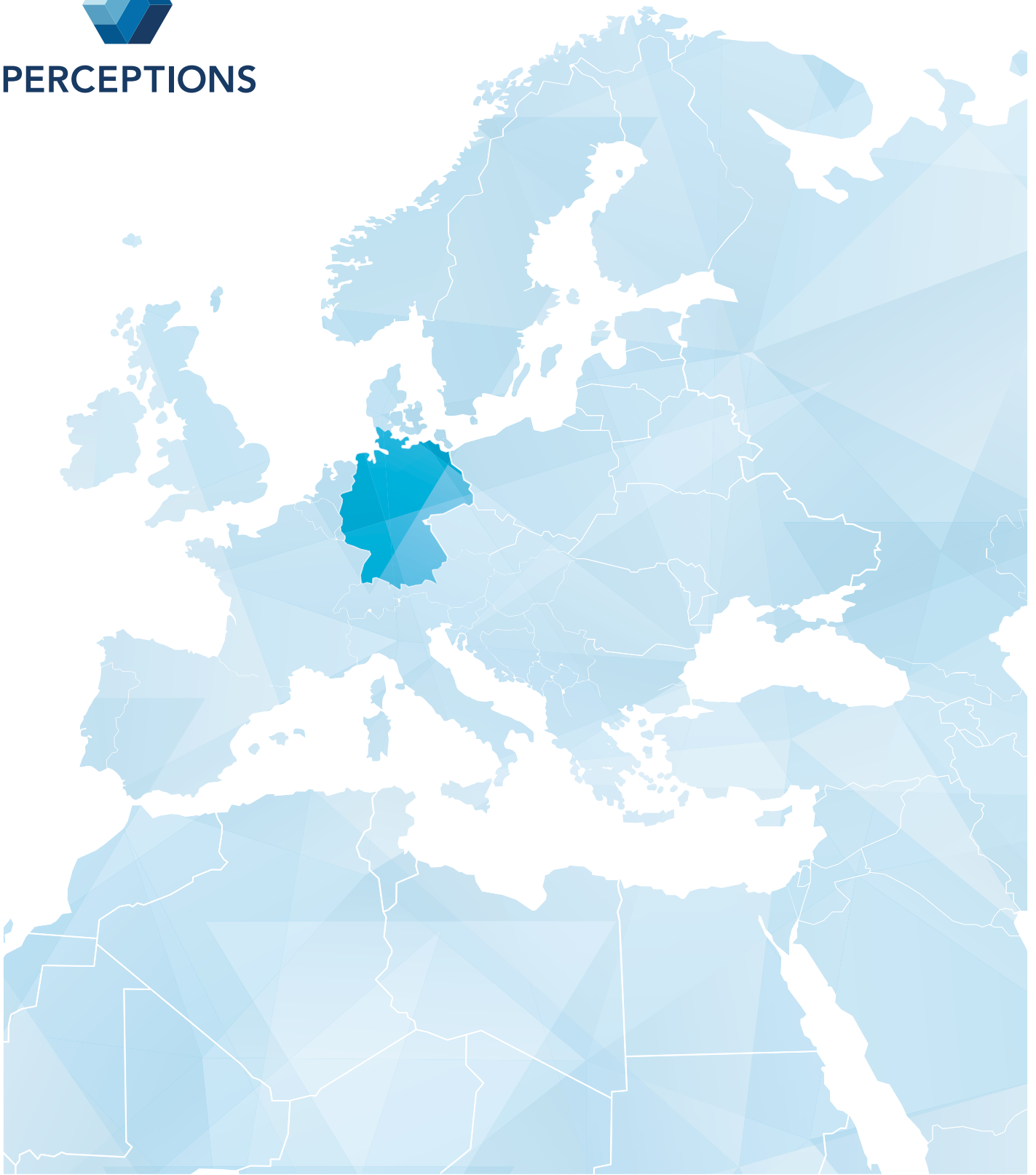




PERCEPTIONS



Germany

PERCEPTIONS
Country Report

PERCEPTIONS RESEARCH:

Literature, studies, projects, stakeholders, solutions, tools and practices

DISCLAIMER:

Disclaimer: This report is based on desk-research conducted between 2019 and 2022 and covers major development between the period of 2015-2019. For more updated information on the country profile, please check the additional institutional links at the end of the document.



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 Research & Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 833870.

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a) Geographical map



b) Short summary

The federal authorities for migration governance in Germany are the Refugees (BAMF) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Germany has received comparatively positive ratings from migration governance monitoring programmes, with The Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 rates German policy as favourable or slightly favourable on the dimensions of labour market mobility, access to nationality and permanent residence, and political participation. On the other hand, dimensions found lacking are anti-discrimination, family reunion, education, and health. In 2019, every fourth person in Germany is of immigrant background (BAMF 2019), meaning that for 25,5% of the population, they or one of their parents were not born a German citizen. Public attitudes toward migration have fluctuated over the years: while the 2015-2016 spike in humanitarian immigration did pose a real challenge to Germany's migration infrastructure, its most profound effects were political and cultural. Initial responses were largely welcoming. However, increased inflows from Muslim-majority regions coincided with high-visibility security incidents across Europe, aggravating longstanding anti-Islamic and racist sentiment within the right-wing, while lack of control over European migration policy aggravated Euroscepticism.

