

Brussels, 14 May 2025

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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP)
Subject:	Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP) - presentation

Delegations will find enclosed the presentation given by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) during the meeting of the EMWP held on 14 May 2025, Item 3 on agenda CM 2348/25.

REGULAR MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO THE EU

Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration

Brussels, 14 May 2025



CONTEXT

	Population				Working-age Population	Emigration Stock	Refugees	Asylum seekers
	1991	2014	2024/25	2040	2023	2024	2024	2024
Kazakhstan	17,2 M	17,1 M	20,2 M	24,4 M	12,6 M	2,8 M	3,897	12,241
Kyrgyzstan	4,5 M	5,8 M	7,1 M	8,7 M	4,4 M	540 K	3,301	11,053
Tajikistan	5,5 M	8,3 M	10,5 M	13,7 M	6,2 M	514 K	3,945	8,203
Turkmenistan	3,8 M	6,2 M	7,3 M	8,9 M	4,7 M	365 K	2,545	2,275
Uzbekistan	20,9 M	30,5 M	37,3 M	46 M	22,6 M	2,1 M	4,793	22,657
Central Asia	52 M	68+ M	82+ M	101+ M	50+ M	7,8 M	18,5 K	56,4 K

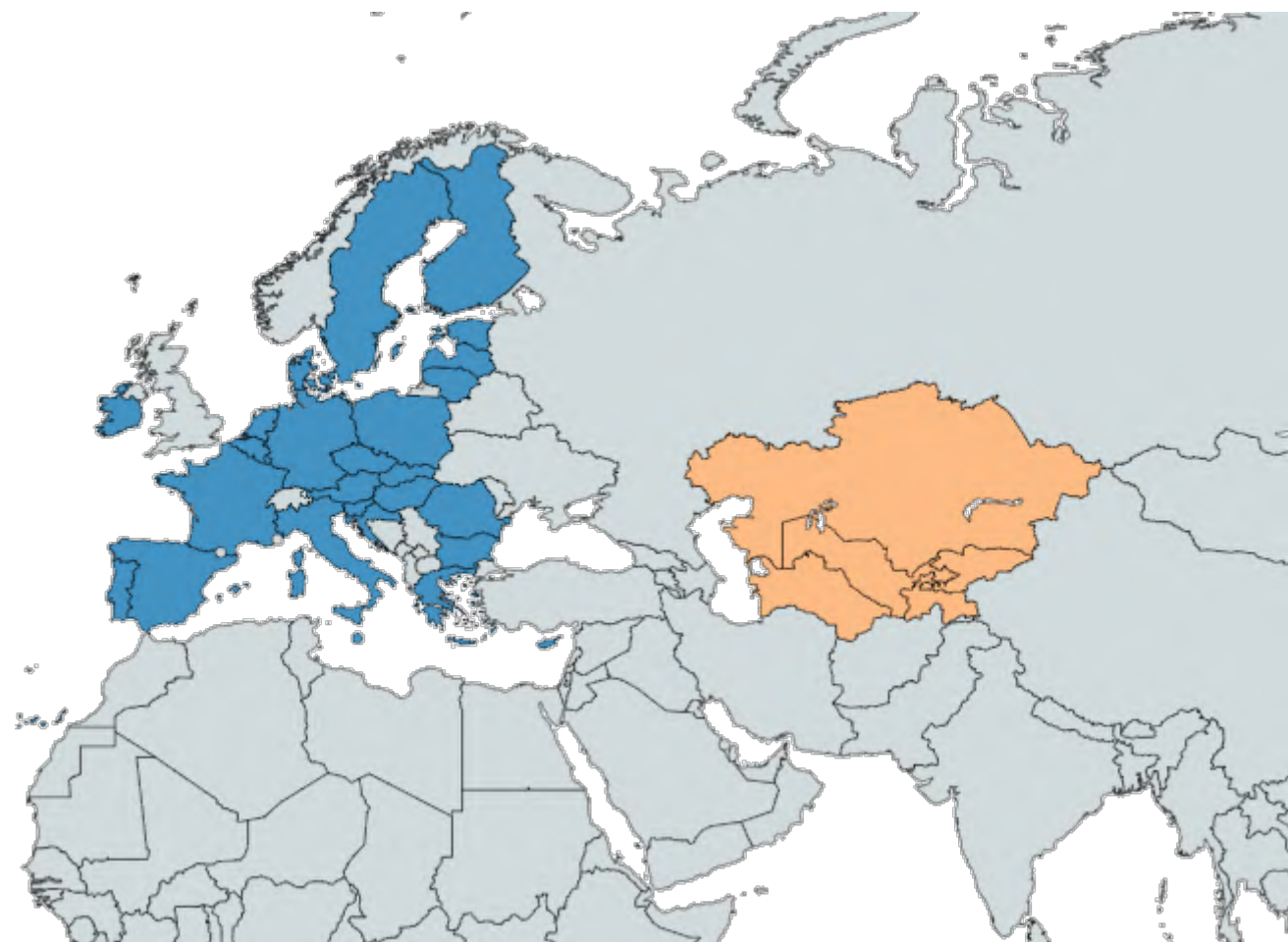


- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyz Republic
- Republic of Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Republic of Uzbekistan

Sources: National Statistical Services of CA states, World Bank, UN DESA, UNHCR

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

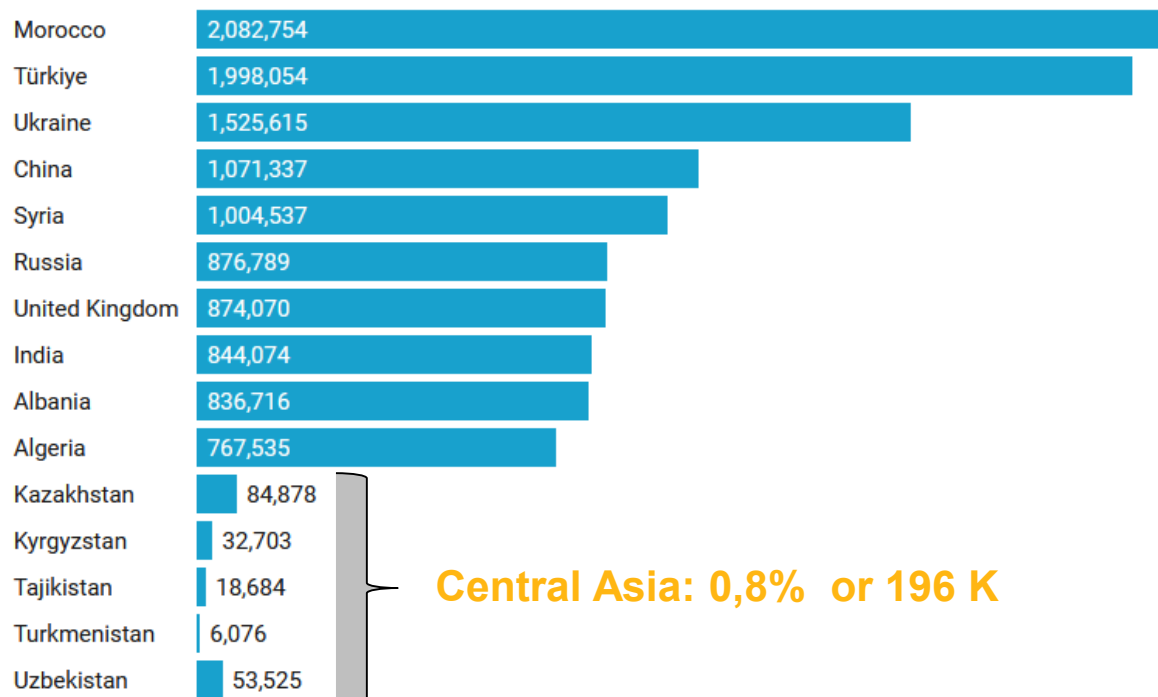
- Minimal migration ties between the EU and Central Asia in the past
- Russia was and remains the primary destination
- Recent shift due to a combination of factors
- Since 2019, stronger strategic EU-CA engagement
 - 2019: the EU Central Asia Strategy
 - 2023: Accompanying Road Map
 - 2025: Historic European Union – Central Asia Summit



