



EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT ON STATISTICS ON MIGRATION, ASYLUM AND RETURN: IRELAND 2004

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1. MIGRATION ISSUES

1.1 Introduction

The current report provides analysis on statistics relating to migration and asylum in Ireland. The majority of the data have been supplied by Eurostat and where other sources have been used this is marked below the relevant table. Data are not available on all of the requested items. The main migration-related event of interest in 2004 was the accession of ten new EU Member States in May. In addition a referendum was held on the acquisition of Irish citizenship in 2004. Regarding asylum the effects of substantial changes to the 1996 Refugee Act, introduced in September 2003, can be seen in some of the 2004 data. Available data on population by citizenship, residence permits, apprehended non-Irish nationals and refused/returned immigrants by citizenship are limited.

The accession of ten new EU Member States in 2004 resulted in very significant increases in immigration flows from those countries. In terms of policy development the main issues were the referendum on the acquisition of Irish citizenship and the subsequent legislative changes and the enactment of the Immigration Act, 2004. Unfortunately, available data on residence permits are very limited so the analysis in that section is curtailed.

1.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Migration Statistics

1.2.1 MIGRATION FLOWS

The legally resident population in Ireland has grown steadily in the period in question to reach just over 4 million in January 2004. This growth has been driven both by net immigration and natural increase. *The Population and Migration Estimates* produced by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicate that emigration declined by 35 per cent between 2001 and 2004 to reach the lowest figure since this series of estimates began.

Table 1: Migration Flows 1999-2004

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Legally resident population (1 January)*	3,734,901	3,786,931	3,838,942	3,897,000	3,963,636	4,027,732
Recorded Immigration	52,600	59,000	66,900	50,500	50,100	70,000
Recorded Emigration	26,600	26,200	25,600	20,700	18,500	16,600

Source: Eurostat; Central Statistics Office (CSO).

*Legally resident population (1 January): Special 1 January calculation by CSO.

Recorded immigration/emigration (April of reference year – April of subsequent year): Population and Migration Estimates, CSO.

Immigration flows reached a high of 66,900 in the twelve months between April 2001 and April 2002. The period between 2001 and 2003 saw a decline in immigration to 50,100. This decline may have reflected tightening immigration policy and a decline in asylum applications (see previous report in this series: Quinn, 2006).¹ Significant increases in immigration flows occurred in 2004: between April 2004 and April 2005 immigration reached 70,000 which was the highest figure recorded since the present series of annual migration estimates began in 1987. This dramatic growth was largely a result of the accession of ten new EU Member States in May 2004. Over a third of immigrants (38 per cent) were nationals of the EU-10 accession states, 17 per cent of immigrants were from Poland while 9 per cent were from Lithuania (CSO, 2005).

Table 2: Immigration Flow by Nationality 2004

	000s	%
Irish	19.0	27
UK	6.9	10
Rest of EU15	7.1	10
EU-10	26.4	38
USA	1.6	2
Rest of world	9.0	13
Total	70.0	100

Source: CSO, 2005.

1.2.2 POPULATION BY CITIZENSHIP IN 2004

Population by citizenship data are available only from the Census. The last Census took place in 2002 and the next will take place in 2006. There are therefore no more detailed data available for 2004.

Table 3: Population 2004

	2004
Total Population	4,027,732
Irish nationals	3,829,000
Non-Irish nationals	198,732

Source: Eurostat, CSO.

Note: The total population figure is a special total estimated population on 1st January in the reference year. Nationality data relate to April of the reference year.

1.2.3 RESIDENCE PERMITS: ANNUAL TOTAL POSITIVE DECISIONS 2004

Unfortunately, data on positive decisions for residence permits are extremely limited for Ireland. Below are the figures for the number of employment permits (work permits, work visas plus work authorisations²) issued in the

¹ Note that it is not possible to provide estimated migration flows for Ireland which exclude flows of asylum applicants.

