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Asylum seekers and refugees

## Foreigners seeking humanitarian protection

Measuring the stock of foreigners seeking humanitarian protection in Germany

Note by German Federal Statistical Office \*

### *Abstract*

*In light of the mass influx between 2014 and 2016, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany explored the feasibility of complementing existing statistics on the inflow of refugees derived from asylum applications with information on the stock of foreigners living in Germany for humanitarian reasons. The concept was designed to take a comprehensive approach by not only including foreigners with a granted protection status but also foreigners with an asylum application still pending as well as foreigners who still remain in Germany after having been refused protection. Thereby, the approach follows the International Recommendations for Refugee Statistics that were recently adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The concept relies on residence permit data obtained from the Central Register of Foreigners. This data allows identifying foreigners currently applying as well as foreigners having been granted or denied humanitarian protection. At the end of 2016, about 1.6 million foreigners were identified as seeking humanitarian protection in Germany. That represents about 2 percent of the resident population and about 16 % of all resident foreigners. During to the recent surge in humanitarian immigration to Germany between 2014 and 2016, the stock has more than doubled.*

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## I. Introduction

1. In March 2018, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) has reached a landmark consensus on the first internationally applicable set of recommendations on how to produce comparable and high quality statistics on refugees. At its 49th meeting, the UNSC endorsed the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) which aim to improve visibility of refugees in official statistics. The IRRS are designed to assist member countries in establishing refugee statistics as an integral part of official population statistics in their National Statistical Offices (NSOs). For this purpose, the IRRS provide guidelines on standardized terminology and classifications and further discuss potentially adequate data sources and key indicators.

2. Already four months earlier, in November 2017, when the final draft of the IRRS was still circulating for global consultation, the German Federal Statistical Office published a prototype statistic that followed those guidelines in key aspects. At the time, the need to improve visibility of refugees in official statistics was urgent in Germany after the large influx of asylum seekers between 2014 and 2016. Policy makers as well as the overall German society demanded for reliable information. Numbers on the flow of incoming asylum applications as well as figures on decisions upon those applications were available from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Though crucial for an empirically grounded public debate, official statistics on the stock of refugees and people in refugee-like situations drawing a more comprehensive picture on humanitarian immigration were not publicly available at the time.

3. This paper lays out the concept, the data source and key results of the German approach towards integrating refugee statistics into official population statistics. Emphasis is placed on the definitions and classifications used to compile a statistic on the stock of foreigners seeking humanitarian protection in Germany from administrative residence permit data. With respect to classifications the paper highlights similarities as well as departures from the IRRS. Moreover, this report emphasizes the obstacles encountered and the lessons learnt in the process of producing and disseminating this new statistic. Altogether, this paper may be of practical use for NSOs aiming to measure the stock of humanitarian migrants in adherence to the IRRS. Within the European Union, data collection on residence and protection status is harmonized to some extent. For instance, article 6 of EU Directive 2007/862/EC on community statistics on migration and international protection regulates the compilation of statistics on residence permits and residence status of third-country nationals. Accordingly, the outlined approach is potentially applicable to other NSOs within the European Union.

## II. Concept and Definitions

### A. Defining the target population

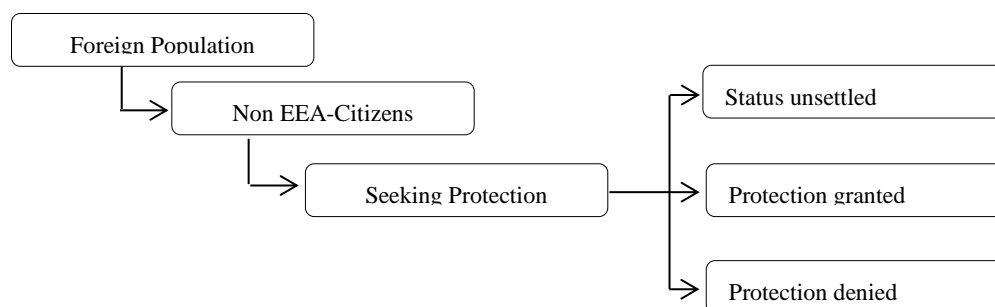
4. People seeking humanitarian protection constitute a sub-group of the foreign population who specifically refer to humanitarian reasons for their current stay in Germany. This population in turn consists of three sub-groups that are distinguished by whether their request for humanitarian protection is yet unsettled, granted or denied. A foreigner's purpose of residence is inferred from his/her legal residence status. In Germany, information on the purpose of residence can be deduced from a foreigner's current residence status under the German Residence Act. Since the beginning of 2005 the German Residence Act regulates entry and residence of foreigners in Germany. According to chapter 1 of the Residence Act, it

*“[...] serve[s] to control and restrict the influx of foreigners into the Federal Republic of Germany. It shall enable and organise immigration with due regard to the capacities for admission and integration and the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany in terms of its economy and labour market. At the same time, the Act shall also serve to fulfil the Federal Republic of Germany’s humanitarian obligations. To this end, it shall regulate the entry, stay, economic activity and integration of foreigners.”*

