

Czech Republic

Migration Profile Light

2015



Purpose of the report and disclaimer

After the adoption of the Building Migration Partnerships Joint Declaration in Prague in April 2009, the Building Migration Partnerships initiative (BMP) started to work on establishing the BMP Knowledge Base. The Knowledge Base, nowadays known as the Prague Process Knowledge Base, consists of a set of Extended Migration Profiles¹ elaborated and endorsed in 2010-2011 and the interactive online map (i-Map), which visualises the available information.

The Prague Process Targeted Initiative (PP TI) is an EU-funded project, which builds upon the BMP initiative and implements selected priorities identified in the Prague Process Action Plan endorsed in Poznan in November 2011. One of the objectives of PP TI is to maintain the Knowledge Base, keep it up-to-date and develop it further.

While continuous attention to updating and developing Extended Migration Profiles remains, the PP TI has taken into account the feedback received from the Prague Process participating states and has proposed a concept of the Migration Profile Light. In comparison to the Extended Migration Profile, which from its name indicates that the information should be of thorough and detailed nature, the Migration Profile Light should be a handy tool with a limited number of pages clearly indicating the areas of interest. The Migration Profile Light should aim at key priorities and problems, easy annual updatability and standardised data for all countries involved.

The proposed Migration Profile Light (MPL) concept has been well received by the Prague Process participating states and Germany volunteered in testing the concept by filling in the template. The MPL on Germany has been developed and the process of its establishment has led to identification of gaps in the first template, which have been covered in cooperation with the PP TI Support Team at ICMPD.

The aim of the PP TI is to establish the Knowledge Base as a useful tool consisting of state-owned migration profiles with standard and comparable data categories. While aiming at the seven leading states of PP TI and the PP TI non-EU participating states, the interest of the Prague Process is to collect national MPLs for all 50 Prague Process participating states.

The MPL is an exercise, which targets all states, believing that this will lead to mutual understanding of migration situation in partner states, existing migratory flows, priorities, problems and interests. The MPL should serve as an informative but also policy making tool. In case of need, methodological and expert support is planned to contribute to development of MPL in states with limited experience with such exercise.

Ownership and responsibility of the content in terms of data provided in this Migration Profile resides solely with the country elaborating the report.

The PP TI Support Team within the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is ready to help and can be contacted at ppti@icmpd.org. The Knowledge Base of the Prague Process is accessible at www.pragueprocess.eu and www.imap-migration.org, section Prague Process.

¹ Albania (endorsed 2010), Armenia (2011), Azerbaijan (2010), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010), Czech Republic (2010), Georgia (2011), Hungary (2011), Kazakhstan (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2011), Poland (2010), Romania (2010), Slovakia (2010), Tajikistan (2010), Ukraine (2011). Belarus, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan worked on their Extended Migration Profiles but the work has not been completed.

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1. Background information on the country

1.1. Size, population, bordering countries and length of borders

Official name	Czech Republic
Capital	Prague
Area	78, 866 km ²
Population	10 538 275 (as of 31 December 2014)
Year of accession to the EU	2004
Member of the Schengen area	Yes
Neighbouring countries	Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia
Length of border:	2, 290 km

1.2. Short characteristics of the country

Czech Republic is a democratic parliamentary republic with the authority of the state divided into the three main holders of power including legislative (the Parliament), executive (the Government) and judicial powers (the Courts); operating independently of each other. The administrative division of the Czech Republic is composed of the capital city (Prague) and thirteen regions.

The Ministry of the Interior is the principal national body responsible for migration and asylum, both at legislative and policy levels (migration and asylum), and the level of implementation (asylum, residence permits, and travel documents). Beside this, the Police of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Industry, and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and trade also play their roles in the implementation of individual spheres of asylum and migration policy. To a certain extent, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry for Regional Development are involved as well.

Statistical data regarding foreigners are primarily collected and further analysed by a number of state institutions and bodies, mainly including Foreigners Police, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (visa), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (labour migration) and Ministry of Industry and Trade.

In the last two decades two important moments having considerable impact on asylum and migration agenda in the Czech Republic can be identified. The first one was accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union in 2004. The second one was accession to the Schengen area at the end of 2007.

2. General migration flows and stocks of immigrants and emigrants

2.1. Migration Flows

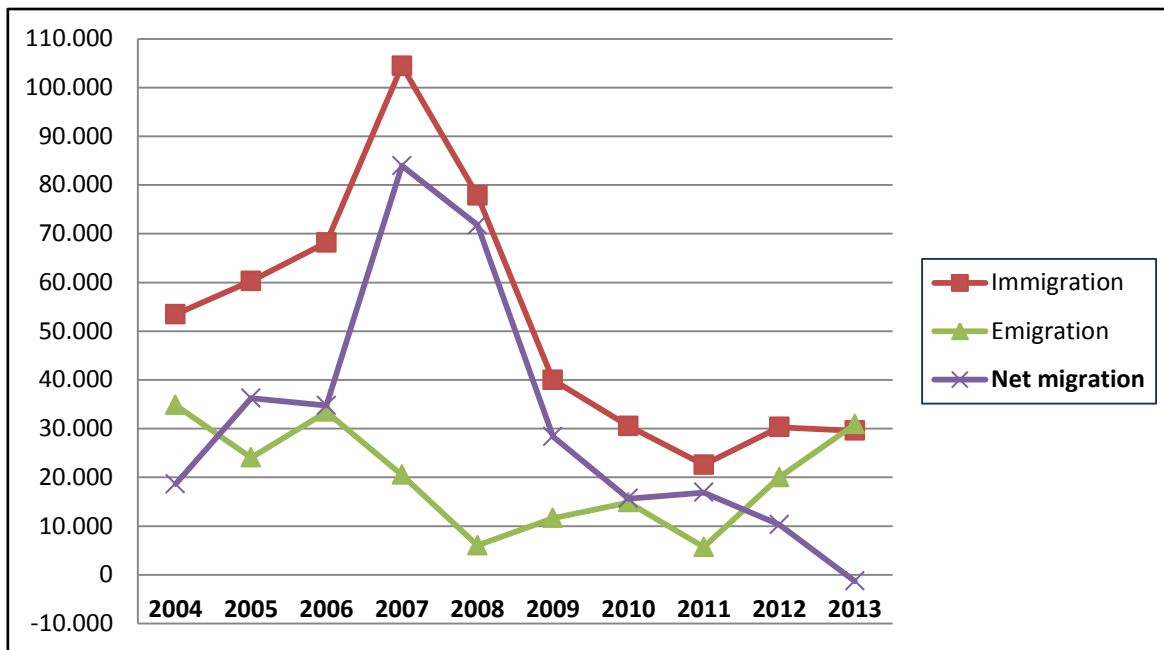
In the last two decades the Czech Republic registered an important moment when migration inflow reached the peak level. The highest percentage of net migration reaching almost 80 thousand persons was recorded in 2007. This number can be related to the accession of the Czech Republic to the Schengen Area. However, the share of population constituted by foreigners residing in the Czech Republic, compared to other EU member states, is still relatively low. It accounts for less than 4.9% which is below the EU average.

Table 1: Migration flows in the period of 2004 – 2013

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Immigration	53,453	60,294	68,183	104,445	77,817	39,973	30,515	22,590	30,298	29,579
Emigration	34,818	24,065	33,463	20,500	6,027	11,629	14,867	5,701	20,005	30,876
Net migration	18,635	36,229	34,720	83,945	71,790	28,344	15,648	16,889	10,293	-1,297

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Figure 2: Development of migration flows in the period of 2004 – 2013



Source: Czech Statistical Office

2.2. Migration stock

A considerable increase in number of foreigners in the Czech Republic was registered in 2007. This phenomenon can partly be explained by the accession of the Czech Republic to the Schengen area at the end of that year. Due to the impact of the economic crisis on the Czech labour market a drop in the number of foreigners was recorded in the period of 2009 – 2010. Since 2011 a continuous, though moderate, rise of number of foreigners staying in the Czech Republic has been observed.

As of 31 December 2014, 451,923² foreigners were registered in the Czech Republic. It should be noted, however, that in light of free movement of EU citizens and a lack of obligation to register for a stay above 90 days the recorded numbers of EU member states citizens in the Czech Republic do not necessarily indicate the actual number of all EU citizens living in the Czech Republic.

² Statistical data is based on a national definition including foreigners with a long-term/temporary and permanent residence permit (above 90 days). Thus, the definition differs from the concept used by EUROSTAT (residence above one year).