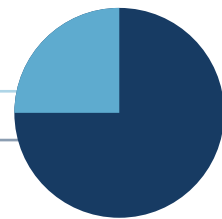
c) Facts & figures

Facts and figures n.1 about Germany

Population of Germany in 2019

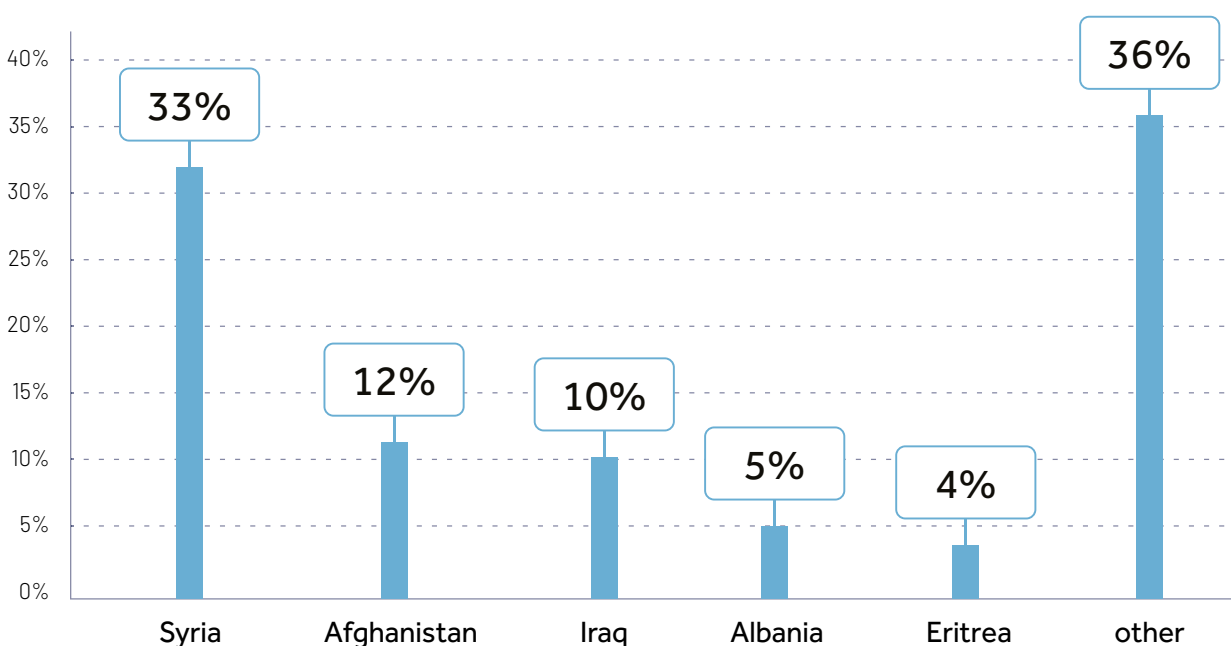
Immigration Background: 25%

Locals: 75%



Facts and figures n.2 about Germany

Percentage of asylum applications by nationality between 2014 and 2018



c) Full document

Institutional setting

The federal authorities for migration governance in Germany are the Refugees (BAMF) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Other federal ministries, such as the Federal Office for Migration and Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), implement migration-related measures in their areas of jurisdiction. Day-to-day administrative services for immigrants, such as visa interviews and issuance of permits, are handled by local immigration offices (Ausländerämter).

The Federal Police and state police administer Border security matters, including detention and deportation. Asylum and deportation reviews are handled by administrative rather than criminal courts; however, the Federal Criminal Police is responsible for human trafficking and other serious border crimes.

A federal Commissary for Migration, Refugees and Integration advises the government concerning asylum and integration, and the Foreign Office assists in the dissemination of accurate information. However, many aspects of integration policy and practical matters of asylum support are administered on a state rather than a federal level, and detailed information on state-level policies and services is sometimes difficult to locate, especially in languages other than German. Civil society (German Red Cross, Raphaelswerk, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Diakonie, Caritas, and many local organizations) plays an important role in disseminating information and providing asylum and integration services such as legal aid, psychological and pastoral counselling, and social and community support. The major federally administered voluntary return programme is REAG/GARP (Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany/Government Assisted Repatriation Programme), a collaborative initiative of the BAMF and IOM that provides financial and logistical support for return migration. The StarthilfePlus programme provides supplementary assistance. Additional programmes are administered on a

state and local level. Both the federal and state governments maintain bilateral agreements with certain countries of origin regarding the provision of reintegration assistance and services.

Germany has received comparatively positive ratings from migration governance monitoring programmes. The IOM Migration Governance Indicators 2018 report mentioned e.g. transparent policies, provision of basic rights and services (to legally recognised migrants), recognition of foreign qualifications, and access to residency for skilled workers as strengths and the lack of an integrated national migration policy and administrative coherence among states as weaknesses (IOM 2019). The Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 rates German policy as favourable or slightly favourable on the dimensions of labour market mobility, access to nationality and permanent residence, and political participation; dimensions found lacking are anti-discrimination, family reunion, education, and health (MIPEX, 2015).