5. As a major novelty, the German Residence Act introduced the distinction between different purposes of residence. Residence permits issued under this federal law permit residence either for educational purposes, for the purpose of economic activity, based on humanitarian grounds or for family reasons. Residence permits based on humanitarian grounds can either be temporary or permanent. Besides foreigners already holding a residence permit based on humanitarian grounds, prospective asylum-seekers residing in Germany who intend to acquire a humanitarian residence permit also belong to the stock of foreigners seeking protection. Foreigners with an unsettled protection status have either expressed a request for asylum towards German authorities (e.g. police or immigration office) or they already filed an asylum application at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Foreigners whose asylum applications were denied but who still reside in Germany belong to the final sub-group of foreigners with a denied protection status. Further, the sub-group of foreigners with a denied protection status includes foreigners who previously held a temporary humanitarian residence permit that was not prolonged, renounced or withdrawn or who were subject to an expulsion. All foreigners belonging to this category are legally obliged to leave the country. However, in many cases this obligation cannot be enforced due to practical or legal reasons leading to prolonged durations of stay in this status.

6. Citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA), that is, the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, neither require a visa to enter nor a residence permit to stay in Germany, pursuant to Section 2 (4) of the Freedom of Movement Act/EU. Consequently, the German Residence Act does not apply to EEA citizens excluding them *prima facie* from the target population.

Figure 1: Foreigners seeking humanitarian protection

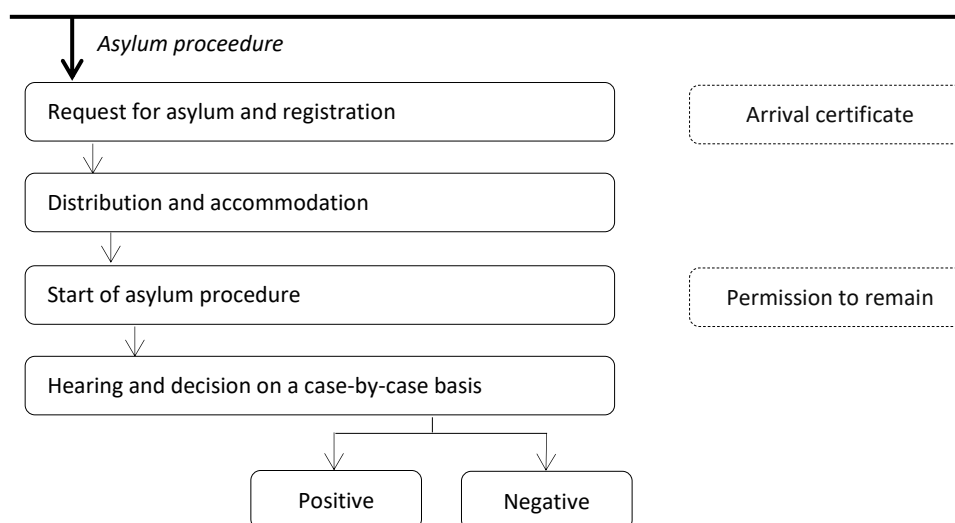


7. By including granted and unsettled cases, the outlined concept is in line with the IRRS. However, the concept deviates from the IRRS in one major aspect. The group of foreigners with a denied protection status does not include persons not admitted as asylum seekers who entered on tourist, student or work visa but who have nonetheless fled persecution, war or violence in their home countries (IRRS 2018: pp. 26-29).

## B. Foreigners with an unsettled protection status

8. Foreigners with an unsettled protection status are prospective asylum seekers or asylum seekers who have filed an application that is currently pending. For statistical purposes this group can be measured by the number of foreigners holding a valid arrival certificate or permission to remain. The arrival certificate is the first official document issued immediately after a person expresses a request for asylum that is registered in the Central Register of Foreigners (CRF).<sup>1</sup> The document allows legal residence for the period between making an asylum request and filing the asylum application. After the asylum seeker has personally filed his/her application with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the arrival certificate is withdrawn and a permission to remain pending the asylum decision is issued.

Figure 2: Foreigners with an unsettled protection status



## C. Foreigners granted humanitarian protection

9. Foreigners with a granted protection status hold a temporary or permanent residence permit based on humanitarian grounds. The German Residence Act stipulates two ways of acquiring a humanitarian residence permit. First, foreigners may be entitled to a temporary humanitarian residence permit through the asylum procedure as described above. Second, through resettlement or humanitarian admissions government authorities can directly entitle foreigners to a humanitarian residence permit without going through the asylum procedure.

10. The asylum procedure consists of four stages, in which the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees examines whether or not a protection status is granted. In the first stage, it examines whether asylum status should be granted. The right of asylum is a form of protection based on national law and has been a constitutional right since the German Basic Law entered into force in 1949. Granting asylum status is strictly limited to persons persecuted on political grounds.

<sup>1</sup> Foreigners seeking protection who entered between 2015 and 2016 with an asylum application pending by the end of 2016 had waited on average 285 days for their asylum procedure to begin. The arrival certificate was introduced in order to identify foreigners who had expressed an asylum request but not yet lodged an official application.