Table 2: Foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic in the last decade (2004 – 2014)³

Year (as of 31 Dec)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Foreigners	278,312	321 456	392 087	438 301	433 305	425 301	436 389	438 213	441 536	451 923
Annual Change in %	9.4	15.5	22.0	11.8	-1.1	-1.8	2.6	0.4	0.7	2.4

Source: *Foreigners Police*

From a long-term perspective, the list of main countries of origin from which foreigners come to the Czech Republic has not, to a large extent, changed much. The three main source countries include Ukraine, Slovak Republic and Vietnam, all together accounting for about 57 % of all foreigners legally residing in the Czech Republic. Other countries from the TOP 10 list include Russian Federation, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, USA and the United Kingdom. In recent years China and Moldova also appeared in the TOP 10 list. As of 31 December 2014, citizens of most frequent countries of migrants originated from Ukraine (104,388), Slovak republic (96,222), and Vietnam (56,666). Although the majority (almost 60%) of foreigners residing in the Czech Republic still originates from third countries, a continuous rise in number of EU/EEA foreigners has been registered recently.

³ See note No. 2.

Table 3: Foreigners with temporary residence permit and residence permit above 90 days (2013/2014)⁴

Year (state as of December 31)		2013		2014		Annual change	
		Number of foreigners	in %	Number of foreigners	in %	Absolute number	in %
Foreigners with residence permit	TOTAL	441,536	100.0	451,923	100.0	10,387	2.4
	Permanent residence permit	238,904	54.1	251,342	55.6	12,438	5.2
	Temporary residence permit	202,632	45.9	200,581	44.4	-2,051	-1.0
EU citizens ⁵	TOTAL	174,388	39.5	185,356	41.0	10,968	6.3
	Permanent residence permit	68 468	39,3	71 625	38,6	3 157	4,6
	Temporary residence permit	105 920	60,7	113 731	61,4	7 811	7,4
Third-country nationals	TOTAL	267 148	60,5	266 567	59,0	-581	-0,2
	Permanent residence permit	170 436	63,8	179 717	67,4	9 281	5,4
	Temporary residence permit	96 712	36,2	86 850	32,6	-9 862	-10,2

Source: Alien Information System (CIS)

It should be noted that the place of residence of foreigners within the country is distributed highly unevenly. Most of foreigners are concentrated in the capital city of Prague (37 % in 2014) and Central Bohemian Region (13.3 % in 2014).

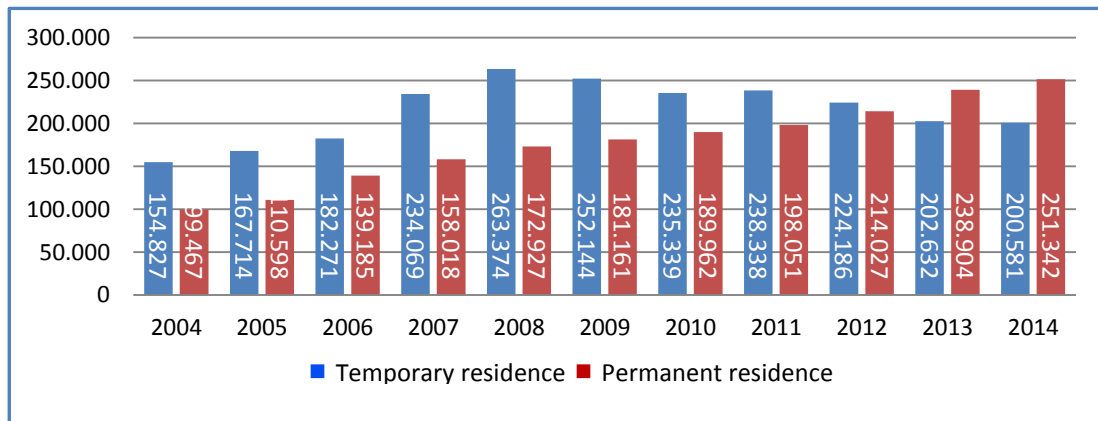
As for the type of residence titles certain trend could have been observed in recent years. The number of foreigners with temporary residence permit has been falling. However, the drop noted in 2014 cannot be considered as significant. At the same time the number of foreigners with a permanent residence permit has been continuously increasing for more than a decade. Since 2013 the majority of foreigners hold permanent residence permits in comparison with previous years when this group constituted a minority as compared to holders of temporary residence permit. The fact that more and more foreigners meet the condition of

⁴ See note No. 2.

⁵ Citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein or Switzerland can temporarily stay in the Czech Republic without any special permit, solely on the basis of a travel document or an identity card. This data indicate only the number of EU citizens who, upon their request, received a confirmation of temporary residence.

continuous residence for 5 years on the territory (one of the main conditions for grant of permanent residence permit) explains the continual rise in number of permanent resident permits over the last decade.

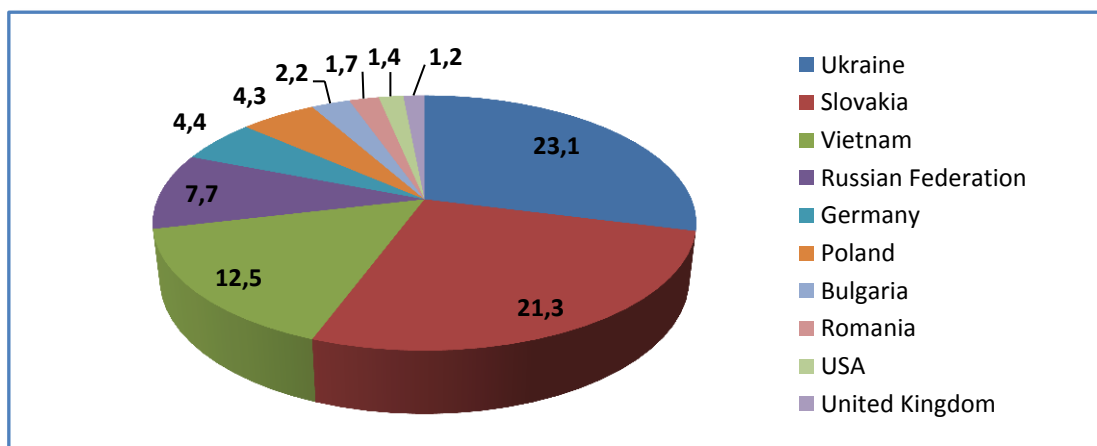
Figure 2: Development of numbers of foreigners with temporary and permanent residence permit (state as of 31 December of each year)



Source: Alien Information System (CIS)/Ministry of the Interior

In relation to permanent and temporary residence permit categories certain trend can be observed as well. While a majority of permanent residence permits are holders originating from third countries, the temporary residence permit is rather held by EU citizens.

Figure 3: TOP 10 source countries of foreign nationals with temporary and permanent residence in 2014 – share in %



Source: Alien Information System (CIS)

3. Legal migration with special focus on labour migration

3.1. Responsible state authorities

Ministry of the Interior is the main party responsible for migration policy including having an important role in the field of labour migration. Beside concluding international agreements related to migration the Ministry, among others, decides on applications for long-term visa, long-term residence permits, and permanent residence permits. Particularly in the field of labour migration the Ministry makes decisions on applications for an "Employee Card" and a "Blue card" including prolongation or termination of their validity. The Ministry of the Interior, in accordance with the Act on Employment, and upon the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, issues opinions on granting licences for employment agencies and agents. In compliance with the same legal regulation the Ministry of the Interior may revoke an approval for these licences.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for implementation of visa policy with regard to short term Schengen visa (stay up-to 90 days) for a number of purposes including, among others, employment, scientific research or a business journey. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closely cooperates with the Ministry of the Interior in processing applications for other types of visa and residence permits as well as in negotiating readmission agreements.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs defines categories of entities which act as employers, and with regard to foreign citizens, sets out labour market access criteria for each category of foreign nationals. With respect to the situation on the labour market, the Ministry lays down conditions regarding employment permits and is responsible for legal regulations governing the employment of foreigners in relation to relevant EU legal provisions. It also maintains a Central Register of Job Vacancies to be potentially occupied by holders of the "Employee Card".

The Labour Office is responsible for testing the situation of the Czech labour market and provides, in some special cases, an expert opinion as for the possibility to employ a foreign national with regard to the situation of the Czech labour market.

