



Making fair migration a reality | 12.2018

## Skilled worker migration to Germany from third countries 2017

Although skilled worker migration from non-EU countries is growing, it still remains low compared to the current labor supply. The ratio of immigrants from non-EU countries to internal EU immigrants is approaching those levels reached before the peak of refugee migration in 2015 and 2016.

- 1. Key points: The trends of recent years continued in 2017 – skilled labor migration is increasing, but Germany could benefit from attracting even more skilled labor.**
  - The total share of EU citizens who migrate to Germany exceeds that of third-country nationals – that is, citizens of non-EU member countries – once again at 54% to 46%. More than 60% of people from EU member states with migration experience in Germany are skilled workers. The share of refugees among total migrants has fallen by 10% – in 2015, refugees comprised 23% of total migration.
  - Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia and Italy are the top origin countries of those individuals who migrated to Germany in 2017 as part of the EU's freedom of movement regime.
  - The net migration of foreign nationals – that is, the total number of immigrants entering an area minus the total number of emigrants leaving an area – totaled 534,980 (278,036 third-country nationals, 256,944 citizens of an EU member state).
  - The trend of increasing skilled labor migration to Germany continued in 2017 as well. Yet at a mere 7% of total migration from non-EU countries, this group still accounts for a rather small share of immigration to Germany.
  - In absolute terms (38,082), the number of skilled workers from non-EU countries is also relatively

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small. Indeed, this group accounts for less than 0.1% of the total labor supply, that is, the potential workforce.

- Totalling 25,723 in 2017, the number of people with a residence permit for the purpose of qualified employment in accordance with Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (German Residence Act) comprised in 2017 the largest share (68%) of skilled labor migration from non-EU countries. This group was followed by 9,652 highly skilled workers with an EU Blue Card (Sec. 19a AufenthG) at 25%.
- The number of incoming labor migrants with job offers and a residence permit for employment that does not require vocational training – so-called low-skilled workers – remained relatively stable from 2009 to 2015 at about 10,000 each year. In 2016, this number increased to 18,359 and again to 22,800 in 2017. This is where the impact of the so-called West Balkans Rule in effect since 2015 can be seen in the statistics.
- In 2017, India, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United States, Serbia and China were the main origin countries for skilled labor coming from areas outside of the EU. Most of low-skilled workers arrived from the so-called West Balkan states (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania).
- The number of skilled third country nationals with vocational qualifications who immigrated to Germany in 2017 remained modest. With some 5,600 permits issued by the Federal Labour Office under placement agreements for professions facing shortages, this number is low even though it reflects a near fourfold increase since 2014. Since the West Balkans Rule, 74,577 permits have been issued.
- The number of D-Visas issued to highly qualified individuals seeking employment doubled to 2,108 from 2013 to 2018.
- A growing number of third country nationals who have studied in Germany are staying on to work as qualified foreigners. In fact, 9,217 people who arrived with either a student residence permit or who were residing in Germany after completing their studies at a German university succeeded in acquiring a residence permit for gainful employment in a skilled sector. Many individuals who completed some other form of education or

vocational training in Germany followed the same route. In 2017, 2,289 such individuals successfully acquired a residence permit for skilled work.

- The immigration of dependent spouses is an additional source of skilled labor. From 2013 to 2017, the number of arrivals in this context increased by 53%, totaling 57,981. However, the actual number of skilled workers migrating to Germany within this context is not fully captured by current statistics.
- According to OECD statistics, labor migration to Germany from non-EU states has increased considerably in comparison to the labor migration rates observed in Australia, France, the Netherlands and Spain. The numbers of immigrant workers arriving in the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada have actually gone down. Germany is by far the most popular destination country for migrants within the context of the EU's freedom of movement regime.

## 2. Incoming EU citizens are again slightly outnumbering non-EU citizens.

In 2017, migrants arriving within the framework of EU mobility once again accounted for more than third-country nationals (54% and 46%, respectively). This discrepancy is in large part a result of the fact that non-EU migration to Europe fell by 19% in comparison to 2016 with only 544,757 third-country nationals arriving in 2017. Indeed, the number of non-EU arrivals is returning to levels seen prior to 2015. The large influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016 considerably expanded the share of non-EU immigrants arriving in Germany during that period. Today, however, refugee migration (i.e., persons with a residence permit on humanitarian grounds, whose removal has been postponed or asylum applicants) accounts for only 10% of all migration to Germany from EU and third countries, which is considerably below the 23% registered in 2015 and even lower than the 12%

**Total migration:** This factsheet is concerned with the volume of migration in Germany, that is, the sum of entries. If we were to examine skilled-labor migration in terms of its net balance, these numbers would be lower than the immigrant numbers featured here. However, net immigration statistics do not distinguish specific purposes for residence. The factsheet draws on data from Germany's Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR). The AZR is a file of data managed by the BAMF.

recorded in 2013. Labor migration now accounts for 5% of total migration – a level which, after falling to 2% in 2015, has surpassed the 4% recorded in 2013.