² Work authorisations were issued to nationals of non visa-required countries while work visas were issued to nationals of visa-required countries.

reference year. Renewals are included. Group work permits are excluded therefore one permit equals one person. The number of employment permits issued in 2004 was substantially lower than in 2002 and 2003. As Quinn and Hughes (2005) and Table 13 show, workers from the EU-10 states and other Eastern European countries dominated work permit allocations in 2002 and 2003. The decline in the numbers of employment permits issued in 2004 reflects the fact that EU-10 nationals ceased to require a work permit to access the Irish labour market on accession to the EU in May 2004.

Table 4: Employment Permits Issued 2002-2004

	2002	2003	2004
Employment Permits issued	40,321	47,551	34,067

Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

1.3 Contextual Interpretations (Legal, Political and International Factors)

1.3.1 MAIN TRENDS AND MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF MIGRATION POLICY SINCE THE PREVIOUS YEAR

1.3.1.1 *The Immigration Act 2004*

The Immigration Act 2004 restated a wide range of provisions that would previously have been contained in the Statutory Orders made under the 1935 Aliens Act. The 2004 Act was introduced in response to certain legal challenges to the older legislation which are detailed in Quinn and Hughes (2005). The Immigration Act 2004 makes provision for the appointment of immigration officers and criteria for permission to land. It empowers the Minister to make Orders regarding visas and approved ports for landing and imposes limits on the duration of a non-Irish national's stay. Certain obligations are imposed on carriers and persons landing in the State are required to be in possession of a passport or identity document and non-nationals are required to register with the Gardáí (police).

1.3.1.2 *Irish Citizenship*

The issue of Irish citizenship dominated immigration policy in Ireland during 2004. There were two dimensions to the debate: a) whether citizenship should be granted to all children born in Ireland as had been the case up to 2004 and b) whether having an Irish-born child entitled non-EU national parents to reside in Ireland. (A more detailed discussion of this debate is provided in Quinn and Hughes, 2005.) In July 2003 the Government announced that immigrants could no longer seek residency in Ireland based on their child's Irish citizenship and suspended the processing of residency claims lodged on that basis. A European Court of Justice judgment in October 2004 (*Chen v UK*) found that Ms. Chen, a Chinese national, had the right to reside anywhere in the EU with her Irish-born (and therefore Irish citizen) child. This was interpreted by the Irish Government as more evidence of an urgent need for citizenship to be linked to *jus sanguinis* (the principle of citizenship based on blood descent). Ireland was then the only country in the EU to grant citizenship on the principle of *jus soli* (place of birth) alone.

A referendum was held in June 2004 on the question of a Constitutional amendment. The referendum was passed by a large majority of voters (79 per cent) and means that a constitutional entitlement to citizenship now exists only for a child who has at least one parent who is, or who is entitled to be,

an Irish citizen. The amendment also reinstated the power of the Oireachtas (parliament) to legislate on the acquisition of citizenship. The Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004, which commenced on January 1 2005, now sets out the conditions under which Irish citizenship may be granted to a child born in Ireland with foreign national parents. One of the parents must have been legally resident on the island of Ireland for three years during the four years immediately preceding the child's birth. Periods spent in the State pursuing education or awaiting determination of an asylum application do not qualify in this regard.

1.3.1.3 Spousal Work Permit Scheme

In October 2004 new arrangements were introduced for the spouses of certain non-EEA employees working in the state on work visa/work authorisations. The spouses of work permit holders are not eligible for the new scheme unless the original work permit holder is a researcher or academic with a recognised third level institution or a medical professional who is fully registered with the appropriate professional body.

1.3.2 EXISTING CATEGORIES OF ADMISSION OR NON-ADMISSION IN 2004

Categories of admission of non-EU nationals for which data are available for 2004 relate to employment, and include work permits holders and work visa/authorisation holders. Other categories of admission on which data are not freely available include: student migration, family reunification/formation; and self employment.