Short migration overview

Before the 20th century, Germany was better known as a country of emigration than immigration. Industrialisation in the 1880s-1900s began to change this. From the mid-20th century on, the balance has shifted toward immigration, which has occurred in several waves. During a first wave (ca. 1944- 1950) war refugees from central Europe, mostly ethnic German (Heimatvertriebene) but also non-German (heimatloser Ausländer) arrived to the country. Between 1955-1973 so-called 'guest workers' (Gastarbeiter) arrived from Italy, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia.

During the 1980s-1990s asylum-seekers, including ethnic Germans, from Central and Eastern Europe started to arrive. The period between ca. 2005-2016, was characterized by regular labour migration and gradually increasing humanitarian migration in response to policy reforms, spiking in 2015-2016. Finally, more recently (2017-2020) there was a drop in humanitarian migration in response to

tightening policies, international agreements (e.g. the EU-Turkey deal), and geopolitical shifts.

In 2015, 890,000 refugees and asylum seekers reached Germany. This influx was largely unforeseen and presented a stress test for administrators and lawmakers. Overarching measures were developed by the ministries concerned, and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees increased its personnel. Various administrative processes related to the asylum procedure were adjusted (BAMF 2019). Some legal changes were also made, including the expansion of the list of safe countries, the removal of barriers to deportation, an expansion of integration offers for asylum seekers, and increased subsidiary protection and toleration opportunities. Some of these liberalising measures have since been reversed (see further).

As of 2019, every fourth person in Germany is of immigrant background (BAMF 2019), meaning that for 25,5% of the population, they or one of their parents were not born a German citizen. A spectrum of civil society groups represents the interests of migrants in Germany, as segmented by legal status (e.g. Pro Asyl, Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., etc.) and/or national or ethnic background (e.g. Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland e.V., Verband Deutsch-Syrischer Hilfsvereine e.V., Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V., etc.). Umbrella organisations also exist (e.g. Bundesverband Netzwerke von Migrantenorganisationen e.V., DaMigra e. V.).

Public attitudes toward migration have fluctuated over the years. During the period of 'guest worker' migration, the majority of policymakers and citizens perceived Germany as an ethnic nation rather than a country of immigrants. This narrative changed on an official level in the 1990s-2000s, with the implementation of partial birth-right citizenship. However, anti-migrant sentiment remains a criterial attribute of the German right wing, and since the perceived 'crisis' of 2015-2016, public opinion has swung against immigration policy liberalisation.

Key development since 2015

While the 2015-2016 spike in humanitarian immigration did pose a real challenge to Germany's migration infrastructure, its most profound effects were political and cultural. Initial responses were largely welcoming. However, increased inflows from Muslim-majority regions coincided with high-visibility security incidents across Europe, aggravating longstanding anti-Islamic and racist sentiment within the right-wing, while lack of control over European migration policy aggravated Euroscepticism. These trends converged to drive the rise of the Alternative für Deutschland party (AfD) and a shift in its priorities from Eurozone scepticism toward nationalism and populism. In the federal elections of 2017, the AfD gained 94 seats, making it the largest opposition party.

Germany's government responded to these political and infrastructural challenges by tightening some asylum and social welfare policies, pushing forward 'migration management' agreements between the EU and important transit countries, incentivising return migration by irregular immigrants, and revising integration policies and labour market access for protected and tolerated immigrants. Current policy debates revolve around these issues and the need to improve economic competitiveness by attracting skilled workers in key sectors (e.g. via a points-based system).

The number of third-country nationals found to be undocumented in Germany peaked at 376,435 in 2015, while asylum applications peaked at 745,160 in 2016. Since then, both statistics have fallen consistently. Between 2014 and 2018, most asylum seekers came from Syria (32.8%), followed by Afghanistan (11.4%) and Iraq (10%) and to a lesser extent Albania (4.8%) and Eritrea (3.5%) (BAMF, 2019). Among asylum applications filed in 2018, nearly 20% were filed on behalf of children born in Germany, under one year old. Legal titles issued for family reunification, too, dropped by about 15% between 2017 and 2018 (ibid.). From 2018 to 2019, net migration also dropped from 416,000 to below 400,000 (Migrationsbericht 2019, BAMF). About two-thirds of immigrants in total come from within Europe.

These fluctuations have had a complex impact on the German security situation. After 2015, crime committed against migrants as well as by migrants rose (SVR 2019). Xenophobic violence rose in 2015 with the arrival of greater numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. As these numbers dropped in 2017, so did the number of registered xenophobic crimes. Criminal acts committed by migrants increased; this remains true even if cases related to overstayed visas and undocumented border crossings into Germany are considered. One probable explanation is that the lengthiness of asylum procedures lead to insecurities about the future and frustration, which may be conducive to crime (SVR, 2019).

For more information, see:

IOM Germany:

<https://germany.iom.int/>

Interior Affairs Germany:

https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/home/home_node.html

Foreign Affairs Germany:

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en>



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