MIGRATION TRENDS

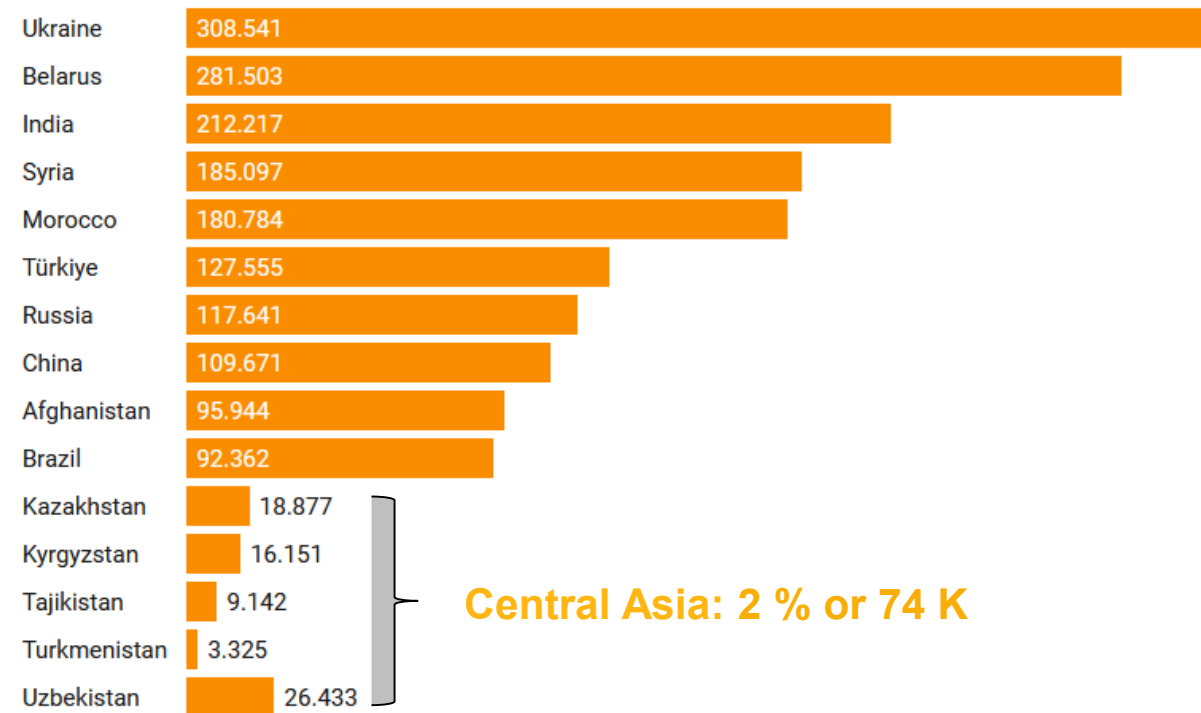
In absolute terms, migration from CA to the EU remains modest