On foot of the Immigration Act 2004, section 4, a non-Irish national may be refused admission to Ireland if he or she:

- Is not in a position to support himself or herself and any accompanying dependants;
- Is not in possession of a valid employment permit or relevant visa;
- Is not in possession of a passport or relevant identity document;
- Is the subject of a deportation/exclusion order or a determination by the Minister that it is conducive to the public good that he or she remain outside the State;
- Suffers from certain conditions diseases/addictions;
- Has been convicted of an imprisonable offence;
- Is considered likely to abuse the Common Travel Area with the UK;
- Is considered a threat to national security;
- Is believed to be seeking entry to the State for purposes other than those expressed to the Immigration Officer.

1.3.3 EUROPEAN/INTERNATIONAL FACTORS EXPLAINING CERTAIN CHANGES/CONTINUITY REGARDING MIGRATION IN 2004 COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

1.3.3.1 EU-10 Accession, May 2004

The most significant migration-related development in 2004 was the accession of ten new EU Member States in May. Ireland was one of just three countries, along with the UK and Sweden, to allow free access of EU-10 nationals to the national labour market. This meant that nationals of these countries ceased to require work permits to access the Irish labour market on 1 May 2004. As in the UK, EU-10 nationals face restrictions on access to Ireland's social welfare system. The measures, which are contained in the

Social Welfare Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2004, apply equally to all EU nationals and restrict access to social assistance and Child Benefit payments by introducing a 'Habitual Residence Condition' (HRC). The basic requirement for a person to be deemed 'habitually resident' is to have been resident in Ireland or the UK for a continuous period of two years before making an application for social welfare.

2. ASYLUM ISSUES

Numbers of asylum applications continued to fall in 2004. The main policy developments which impacted on asylum in 2004 actually took place in September 2003, principally the introduction of safe countries of origin and prioritisation directives. Accession in May 2004 and changes to Irish citizenship laws also had an impact on asylum flows.

2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Asylum Statistics

2.1.1 TRENDS IN FIRST-TIME ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN 2004 COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Table 5: First-time Asylum Applications 1997-2004

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of First Applications	3,880	4,626	7,724	10,938	10,325	11,598	7,483	4,265

Source: Eurostat, Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

Table 6: First Asylum Applications by Main Countries of Citizenship

	2004
Nigeria	1,445
Romania	246
Somalia	197
China (including Hong Kong)	152
Sudan	145
Congo, the Democratic Republic of the	130
Croatia	128
Georgia	120
Afghanistan	106
Moldova, Republic of	90
Others	1,506
Total	4,265

Source: Eurostat; Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

Table 5 shows that over the period 1997 to 2002 the number of people who sought asylum in Ireland under the 1951 Geneva Convention increased significantly to 11,634. Between 2002 and 2004, however, the number of first instance asylum applications fell by over 60 per cent to 4,265. A comparison of first asylum applications by main countries of citizenship in 2004 (Table 6) and 2003 (data supplied in Quinn, 2006) shows that applications made by Nigerian and Romanian nationals have fallen most dramatically in the period:

by 54 per cent from 3,110 and by 68 per cent from 777 respectively. Applications made by Moldovan nationals also fell substantially year on year from 244 to 90 (63 per cent) and those made by nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo almost halved year on year from 256 to 130.³

This overall reduction in the number of asylum applications to some extent reflects international trends: UNHCR (2005) data indicate that the number of asylum seekers lodging applications in industrial countries fell sharply for the third year in a row. However, it is also possible that domestic policy contributed to this decline. As was discussed above, during 2004 a debate was taking place on the acquisition of Irish citizenship and the granting of residency based on parentage of Irish-born children had been suspended since 2003. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (April 2004) argued that people were coming to Ireland as asylum applicants and then having children here and pursuing residency claims on that basis. The Department circulated an 'Information Note' in April 2004 which indicated that numbers of asylum seekers had fallen in response to the suspension of residency claims on the basis of parentage of Irish-born children.