Germany attracts a relatively large number of skilled workers through immigration from other EU states. For example, data from a microcensus conducted in 2017 by the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) show that just under 61% of individuals from EU member states with migration experience who reside in Germany have vocational qualifications (Destatis 2018: 200). Skilled labor immigration from within the EU is much larger than that from third countries.

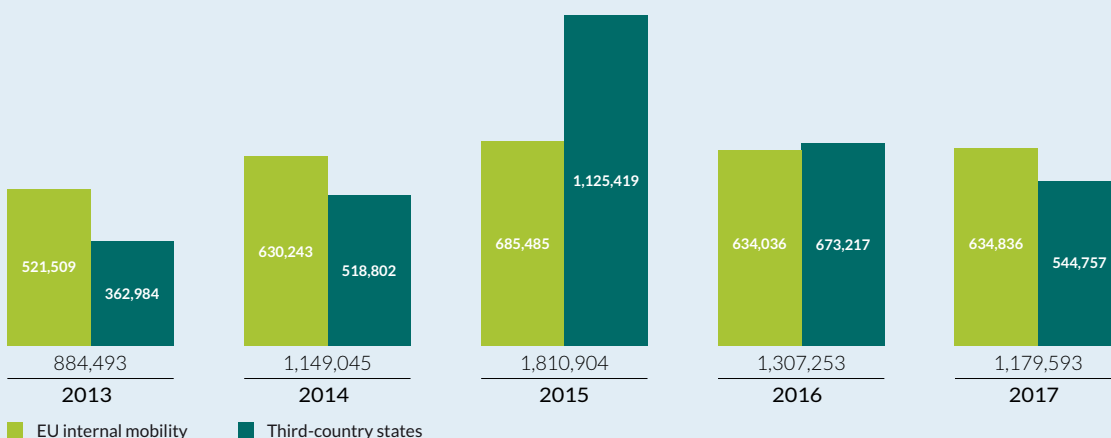
Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia and Italy are the top origin countries of those individuals who migrated to Germany in 2017 under the EU's freedom of movement regime.

**Skilled workers** are people with a university degree (highly qualified) or who have completed vocational training (qualified).

**Low-skilled workers** are people without any formal vocational qualifications. Clearly, a person without vocational training or whose qualifications are not officially recognized can nonetheless be a skilled worker in practice, particularly if he or she has several years' work experience in a specialized field. In statistical and legal contexts, however, the aforementioned definition applies.

The net migration of foreign nationals – that is, the total number of immigrants entering an area minus the total number of emigrants leaving an area – totaled 534,980 (278,036 third-country nationals, 256,944 citizens of an EU member state) (BAMF 2018a: 7, 2018c: 12).

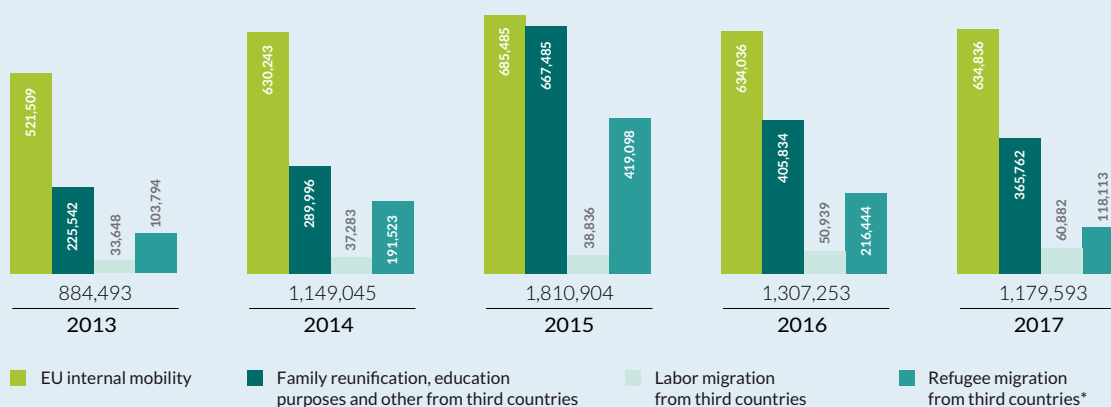
FIGURE 1 Total migration of EU nationals and third-country nationals (2013–2017)