- Over **25 million** valid residence permits in the EU at the end of 2023



Source: Eurostat

- Over **3.7 million** first residence permits in the EU in 2023

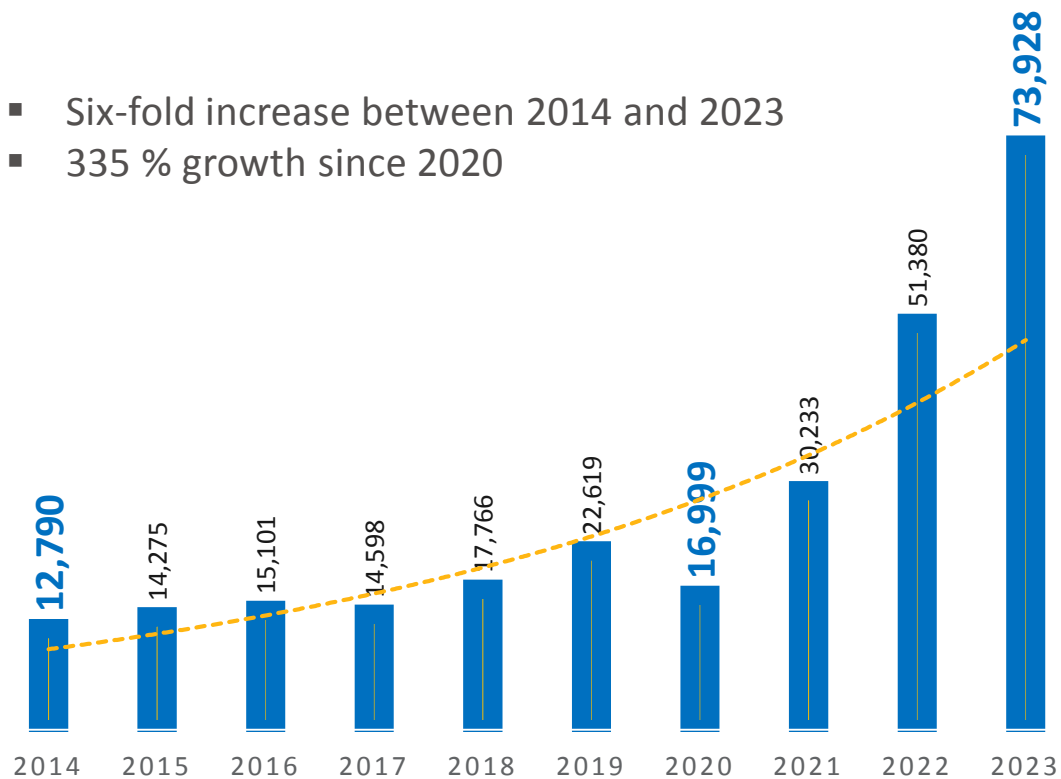


MIGRATION TRENDS

Rapid growth in the recent years

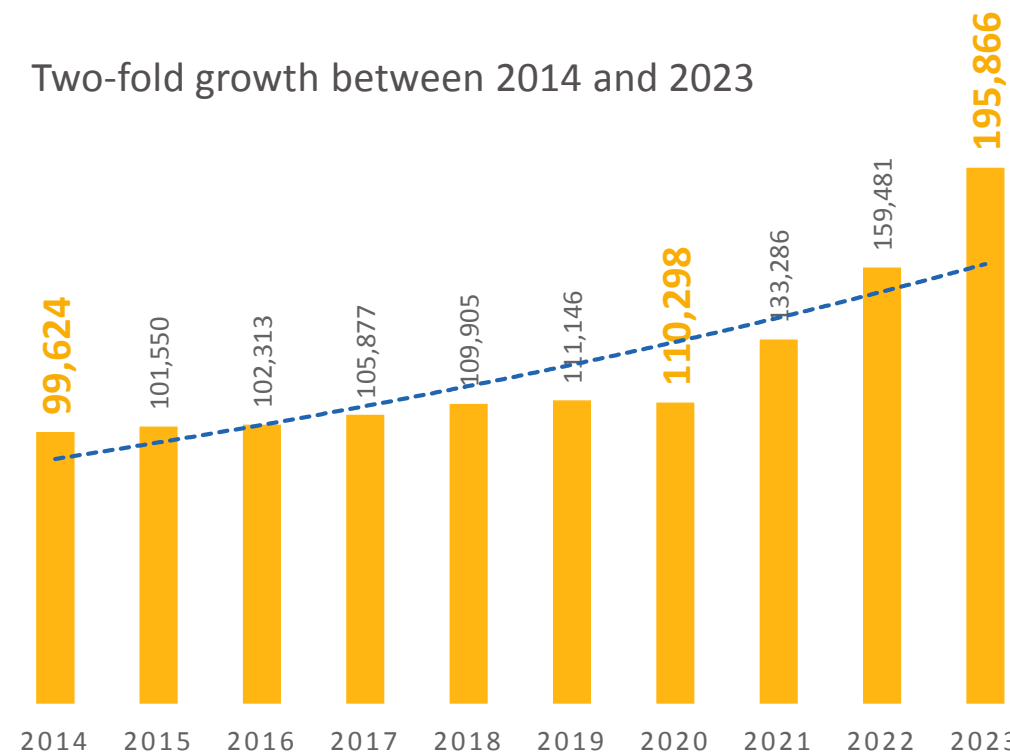
FLOW, 2014-2023

- Six-fold increase between 2014 and 2023
- 335 % growth since 2020



STOCK, 2014-2023

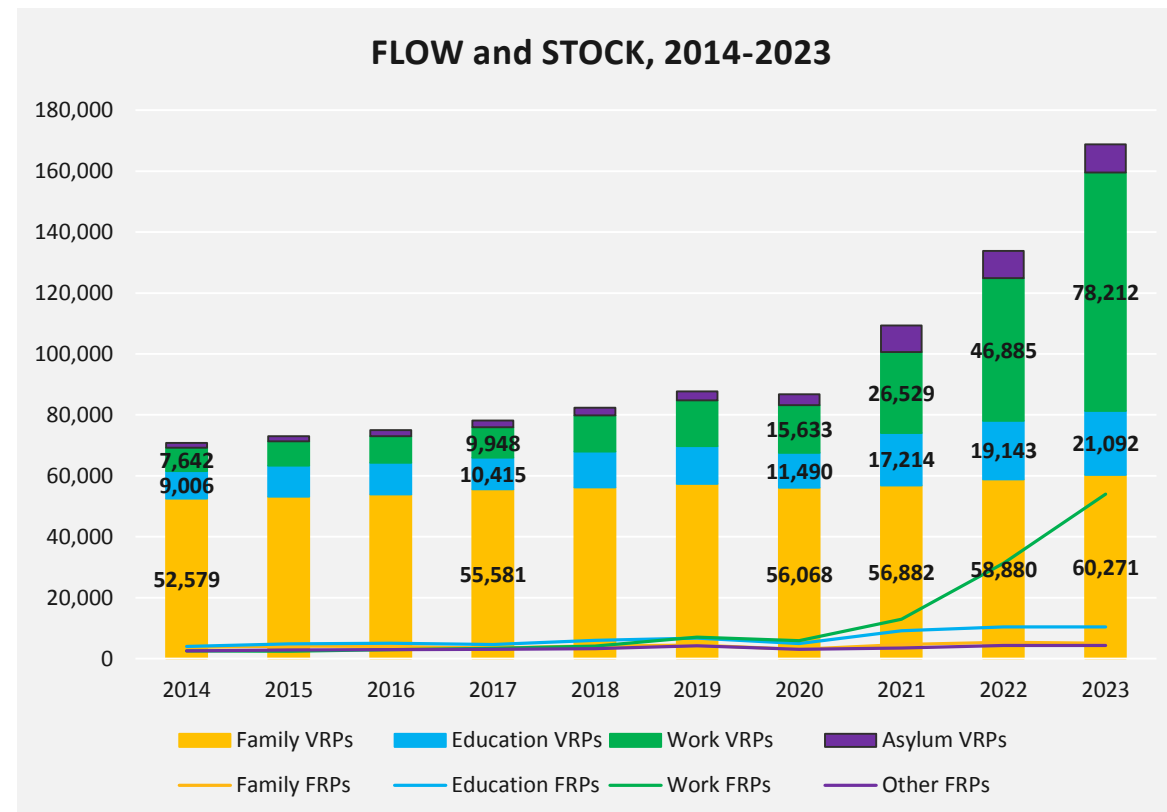
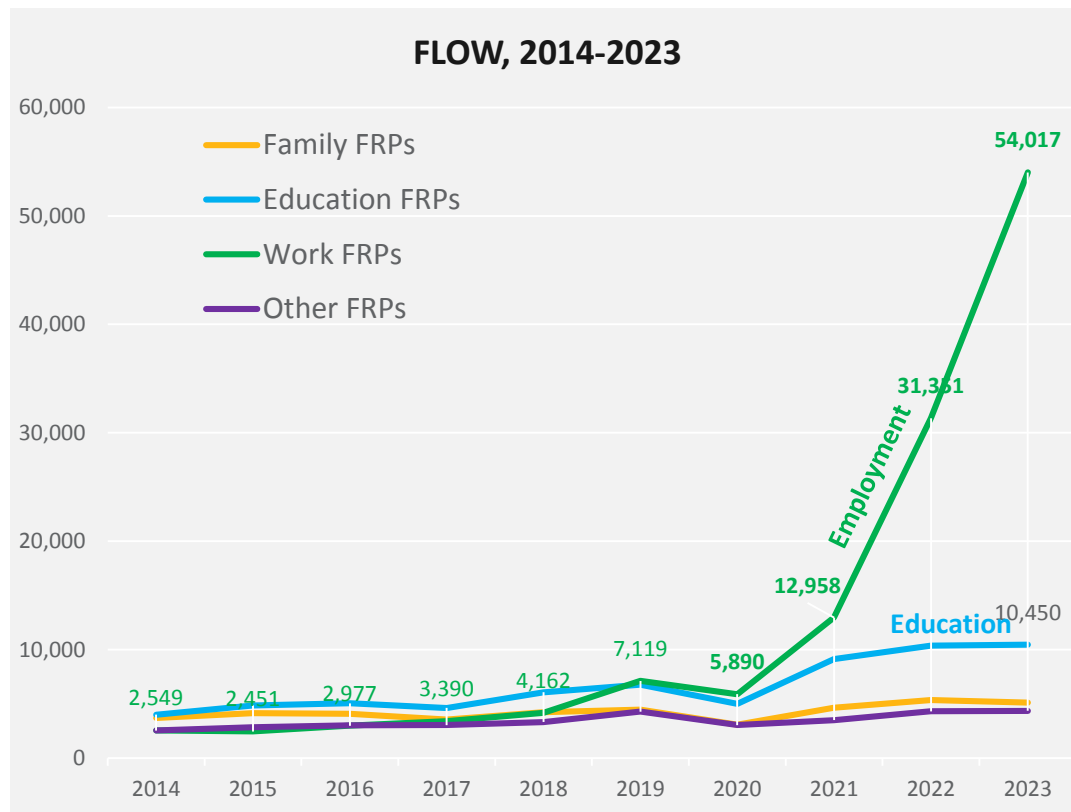
- Two-fold growth between 2014 and 2023



Source: Eurostat

MIGRATION TRENDS

Employment is the primary reason driving migration to the EU

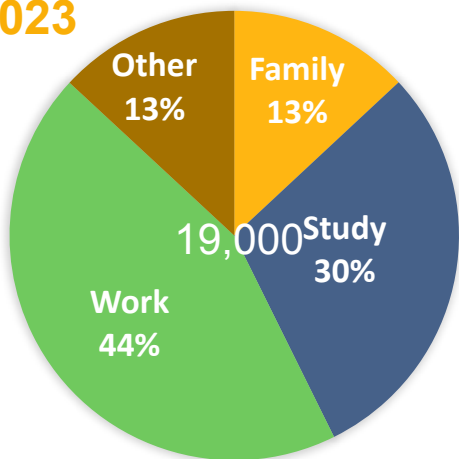


Source: Eurostat

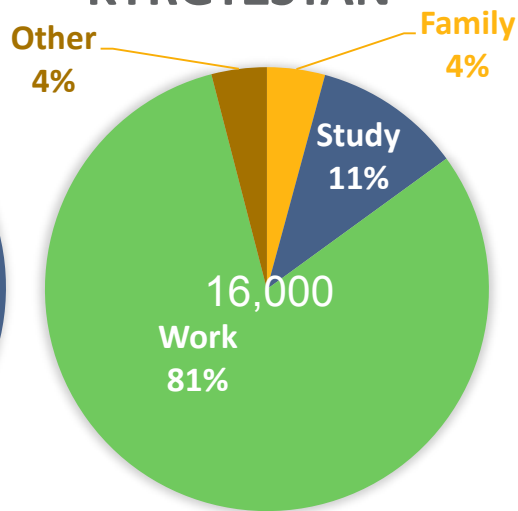
FLOW 2014 vs 2023: REASONS PER COUNTRY

KAZAKHSTAN

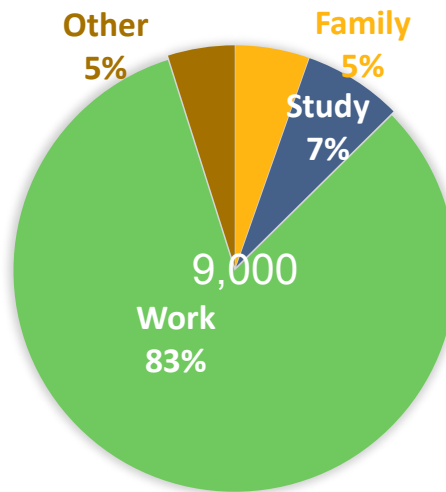
2023



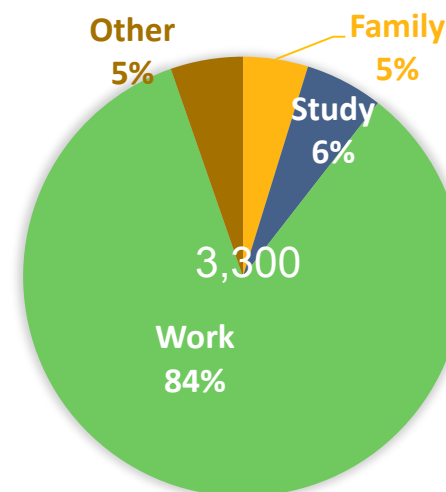
KYRGYZSTAN



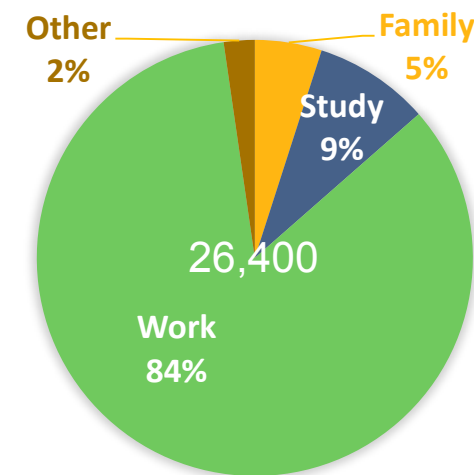
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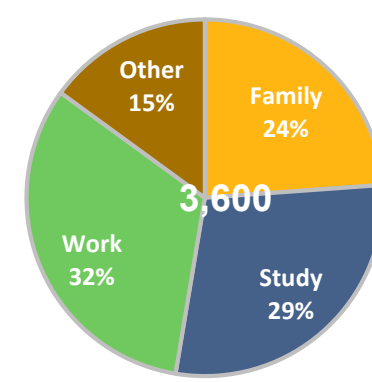
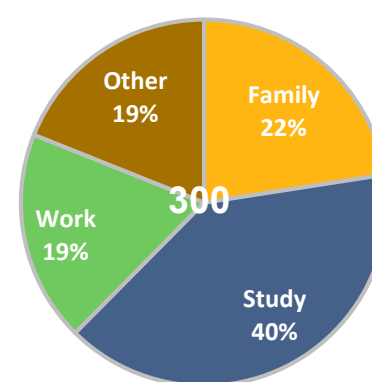
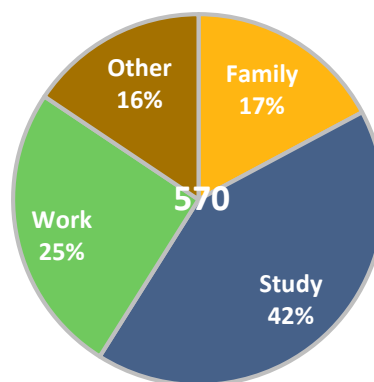
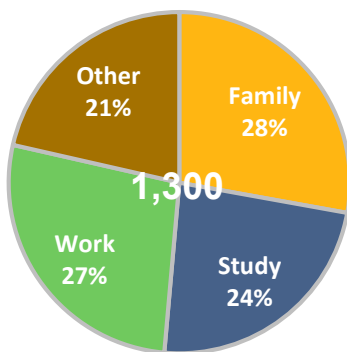
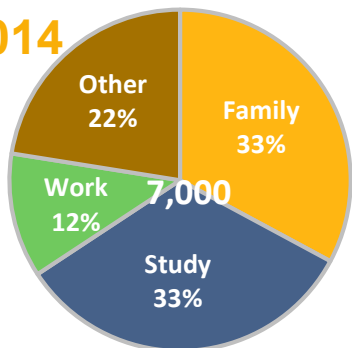
TURKMENISTAN



