunerated activities, with 312 changing to family reasons, 356 to education and 660 for other reasons.

## Naturalisation

There was a marked increase in the number of immigrants who acquired Irish citizenship after 2011. This was due both to an increase in applications and the introduction of administrative reforms to reduce a pent-up bag-log of applications. As a result, the number of persons acquiring Irish citizenship increased from 6,300 in 2010, to a high of over 25,000 in 2012 before trending down, to just over 10,000 in 2016 and 8,199 in 2017.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 22: Citizenship Certificates Issued, 2012-2016**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
UK	85	55	51	54	98
Rest of EU15	75	91	149	145	170
EU12/13	1,265	1,615	2,725	2,921	3,058
Rest of World	23,685	22,482	18,177	10,443	6,712
Total	25,110	24,243	21,102	13,563	10,038

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

Available at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

Table 23 suggests that the number of naturalisations involving non-EEA nationals increased until 2012, then declined both due to the easing of the back-log of applications as well as to a decline in applications, which mainly entailed a decline in applications from Nigerians which was the main nationality of those who had benefitted from the Irish Born Child Scheme in 2005 (McGinnity, Quinn, Kenny and O’Connell, 2016). Second, the number of naturalizations involving those from the EEA has increased steadily: from 477 in 2010 1,265 in 2012 and to over 3,000 in 2016. This may reflect a process of settling in as those who migrated, particularly from the new EU member states, decide to put down permanent roots for themselves and their families.

**Figure 2: Naturalisations by Former Nationality Group – EEA and Non-EEA, 2010-2017**

<sup>32</sup> Sheridan, A., 2018, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2017: Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI.

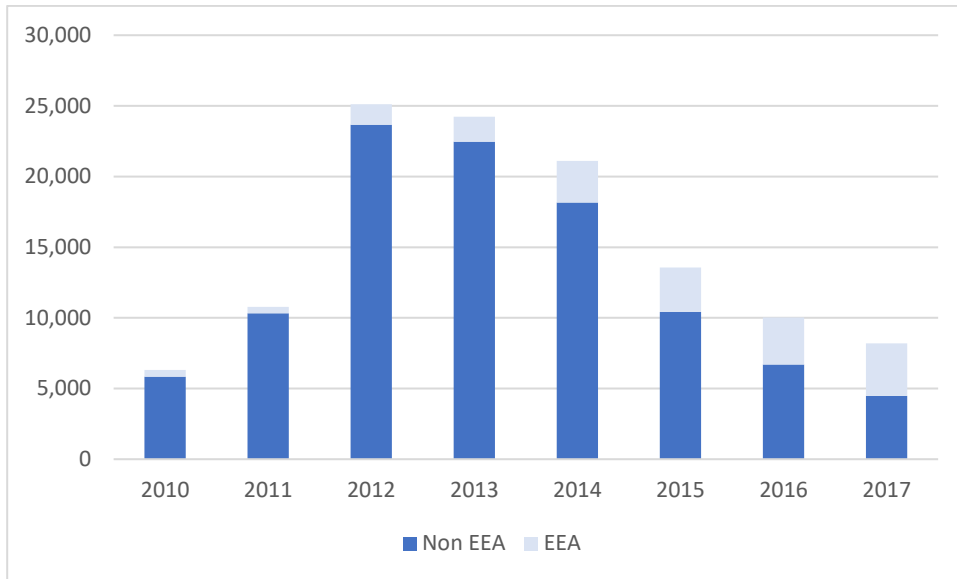


Figure 2 shows that this trend continues. In 2017, 3,722 EEA nationals became naturalised Irish citizens, representing 45% of the total of 8,196 naturalizations that year – up from 453, or 4% in 2010.<sup>33</sup> There was a surge in applications for Irish citizenship by British nationals following the Brexit referendum in 2016, with 819 applications in 2017.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Quinn, E., (2018) “Active Citizenship” in F McGinnity, E Quinn, É Fahey, S Arnold, B Maitre and P O’Connell, *Monitoring Report on Integration*. Dublin: ESRI.