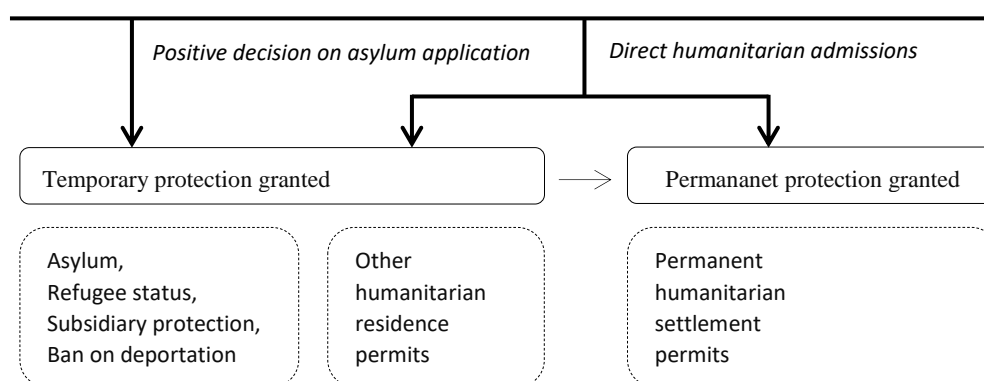
11. In cases of asylum not being granted, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees examines in the second stage whether refugee status pursuant to the Geneva Refugee Convention can be granted. The prerequisite for refugee status being granted is persecution due to personal characteristics such as race, nationality, political opinion, religion or membership of a particular social group (for instance, sexual orientation). Protection of refugees is based on the Geneva Convention, which in 1951 defined for the first time refugees and their legal protection. Within the European Union, protection of refugees pursuant to the Geneva Refugee Convention is uniformly regulated in EU Directive 2001/55/EC.

12. If neither refugee status nor asylum status is granted, it is examined in the third stage of the asylum procedure whether entitlement to subsidiary protection can be claimed. Subsidiary protection is granted if there are substantial grounds for believing that a person would face a real risk of suffering serious personal harm in his/her country of origin. The subsidiary protection status is based on international law, as is the refugee protection status pursuant to the Geneva Refugee Convention. Application and implementation in the national legislation of all European Union Member States is regulated in EU Directive 2001/55/EC.

13. In a final stage, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees examines whether there are reasons for a national ban on deportation. This examination only applies to cases, in which a person seeking protection is granted neither refugee status nor asylum status nor subsidiary protection status. A national ban on deportation determines that obstacles precluding deportation apply, which relate to the countries of destination. This includes illness which would significantly worsen or become life-threatening due to a lack of sufficient medical care.

14. Moreover, foreigners can obtain permanent protection by immigration offices rendering temporary humanitarian residence permits permanent. Therefore, applicants must fulfil legal prerequisites with respect to duration of residence and gainful employment. Further requirements apply that aim at evidence of ensured subsistence and personal integration efforts. Finally, temporary as well as permanent protection can also be admitted directly by means of direct admissions.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 3: Foreigners granted humanitarian protection



<sup>2</sup> Admissions based the EU-Turkey Statement from March 2016 belong to this group. The treaty states that asylum seekers crossing from Turkey to the Greece will be returned to Turkey if denied protection in Greece. For every denied Syrian asylum seeker being returned to Turkey, a Syrian refugee is resettled to the EU from Turkey.

**D. Foreigners denied humanitarian protection <sup>3</sup>**

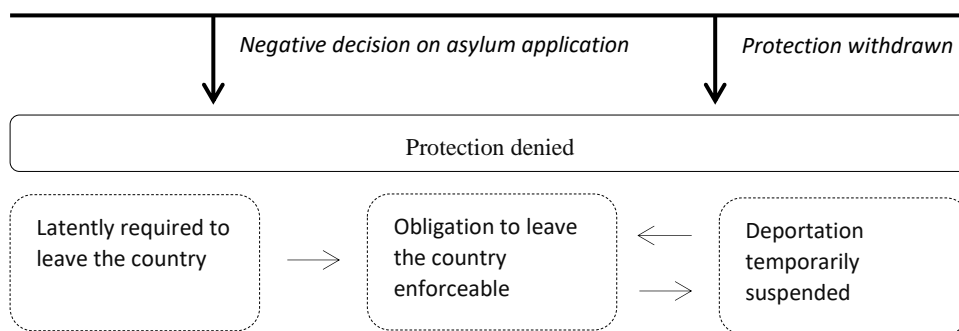
15. The group of foreigners with a denied protection status includes asylum seekers who are residing in Germany after their applications were denied by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Moreover, foreigners granted temporary protection may lose their status over the course of time because their residence permit expires or is withdrawn. Foreigners who were denied protection do not hold a residence permit and are hence legally obliged to leave the country. The status of this obligation can further be distinguished in latent, enforceable or temporarily suspended.

16. People latently required to leave the federal territory have been requested to leave the country within a specific period of time allowing them to comply voluntarily. The requirement to leave is defined as latent because those required to leave can file an appeal at court. This means that the decision reached in the asylum procedure, or the decision on applying a measure terminating residence, is not enforceable yet.

17. Persons denied protection and required to leave the country who can no longer appeal against the decision that justifies their requirement to leave belong to the persons with an enforceable requirement to leave the country. If the requirement to leave the federal territory is enforceable, and if a person does not voluntarily comply with this requirement, it can be compulsorily enforced through expulsion. Local immigration authorities under the jurisdiction of the federal Länder are responsible for carrying out the expulsion.