UZBEKISTAN



2014

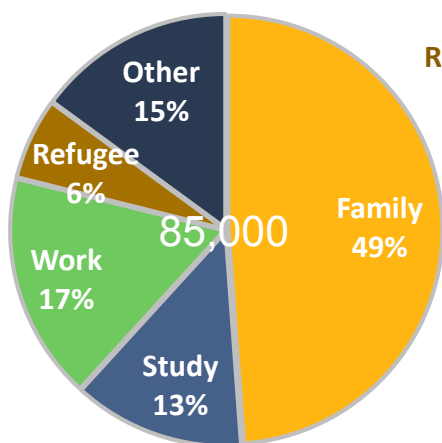


Source: Eurostat

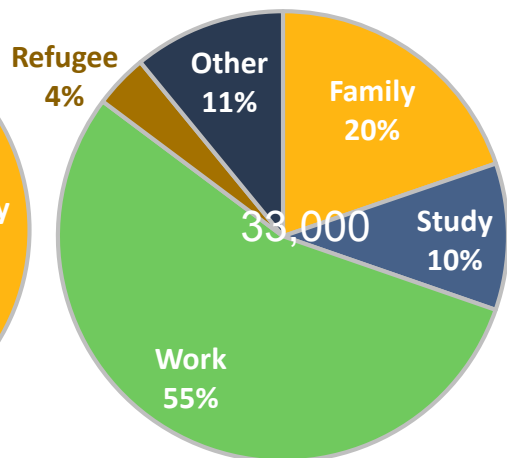
STOCK 2014 vs 2023: REASONS PER COUNTRY

2023

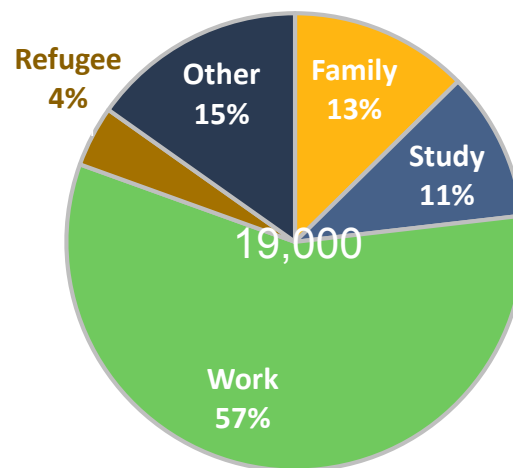
KAZAKHSTAN



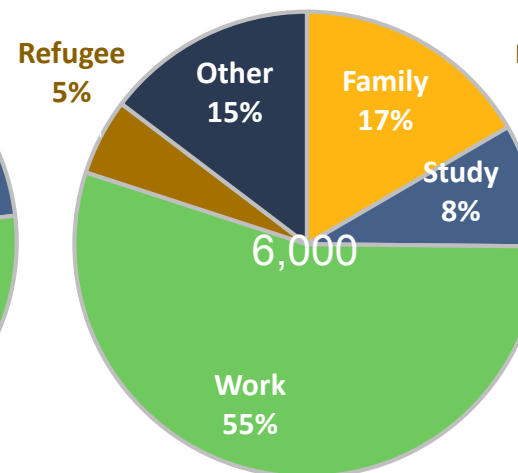
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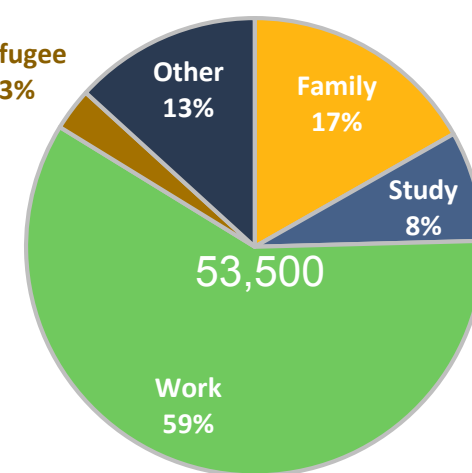
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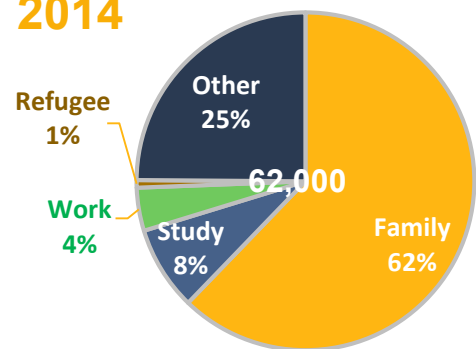
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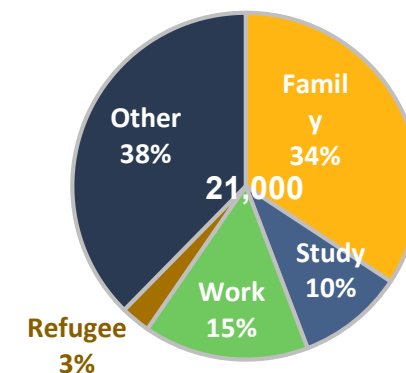
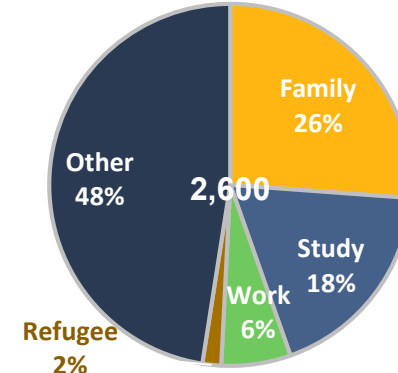
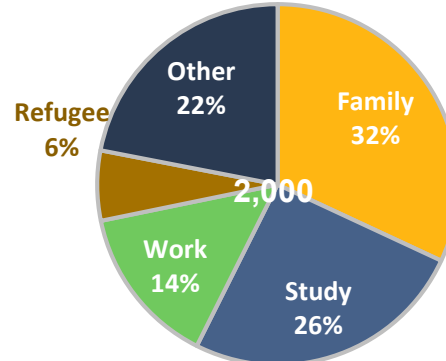
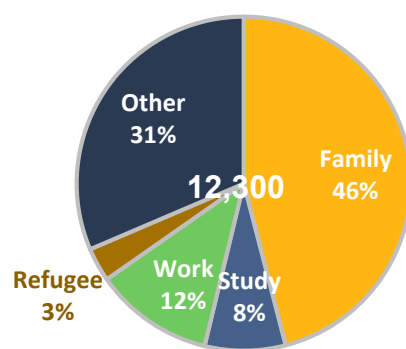
UZBEKISTAN