Ministry of Industry and Trade among others regulates issuing of trade licenses under Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing, as amended, covering a major part of entrepreneurial activities carried out by natural and legal persons. Within the framework of its responsibilities the Ministry proposes legal amendments, in particular to conditions for the activities of entrepreneurs, while managing, in terms of guidance, the execution of state administration powers in this sphere and supporting the development of selected entrepreneurial activities. In connection with this, the Ministry also deals with issues concerning the business activities of foreigners.

3.2. Policies

The Act No. 326/1999 Coll., on Residence of Foreign Nationals in the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as "the Foreigners Act") lays down two areas of residence titles — temporary residence and permanent residence. From the perspective of conditions for entry and stay in the territory the Foreigners Act defines two groups of foreigners. The first group includes citizens of member states of the European Union and European Economic Area.⁶ EU citizens intending to stay in the Czech Republic for a period longer than three months have the right, though not the obligation, to apply for a confirmation of temporary residence.

The second group includes nationals of 'third countries' listed by Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001, i.e. foreigners required to obtain a visa for the entry in the Czech Republic. Persons falling into this group can apply for a number of residence titles according to a length of their planned stay and a purpose of the stay. The policy of the Czech Republic, a member of Schengen Space, in the area of short-term visa (up to 90 days) is based on common EU visa policy. Nationals of listed third countries have to obtain a visa in order to be allowed entering the Czech Republic. For a longer stay the third-country nationals can apply for a long-term visa (above 90 days, up to 6 months), long-term residence permit, or under certain conditions, permanent residence permit as laid down by the Act on Foreigners. Any family member of an EU citizen who is not him/herself an EU citizen, who intends to reside in the Czech Republic on a temporary basis for a period exceeding three months together with an EU citizen, is obliged to apply for a temporary residence permit.

Foreigners from third countries seeking employment or planning to run business activities in the Czech Republic can apply for a number of residence titles or dual residence & work permitting titles including a short-term visa, long-term visa, long-term residence permit as well as an Employee Card and a Blue Card.

The Employee Card, a new type of a long-term residence permit for the purpose of employment, was introduced at the end of June 2014 in order to facilitate labour migration to the Czech Republic. The concept is based on 'Single Permit Directive' (Directive 2011/98/EC). The Card, issued by the Ministry of the Interior, serves as a single permit allowing its holder both to stay in the territory and to work therein. Therefore, it authorises its holder to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic for the purpose of employment on the long-term basis and, at the same time, to perform work in the job, for which the Card was issued. The Card is issued by the Ministry of the Interior and there is no need to apply additionally for an Employment Permit at the Labour Office. The job must be registered in a central register of job vacancies that can be filled by holders of Employee Cards. The Card replaces the long-term visa (stay over 90 days) for the purpose of employment, the long-term residence permit for the purpose of employment and the Green Card, which ceased to be issued in June 2014.

The dual purpose Blue Card based on the Directive 2009/50/EC, intended for highly qualified workers, was introduced in January 2011. Since then a third-country qualified worker (foreigner) can apply for this status which includes a long-term residence permit and a work permit in one. The card can be issued to a highly

⁶ Family members of EU and EEA states not being citizens of these states may, under certain conditions, enjoy the same status rights.

qualified foreigner (university degree or higher professional education) with at least one-year long work contract.

Aimed at improvement of legal migration environment, relevant initiatives were undertaken in recent years. In 2014, an Immigration Portal, designed as a one-stop-shop providing access to various sources of information for foreigners and experts from the professional community dealing with foreigners, was built. Beside this, migration projects are another important instrument facilitating legal migration of third-country nationals into the Czech Republic.

On the basis of development and needs of the national economy the Czech Republic set up several **'migration projects'** including targeted measures facilitating visa and/or work permit procedure for specific groups of third-country nationals. By the end of 2014 three projects focused on economic migration, were implemented by the Ministry of Industry and Trade in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The projects are considered important instruments for attracting selected highly skilled workers (managers, specialists) to work as experts relocated by international companies to their subsidiaries in the Czech Republic or as representants of foreign investors and business partners. The above mentioned initiatives included a project called *'Accelerated procedure for intra-corporate transfers and localisation of foreign investors' employees and statutory bodies*, *'Welcome Package for Investors'*, and *'Facilitation of Procedures for Entry and Stay of Economically Important Partners'*.

In addition to that, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs administers a project called *'Accelerated procedure of residence permits to foreign nationals – students of the third countries'* ensuring an accelerated procedure of issuing the residence permits/long-term visas with the purpose of study to certain groups of foreign nationals. The target group of this project are students awarded a scholarship of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and on the basis of bilateral agreements, scholarships granted according to the Government Resolution, and students of CEPUS and International Visegrad Fund.

Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for a project called *'Accelerated procedure for foreign patients who will undergo medical treatment in the Czech Republic'*. The project is aimed at streamlining visa application procedure for the patients who will undergo medical treatment longer than 90 days in Czech spas.

3.3. Statistics

A third-country national intending to work in the Czech Republic can apply for a number of residence titles or dual residence & work permitting titles. In recent years foreigners used the possibility to apply for a short term visa for the purpose of employment to a very limited extent. Long-term visa and long-term residence permits including the Employee Card and the Blue Card were used instead.

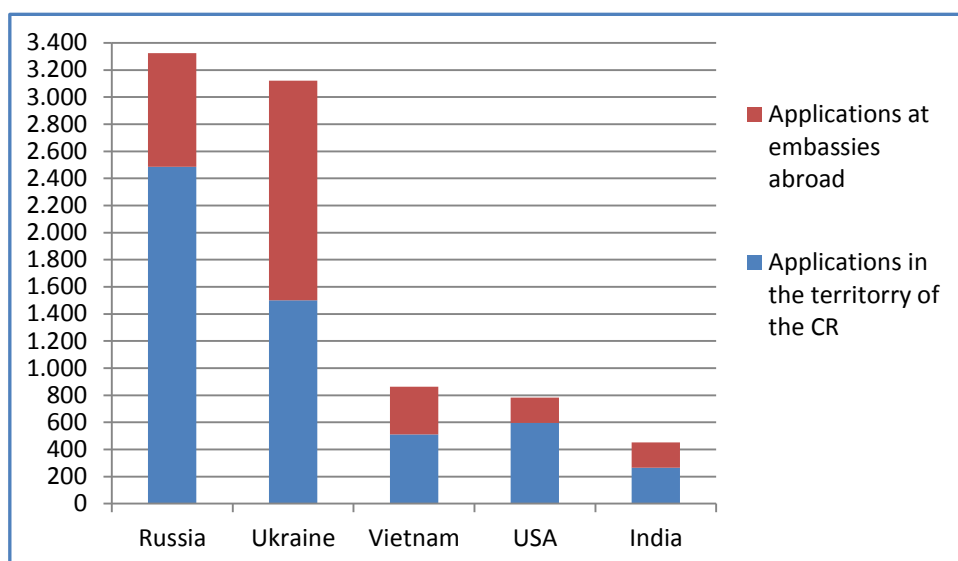
In 2014 foreigners filed 13,356 applications for the stay on the basis of a **long-term visa** in the Czech Republic. This number represents a decrease by 10.5% when compared to 2013. As opposed to the consequences of the economic crisis which had an impact on the number of LT visa applications in recent years (2009 – 2013), the decline was not a result of economic crisis. The decline registered in 2014 was mainly caused by a technical change in visa policy. Since June 2014 foreigners cannot apply for a long-term visa for the purpose of employment anymore. Instead, they can apply for the Employee Card consisting of a work permit and a residence permit/visa. This category is recorded in a statistical dataset separate from LT visa. In 2014 most (49.8%) of LT visa applications were launched for the purpose of study. TOP 5 countries with the highest number of applicants for the long-term visa including the Russian Federation, the USA, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Turkey respectively have remained unchanged for last five years. The share by the countries on the total number of applications has been stable as well. In 2014 applications for long-term visa for the purpose of employment, business or self-employment were most frequently applied for by citizens of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the USA.

Table 4: Applications for a long-term visa by purpose in 2014

Purpose	Number of applications	in %
Study	6,654	49.8
Other educational activities	2,122	15.9
Business – self-employment	639	4.8
Business	850	6.4
Employment	1,059	7.9
Family reunification	1,721	12.9
Other (culture, sport, invitation, etc.)	311	2.3
Total	13,356	100.0

In 2014 the total of 14,199 applications for the **long-term residence permit** were filed by third-country nationals. With regard to individual purposes, the applications for 'study' were the purpose accounting for the highest number of applications in this category (33.8 %) in 2014. It was closely followed by 'employment' with a share of 31 %. Most of applications for gainful activities were submitted by citizens of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The annual increase in applications for long-term residence permit by 46.8%, as compared to 2013, can be partially explained by the rise in number of applications for the purpose of study as well as by replacement of the long-term visa for the purpose of employment with the Employee Card system in June 2014.