Sources: BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

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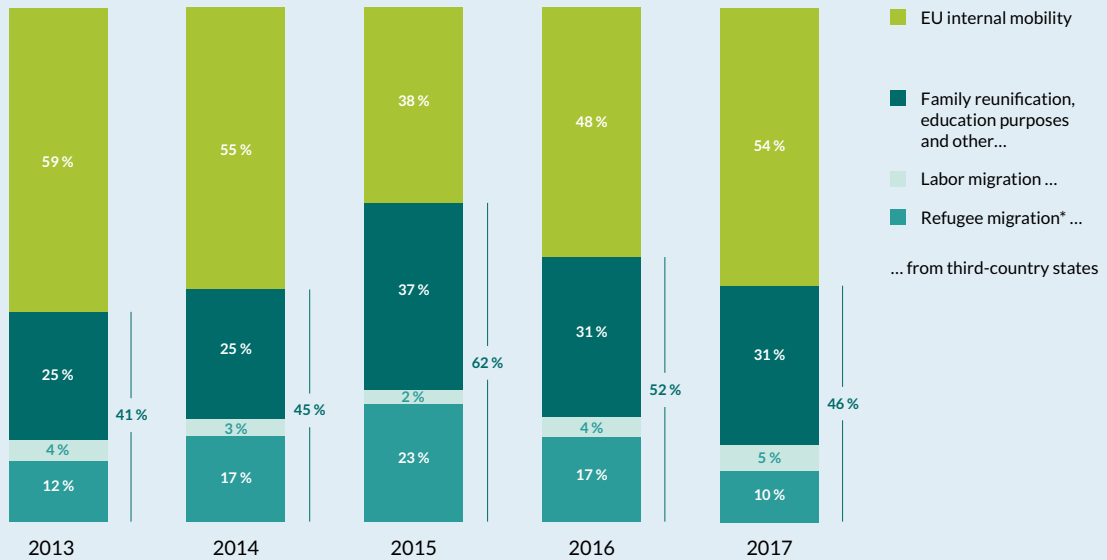
FIGURE 2 Total migration of EU nationals and third-country nationals, by selected types of residence permit (2013–2017)



\* Persons with a residence permit on humanitarian grounds, whose removal has been postponed or asylum applicants. Source: BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

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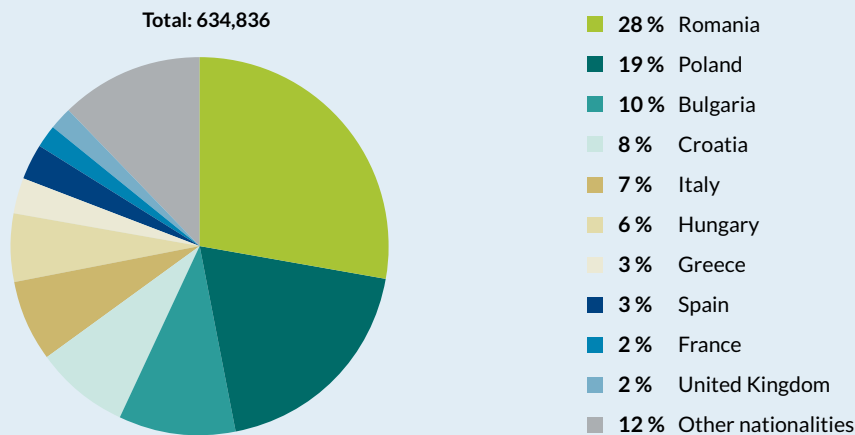
FIGURE 3 Total immigration of EU nationals and third-country nationals, by selected types of residence permit (2013–2017), as a percentage



\* Persons with a residence permit on humanitarian grounds, whose removal has been postponed or asylum applicants.  
Source: BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

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FIGURE 4 EU nationals immigrating to Germany, by country of origin (2017)



Source: BAMF (2018c).