2014



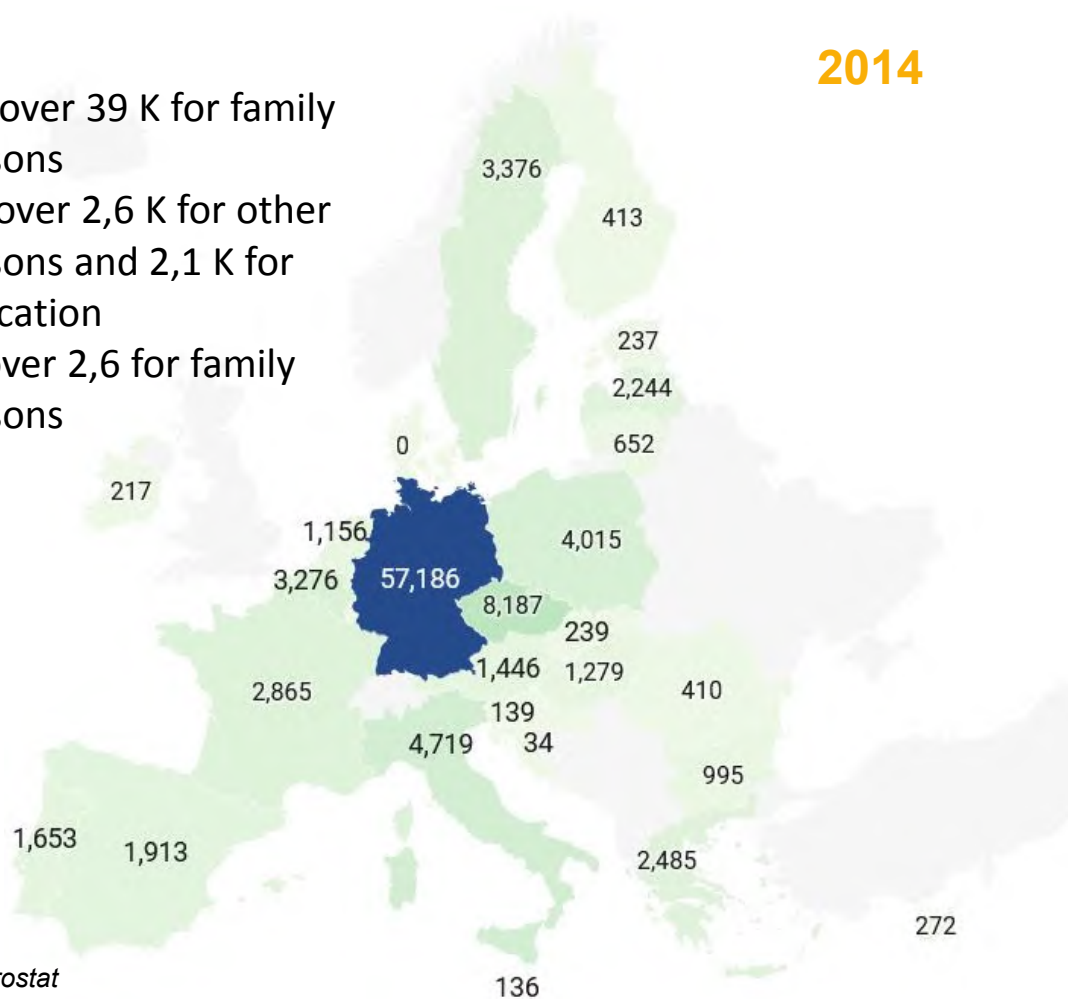
Source: Eurostat



MIGRATION DESTINATIONS: STOCK

- DE: over 39 K for family reasons
- CZ: over 2,6 K for other reasons and 2,1 K for education
- IT: over 2,6 for family reasons

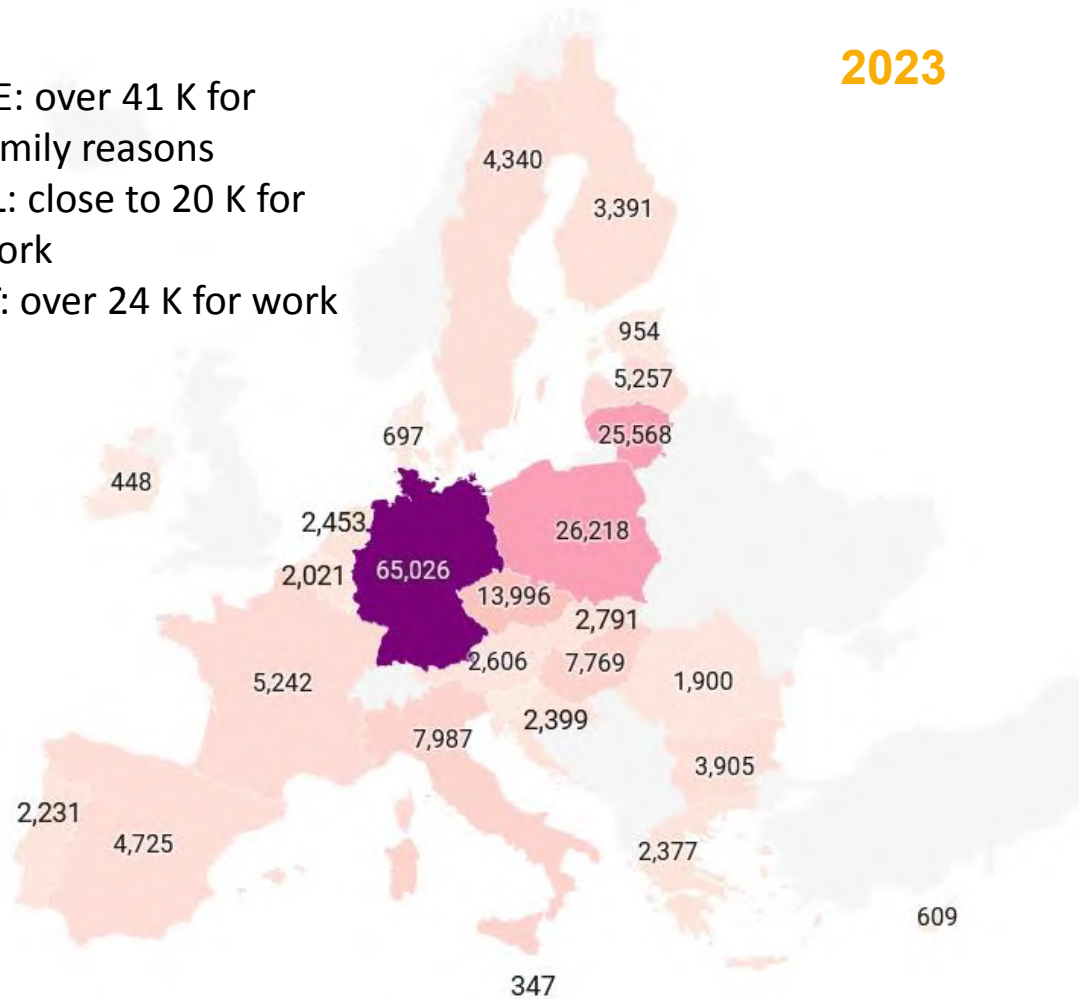
2014



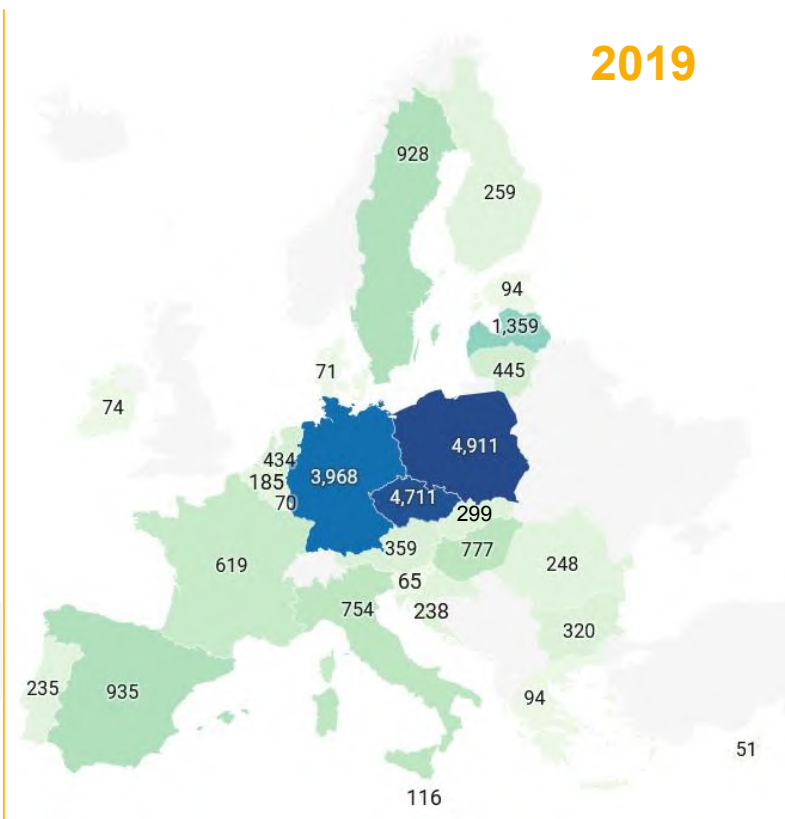
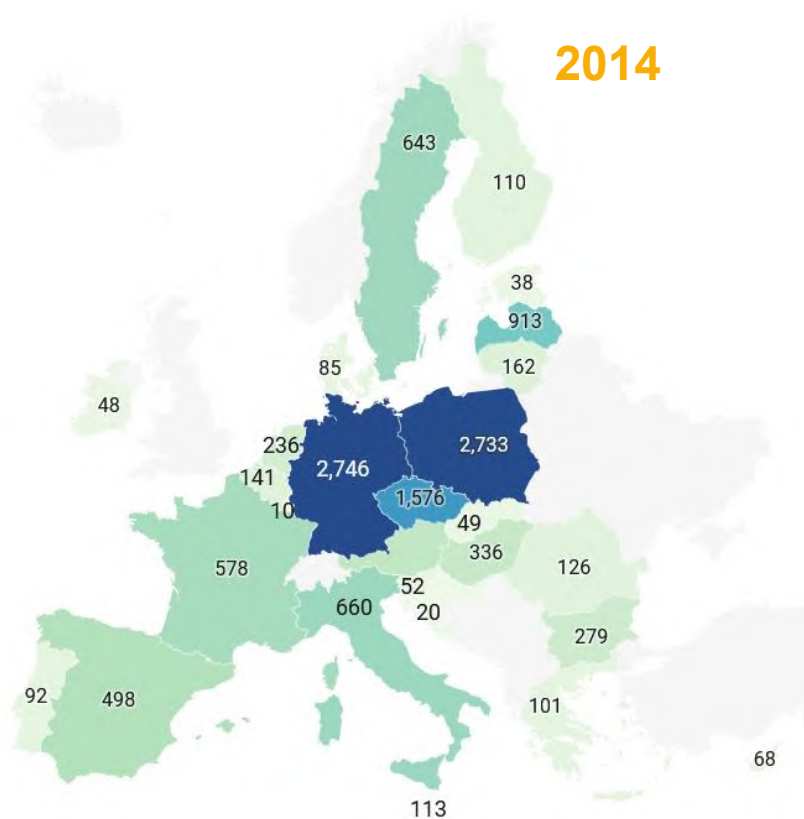
Source: Eurostat

- DE: over 41 K for family reasons
- PL: close to 20 K for work
- LT: over 24 K for work