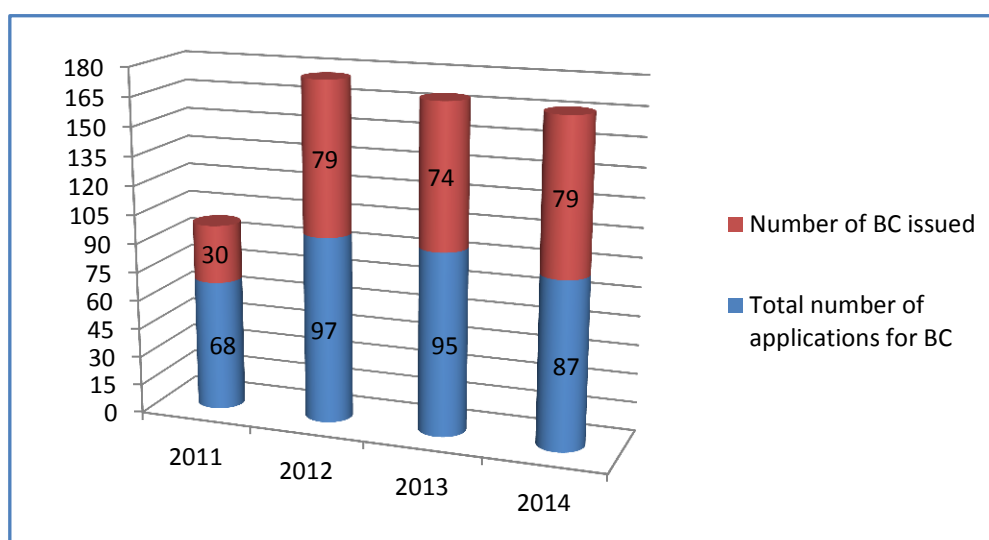
Figure 4: Applications for a long-term residence permit in 2014 - TOP 5 countries of citizenship



Source: Alien Information System (CIS)

From 2011 highly qualified foreigners from third countries can apply for the Blue Card. Since then a total of 262 cards was issued by the Ministry of the Interior. Countries with the highest number of applicants for the Blue Card have been more or less the same since 2012 with the Russian Federation and Ukraine occupying the first two positions. Other countries followed with a considerable distance. In 2011 the first position was held by Uzbekistan closely followed by Ukraine and Russia.

Figure 5: Number of applications for a Blue Card/Blue Cards issued (2011 – 2014)



Source: Alien Information System (CIS)

4. Irregular migration in the country

4.1. Responsible state authorities

In combating irregular migration in the Czech Republic the main bodies such as the Directorate of the Alien Police Service and Organised Crime Unit of the Police as well as the Ministry of the Interior closely cooperate with other government bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Customs Administration, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The actors take part in developing policies, drafting legislation and implementing relevant measures.

4.2. Policies

The national concept of combating irregular migration reflects the fact that most of the country's border consists of Schengen border, i.e. no regular border controls are carried out except for the airports. The concept is based on preventive measures, including among others deployment of immigration liaison officers (IPD) in selected countries of origin and international cooperation and, international information exchange, as well as on operational measures focusing on checking compliance with residence and labour legislation in the territory conducted controls of the Police as well as Labour Inspectorates. The IPD were deployed in a number of countries of origin focusing on visa application interview screening and detection of forged documents. The comprehensive approach towards combating irregular migration in all its forms includes a broad range of schemes and activities involving the Police as well as a number of government authorities.

In order to achieve maximum effectivity of the broad range of measures and efficient cooperation of involved actors as well as coordination and information exchange, bodies, such as the Inter-institutional Body for Combating Illegal Employment and Analytical Centre for Border Protection and Migration (ANACEN), were established. ANACEN is an analytical unit within the Ministry of the Interior focusing on current threats and problematic issues as well as future issues and trends having potential elements of risk with an impact on migration and security situation in the Czech Republic. Activities of ANACEN are based on data and information exchange and cooperation of all members involved in a complex border protection system. ANACEN members include the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Trade, General Directorate of Customs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Police and Security Services. Proposals for legislative amendments of existing legal norms related to migration are also discussed within ANACEN.

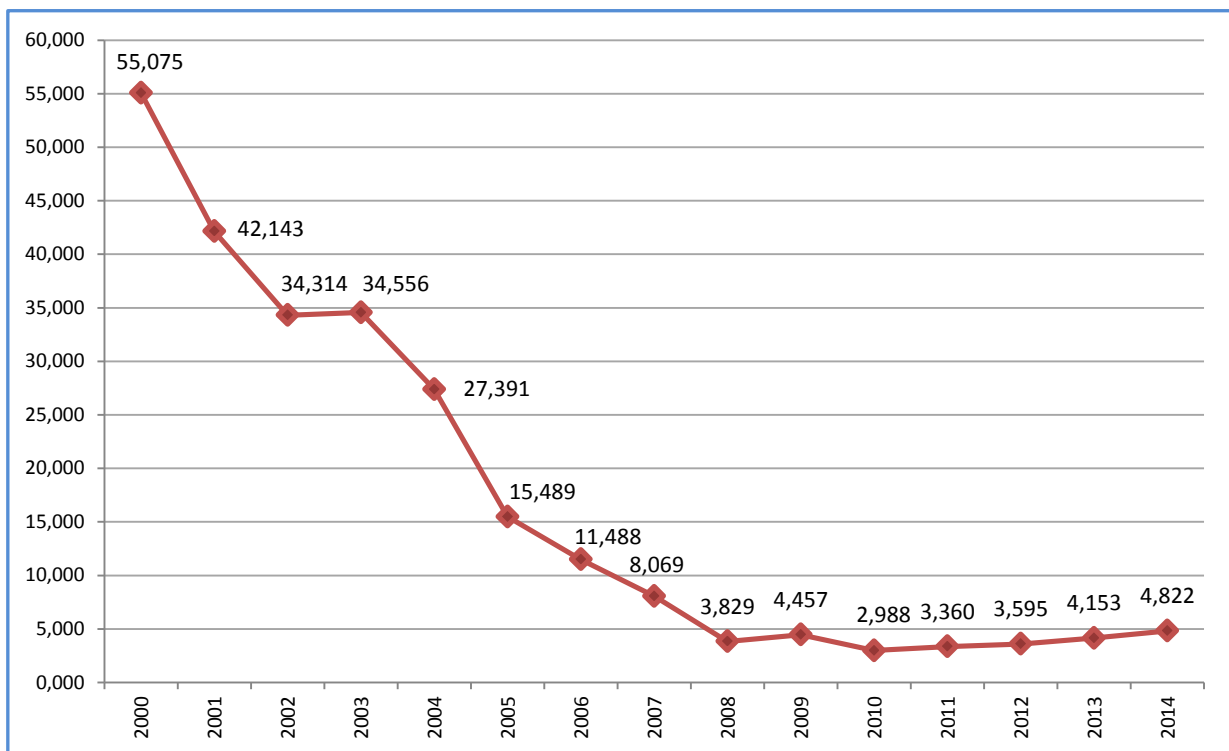
4.3. Statistics

Statistical data covering development of irregular migration in recent years show that the Czech Republic has become deemed by many foreigners as a destination country. However, the territory is still used as a transit route for irregular migration to further countries of Europe (European Union).

Seen from a long-term perspective, the highest number of irregular migrants since 2008 was recorded in 2014. In that year, the total of 4,822 persons was established as irregular migrants in the Czech Republic. This represents an increase by 16.1% when compared to 2013.

Most incidents of irregular migration were related to citizens of third countries. Since 2008 the irregular migration by EU/EEA citizens did not exceed 7% of total number of recorded incidents in individual years. In 2014 the TOP five countries whose citizens committed the most incidents of irregular migration included Ukraine (23%), Kuwait (10.2%), Libya (9.2%), Russia (8.6%) and Vietnam (6.8%). In 2014, a considerable increase in the number of irregular migration cases perpetrated by nationals of Kosovo, Syria, and Afghanistan, illegally transiting the territory of the Czech Republic further to Germany, was recorded.