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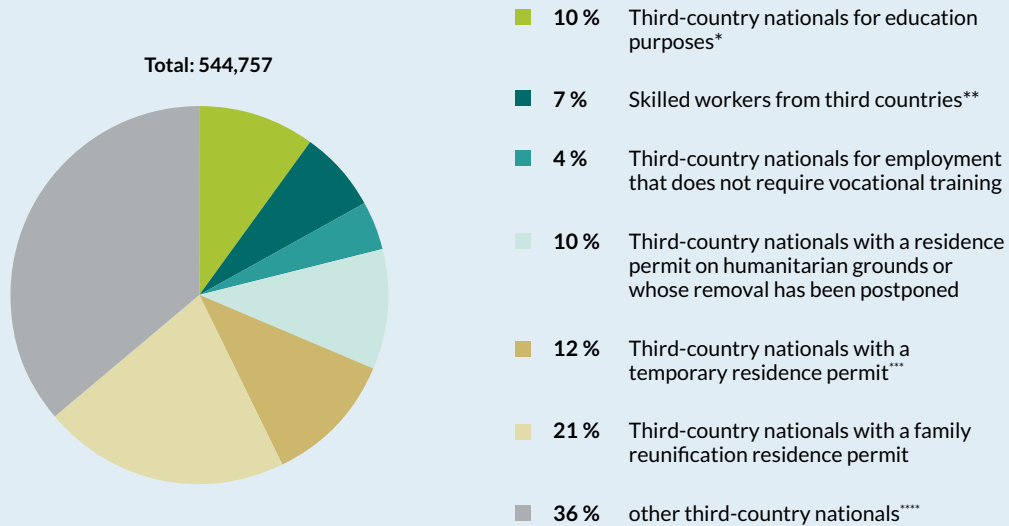
**3. In 2017, skilled labor comprised only 7% of all immigration to Germany from third countries**

The trend of increasing skilled labor migration to Germany continued in 2017. The number of skilled workers has more than doubled since 2009. Nevertheless, at only 7% of total migration, skilled labor migration from third countries continues to represent only a small share of migration inflows to Germany – even though this share has been

growing since 2015 after falling below 3% as a result of the large influx of refugees.

The total number of arrivals from third countries has fallen for the second time in two years to 544,757. Much of this decline is attributable to the fact that the influx of asylum seekers has subsided.

FIGURE 5 Immigration of third-country nationals, by residence permit type (2017)



\* Studying at a university or comparable educational institution, language courses and other courses of study.  
 \*\* §§ 18, 19, 19a, 19b, 20, 21 AufenthG.  
 \*\*\* Asylum applicants.  
 \*\*\*\* For example, third-country nationals not required to hold a residence permit; third-country nationals who have applied for a residence permit; and third-country nationals who have re-entered Germany in the same year and third-country nationals with the right of residency within the EU.  
 Source: BAMF (2018b); author's own calculations.

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**4. The volume of immigration of skilled workers from third countries has more than doubled since 2009, but remains limited in scope.**

Despite growth, skilled-labor migration levels were relatively low in 2017, totaling 38,082 persons. To put that in scale, this constitutes less than 0.1% of the overall labor supply. This is measured on the basis of the potential workforce, and thus the sum of the employed, unemployed and economically inactive populations. In 2017, this total figure amounted to 47 million people (Fuchs et al. 2018).

Among skilled immigrant workers, persons with a vocational qualification who have come to Germany with a residence permit for the purposes of taking up employment (Sec. 18 para. 1 of the German Residence Act, AufenthG) continue to make up the largest share, accounting for 25,723 individuals or 68% of the whole. However, this share is declining. Immigration on the basis of the EU Blue Card (Sec. 19a AufenthG) has risen significantly since the introduction of this program, and in 2017 reached 9,652 people, or 25% of all labor-related immigration from third countries.

The number of low-skilled workers arriving from third countries with a pre-existing offer of work remained roughly constant until 2015, at about 10,000 individuals. However, by 2017 this figure had more than doubled, and has now reached 22,800. Here, the influence of the so-called West Balkans Rule is notable.

**West Balkans Rule:** A regulation issued by the German federal government in the context of the Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures, applying to citizens of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (Sec. 26 para 2 of the Ordinance on the Admission of Newly Arrived Foreigners for the Purpose of Taking up Employment). The rule, which is valid for the years 2016 to 2020, enables migrants who have a specific offer of work or training from Germany to receive a German visa in their origin countries, if the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) has approved the employers' work contract. To qualify, migrants may not have received benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act in the last two years, must have withdrawn their applications for asylum, and must have left Germany voluntarily before the regulation took effect in October 2015.