18. If there are legal or actual obstacles precluding the compulsory enforcement of expulsion, the person concerned is entitled to temporary suspension of deportation. If temporary suspension of deportation is granted, the enforceable requirement to leave the country is suspended but maintained. Temporary suspension of deportation is granted by the responsible immigration authority and is hence belongs to the responsibility of the federal Länder. Legal obstacles precluding deportation include the right to maintain marital and family life and the claim to take account of health-related risks that would arise from the deportation itself. Also, deportation is impossible on actual grounds if travel documents are missing (e.g. identification papers), the country of destination refuses admission or transport routes are interrupted.

Figure 4: Foreigners denied humanitarian protection



<sup>3</sup> More detailed descriptions of all three sub-groups of foreigners seeking protection are available at [www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/MigrationIntegration.html](http://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/MigrationIntegration.html)

## E. Ending the status of humanitarian protection

19. Foreigners are determined as seeking humanitarian protection based on their residence permit. Based on the German Residence Act, all residence permits refer to a specific purpose of residence (e.g. of economic activity, humanitarian reasons or family reasons). Foreigners remain in the status of seeking protection as long as their legal residence status reveals that their purpose of residence is based on humanitarian grounds. Consequently, there is no time limit or integration threshold that ends a foreigner's status as seeking protection. Foreigners granted permanent settlement permits on humanitarian grounds may remain in this status, regardless of their duration of stay and regardless of how well they are integrated in German society.

20. Besides death, four different ways exist out of protection status: First, foreigners who lived in Germany with a granted protection status for a prolonged period of time may qualify for naturalization. After having obtained the German citizenship, a person is no longer a foreigner and thus also no longer a foreigner seeking protection. After naturalization, the data on the respective person is deleted from the CRF. Second, a person seeking protection, who receives the citizenship of an EU member country is entitled to free movement and hence no longer belongs to the target population. The data on the respective person however remains in the CRF. Third, the purpose of residence may change for foreigners. Foreigners' whose residence permit was once based on humanitarian grounds may obtain a residence permit from the non-humanitarian domain of the German Residence Act. After marrying a German citizens for instance, a residence permit based on family reasons may be obtained. Finally, residence ends with departure and with it any previously held protection status. Departure may be voluntarily or enforced by government authorities. Foreigners, who have not been granted a protection status and who are left with no further legal appeal against the decision may become subject to a deportation if they do not voluntarily comply with their obligation to leave the country. The data on respective persons remains in the CRF marked as inactive for a period of ten years.

## III. The Central Register of Foreigners

21. The Central Register of Foreigners (CRF) serves as a central database for a variety of authorities that are involved in administrative procedures concerning foreigners. It contains basic personal information on all foreigners from EU member countries as well as from Non-EU countries living in Germany for more than three months.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, it centrally collects all information concerning the residence status that is locally held by more than 600 immigration offices under the jurisdiction of the federal Länder. Further, data on residence status in the CRF is also produced by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees that is responsible for carrying out the asylum procedure.

22. For the purpose of producing official statistics, the German Federal Statistical Office receives an annual excerpt of the register as of the 31st of December. This excerpt contains data on basic demographics (e.g. sex and age), citizenship as well as detailed information on residence status and duration of stay. Date and extent of the annual excerpt are determined by law.

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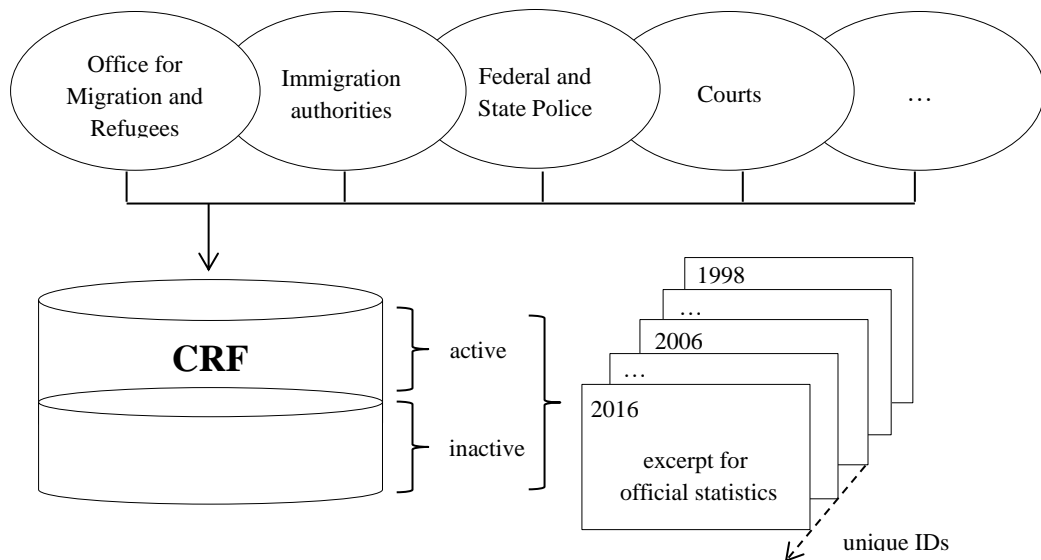
<sup>4</sup> As an exception, foreign military personnel stationed in Germany and diplomatic representatives as well as their family members are not registered in the CRF.