Figure 6. Number of irregular migrants in the period of 2000 - 2014



Source: *Foreigners Police*

Since 2008⁷ when the Czech Republic accessed the Schengen Space, two main categories of incidents in the field of irregular migration have been recorded. Statistical data on illegal crossing of external Schengen border and on illegal residence is collected by the Foreigners Police. It should be noted that the external Schengen Border consists of air border (airports) only. Until 2008 the number of illegal border crossings constituted 30-40% from the total of irregular migration incidents. Since 2008 the number of illegal crossings of the external Schengen border has not exceeded 5% of all illegal migration incidents.

5. Return

5.1. Responsible state authorities

Ministry of the Interior is the responsible body for drafting policy and conducting decision-making process in the field of repatriation programmes (voluntary returns). The actual repatriation process of irregular foreigners is implemented by the International Organisation for Migration. Refugee facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for carrying out voluntary repatriation program for applicants for international protection who decided for a voluntary return. The Ministry of the Interior with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also involved in concluding bilateral readmission agreements.

The Directorate of the Alien Police Service is responsible for forced returns by issuing an administrative expulsion order and carrying-out the actual expulsion to the country of origin of a foreigner.

5.2. Policies

Voluntary returns

Czech Republic, in line with the general policy of the EU, prefers voluntary returns of all persons illegally present in its territory. According to the Act on Foreigners, the foreign nationals who have been issued a decision on administrative expulsion including a deadline for leaving the territory of the Czech Republic and foreign nationals who have been placed in a detention centre in connection with an issued decision on administrative expulsion can file an application for an assisted voluntary return to the country of origin to the Ministry of the Interior.

Ministry of the Interior has been using services of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on the basis of a cooperation contract for implementation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR). The IOM provides comprehensive services including pre-departure counselling for the returnee, assistance in communication with his/her diplomatic representation for arrangement of a travel document, actual return and, if needed, post-departure assistance.

In order to increase the overall use of AVRR scheme in the Czech Republic, a new initiative was introduced in the form of a project funded by the Czech Government and the European Return Fund in December 2014.

⁷ In fact, the Czech Republic accessed the Schengen Area on 31 December 2007.

Apart from common target groups addressed by AVRR projects (TCN who do not fulfil legal conditions of stay at the territory), those who no longer fulfil condition of a legal stay in the territory are also eligible to apply for return and reintegration assistance. In other words, this new project offers the AVRR assistance not only to those who already have an irregular status but also to those who have been issued a departure order after rejection of application for any type of residence permit (including extension of existing visa/permit) or to those whose residence permit or visa was terminated on the basis on an initiative of relevant authorities.

Beside this, foreigners staying on the territory of the Czech Republic on the basis of the Asylum Act, i.e. applicants for international protection (including those who failed to submit the application for the protection or file an appeal against decision on the application within the deadline) can benefit from a voluntary repatriation program operated by the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior. The application for the voluntary repatriation is submitted to the Refugee Facilities Administration.

However, in order to have an effective return scheme, it is necessary to have in place mechanisms enabling to remove such a person from its territory in cases where the person refuses to return voluntarily. Readmission agreements are a useful instrument for carrying out returns of persons who refuse to take advantage of the opportunity for a voluntary return.

Forced returns

A foreigner can be forcibly returned either for not having complied with an administrative expulsion order (not leaving the territory within a set deadline), a deadline to leave set by an expulsion punishment issued by the court judgement or on the basis of a court judgement ordering the expulsion of the foreigner directly. The forced returns are carried out by the Foreigners Police.

Readmission Policy

The main purpose of these agreements is to facilitate and accelerate the readmission process as much as possible. Readmission is not only the act of handing over the person, it also involves a number of steps that must precede this act, ranging from identification of the identity and citizenship of the person concerned or proving the entry into the territory of one party to the agreement from the territory of the other party to the agreement and issuance of a travel document, up to the actual hand-over. The conditions, after the fulfilment of which the parties to the agreement are required to accept the persons concerned, are provided for by the readmission agreements.

At the end of 2014, the Czech Republic was a party to readmission agreements with a total of 15 countries worldwide including Germany, Poland, Austria and Slovakia as well as other countries including Slovenia, Switzerland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Moldavia, Armenia, Kosovo, Canada, and Vietnam.

5.3. Statistics

Voluntary return

Within voluntary return schemes provided to irregular foreigners as well as to asylum applicants the International Organisation for Migration and the Refugee Facility Administration provide comprehensive pre-departure services including return counselling, arranging for a travel ticket and assistance in obtaining a travel document/passport from a diplomatic representation of his/her country of origin, if needed. The number of persons making use of return counselling is regularly higher than the number of persons who actually undertake the voluntary return.

In 2014 the IOM provided return counselling to 304 persons while about 56% percent of them finally returned to their countries of origin including Ukraine (30), Romania and Vietnam (27 each), Mongolia (18), Uzbekistan (11), and Russia (9). Number of actually returned irregular migrants in 2013 was even higher reaching 78%. Most persons returned to Vietnam, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

Out of 49 asylum applicants requesting voluntary return with the assistance of the Refugee Facility Administration, 36 persons actually returned back (about 73.5%). In 2014 countries of origin of returnees included Serbia (10), Ukraine (7), Armenia, Georgia and Turkey (3 each), and Belarus (2). In 2013 the number of actually conducted returns was lower, reaching 66% of the total of persons originally interested in the assisted return. The returnees' countries of origin were the same as previously.

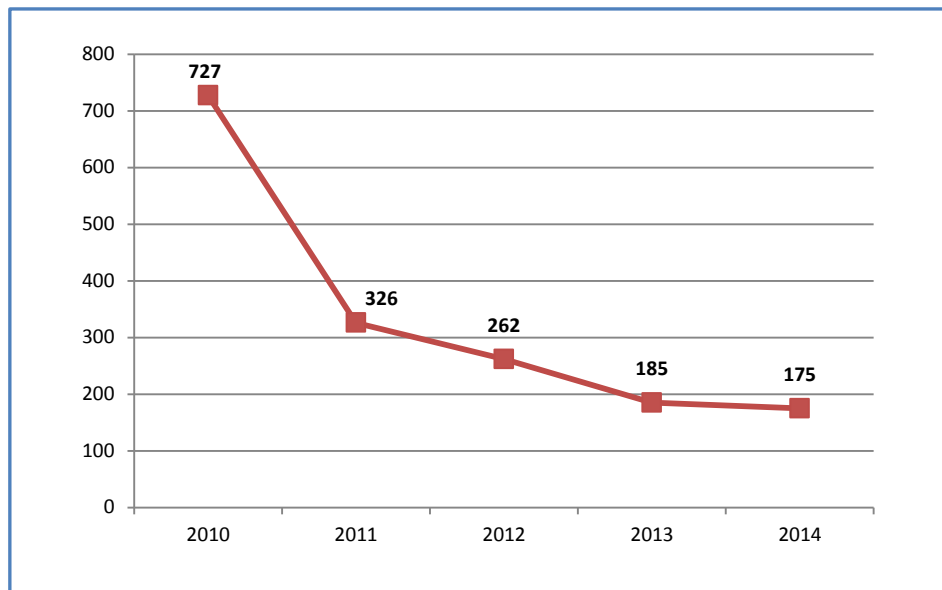
Table 5. Number of persons returned within assisted voluntary return scheme carried out by IOM and Refugee Facility Administration (RFA)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Returned by IOM	211	207	223	148	169
Returned by RFA	79	60	36	41	36

Source: Ministry of the Interior, IOM

After a sinusoidal fluctuating of the number of forcibly returned foreigners in the first decade of the millennium the situation changed in 2010. Since then the number has been continuously abating. In 2014 the number of conducted forced returns was the lowest in last fifteen years.

Figure 7. Development of the number of conducted forced returns (2010 – 2014)



Source: Foreigners Police

6. Integration

6.1. Responsible state authorities

Responsibility for integration activities, both at policy and implementation levels, is shared by a number of state bodies and institutions including the Ministry of the Interior – the main coordinator of integration activities in the Czech Republic –, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Culture as well as by other partners (regions, non-governmental non-profit organizations including foreigners' organizations, social partners, etc.).