Other relevant domestic policy changes are detailed in Quinn and Hughes (2005) and Quinn (2006) and include the following measures. In November 2004, the Minister designated Croatia and South Africa as safe countries of origin, with effect from 9 December 2004. Applicants for asylum from these countries must rebut the presumption that they are not in need of refugee protection and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT) makes decisions on the basis of papers alone rather than with an oral hearing. However, it is more likely that the general decline in asylum applications in 2004 reflects policy developments in 2003. These measures included a direction to the Chairperson of the RAT to accord priority to asylum applications received from Nigerian nationals, the designation of Bulgaria, Romania and the EU-10 states as safe countries of origin and an increased duty to cooperate on the part of the asylum applicant.

2.1.2 FIRST AND FINAL POSITIVE DECISIONS IN 2004

Table 7: Total Number of Asylum Decisions

	2004
Total	6,898
Positive decisions	430
Negative decisions	6,468
Other non-status decisions	-

Source: Eurostat; Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

³ Note the comparison is not complete year on year i.e. some countries included in the 2003 data are not significant enough to include in the 2004 data and vice versa.

Table 8: Total Number of Positive Decisions (First Instance) by Type and Country of Citizenship

	Total	Geneva Conv. Stat. Granted	Humanitarian Status and all other types of subs. protection
Total	430	430	207*
Somalia	82	82	-
Sudan	34	34	-
Iraq	34	34	-
China (including Hong Kong)	23	23	-
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	20	20	-
Others	237	237	-

*Number of persons granted Leave to Remain pursuant to Section 3(3)(a) of Immigration Act 1999 (Closest equivalent to subsidiary protection available prior to October 2006.)

Source: Eurostat; Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

Relative to the total number of asylum decisions made there was an increase in the proportion of positive decisions between 2003 and 2004: 3.7 per cent of determinations were positive in 2003 while 6.2 per cent were positive in 2004. Unfortunately, there is no detailed breakdown of the citizenship of people accorded positive and negative decisions. We can speculate that the higher proportion of positive determinations in 2004 is partly a result of changed migration flows, for example lower numbers of Nigerian and Romanian asylum applicants: both of these groups are characterised by low recognition rates (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, June 2005). In addition in 2003 a substantial proportion of the total first instance decisions issued were classified as 'other non-status decisions' because certain types of cases could not be processed to completion before the introduction of new measures in the Immigration Act 2003. If these non-status decisions are excluded the proportion of positive decisions in 2003 rises to 4.2 per cent. A total of 207 people were granted leave to remain pursuant to Section 3(3)(a) of Immigration Act 1999.

When compared with the previous year, can you observe *changes in the statuses regularly granted to particular citizenship groups?* How do you explain these changes or continuity?

Compared with the previous years substantially, more Somali nationals were granted a positive asylum determination in 2004 than in 2003 (82 compared to 24 respectively). No other nationality appears in both 2003 and 2004 top five nationalities data therefore the comparison is limited to Somalia.

2.2 Contextual Interpretations (Legal, Political and International Factors)

2.2.1 NEW OR AMENDED LAWS EFFECTIVE IN 2004

There were very few legislative developments during 2004 in the area of asylum. A great deal of activity took place in the latter half of 2003 and is discussed in detail in Quinn, 2006. The legislative changes discussed above in relation to citizenship are relevant here as it was believed that the asylum system was the route of entry to the State used by people who might later claim residency based on the parentage of an Irish born child. To support this position the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform claimed that

almost 60 per cent of female asylum seekers aged 16 years and over were arriving in Ireland while pregnant (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, April 2004).

2.2.2 PROCEDURAL CHANGES EFFECTIVE IN 2004

In relation to the processing of asylum applications the most important procedural change was the continued implementation of prioritisation directives. Prioritisation directives were introduced through amendments to the Refugee Act 1996 in September 2003 and were implemented in 2004. Prioritisation directives may be issued to the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal for certain categories of applicants. On 15 September 2003, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform directed the Refugee Applications Commissioner to prioritise the countries designated as safe countries of origin (then Bulgaria, Romania and the EU-10 States, South Africa and Croatia were added to the list subsequently). In December 2003 the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform directed the Chairperson of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to accord priority to asylum applications received from Nigerian nationals as well as those from safe countries of origin.