23. The CRF not only refers to foreign persons who are residing in Germany at the reference date, that is, who are currently staying in the country (active stock). Instead, it also contains information on foreigners who were registered at an earlier time but are no longer residing in Germany at the reference day because they moved away or died (inactive stock). The available data allows analysis with a regional breakdown at the county-level. Addresses are not contained in the CRF data but only in the data of the local immigration authorities. However, reference within the data to the competent immigration office allows determining the county of residence, since immigration offices' responsibilities are county-specific. As a valuable feature for statistical analysis, excerpts from 2006 on contain an anonymized file reference number that can be used to uniquely identify a person within the cross-section and over time. This enables longitudinal analysis, for instance with respect to regional mobility of foreigners.

24. The German Federal Statistical Office is only one stakeholder of the CRF among many. Users range from youth welfare services to police authorities and intelligence agencies. Official statistics on foreigners and on people seeing protection compiled from the CRF are merely a by-product, while the register mainly serves administrative purposes. Accordingly, data quality tends to vary with respect to the importance of information in administrative procedures. Information on the residence status of foreigners is crucial not only for immigration offices but also for police authorities and thus tends to be of good quality.

25. As it is typically the case with administrative data, the CRF lacks information that is common to primary statistical data collected by NSOs themselves. For instance, information on socioeconomic background is scarce in the CRF. Furthermore, the CRF does not include information on family relationships. Links are neither in place between spouses nor between cohabiting partners or between parents and children.

Figure 5: The Central Register of Foreigners





26. Data quality is a common issue where administrative data is used for statistical purposes. With respect to the CRF, specific problems with timeliness of registration and double registration occurred during the period between 2014 and 2016, when administrative procedures were overburdened with the registration of the large numbers of incoming asylum-seekers. Asylum seekers faced prolonged waiting periods, while registration in the CRF was tied to lodging the asylum application. The CRF data at the end of 2016 revealed that close to half a million entries during 2015 were captured with considerable delay in 2016. Intended to assist overburdened local authorities, mobile registration units with support by the armed forces registered asylum seekers in temporary accommodation or improvised receptions. As a result, registration was often incomplete and small differences in spelling or translations sufficed to cause double registration, when asylum seekers were distributed among counties.

## **IV. Results**

### **A. Stock of foreigners seeking protection**

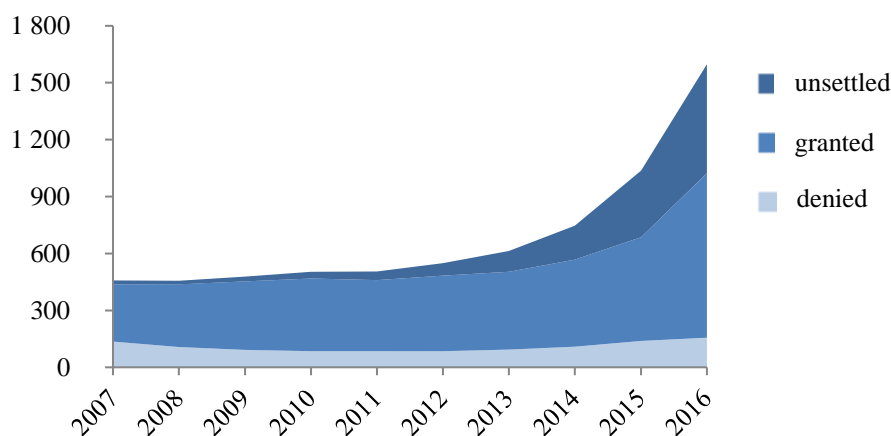
27. The number of foreigners seeking protection in Germany amounts to 1.6 million at the end of 2016. This represents 1.9 % of the overall resident population and 15.9 % of the foreign population in Germany. The group of foreigners seeking protection comprises 575 000 foreigners with an unsettled protection status (36 %), 868 000 foreigners with a granted protection status (54 %) and 155 000 with a denied protection status (10 %). Among those granted protection the majority (69 %) holds a temporary protection status which is valid for maximum three years. Deportation is temporarily suspended for 76 % of those residing in Germany with a denied protection status.

28. Time series on people seeing protection cannot be compiled from the CRF for the period before 2007, since the relevant information on the underlying purpose of residence permits was not yet available. The German Residence Act introduced the distinction between residence permits by purpose of residence only in the beginning of 2005 and only after a transition phase of two years this information became reliably available in the CRF.

29. Since 2014 Germany experienced an unprecedented increase in the stock of people seeking protection. The stock more than doubled within only two years (+ 114 %). The growing share of unsettled within this period indicates that the administrative procedure of deciding on each individual case could not keep pace with the rapid increase in asylum applications. Compared to the significant increases in the overall number of people seeking protection in Germany, the stock of foreigners with a denied protection status remained remarkably stable.