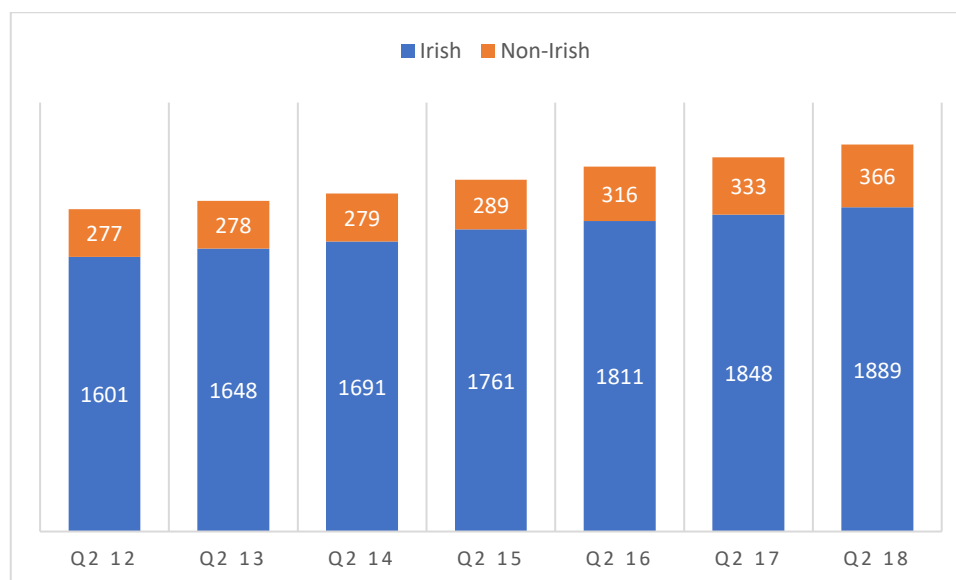
<sup>34</sup> Sheridan, A., 2018, *Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum 2017: Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI.

## 5. The Labour Market

During the Great Recession, total employment fell by over 14% between the end of 2007 and the end of 2012<sup>35</sup>. While employment among Irish nationals fell by 13%, it fell by 21% among non-Irish nationals. Employment among New EU MS nationals contracted by over 26% between 2007 and 2012 and among UK nationals by 18%. The biggest employment losses occurred in construction, in the wholesale and retail trade, and in accommodation and food services; these sectors had expanded substantially, and with large increases in migrant labour, during the boom years.

In the recovery, since about 2012, total employment increased by almost 17% between 2012 and 2018. Employment among Irish nationals increased by over 15%, from 1,601,000 in 2012 to 1,889,000 in 2018. Employment among non-Irish nationals, which contracted more sharply during the Recession, increased more rapidly in the recovery, by 24% from 277,000 in 2012 to 333 in 2018.

**Figure 3: Employment, Irish and Non-Irish Nationals, Q2 2012 to 2018**



Source: CSO, Labour Force Survey. [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

<sup>35</sup> Given that supply and demand in the labour market are influenced by seasonality, we focus on the fourth quarter of each year so as to compare like with like.

Table 23 examines differences in employment and economic activity between immigrant groups. The table includes a distinction between Irish-born and foreign-born Irish nationals. In 2017 there were almost 212,000 foreign-born Irish nationals, about 7 per cent of the total population aged 15-64 years. Foreign-born Irish nationals are a diverse group that includes the descendants of Irish emigrants, now resident in Ireland, as well as foreign-born immigrants, who acquired Irish citizenship by naturalisation. The labour market experiences of naturalised citizens can be expected to differ from those both of Irish-born citizens as well as from non-naturalised immigrants. We might expect that naturalised citizens, with a greater stake in the host society, and a larger bundle of rights, might fare better in the labour market than non-naturalised immigrants, although perhaps not as well as Irish-born natives. However, a paper by Kelly et al (2015) shows that naturalized immigrants from certain regions, particularly in Africa, had exceptionally unfavourable employment and unemployment outcomes in Ireland in 2012 and 2014.

Table 23 shows that foreign-born Irish tend to have slightly lower employment. Their employment rates are also lower than the average non-Irish employment rates and they have higher unemployment rates than the native-born Irish. In 2017 the foreign-born Irish unemployment rate, at just over 10 per cent, was significantly higher than the native-born Irish rate of 7%, and also higher than the average unemployment rate among non-Irish nationals.



**Table 23: Employment, Unemployment and Activity Rates, 2016 and 2017**

	Employment rate		Unemployment rate		Activity rate	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
			%			
Irish	64.7	66.4	8.8	7.1	71.0	71.5
Irish-born	64.8	66.6	8.6	6.9	70.9	71.5
Foreign-born	64.2	64.8	11.1	10.1	72.1	72.1
<i>Of which:</i>						
Non-Irish	67.5	69.6	9.8	7.5	74.9	75.2
UK	62.7	66.4	10.8	7.2	70.4	71.6
Old EU 13	75.4	76.0	4.5	3.9	78.9	79.1
New EU 13	72.1	74.2	11.0	8.0	81.0	80.6
Africa	52.1	44.7	14.2	16.2	60.7	53.3
Nth America, Australia, NZ	61.7	63.6	3.5	8.6	63.9	69.5
Asia	67.3	63.5	5.9	8.7	71.5	69.5
Rest of world	52.0	61.6	12.6	7.0	59.5	66.3
Total	65.1	66.9	8.9	7.2	71.5	72.1

Source: O'Connell, P, and Fahey, É. (2018) "Employment and Integration" in F McGinnity, E Quinn, É Fahey, S Arnold, B Maitre and P O'Connell, *Monitoring Report on Integration*. Dublin: ESRI

In general, nationals of other EU member states have higher employment rates than Irish nationals and those from outside the EU: nationals of Old EU member states had the highest employment rate at 76%' followed closely by nationals of the New EU 13 member states. However, the unemployment rate among New EU nationals is high compared to other Europeans.