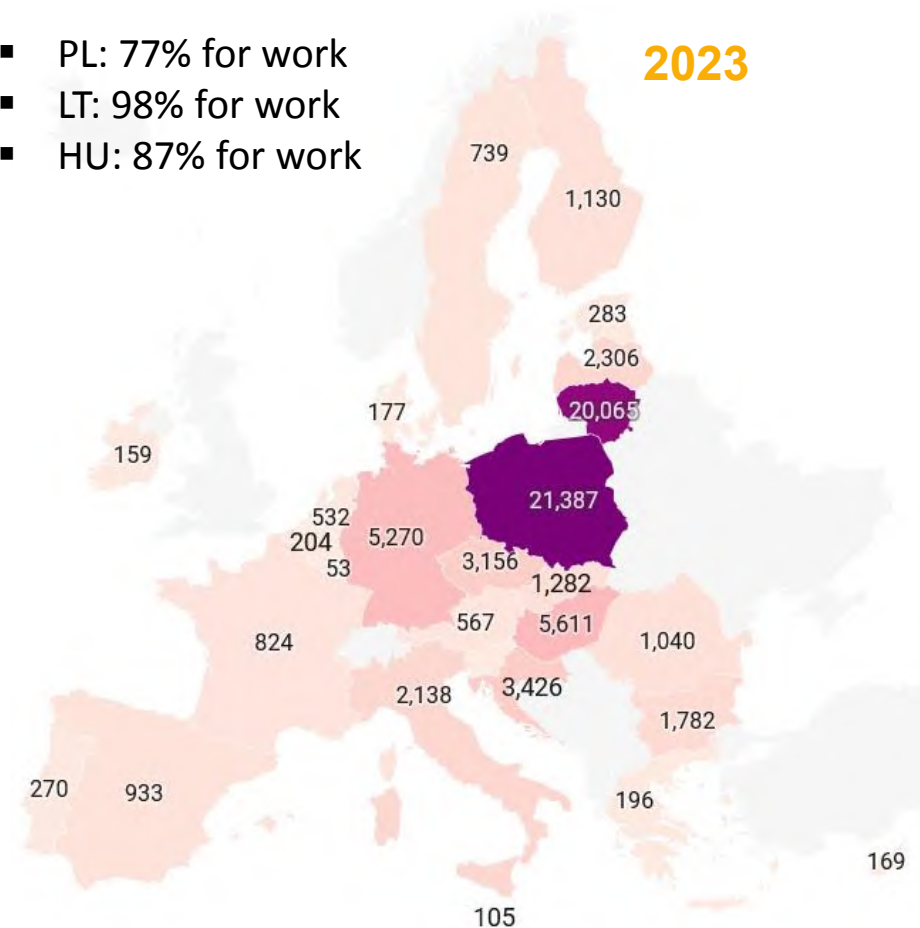
2023



MIGRATION DESTINATIONS: FLOW

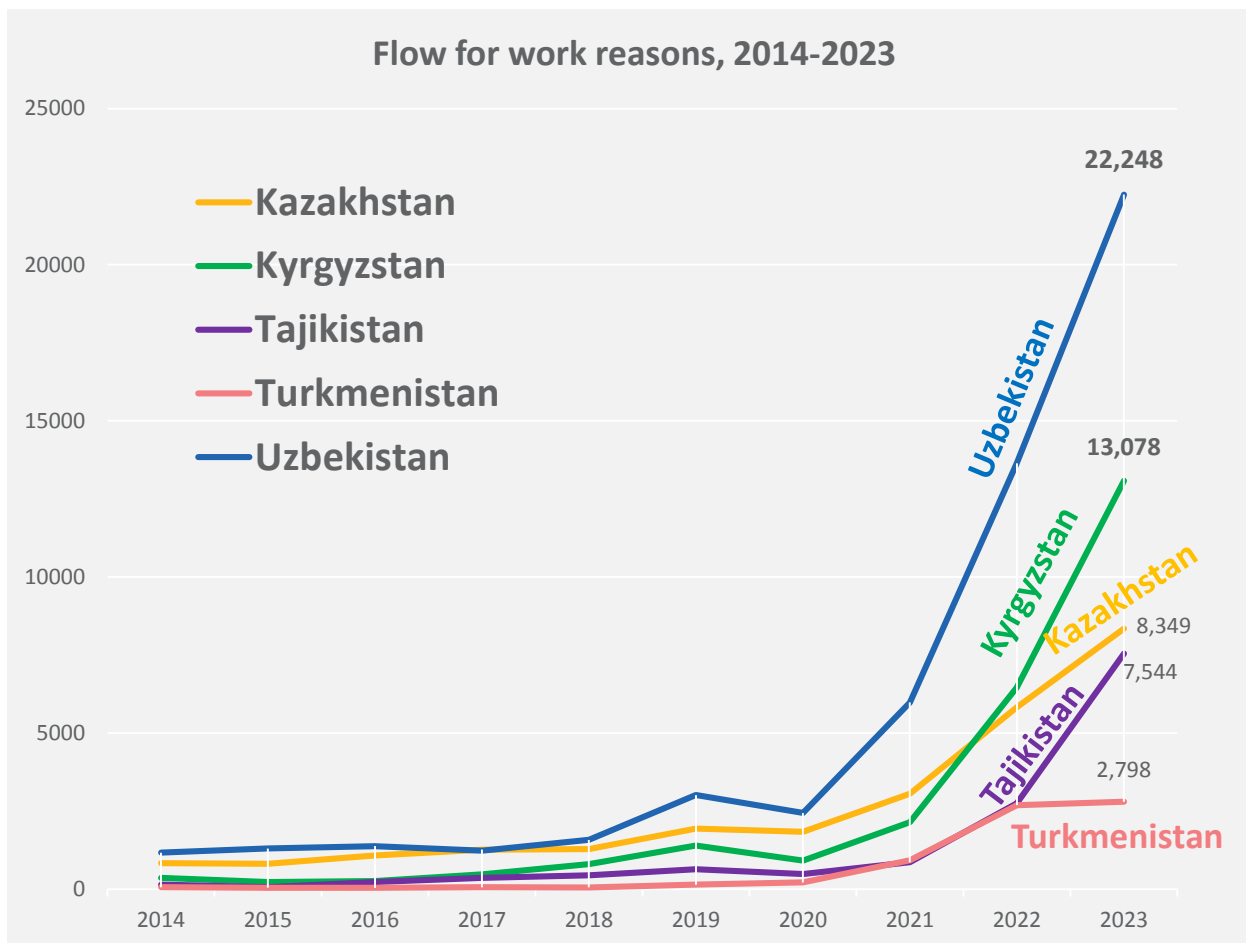


- PL: 77% for work
- LT: 98% for work
- HU: 87% for work

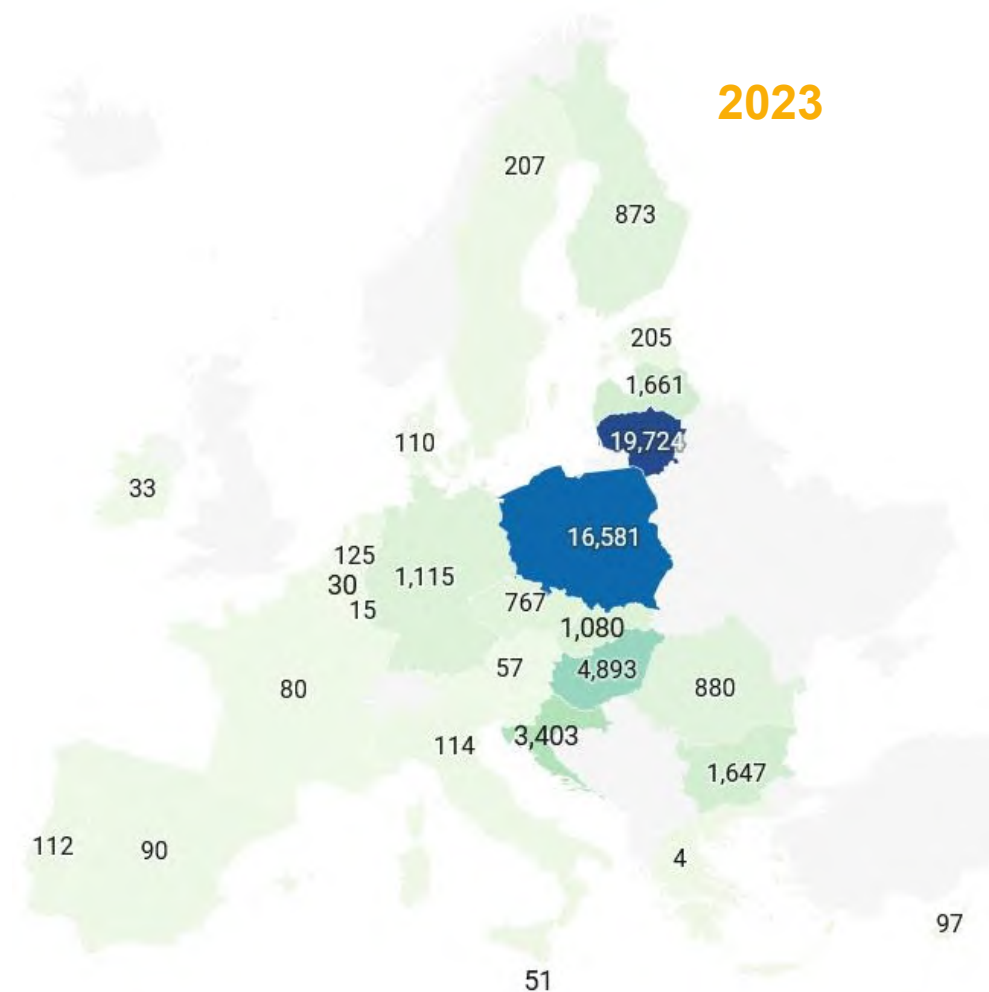


Source: Eurostat

LABOUR MIGRATION



Source: Eurostat



LABOUR MIGRATION

- Manual jobs: construction, industry, agriculture, services, and transportation
- Positions that do not require high qualifications or language proficiency
- Mostly male, 20-45 years old
- Motivation: higher salaries, safety, stability, respectful treatment