TABLE 1 Skilled and low-skilled labor immigrants from third countries with a firm job offer, by type of residence permit (2009–2017)

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
<b>Skilled workers</b>																		
Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (vocational qualification)	14,816	92	17,889	93	23,912	92	23,912	85	17,185	71	19,515	72	18,994	68	22,387	69	25,723	68
Sec. 19 AufenthG (permanent residence permit for the highly qualified)	169	1	219	1	370	2	244	1	27	0	31	0	31	0	25	0	33	0
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card, standard occupations)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,387	5	2,786	12	3,099	11	3,786	14	4,729	15	5,725	15
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card, high-demand occupations)	-	-	-	-	-	-	803	3	1,865	8	2,279	8	3,006	11	3,309	10	3,927	10
Sec. 19b para 1 AufenthG (ICT-Karte)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	0
Sec. 20 AufenthG (research)	140	1	211	1	317	1	366	1	444	2	397	2	409	1	422	1	877	2
Sec. 21 AufenthG (self-employment)	1,024	6	1,040	5	1,347	5	1,358	5	1,690	7	1,781	7	1,782	6	1,733	5	1,788	5
<b>Sum</b>	<b>16,149</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19,359</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25,946</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27,349</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23,997</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27,102</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,008</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32,605</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>38,082</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Low-skilled workers</b>																		
Sec. 18 para 3 AufenthG (no vocational qualification required)	8,405	82	9,941	96	11,291	93	11,050	97	9,481	98	9,995	98	10,697	99	18,208	99	22,696	100
Sec. 18 AufenthG (general employment, old scheme)	1,832	18	468	4	846	7	346	3	170	2	186	2	131	1	151	1	104	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,237</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10,409</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,137</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,396</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,651</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10,181</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10,828</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18,359</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Labor migration</b>																		
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,386</b>		<b>29,768</b>		<b>38,083</b>		<b>38,745</b>		<b>33,648</b>		<b>37,283</b>		<b>38,836</b>		<b>50,964</b>		<b>60,882</b>	

\* The "Act to Implement Residence Permit Directives of the EU for Labour Migration", together with the so-called ICT directive, went into effect on August 1, 2017. The technical infrastructure for collecting this data was completed by the end of November 2017.

Sources: BMI/BAMF (2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

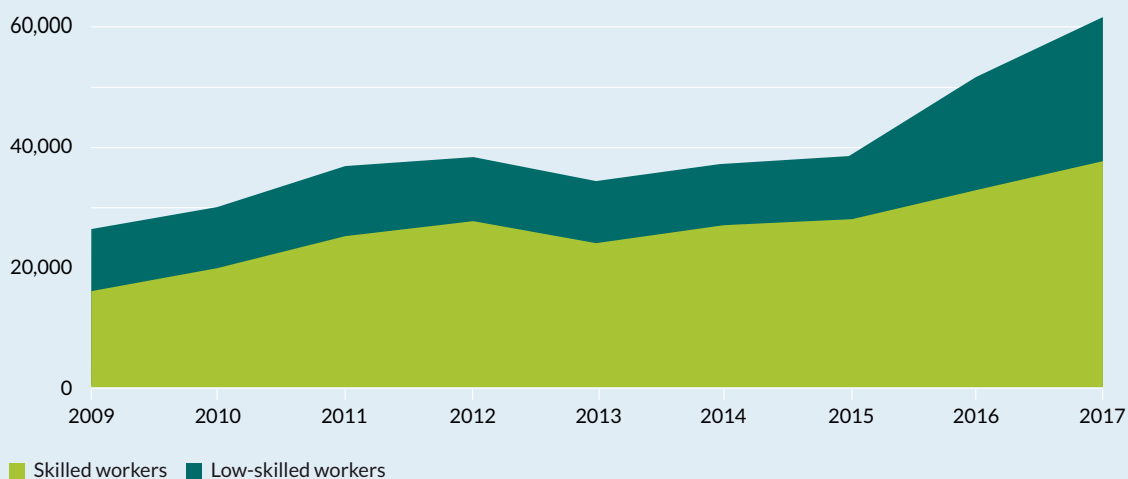
TABLE 2 Skilled and low-skilled labor immigrants from third countries, by type of residence permit, total (2009–2017)

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
<b>Skilled workers</b>	16,149	61	19,359	65	25,946	68	27,349	71	23,997	71	27,102	73	28,088	72	32,605	64	38,082	63
<b>Low-skilled workers</b>	10,237	39	10,409	35	12,137	32	11,396	29	9,651	29	10,181	27	10,828	28	18,359	36	22,800	37
<b>Total labor migration</b>	26,386	100	29,768	100	38,083	100	38,745	100	33,648	100	37,283	100	38,836	100	50,964	100	60,882	100

Sources: BMI/BAMF (2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.