African nationals suffered the highest unemployment rate (16%) of any group in 2016, and the lowest employment (52%) and activity rates (61%). These rates actually declined between 2016 and 2017, when labour market outcomes for nearly every other nationality group improved. In 2017 less than 45% of Africans were employed, and only 53% of them were economically active. Unemployment among Africans increased from about 14% in 2016 to 16% in 2017, a worrying departure from the general decline unemployment across the labour market. Previous research suggests that the main concentration of labour market disadvantage among immigrants in

the Irish labour market occurs among the Black African national-ethnic group and this group was also much more likely than either Irish natives or other immigrant groups to have experienced discrimination while looking for work.<sup>36</sup> Michael (2015) documents a series of reports of racial abuse of people of African descent at work by customers or colleagues. Her accounts focus on employees experiencing abuse at the workplace, rather than to discrimination in access to employment.<sup>37</sup>

Discrimination may provide part of the explanation for the high unemployment rates among Africans participating in the labour force. However, it is also necessary to consider the low labour force participation rates among Africans. Analysis of data from the *Growing up in Ireland* survey showed that African mothers have low rates of employment and less favourable educational qualifications and it has been suggested that the low employment rates among African women may be partly due to the high costs of childcare in Ireland, which may be unaffordable for African mothers with relatively large families, relatively low earning potential, and, because of their immigrant status, less recourse to relatives to provide childcare.<sup>38</sup> In addition to these compositional factors, the severe disadvantages suffered by Black African individuals may be due in part to the fact that many Black Africans in Ireland are refugees and would have spent an extended period of time excluded from the labour market, and from participation in Irish society, as asylum seekers in the direct provision system, leading to a scarring effect on their future employment prospects.<sup>39</sup> Analysis of data from the 2011 Census, which indicates that immigrants from countries with relatively large

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<sup>36</sup> Kingston, G., McGinnity, F., O'Connell, P., (2012) Discrimination in the Labour Market: Nationality, Ethnicity and the Recession, *Work, Employment and Society*. 29:2: 213-232

<sup>37</sup> Michael, L. 2015. "Afrophobia in Ireland: Racism against people of African descent." ENAR Ireland and Institute for Research in Social Sciences, Ulster University

<sup>38</sup> McGinnity, F., Quinn, E., Kingston, G., and O'Connell, P., (2013) Chapter 6 in *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2013*. Dublin: ESRI and the Integration Centre; and O'Connell, P., and Kenny, O., (2017) "Employment and Integration" in A. Barrett, F. McGinnity and E. Quinn (eds) *Monitoring Report in Integration 2016*. Dublin: ESRI and Department of Justice and Equality.

<sup>39</sup> Kingston, G., O'Connell, P., and Kelly, E., 2013, Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Module 2010. ESRI/Equality Authority: Dublin.

numbers of asylum seekers in Ireland tend to have lower employment rates, and higher unemployment rates, lends support to the contention that the exclusion of asylum seekers in the Direct Provision system from the Irish labour market had lasting negative effects on the employment prospects of asylum seekers. However, that analysis also concludes that the African disadvantage is likely due to the combination of restrictive policies on the part of the state as well as discriminatory practices on the part of employers, based on statistical models that take account of both educational attainment and language ability.<sup>40</sup>

Non-EU nationals in general show lower employment and activity levels. This may reflect the fact that non-EU nationals require employment permits in order to participate in the Irish labour market. However, part of the difference may also be because a greater proportion of non-EU nationals in Ireland are students than is the case for the EU groups. Nevertheless, it should be noted that employment rates of non-EU nationals have increased in recent years, suggesting that these also have participated in the more general improvement in the labour market, although this has not been the case among Asians.

A recent report on emigration and the labour market noted that there was substantial emigration of skilled labour from Ireland during and after the Great Recession, although this was offset by a substantial inflow of highly skilled immigrants.<sup>41</sup> Prior to the recession, a little over 40 % of immigrants had tertiary education, and this increased to almost half of all migrants arriving in Ireland in 2015. During the Recession, when the Irish economy was performing particularly poorly and other economies performing better, many Irish people chose to emigrate rather than face unemployment.