Every year approximately one million young people (trend increasing) enter local labour markets in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan jointly

- Private employment agencies
- Replacing Ukrainian male migrants
- CA states proactive approaches: growing number of bilateral agreements

COUNTRY CASES



Kazakhstan

- Most economically developed CA country
- Stock: 85,000 in 2023, half residing in Germany, on family grounds
- Flow: 19,000 in 2023, driven by work and education
- Top destinations:
 - Work: PL, LT, HU, CZ, SK, DE
 - Education: CZ and HU
- Higher education levels; employed in sales, transport, and hospitality sectors
- Heavy reliance on intermediaries and recruiting agencies, incl. unregulated online platforms; limited regulatory oversight of PEAs
- EPCA in place (2020); currently negotiating visa facilitation



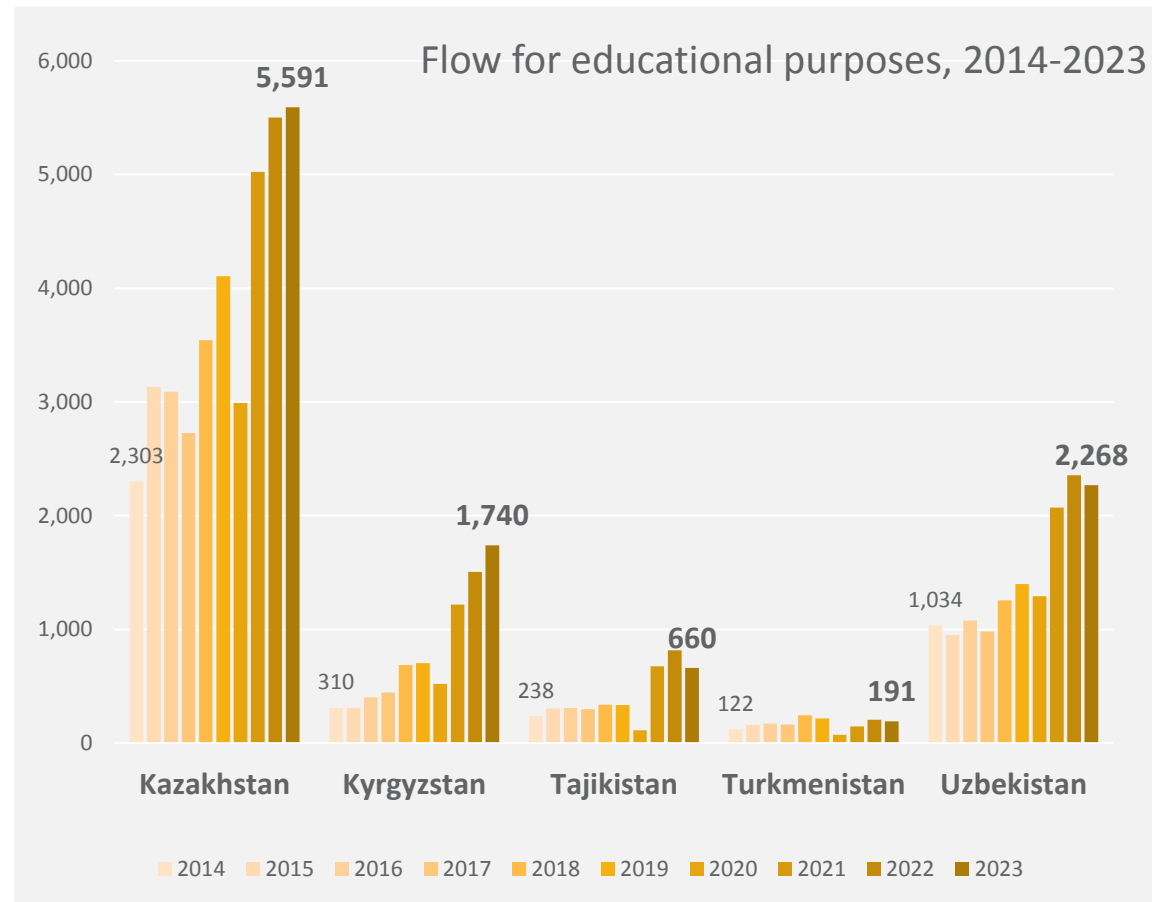
Uzbekistan

- Most populous country in CA, 650 K entrants annually
- Stock: 53,500 in 2023 (PL, LT, DE, LV, CZ, SE)
- Largest increase in migration flows: from 3,600 in 2014 to over 26,000 in 2023. Work – the main driver.
- Top destinations:
 - Work: LT and PL; also: HR, LV, BG, FI, DE
 - Education: PL, DE, LV
 - Family: DE and SE
- More rural, low-income populations
- Private intermediaries, PEAs, Migration Agency, Monocentres
- EPCA signing planned in 2025
- 2024: Labour migration Agreement with Germany; CA diversification pioneer

EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION

- 10,460 first residence permits in 2023
- 80-90% were issued in the top six EU MS
- Over 20,000 CA holders of valid residence permits at the end of 2023

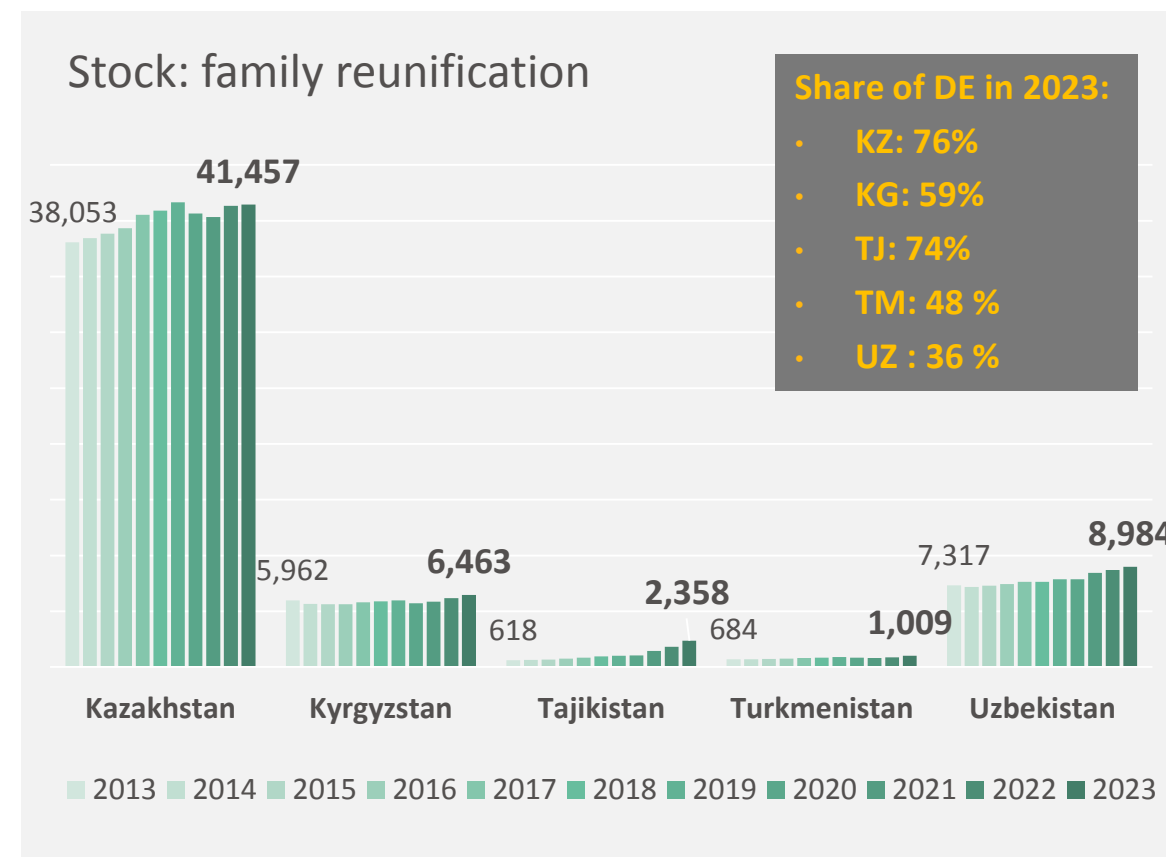
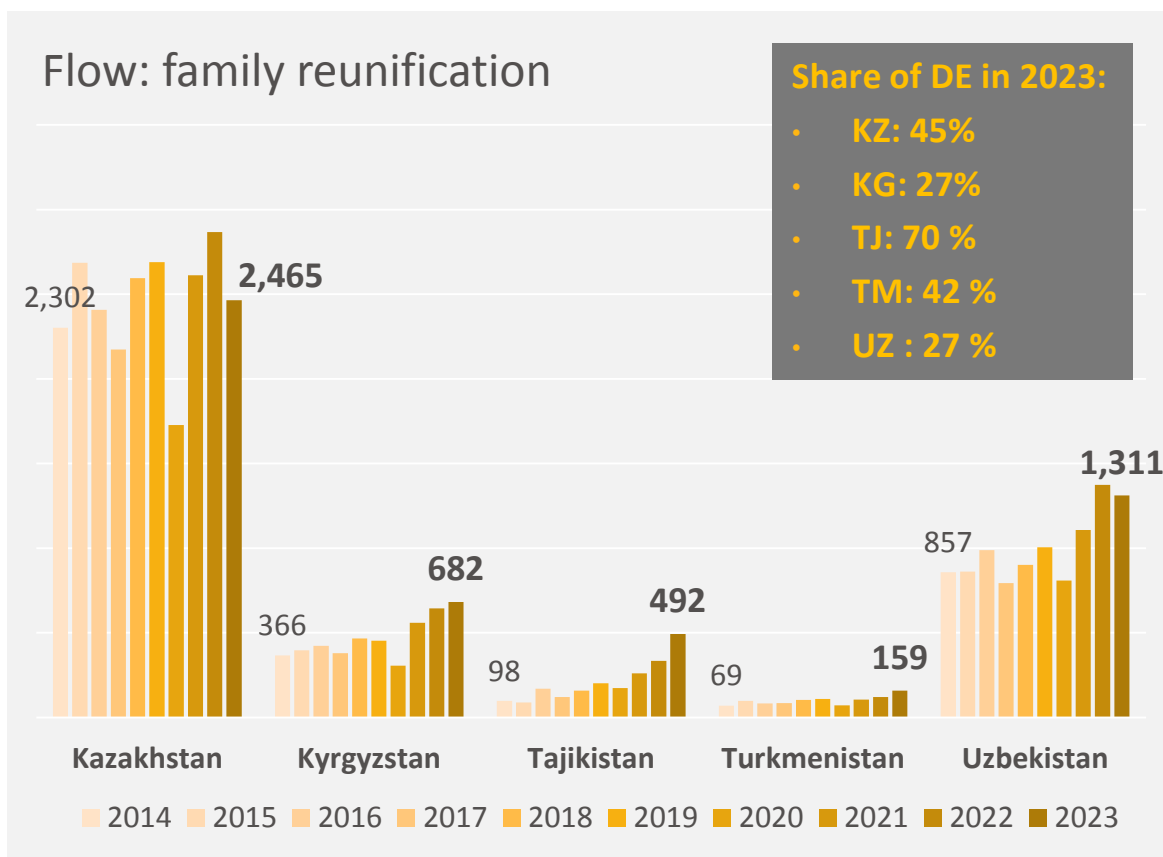
CA state	MS1	MS2	MS3	MS4	MS5	M6
Kazakhstan	Poland	Czechia	Italy	Germany	France	Spain
Kyrgyzstan	Poland	Germany	Italy	Hungary	Czechia	Austria
Tajikistan	Germany	Poland	Czechia	Italy	Hungary	Latvia
Turkmenistan	Romania	Germany	Poland	Hungary	Austria	Italy
Uzbekistan	Poland	Germany	Latvia	Italy	Czechia	Hungary