6.2. Policies

Integration is considered as an important instrument aimed at inclusion of legally residing foreigners into the Czech society as well as a significant element preventing creation of tensions between immigrant communities and majority society as well as social isolation and exclusion of foreigners. Successful integration also helps promotion of legal migration. The integration activities are divided in two categories

according to the following types of beneficiaries including I. foreigners and II. recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

I. Integration of foreigners is based on the 'Policy for the Integration of Foreigners', a policy document adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic. The Policy is regularly updated in order to reflect the integration needs and migration trends, both from the perspective of the Czech Republic and as well as that of the EU. Activities in this category primarily address third-country nationals (i.e. non-EU citizen) legally residing within the territory of the Czech Republic, who are not applicants for international protection neither recognized refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. In exceptional cases, this target group can also include citizens of EU member states.

Projects implemented on municipal and regional levels are key instruments used for the integration activities. Municipal projects, based on analyses of local needs and specific conditions, address both foreigners and the majority society. They are primarily aimed at facilitation of mutual coexistence of both entities and promoting mutual understanding and establishing social contacts in order to prevent elements of intolerance, racism and xenophobia. High attention is paid to facilitation of integration of school children into their school classes including assistance with learning of the Czech language.

Integration centres are the main instrument of integration at regional level. The centres, based on a long-term 'project' concept, are operated by different actors including NGOs, regions or state bodies and ensure that foreigners can benefit from equal access to integration services. Majority society including state bodies also benefit from services of the centres to obtain relevant information on foreigners as well.

Other projects implemented by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Regional Development, and Ministry of Culture aim at providing relevant information and assistance to foreigners in areas such as language education, labour market, access to health care, intercultural dialogue.

II. Integration of recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection⁸ is accomplished through a State Integration Programme based on the Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic. The Programme consists of three main areas of activities including Czech language instruction, provision of accommodation, and assistance in access to the labour market. The language instruction is organised by the Refugee Facilities Administration⁹ and by a professional organisation of Czech language teachers and supervised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Provision of accommodation, which is arranged by municipalities, is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior and financed from its budget. The number of provided integration apartments has been almost continuously loathing since 2004. In 2014 the programme provided 139 apartments for 320 persons. Activities in the field of assistance in access to the labour market, supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, included professional requalification courses, counselling, and motivational programmes.

⁸ Since the 2013 Asylum Act amendment beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can enjoy the integration activities under the same conditions as do the recognised refugees.

⁹ State organisation operating refugee accommodation and integration centres.

Naturalisation

Until the end of 2013 citizenship issues were regulated by the Act No 40/1993 as amended on Citizenship. Additionally, the Act No. 193/1999 as amended concerning the nationality of certain former Czechoslovak citizens provided for re-gaining of citizenship by former Czechoslovak citizens who lost the citizenship for political reasons in the past. Both acts ceased to be valid as from 31 December 2013. The Act No 40/1993 was replaced by a new citizenship act No 186/2013 valid from 1 January 2014. On the basis of the new Act on Citizenship foreigners can¹⁰ acquire the citizenship of the Czech Republic via naturalisation provided that they meet conditions set out by the Act. The Act also does not require that applicants for Czech citizenship release themselves from their current citizenship, thus permits dual or multiple citizenships.

The Ministry of the Interior may grant the citizenship to a foreigner who, among others, has been lawfully permanently residing in the Czech Republic for a period of at least five years (three years for citizens of EU/EEA) or otherwise lawfully residing for a total of ten years and has not been sentenced for wilful criminal offences. The applicant is required to prove sufficient knowledge of the Czech language and basic knowledge of the Czech Republic's constitutional system, state symbols, institutions, history, geography, culture, etc. Moreover, the applicant must meet all obligations arising from the provisions of a special legal regulation governing the entry into and residence in the Czech Republic as well as obligations resulting from special provisions regulating public health insurance, social security, pension insurance, taxes, and other mandatory fees. Certain requirements may, under conditions provided for by the Act, be waived. The new Act also and provides for a simplified way for a obtaining the citizenship through declaration by the second-generation immigrants.

6.3. Statistics

Apart from citizens of the Slovak Republic, 14,461 foreigners were granted the Czech citizenship by naturalisation according to the Act No 40/1993 as amended on Citizenship in the period of 2003-20013. In 2014 the Czech citizenship was granted via naturalisation to 4 915 persons. Numbers of naturalised persons in the period of 2003-20013 were relatively stable until 2013 when the number rose by 34.8 % as compared to 2012.

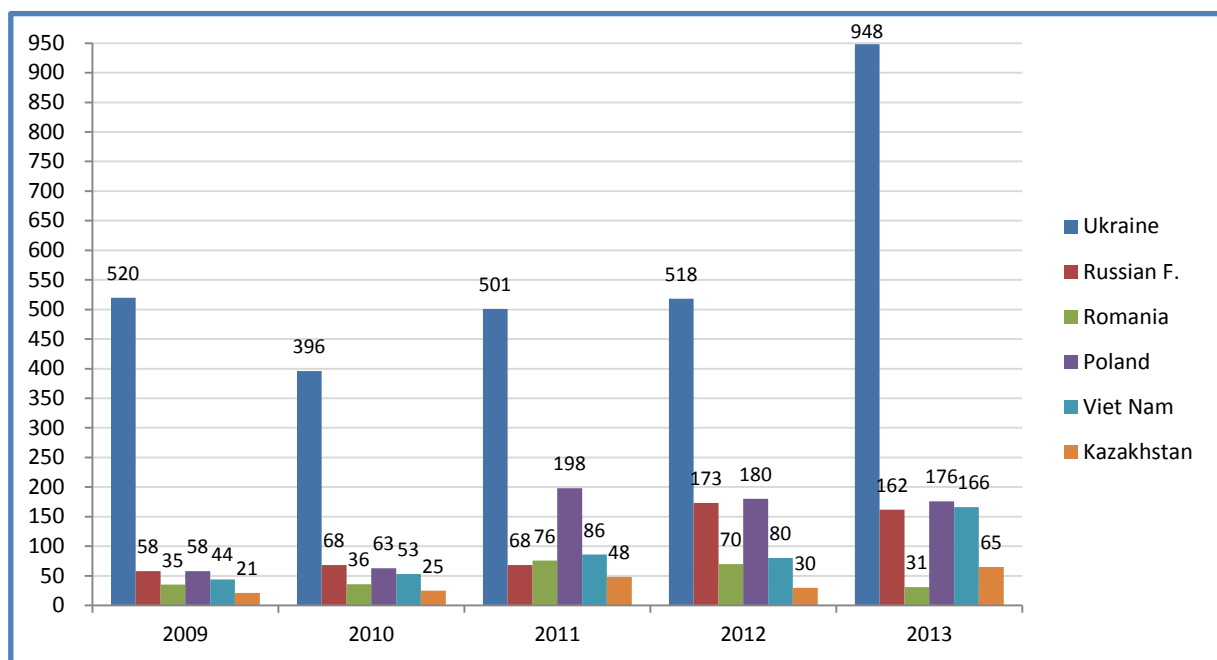
¹⁰ The Act provides for a possibility to obtain the citizenship, however does not provide for the right to obtain it.

Table 6: Acquisition of citizenship by naturalisation (2003 – 2013)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Naturalisation	1 267	1 495	1 177	1 355	1 027	1 087	1 017	947	1 414	1 565	2210
Naturalisation of citizens of the Slovak Republic					131	103	111	141	239	206	143

Source: Ministry of the Interior/Czech Statistical Office

Figure 8: TOP 6 Countries of citizenship of naturalised foreigners (2004 – 2013)



Source: Ministry of the Interior

The largest group¹¹ of foreigners naturalised between 2009 and 2013 consisted of citizens of Ukraine accounting for 2, 883 persons. It was followed by citizens of Poland (675), Russian Federation (529), Vietnam (429), Romania (248), and Kazakhstan (189). It should be noted that two states mentioned above are member states of the European Union.

¹¹ Due to existence of one state constituted by Czechs and Slovaks before 1993 the citizens of Slovak Republic are not considered in this account.

7. Migration and development

7.1. Responsible state authorities

Beside sectoral development cooperation initiatives implemented by Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the main body coordinating foreign development projects and schemes on the national level. Ministry of the Interior is the main body responsible for bilateral cooperation and development projects related to migration.

Special Commissioner for Czechs Living Abroad Office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for cooperation with and support of cooperation with Czech compatriot societies around the world.

7.2. Policies

Foreign development assistance, as an integral part of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic, carries out initiatives helping to remove poverty and support security and prosperity in less developed countries. Within this effort the Czech Republic acknowledges a need for broad political dialogue with partner countries and using instruments global approach to migration in the field of migration.