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<sup>40</sup> O’Connell, P., 2018, “Why Are So Few Africans at Work in Ireland? Immigration Policy and Labour Market Disadvantage.” Geary Working Paper, WP2018/16  
<https://ideas.repec.org/p/ucd/wpaper/201816.html>

<sup>41</sup> McGuinness, S., Whelan, A., Delaney, J., and Redmond, P., 2018, “Labour Market Policy Thematic Review 2018: An in-depth analysis of the emigration of skilled labour: Ireland” European Centre of Expertise (ECE) in the field of labour law, employment and labour market policy and ESRI

Emigration thus helped to ease the burden on the social security system by reducing unemployment rates. The report concluded that migration has ensured that adjustments to shocks in the economy have tended to come mainly through migration rather than wage flexibility.

## 6. Special Focus: International Mobility of Retirees

Irish citizens returning to Ireland have an automatic entitlement to reside in Ireland.

Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA)<sup>42</sup> and of Switzerland and their families have the right to reside in Ireland for up to 3 months without restriction. Those who are retired and wish to stay for longer than 3 months must demonstrate that they have sufficient resources and health insurance to ensure that they do not become a burden on the State.

UK citizens may reside in Ireland without a visa, any form of residence permit or employment permit in Ireland. They are entitled to move to Ireland from any country and they may move to Ireland to work or to retire. Unlike other EU/EEA nationals, UK citizens may retire to Ireland without having to establish that they have sufficient resources or that they have private health insurance.

Citizens of non-EEA countries must have permission to remain in Ireland if they intend to stay for longer than 3 months. Those who are retired and wish to stay for longer than 3 months must demonstrate that they have sufficient resources to cover their stay in the State without recourse to public funds, services or State benefits. They must also have private medical insurance to cover your stay in the State. Non-EEA nationals, including retirees must obtain permission to remain by registering with their local immigration registration officer following arrival in Ireland.<sup>43</sup>

Immigration permission to retire to or live independently in Ireland is covered by the conditions of immigration Stamp 0. Stamp 0 is a low level immigration status which is not intended to be reckonable for Long Term Residence or Citizenship. It is granted to persons who have been approved by INIS for a limited and specific stay in Ireland, and who, as an inherent condition of their residence permission, are required to be self-sufficient; i.e.

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<sup>42</sup> The EEA comprises the member states of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Stamp%200>

they are not permitted to avail of State benefits while resident here on Stamp 0 basis. Permission must be renewed annually for the first five years, after which a five-year permission may be granted. If State benefits are accessed while present in the State on a Stamp 0 basis, this will be in breach of the self-sufficient condition of their residence permission. If a holder of Stamp 0 permission is found to be in breach of any or all of the conditions, the permission may be revoked and/or not renewed. Stamp 0 may be granted to persons who can demonstrate sufficient funds to ensure they will not become a burden on the State. There are two types of older persons who may be granted Stamp 0:

1. For elderly dependent relatives, the sponsor of an elderly dependent relative will be required to have earned in Ireland each of the 3 years preceding the application an income after tax and deductions of not less than €60,000 in the case of one parent and €75,000 where 2 parents are involved. Where the elderly dependent relative has a guaranteed income into the future this can be used to partially offset the financial limits. Comprehensive health insurance is also required
2. For persons of independent means, the financial threshold is generally considered to be €50,000 per person per annum, plus the person must have access to a lump sum of money to cover any unforeseen major expenses. This should be equivalent to, for example, the price of a dwelling in the State. Financial documentation must be certified by an Irish accountancy firm. Each application is dealt with on a case by case basis.<sup>44</sup>

The Irish immigration and Naturalisation Service (INIS) published a public consultation document in September 2016 regarding a policy on non-EEA

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<sup>44</sup> INIS (2016) "Policy Document on Non-EEA Family Reunification"  
<http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Family%20Reunification%20Policy%20Document.pdf/Files/Family%20Reunification%20Policy%20Document.pdf>

retirees retiring to Ireland.<sup>45</sup> New rules were under development in summer 2018.

Ireland maintains bilateral social insurance agreements with a number of countries: Australia, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, United Kingdom territories outside of the EU (the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) and the United States of America. These agreements protect the pension entitlements of Irish people who go to work in these countries and they protect workers from those countries who work in Ireland. They allow periods of Irish social insurance and depending on the legislation in the other country, periods of residence/contributions which are completed in the second country to be taken into account so that the worker may have his/her entitlement to a pension determined. They also include arrangements for posted workers who are sent on temporary work assignments from one country to the other by deciding which country's social security legislation will apply to the workers.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/public-consultation-sept2016-non-eea-retirees.pdf/Files/public-consultation-sept2016-non-eea-retirees.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Bilateral-Agreements---Guidelines-on-Application-of-Bilatera.aspx>