Figure 6: Time series of foreigners seeking protection

Numbers in thousands



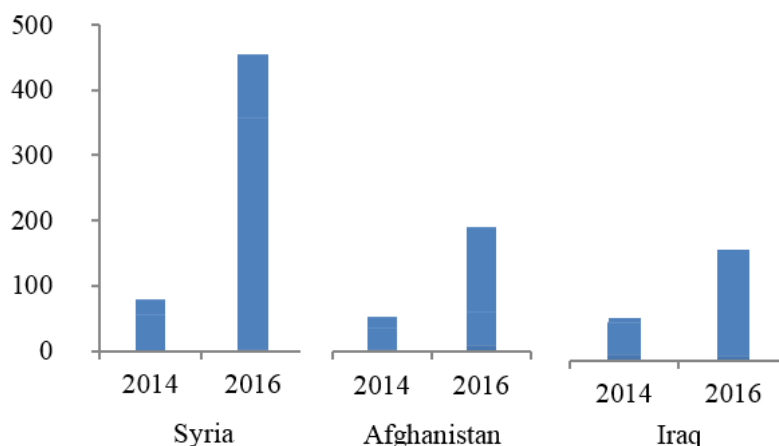
30. Residence permits based on humanitarian grounds may either be granted via the asylum procedure or via direct admissions (e.g. resettlement). Over the course of the two years 2015 and 2016, the asylum procedure was the predominant path to a humanitarian residence permit for foreigners. The stock of residence permits acquired through the asylum procedure at the end of 2016 was close to fivefold the number at the end of 2014 (+ 370 %). Meanwhile, the stock of residence permits assigned via direct admissions remained stable (+ 0.5 %).

## B. People seeking protection by citizenship

31. The CRF contains information on foreigners' citizenship in order to approximate their country of origin. The recent increase in stock of people seeking protection between 2014 and 2016 is mainly driven by citizens from Syria (+ 473 %), Afghanistan (+ 255 %) and Iraq (+165 %) who predominantly acquired a temporary residence permit after having gone through the asylum procedure.

Figure 7: Foreigners seeking protection from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq

Numbers in thousands



32. At the end of 2016, more than half of all foreigners with a protection status granted come from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (56 %). Among those granted protection, considerable differences exist with respect to which specific protection status was granted. While the majority (71 %) of Syrian citizens is recognized as refugee according to the Geneva Convention, subsidiary protection is the most frequent (42 %) protection status among Afghans. Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis also rank highest within the group of foreigners with a yet unsettled protection status. A different composition emerges among foreigners whose request for humanitarian protection was denied. Within this group Serbian, Albanian and Kosovan represent the three most frequent citizenships.<sup>5</sup> In the end of 2016, Western Balkan countries are disproportionately represented among foreigners with a denied protection status. Together, the Western Balkan states constitute only 10 % of all foreigners seeking protection, while representing 34 % of all foreigners with a denied protection status.

*Table 1: People seeking protection at the end of 2016 by protection status and citizenship*

Unsettled		Granted		Denied	
Total	574 945	Total	867 500	Total	155 120
Afghanistan	129 380	Syria	354 720	Serbia	16 860
Syria	96 505	Iraq	83 350	Albania	14 520
Iraq	67 515	Afghanistan	51 075	Kosovo	13 375
Iran	28 020	Turkey	38 005	Afghanistan	10 425
Pakistan	23 115	Kosovo	36 945	Macedonia	9 100
Nigeria	20 050	Russia	36 560	Russia	8 370
Russia	18 975	Ukraine	28 260	Iraq	5 590
Eritrea	18 320	Eritrea	28 050	India	5 065
Somalia	15 780	Serbia	25 215	Pakistan	5 015
Gambia	9 555	Iran	24 545	Bosnia-H.	4 345

33. Humanitarian migration triggered by the aftermath of civil war in Syria predominantly shapes the stock of foreigners seeking protection at the end of 2016. Accordingly, a great share foreigners seeking protection entered Germany only recently. The median date of entry is 15th of May in 2015, meaning that half of all foreigners seeking protection at the end of 2016 entered Germany for the first time after this date

34. Nonetheless, humanitarian immigration is not an entirely new phenomenon in Germany. Russians were seeking political asylum already during the Cold War period. As a response to the Islamic revolution many Iranians left towards Germany after 1979. As a response to the Kurdish-

<sup>5</sup> The group of Western Balkan countries comprises the non-EU member countries of former Yugoslavia, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia. Further, foreigners seeking protection with citizenship of the former states of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia including Kosovo and Serbia and Montenegro are included. German legislation rates all Western Balkan countries as safe countries of origin, meaning that humanitarian residence permits are only granted in exceptional cases. For citizens of those countries, the prima facie assumption of absence of political persecution and no risk of serious personal harm in their home countries applies.

Turkish conflict starting in the mid-1980s, many Turkish Kurds were seeking for protection in Germany. Turkey continuously represented the most frequent country of origin among foreigners granted protection in Germany until 2012. Following the violent conflicts after the collapse of Yugoslavia, e.g. the Kosovo conflict during 1998 and 1999, Germany experienced a surge in asylum applications. Subsequently, military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in the first decade of 2000 triggered humanitarian migration towards Germany. Humanitarian migration from the past is still visible within the population of foreigners seeking protection in Germany at the end of 2016. Table 2 depicts the ten most frequent citizenships among foreigners seeking protection who had entered Germany before the outbreak of civil war in Syria in 2011.