The number of appeals received by the RAT did not change substantially between 2003 and 2004 (5,306 and 5,011 respectively) but the number of completed appeals was up 29 per cent year on year. This may be partly attributed to the introduction of prioritisation directives.

2.2.3 EUROPEAN/INTERNATIONAL FACTORS EXPLAINING CERTAIN CHANGES REGARDING ASYLUM TRENDS IN 2004

The number of people who sought asylum in Ireland under the 1951 Geneva Convention fell by 43 per cent between 2003 and 2004. As discussed above this decline partly reflects international trends: UNHCR (2005) data indicate that in 2004 asylum applications had reached their lowest level for sixteen years across all the industrialised countries for which comparable UNHCR historical statistics are available.

3. ILLEGAL ENTRY

Available data in this section are limited particularly that related to apprehended non-Irish nationals and refused/returned immigrants by citizenship. The Immigration Act 2004 was enacted and contains provisions related to border controls although this legislation largely restated existing provisions.

3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Statistics

3.1.1 DEVELOPMENTS/TRENDS PERTAINING TO THE NUMBER OF REFUSED ALIENS IN 2004 COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Table 9: Total Number of Refused Non-Irish Nationals During the Period 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of Refused Aliens	5,504	5,647	5,826	4,763

Source: Eurostat.

Table 10: Refused Non-Irish Nationals by Main Country of Citizenship, 2004

	2004
Nigeria	497
Brazil	490
Romania	306
Unknown	264
Poland	245
South Africa	218
China	216
Lithuania	193
Pakistan	103
Latvia	85
Others	2,146
Total	4,763

Source: Eurostat.

The total number of refused non-Irish nationals fell by 18 per cent between 2003 and 2004. Particularly large decreases were seen among refusals of Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish nationals (falls were recorded of 66 per cent, 60 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). It is likely these figures reflect the fact that EU-10 nationals gained freedom of movement within the EU in May 2004. The number of South African and Romanian nationals refused also decreased by 22 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Both countries

were designated as safe countries of origin in 2004 and as discussed above asylum applications from Romania fell substantially between 2003 and 2004. It is possible that the safe country of origin designation resulted in fewer Romanians travelling to Ireland to apply for asylum. As South Africa was just designated a safe country of origin in December 2004 this could not have contributed to the decline in refusals. Brazilian nationals were the only group (on which we have data) for which refusals increased year on year by 24 per cent.

3.1.2 DEVELOPMENTS/TRENDS PERTAINING TO THE NUMBER OF APPREHENDED ALIENS IN 2004 COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Table 11: Apprehended Non-Irish Nationals 1997-2002

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of Apprehended Aliens	6	24	24	25	52	115

Number of apprehended aliens.

No data are available on the number of apprehended non-Irish nationals for 2003 or 2004.

3.1.3 DEVELOPMENTS/TRENDS PERTAINING TO THE NUMBER OF ALIENS REMOVED IN 2004 COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Table 12: Removed Non-Irish Nationals 1999-2004

	Deportation Orders Signed	Deportation Orders Effectuated*	% Effectuated
1999	102	6	6
2000	940	187	20
2001	2,025	365	18
2002	2,430	521	21
2003	2,411	591	25
2004	2,915	599	21

Source: *Eurostat, Quinn (2007).

Table 12 shows the number of deported non-Irish nationals and the number of deportation orders signed. The number of deportation orders effected has been climbing steadily in line with the number of deportation orders signed although the percentage effected remains low. No breakdown by citizenship is available of these data for 2004.

In cases of refused, apprehended, and removed aliens in 2004, are these from the same countries in all categories, or are particular citizenship groups more common in a particular category? If possible, explain the underlying causes.

Unfortunately 2004 data are only available for by nationality for refused non-Irish nationals.

**3.2
Contextual
Interpretations
(Legal,
Political and
International
Factors)****3.2.1 NEW OR AMENDED LAWS INFLUENCING IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION IN 2004**

As discussed above 2004 saw the enactment of the Immigration Act 2004. However, this legislation largely restated existing provisions, such as grounds on which to refuse entry to the State, and did not have a huge impact on irregular migration.