Source: Eurostat

FAMILY MIGRATION

- Germany – top EU destination for all CA countries



Source: Eurostat

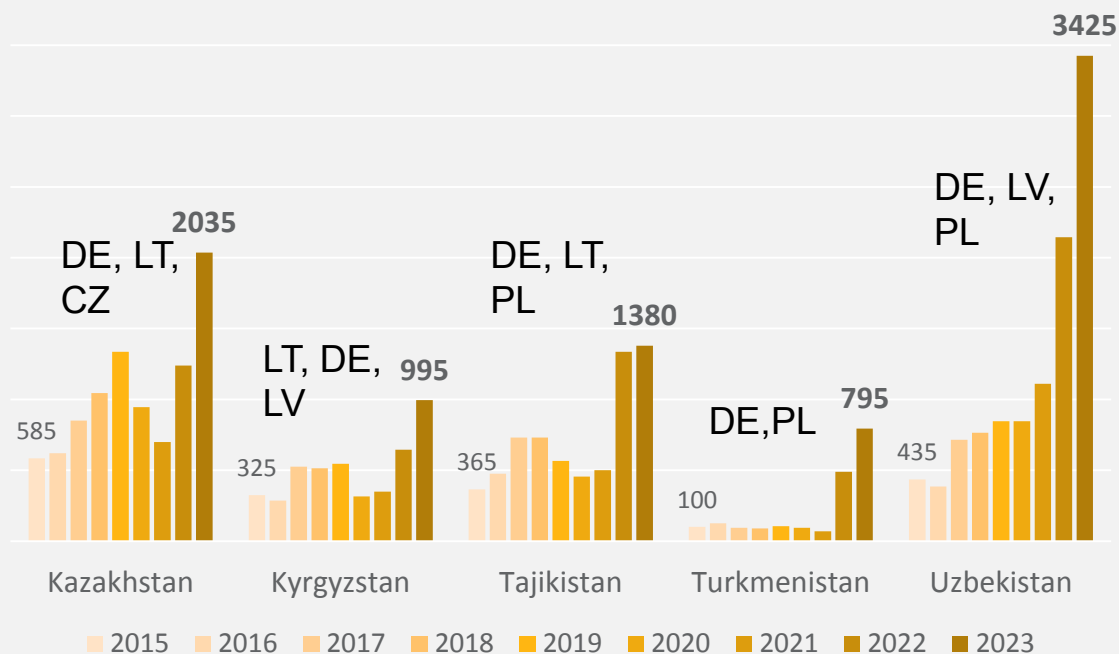
CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

- Slow formation of a new corridor (?) – a response to regional pressures, but also to a broader EU that is closer, more accessible, and more engaged with its neighbourhoods
- Labour migration becoming more structured and strategic: more agreements
- CA may be seen as a strategic reservoir for (semi-, low-, high-skilled) labour force
- Pre-departure training is essential – *Migrant Resource Centres*
- EU countries competing for CA workers with other countries
- Diversification diminishes Russian influence (?)
- Irregular migration increases (?)
- Cooperation on labour migration as one of the pillars for broader geopolitical and economic partnership

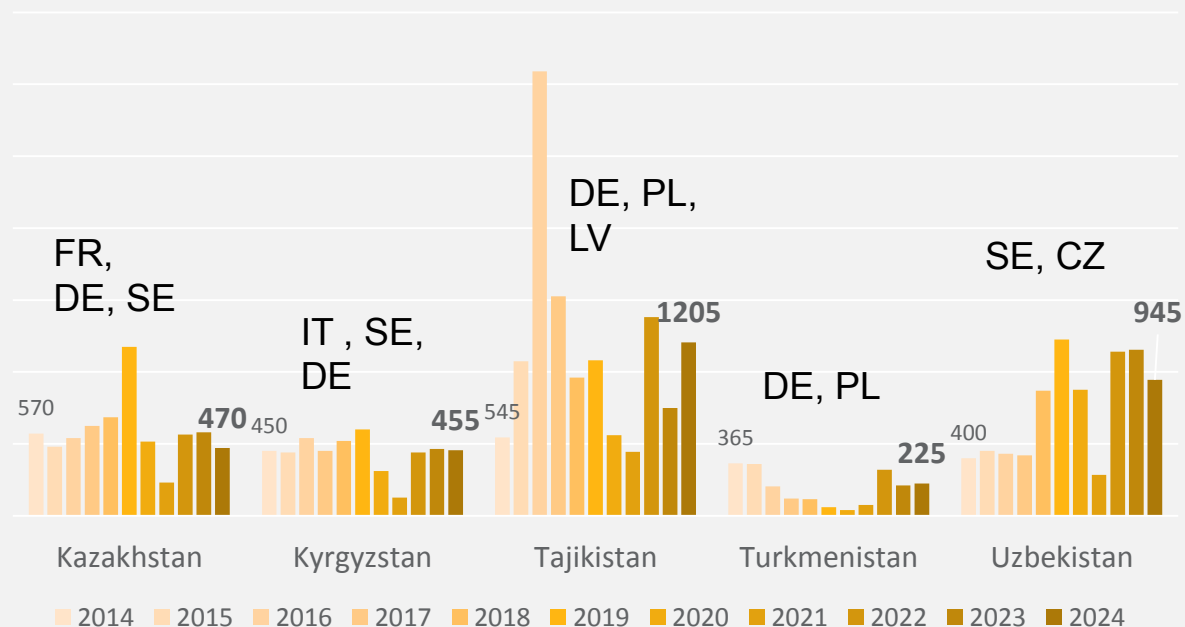
IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

Has irregular migration increased too? What about asylum?

CA nationals found to be illegally present in the EU,
2014-2023



First-time asylum applicants from CA,
2014-2024



Source: Eurostat

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What are the key challenges and opportunities regarding cooperation with Central Asian countries on migration?
- What actions should be taken to balance the challenges (including potential security concerns), while facilitating migration to meet labour market needs?
- Should migration governance cooperation between the EU and Central Asia be better integrated into broader diplomatic and economic relations?

Thank you very much for your attention!

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