The Ministry of the Interior, taking into account existing and potential migration movements with possible impact on the Czech Republic, has been involved in bilateral cooperation schemes and multilateral EU projects aiming to support security and stability in countries of potential migrants. The focus is put on prevention of irregular migration and promotion of legal migration, providing capacity-building assistance and support in strengthening asylum and migration infrastructure in partner countries.

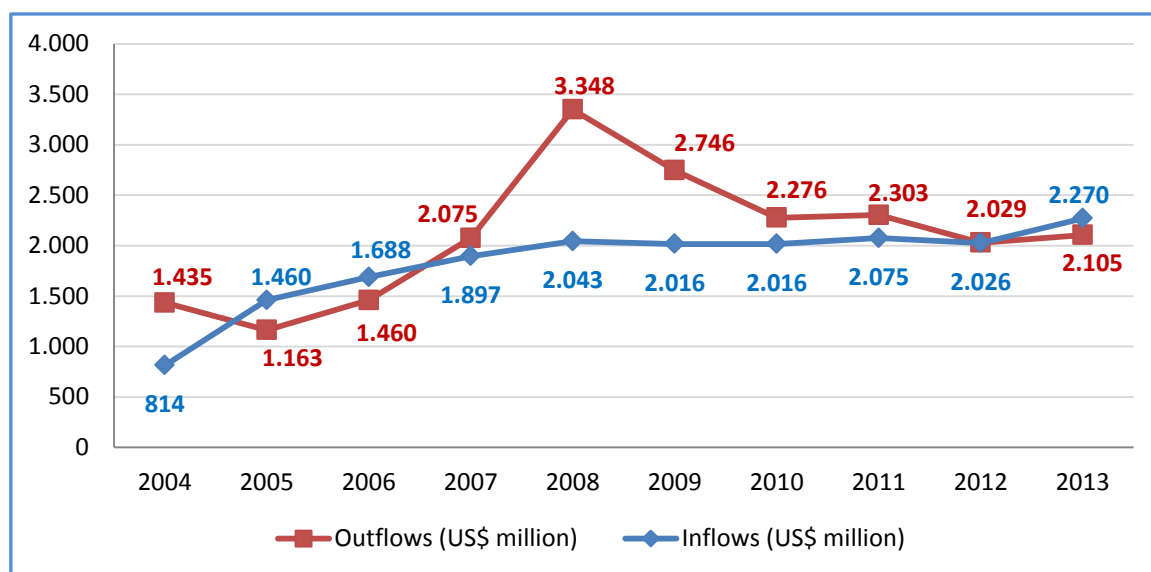
The Czech Republic has been active within Prague Process, a principal EU instrument for multilateral dialogue with countries of Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership, and Central Asia, as well as Russia and Turkey. Specific activities in which the Ministry of the Interior was involved through Targeted Initiative framework focus on circular migration, student mobility, and integration of labour migrants. Beside this, within the framework of EU mobility partnership with Moldova, a project dealing with post-return reintegration of labour migrants and development of irregular migration prevention measures was implemented.

The Office of Special Commissioner for Czechs Living Abroad within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs executes the policy of the Czech Republic with regard to estimated 2 million Czechs living abroad. The Office is particularly responsible for provision of financial donations for the compatriot societies' cultural projects and for educational programme for Czech compatriots abroad.

7.3. Statistics

The World Bank provides a figure of incoming **remittances** to the Czech Republic amounting to \$2,270 million in 2013. According to the WB data the remittances constituted about 1.1% of the national GDP of Czech Republic in 2013.

Figure 9. Remittances to and from the Czech Republic



Source: World Bank

As reads from the World Bank figures, in 2012 the biggest remittance emitters to the Czech Republic were partly neighbouring countries including the Slovak Republic (17.6%), closely followed by Germany (almost 15%) and Austria (13.7). The TOP five was completed by the overseas United States (almost 9%) and Canada (7%).

According to OECD figures, in past ten years the **Official Development Assistance** provided by the Czech Republic was maintained on a constant level accounting within a range of 0.11-0.13 % of GNI. In 2013 the Czech Republic spent \$210.9 million on the bilateral Official Development Assistance. The TOP 10 beneficiary countries in 2013 included Moldova, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine, Serbia, Syria, and Vietnam. From a five-year perspective (2008 – 2012), Afghanistan was by far the largest beneficiary country followed, with a distance, by Mongolia, Serbia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Georgia, Vietnam, Kosovo, and West Bank & Gaza Strip.¹²

8. Asylum and international protection

¹² ODA data obtained from databases maintained by OECD <http://www.aidflows.org/>; <https://data.oecd.org/czech-republic.htm#profile-development>.

8.1. Responsible state authorities

Ministry of the Interior - Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, hereinafter the DAMP, is the main body responsible for international protection in the Czech Republic. DAMP conducts the administrative procedure for the grant of international protection (either in the form of asylum or subsidiary protection) in the first instance (applicants registration, COI analyses, decision-making and compiling asylum statistics). Beside this, the DAMP also conducts the 'Dublin' procedure.

8.2. Policies

The **Act No 325/1999 as amended on Asylum** (hereinafter the Asylum Act) governs conditions under which a foreign national who expressed an intention to request the Czech Republic for international protection in the form of asylum or subsidiary protection may enter and reside in the Czech Republic. It also regulates a residence of recognised refugees (persons with granted asylum status) and the residence of persons enjoying subsidiary protection. The act is regularly updated, both to be kept in line with relevant EU legislation and to reflect practical procedural needs and issues. Moreover, the Administrative Procedure Code is also applied to the proceedings.

The proceedings for grant of international protection are a single procedure where the eligibility for asylum or subsidiary protection is considered at once. The Ministry will grant a foreign national an asylum status pursuant to Article 12 of the Asylum Act, if it is established in the international protection proceedings that the foreign national is persecuted for expression of political rights and freedoms or that he/she has well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, gender, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group or for holding certain political opinions in the country of which he/she is a citizen or, if the foreign national is a stateless person, in the country of his/her last permanent residence.

The Ministry will grant the asylum status pursuant to Article 13 of the Asylum Act, in a case worthy of special consideration, to a family member of a recognised refugee who has been granted asylum pursuant to Section 12 or Section 14 as well as for the purpose of family reunification. The Ministry will grant a humanitarian asylum status pursuant to Section 14 of the Asylum Act to a foreign national, if no reason for granting asylum, as set out in Section 12, is found in the international protection proceedings but reasons worthy of special consideration are found for granting asylum on humanitarian grounds. If the asylum status is granted, the recognised refugee will receive a residence permit card for a recognised refugee, which entitles him/her to stay permanently in the territory of the Czech Republic.

The Ministry will grant the subsidiary protection pursuant to Section 14a to a foreign national who does not meet the criteria for grant of asylum, if it is found in the course of international protection proceedings that there is justified concern in he/she case that if the foreign national were returned to the state whose citizen he/she is, or, if he/she is a stateless person, to the state of he/she last permanent residence, he/she would be at a real risk of serious harm, and that he/she is unable or unwilling, because of such a risk, to make use of the

protection of the state whose citizen he/she is, or the protection of the state of he/she last permanent residence.

According to the Asylum Act, serious harm is deemed to be imposition or execution of a death penalty, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of the applicant for international protection, a serious threat to life or human dignity because of wilful violence in the situations of an international or internal armed conflict, or if the departure of the foreign national from the Czech Republic were in conflict with the international obligations of the Czech Republic.

Pursuant to Section 14b of the Asylum Act, in a case worthy of special consideration, the Ministry will grant subsidiary protection for the purpose of family reunification to a family member of a person who has obtained the subsidiary protection status. If the subsidiary protection is granted, the foreign national will receive a residence permit for a person enjoying subsidiary protection permitting him/her to stay legally in the territory of the Czech Republic for a period of time stated on the permit.

A legal action (appeal) can be filed against an effective decision of the Ministry of the Interior with a regional court with the local jurisdiction according to the registered place of residence of the foreign national. During the proceedings on the legal action against the decision of the Ministry of the Interior, the foreign national has the status of an applicant for international protection, and if the legal action has a suspensory effect, he/she cannot be expelled from the territory of the Czech Republic until the legal proceedings are completed. A foreign national is also entitled to file a cassation complaint with the Supreme Administrative Court in Brno against the verdict of the regional court on the legal action against the decision of the Ministry of the Interior regarding international protection.