FIGURE 6 Skilled and low-skilled workers immigrating from third countries with pre-existing job offers (2009–2017)



Sources: BMI/BAMF (2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

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**5. India is the most common country of origin for skilled workers from non-EU countries, followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina and the United States.**

By some distance, the most common country of origin for skilled workers from non-EU countries was India, followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United States, Serbia and China. With regard to the

immigration of persons for employment purposes who have not previously completed vocational training (so-called low-skilled workers), the primary countries of origin are the West Balkan states (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania) – a circumstance attributable to the above-mentioned West Balkans Rule – as well as the United States.

TABLE 3 Third country nationals immigrating to Germany for the purpose of employment, by nationality (2017)

	Skilled workers							Low-skilled	Total labor migration
	Sec. 18 para 4 AufenthG	Sec. 19 AufenthG	Sec. 19a AufenthG	Sec. 19b para 1 AufenthG	Sec. 20 AufenthG	Sec. 21 AufenthG	Total skilled labor		
India	3,926	6	2,339	7	71	31	6,380	96	6,476
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,470	0	155	0	0	7	3,632	3,872	7,504
United States of America	2,350	10	527	0	121	598	3,606	1,390	4,996
Serbia	2,670	0	306	0	7	3	2,986	2,627	5,613
China	1,812	1	810	2	149	203	2,978	235	3,212
Turkey	1,180	2	670	0	52	112	2,016	196	2,212
Japan	1,506	1	93	0	54	65	1,719	305	2,024
Kosovo	1,451	0	40	0	0	3	1,494	3,469	4,963
Russian Federation	382	2	794	0	27	65	1,270	361	1,631
Macedonia	1,119	0	73	0	1	3	1,196	2,088	3,284
Brazil	469	0	473	0	46	23	1,011	273	1,284
Albania	812	0	128	0	0	5	945	1,257	2,202
Republic of Korea	617	0	214	0	23	28	882	86	968
Canada	354	0	104	0	30	113	601	451	1,052
Other nationalities	3,605	11	2,926	0	296	529	7,366	6,094	13,461
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,723</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25,723</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>38,082</b>	<b>22,800</b>	<b>60,882</b>

\* Residence status under Sec. 18 AufenthG (general employment, old scheme).  
Source: BAMF (2018b); Ausländerzentralregister (AZR); author's own calculations.

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**6. The absolute number of approvals granted for the employment of non-academic skilled workers from third countries is increasing, but remains limited in scope.**

Permit-approval statistics provided by the Federal Employment Agency provide information on how many people take advantage of the opportunity to immigrate as non-academic skilled workers. For example, a total of 3,618 permits associated with

placement agreements (Sec. 6 para. 2(1) of the Ordinance on the Admission of Newly Arrived Foreigners for the Purpose of Taking up Employment, BeschV) were granted in 2017. A total of 1,982 were granted on the basis of the “positive list” for so-called high-demand occupations (Sec. 6 para. 2(2) BeschV). The number of permits granted has risen in recent years, but the absolute number remains low. The statistics also show that 74,577 permits were granted in 2017 under the so-called West Balkans Rule.

TABLE 4 Approvals granted for the employment of third country nationals, by regulation (2013–2017)

Regulatory basis	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sec. 2 para 2 BeschV (EU Blue Card-high-demand occupations – professional salary)	1,289	2,653	3,492	3,916	5,390
Sec. 2 para 3 BeschV (foreign university degree)	1,979	4,182	4,962	5,456	5,733
Sec. 3 BeschV (managers and specialists)	1,247	1,515	1,205	1,342	1,769
Sec. 6 para 1 BeschV (occupation requiring formal training, German degree)	173	432	744	1,169	1,930
Sec. 6, para 2 nr. 1 BeschV (occupation requiring formal training with foreign qualification – recruitment agreement)	273	1,136	2,263	3,315	3,618
Sec. 6, para 2 nr. 1 BeschV (occupation requiring formal training with foreign qualification – high-demand occupation)	51	311	658	1,305	1,982
Sec. 8 BeschV (practical training as a requirement for the recognition of a foreign professional qualification), until 7/2015	32	171	235	-	-
Sec. 8 para 1 BeschV (basic and advanced vocational training – Sec. 17 AufenthG), in effect since 8/2015	-	-	1,551	9,989	11,525
Sec. 8 para 2 BeschV (recognition of foreign professional qualification) – Sec. 17a AufenthG up to 18 months), in effect since 8/2015	-	-	189	921	1,804
Sec. 8 para 3 BeschV (recognition of foreign professional qualification) – other, in effect since 8/2015	-	-	42	67	166
Sec. 10 BeschV (international personnel exchange, foreign projects)	3,764	9,351	9,111	7,474	7,276
Sec. 11 para 1 BeschV (language instructors)	229	246	217	160	170
Sec. 11 para 2 BeschV (specialist chefs)	1,482	3,600	3,436	3,181	3,030
Sec. 26 para 2 BeschV (employment of specific nationals – West Balkans)	-	-	377	42,546	74,577