Table 2: People seeking protection at the end of 2016 who entered before 2010

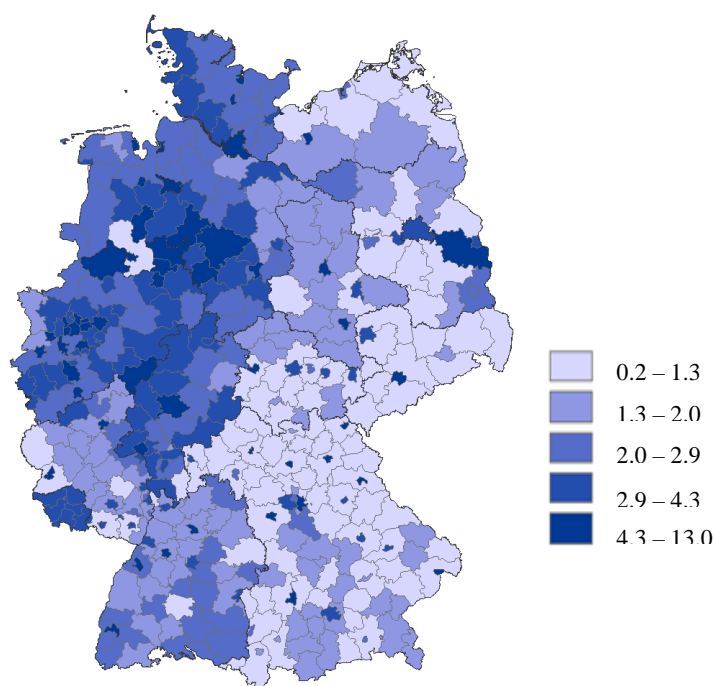
Unsettled		Granted		Denied	
Total	4 155	Total	360 880	Total	45 405
Turkey	375	Turkey	37 085	Serbia	4 895
Afghanistan	335	Iraq	36 400	Kosovo	3 130
Iraq	305	Kosovo	35 655	Turkey	2 920
Serbia	220	Russia	33 450	Iraq	2 670
Russia	185	Ukraine	26 745	undetermined	2 335
Syria	185	Serbia	23 075	Macedonia	2 245
Iran	175	Afghanistan	19 980	Yugoslavia *	2 230
Ghana	165	Bosnia-H.	16 500	Lebanon	1 840
Macedonia	155	Syria	13 940	Russia	1 735
Kosovo	155	Iran	13 455	India	1 505

\* Former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The CRF contains citizenship of countries that ceased to exist, since passports maintain their validity for a certain period of time and due to non-regular contact between immigration offices and foreigners

### C. Regional distribution of foreigners seeking protection

35. In the end of 2016, the share of foreigners seeking protection within the overall population ranges from 13.0 % to 0.2 % at the county level (Figure 8). With respect to the regional distribution two patterns emerge. First, shares in western German counties are on average higher compared to eastern German counties. This pattern is well known from the regional distribution of the overall foreign population. Second, compared to the regional distribution of the overall foreign population, foreigners seeking protection are less concentrated in densely populated, urban parts of Germany. At the end of 2016, when many asylum seekers had only recently entered Germany, high shares of people seeking protection are mostly to be found in those counties that host central reception centres for asylum seekers. After arrival, foreigners requesting for asylum are distributed among the German Federal Länder and obliged to reside in the county that was assigned to them for carrying out the asylum procedure. Accordingly, the resulting clustered regional distribution of foreigners seeking protection is especially visible in Bavaria, where the asylum procedure was already highly centralized by the end of 2016.

Figure 8: Share of foreigners seeking protection by counties <sup>6</sup>



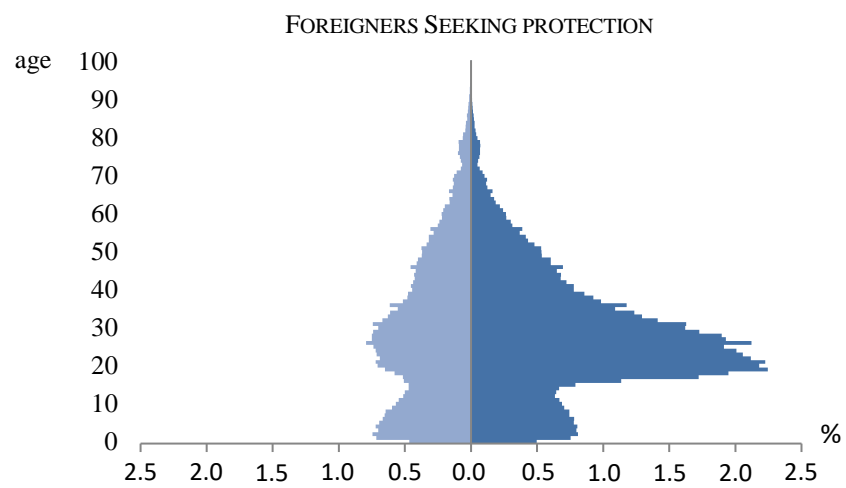
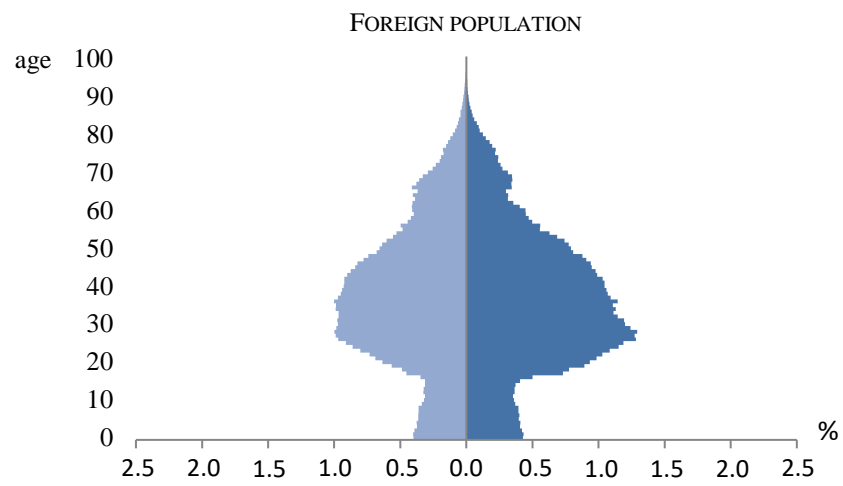
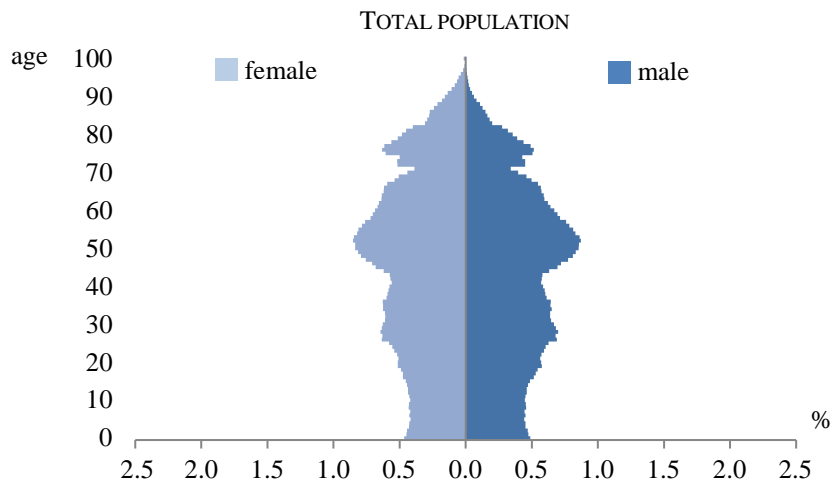
#### D. Demographic structure of foreigners seeking protection