Resettlement

The Czech Republic launched its national resettlement initiative in 2008 when the Government adopted the National Resettlement Programme Policy (hereinafter the Policy). The Policy defines national capabilities and main instruments for implementation of all stages of resettlement initiatives. A bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of resettlement was signed with UNHCR in 2009. The Ministry of Interior is the responsible national body for policy and implementation of resettlement activities.

On the basis of the adopted national policy three groups of Burmese refugees were resettled from Thailand and Malaysia in the period of 2008 – 2012. In 2014 the Czech Republic cooperated with UNHCR on emergency resettlement activities. For the first half of 2015 a resettlement of a small group of Syrian refugees from Jordan in need of emergency medical care is planned.

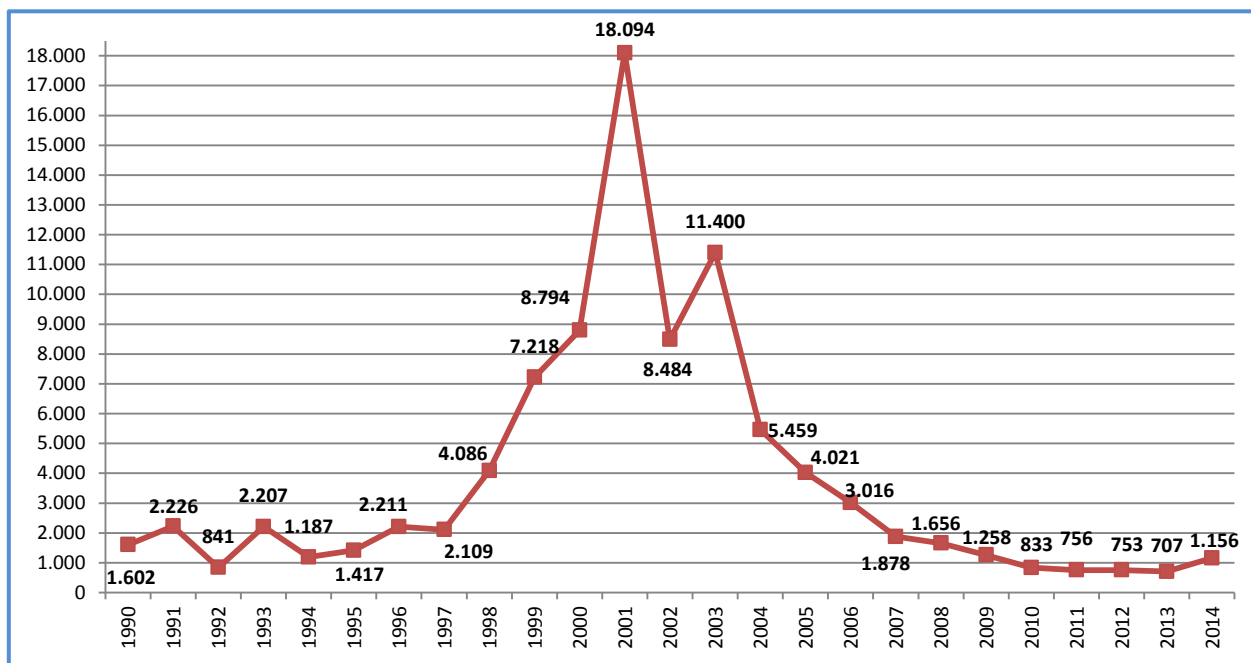
8.3. Statistics

After initial, rather sinusoidal, development in the number of applications for asylum in first eight years of asylum procedure of the Czech Republic a continuous increase in asylum applications started in 1998. This trend culminated in 2001 when the number of asylum applications reached its peak in the asylum history of the Czech Republic by receiving more than 18,000 applications. This until then unseen situation was, to a certain extent, a result of the new Act on Asylum (in force since 2000) which provided asylum seekers with

more benefits, such as the right to work as soon as they had submitted their applications. Most of the applications were lodged by migrants working illegally in the Czech Republic attempting to legalise their status and thus trying to avoid falling foul of the law in order to be able to continue their work.

An amendment to the Act on Asylum from 2002 banned all applicants from entering the labour market during the first year of the asylum procedure. This led to a substantial decrease in the number of asylum applications in 2002 compared to the previous year. Since then (except for 2003) the number of immigrants has been continually decreasing until 2013 when the lowest intake in the Czech asylum history was registered. In connection with the political crisis in Ukraine the situation changed at the beginning of 2014. At the end of 2014 the total number of asylum applications rose to 1 156. Thus the comparison of 2013 and 2014 indicated an annual increase by 63.5% in 2014. On average, the asylum intake of the Czech Republic is generally lower than the average in EU member states. The numbers are also lower than those received in neighbouring Germany, Austria and Poland.

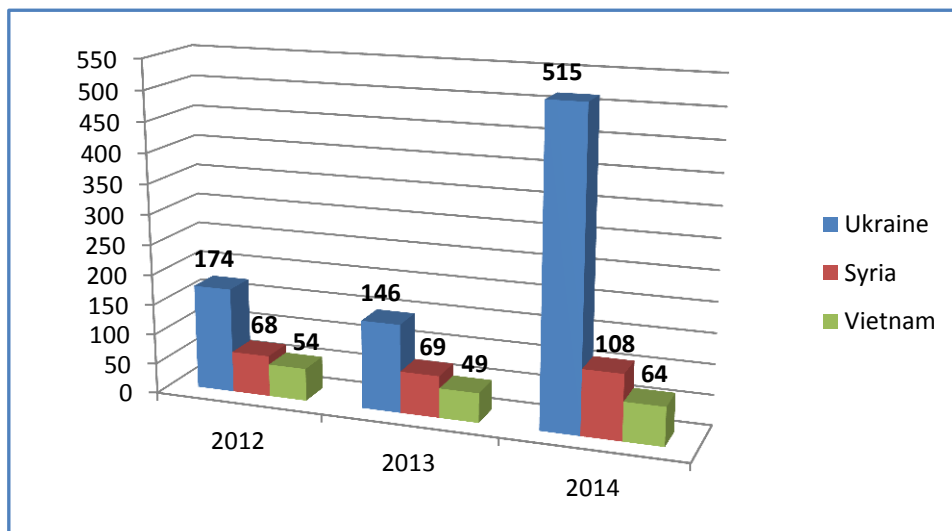
Figure 10: Development of applications for international protection (1990 – 2014)



Source: Ministry of the Interior

Despite the fact that the countries of origin of asylum applicants, as well as the number of applicants from individual countries, changed over the decade, in total, most of asylum applicants originated from the countries of the CIS region. In last three years the countries producing most of applications for asylum included Ukraine, Syria, and Vietnam. Despite the general increase of applications by Syrians the Czech Republic was affected by the Syrian refugee influx through the Mediterranean to a very limited extent only.

Figure 11: Applications for international protection from TOP 3 countries - individual years (2012 – 2014)



Source: Ministry of the Interior

Most of 1 156 applications lodged in the Czech Republic in 2014 were submitted by citizens of Ukraine (515) followed by Syria (108), Vietnam (64), Russian Federation (43), and Cuba (42), etc. In 2014, follow-up (repeated) asylum applications in the Czech Republic accounted for almost 21 %. The Czech Republic granted some form of international protection to 376 persons in 2014. Out of this number, 82 asylum statuses and 294 subsidiary protection statuses were granted. Most of recognized refugees in 2014 were citizens of Ukraine (25). Between 1990 and 2014 the Ministry of the Interior granted the refugee status (asylum) to 3,969 applicants in total.

Annexes

8.4. Websites of relevant bodies, institutions and organisations

Ministry of the Interior – <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/>
Police of the Czech Republic – <http://www.policie.cz/clanek/Police-of-the-Czech-Republic.aspx>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs – <http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/index.html>
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – <http://www.mpsv.cz/en/>
Ministry of Industry and Trade – http://www.mpo.cz/default_en.html
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – <http://www.msmt.cz/index.php?lang=2>
Ministry of Regional Development – <http://www.mmr.cz/en/Homepage>
Ministry of Health – <http://www.mzcr.cz/Cizinci/>
Ministry of Culture – <http://www.mkcr.cz/en/>
Directorate of the Alien Police Service – <http://www.policie.cz/clanek/Police-of-the-Czech-Republic.aspx>
Czech Development Agency – <http://www.czda.cz/?lang=en>
Customs Administration – <https://www.celnisprava.cz/en/Pages/default.aspx>
International Organisation for Migration – <http://www.iom.cz/home>



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