Source: Federal Employment Agency (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

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**7. In 2017, a total of 2,108 job-seeker visas for highly qualified individuals were granted.**

The number of D-visas – that is, visas for longer-term residence – granted to highly qualified job seekers doubled between 2013 and 2017, to a total of 2,108. An increasing number of people are thus taking advantage of the opportunity to look for

employment. The number of D-visas granted significantly exceeds that of granted residence permits. This is because many people are able to find work within the three-month time period usually granted under the D-Visa in order to obtain a residence permit for the purposes of seeking employment under Sec. 18 AufenthG.



TABLE 5 Residency permits and D-Visas for the purpose of seeking employment (2013–2017)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
For the purpose of seeking employment in accordance with Sec. 18c AufenthG for third country national arrivals	107	125	132	*	*
D-Visas for the purpose of seeking employment granted in consular posts	1,070	1,116	1,448	1,958	2,108

\* Data not available.

Source: BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017a, 2018a).

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### 8. An increasing number of students are remaining in the country by changing their permit status to that of skilled worker.

The population of skilled immigrant workers participating actively in the German labor market extends beyond people who have originally immigrated for that purpose. Germany also gains skilled workers from non-EU countries when people who already reside in the country change their residence-permit status. The groups identified below are of particular importance in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

A total of 5,948 people holding a residence permit for the purposes of study (Sec. 16 para. 1 AufenthG), along with 3,269 persons holding a job-seeker’s residence permit specifically for graduates of German universities (Sec. 16 para. 5 AufenthG), have shifted to permits designated for skilled workers’ employment. In this way, Germany has been able to retain 9,217 people as skilled workers who originally came to the country to

**Permit-status change:** Some of the skilled workers from third countries in the statistics are people who have obtained a change in their permit status. Generally, these individuals have already spent time in Germany under a different permit (e.g., for the purpose of study or of seeking employment) before being granted a residence permit to work as a qualified national.

study. In comparison with 2012, the total number of permit status changes away from a residence permit for the purposes of study has more than doubled.

In addition, a total of 2,289 people with a residence permit for the purposes of basic or advanced vocational training (Sec. 16b para 1, Sec. 17 para. 1 and Sec 17a paras. 1, 5 AufenthG), along with 175 people with a residence permit for qualified skilled workers seeking employment (Sec. 18c AufenthG), changed status to receive a residence permit for the employment of skilled workers.

TABLE 6 Shift from residence permit for educational purposes (Sec. 16 para 1 AufenthG) to a residence permit for skilled employment purposes (2012–2017)

Current right of residency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (vocational qualification)	2,390	1,887	1,921	2,102	2,505	2,842
Sec. 19 AufenthG (highly qualified)	13	7	5	5	3	5
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card)	442	1,121	1,306	1,686	2,162	2,757
Sec. 20 AufenthG (research)	41	49	51	27	36	151
Sec. 21 AufenthG (self-employment)	158	181	171	142	196	193
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,044</b>	<b>3,245</b>	<b>3,454</b>	<b>3,962</b>	<b>4,902</b>	<b>5,948</b>

Source: BAMF (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018a); author’s own calculations.

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<sup>1</sup> Permit-status changes from Sec. 18 para. 3 AufenthG (employment that does not require a vocational qualification) are also relevant in this regard. However, since 2017, the BAMF has no longer broken this out as a separate category.

TABLE 7 Change in residence permit for graduates of a German university seeking employment (Sec. 16 para 5 AufenthG)<sup>\*</sup> to a residence permit for skilled employment (2012–2017)

Current right of residency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (vocational qualification)	989	846	1,201	1,342	1,654	1,909
Sec. 19 AufenthG (highly qualified)	3	0	4	0	3	5
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card)	133	458	704	804	959	1,130
Sec. 20 AufenthG (research)	4	4	0	1	3	21
Sec. 21 AufenthG (self-employment)	111	109	179	180	207	204
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>2,088</b>	<b>2,327</b>	<b>2,826</b>	<b>3,269</b>

\* Before August 1, 2017: Sec. 16 para 4 AufenthG

Source: BAMF (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018a); author's own calculations.