36. As previously mentioned, the annual excerpt the German Federal Statistical Office receives from the CRF is scarce on socioeconomic variables. However, the excerpt contains information on basic demographic information. This demographic information reveals that, the influx of foreigners seeking protection has a rejuvenating impact on an aging German society. For the first time after more than two decades, the general trend of an increasing average age was reversed in 2015 due to migration from crisis countries (German Federal Statistical Office, 2017).

37. Figure 9 compares the age and gender structures of the overall German population, the foreign population and the population of foreigners seeking protection at the end of 2016. Foreigners seeking protection are predominantly male (64 %) and below the age of 30 years (58 %). While on average foreigners seeking protection are 29 years old, half of them are younger than 27 years. Given that schooling is compulsory, about 229 000 children seeking humanitarian protection between the age of 6 and 17 years are attending school in Germany. The contrast to the overall German population is striking. At the end of 2016, the German population is on average 44 years old. Within the overall population, 49 % is male and only 30 % below the age of 30 years. The contrast remains remarkable in comparison to the foreign population that exhibits 54 % males, an average age of 38 years and a share of 37 % below the age of 30 years.

Figure 9: Demographic structure of foreigners seeking protection

<sup>6</sup> Shares relative to the total population within the respective counties. Domains are determined by splitting the distribution in quintiles. In other words, each category contains an equal amount of counties. Consequently, the darkest color depicts the 20 % of counties with the highest shares of foreigners seeking protection, while the lightest color depicts the 20 % of counties with the lowest shares.



## V. Outlook

38. After the large inflows in 2015 and 2016, integration of foreigners seeking protection in housing markets, labour markets and in civic society remains an ongoing and major priority for policy makers in Germany. Policy makers demand for detailed data on the socioeconomic situation of refugees in order to monitor the progress of integration and to derive implications for integration policies. The available administrative data on foreigners' residence status obtained from the CRF confidently identifies and comprehensively covers the population of foreigners seeking humanitarian protection and its' various subgroups. However, the data does not provide much additional information on their socioeconomic background and living conditions. Vice versa, population surveys like the Labour Force Survey (LFS) provide detailed socioeconomic information but usually neither confidently identify nor comprehensively cover the target group. By linking administrative data sets with population surveys, data integration combines the precision and coverage of administrative records with the variety of socioeconomic variables found in surveys. Thus, integrated data sets have the potential to fill critical data gaps on the integration of refugees. Given the absence of personal identifiers, the German Federal Statistical Office currently conducts case-studies in which statistical matching methods (e.g. random hot deck matching algorithms) are assessed with respect to their potential for linking CRF and LFS.

39. There is a growing demand for longitudinal data within migration statistics. In Germany, the CRF qualifies as a potential longitudinal data source. The German Federal Statistical Office derives statistical data sets from annual register excerpts. From 2006 onwards, excerpts contain a unique personal identifier. Accordingly, a longitudinal data set can be constructed that tracks foreigners seeking protection within the period from 2006 to 2017. As repeatedly mentioned in this paper, unfortunately the CRF is scarce on socioeconomic information. For instance, integration of foreigners seeking protection in labour markets over time cannot be directly tracked in the CRF. Nonetheless, the CRF has significant potential for longitudinal analysis. Regional mobility of foreigners seeking protection is assessable. Further, residence status can be traced over time, allowing analysis on how long foreigners hold a certain protection status and on how humanitarian protection ends.

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Regulation (EC) No 862/2007

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last amended 30.10.2017