3.2.2 PROCEDURAL CHANGES INFLUENCING IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION IN 2004

There were no significant procedural changes influencing irregular immigration during 2004. However, there was considerable debate in the period on the subject of judicial review. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the GNIB argue that high incidence of judicial review proceedings is a reason for the lack of enforcement of deportation orders. However, judicial review may only delay the enforcement of a deportation order (under certain circumstances) and may only stop enforcement when the Court has quashed the deportation order and the order has, therefore, become invalid. In November 2004 the Master of the High Court was critical of the fact that so many applicants for asylum were on the High Court judicial review list. He argued that the Refugee Appeals Tribunal was not giving sufficient consideration to the credibility of asylum applicants and that such applicants were then challenging negative decisions in the courts.⁴

3.2.3 EUROPEAN/INTERNATIONAL FACTORS EXPLAINING CERTAIN CHANGES/CONTINUITY REGARDING ILLEGAL ENTRY IN 2004

The accession of the EU-10 States in May 2004 had the effect of reducing illegal entry of nationals of those States to Ireland in 2004.

⁴ *The Irish Times*, November 20, 2004, "Lawyer criticises assessment of refugees".

4. OTHER DATA AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE

4.1 Cross-Border Labour Employment

Table 13: Work Permits Issued and Renewed by Nationality, 2001-2004

Country, Region	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%
USA, Canada	1,470	4.0	1,096	2.7	1,265	2.7	1,196	3.5
Australia	1,098	3.0	1,116	2.8	1,149	2.4	908	2.7
India	757	2.1	845	2.1	1,030	2.2	1,253	3.7
Japan	205	0.6	197	0.5	209	0.4	235	0.7
Pakistan	821	2.3	840	2.1	830	1.7	846	2.5
Philippines	2,472	6.8	3,255	8.1	4,042	8.5	4,301	12.6
South Africa	2,305	6.3	2,273	5.6	2,468	5.2	2,031	6.0
Baltic States	8,346	22.9	8,594	21.3	9,723	20.4	2,12	8.5
Other EU-10 States	4,984	13.7	5,131	12.7	6,883	14.5	2,378	7.0
Other Eastern Europe	6,662	18.3	8,562	21.2	9,974	21.0	7,978	23.4
Other Countries	7,326	20.1	8,412	20.9	9,978	21.0	10,029	29.4
Total	36,446	100.0	40,321	100.0	47,551	100.0	34,067	100.0

Table 14: Work Permits Issued and Renewed by Sector, 2001-2004

Sector	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%
Agriculture	5,714	8.6	6,248	15.5	7,242	15.2	3,721	10.9
Industry	3,119	75.8	3,094	7.7	3,376	7.1	2,174	6.4
Services	27,613	6.2	30,979	76.8	36,933	77.7	28,172	82.7
Medical, Nursing	2,252	25.0	2,883	7.2	2,709	5.7	2,469	7.2
Catering	9,129	1.3	10,306	25.6	11,548	24.3	8,306	24.4
Education	480	1.4	610	1.5	759	1.6	717	2.1
Domestic	521	3.1	788	2.0	944	2.0	772	2.3
Entertainment/Sport	1,142	38.7	1,027	2.5	1,172	2.5	1,191	3.5
Other Services	14,089	100.0	15,365	38.1	19,801	41.6	14,717	43.2
Total	36,446	0.0	40,321	100.0	47,551	100.0	34,067	100.0

As mentioned above the most complete immigration-related administrative data available in Ireland relate to work permits. Work permit data is presented above for the years 2001-2004 by nationality and by sector of permit issued. The number of work permits issued in 2004 was down compared to 2004. The nationality breakdown provided in Table 13 shows that workers from the EU-10 States and other Eastern European countries dominated work permit allocations in 2002 and 2003. The proportion of

work permits issued to EU-10 nationals fell significantly after accession in May 2004. Table 14 shows that the vast majority of work permits are issued to workers in the services sector, particularly catering and other services.

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