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TABLE 8 Change in residence permit for education or vocational training purposes to a residence permit for skilled employment (2017)

Current right of residency	Change in permit status from			Total
	Sec. 16b para 1 AufenthG (language courses and schools)	Sec. 17 para 1 AufenthG (vocational training)	Sec. 17a para 1, 5 AufenthG (recognition of foreign professional qualifications)	
Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (vocational qualification)	158	1,229	230	1,617
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card)	176	315	120	611
Sec. 21 AufenthG (self-employment)	55	6	-	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>2,289</b>

Source: BAMF (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018a); author's own calculations.

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TABLE 9 Change from job-seekers' residence permit to residence permit for skilled employment (2017)

Current right of residency	Change in permit status from					Total
	Sec. 16 para 5 AufenthG (seeking employment after graduation)	Sec. 16 para 3 and Sec. 17 para 3 AufenthG (seeking employment after vocational training)	Sec. 17a para 4 AufenthG (seeking employment after recognition of foreign professional qualifications)	Sec. 18c AufenthG (qualified skilled workers seeking employment)	Sec. 20 para 7 AufenthG (seeking employment after completing research)	
Sec. 18 para. 4 AufenthG (vocational qualification)	1,909	57	8	83	-	2,057
Sec. 19 AufenthG (highly qualified)	5	-	-	-	-	5
Sec. 19a AufenthG (EU Blue Card)	1,130	11	37	71	-	1,249
Sec. 20 AufenthG (research)	21	-	-	1	-	22
Sec. 21 AufenthG (self-employment)	204	3	-	20	-	227
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,560</b>

Source: BAMF (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018a); author's own calculations.

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**9. Germany also gains skilled workers through the arrival of dependent spouses or partners, though this is not captured by the available statistics.**

Spouses and partners who arrive in Germany within the legal framework of family reunification comprise an additional source of skilled labor. From 2013 to 2017, this group has increased by 53%, totalling 57,981. Presumably, many of these individuals are skilled workers who find jobs suited to their quali-

cation – but exactly how many is unclear, as the statistics do not capture this information. A 2014 BAMF study found, for example, that 55% of all spouses from a foreign country had either a university degree or had completed vocational training before arriving in Germany. Yet only 15% of these qualifications had been recognized as equivalent to a degree or qualification in the German system (Büttner and Sticks 2014:8). Female spouses of foreigners in Germany make up the largest share of arrivals in the context of family reunification.

TABLE 10 Arrivals in the context of family reunification (2013–2017)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Wives of German nationals	13,761	14,218	14,245	13,997	13,628
Husbands of German nationals	7,822	8,510	8,524	8,276	8,132
Wives of foreign nationals	13,418	15,712	21,074	27,383	31,227
Husbands of foreign nationals	2,834	3,236	3,724	4,163	4,994
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,835</b>	<b>41,676</b>	<b>47,567</b>	<b>53,819</b>	<b>57,981</b>

Sources: BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016a, 2016b), BAMF (2017b, 2018b); author's own calculations.

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**10. Compared with other OECD countries, Germany has witnessed a considerable increase in labor migration.**

OECD statistics show that from 2014 to 2016, the number of people immigrating to Germany for the purpose of employment rose significantly in international comparison, particularly when measured against rates observed in Australia, France, the Netherlands and

Spain, for example. In the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada, the numbers have actually decreased. This reflects in part Germany's increased efforts to attract skilled labor from abroad but is also a function of the fact that other countries such as the United Kingdom have begun turning away skilled laborers from other countries. Finally, Germany is by far the most popular destination country for migrants within the context of the EU's freedom of movement regime.

TABLE 11 Permanent\* immigration to selected OECD States (2014–2016)

OECD State	2014		2015		2016	
	Labor migration from third countries	Freedom of movement (EU and other)	Labor migration from third countries	Freedom of movement (EU and other)	Labor migration from third countries	Freedom of movement (EU and other)
Canada	78,040	-	76,688	-	69,700	-
United States of America	71,400	-	68,624	-	65,600	-
Australia	61,580	27,270	59,543	23,365	60,700	19,700
Germany	27,850	434,890	27,108	427,058	50,500	454,100
Japan	29,260	-	41,256	-	49,100	-
Spain	31,620	102,100	33,568	108,126	27,900	119,000
France	31,270	87,610	25,552	88,328	27,900	86,900
United Kingdom	79,250	128,210	58,044	229,311	27,600	215,400
Netherlands	11,950	72,310	13,119	71,443	14,800	78,100
Italy	48,490	68,390	13,800	63,775	5,900	63,100

\* Does not include seasonal workers, posted workers and so-called Working-Holiday-Makers. Source: OECD (2016, 2017, 2018).

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