



# North Macedonia

## General Information



### Population

1 824 359 ([World Bank 2024](#))  
2 097 319 ([STAT MK 2021](#))



### Immigration

3 176 ([STAT MK 2023](#))



### Emigration

693 896 ([UN Emigration Stock 2020](#))  
2 377 ([STAT MK 2023](#))



### Working-age population

1 188 616 ([World Bank 2024](#))  
1 515 107 ([STAT MK 2023](#))



### Unemployment rate

12.3 % ([World Bank 2024](#))  
15.7 % ([STAT MK 2021](#))



### GDP

16 951 682 245.4 current prices USD ([World Bank 2024](#))  
840 611 000 000 current prices MKD ([STAT MK 2023](#))



### Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

**Refugees**  
20 881 ([UNHCR 2025](#))

**Asylum Seekers**  
25 ([UNHCR 2025](#))

**IDPs**  
0 ([UNHCR 2025](#))



### Citizenship

**By Birth**  
No ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))

#### By Descent

Yes (conditional) ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))



### Territory

25 713 km<sup>2</sup> ([CIA World Factbook](#))

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

# Migration Authorities Responsible Body

Ministry of Interior

## Line Ministries

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Ministry of Education and Science

Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations

## Agencies

Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia

Immigration Agency of the Republic of Northern Macedonia

Sector for Border Affairs and Migration

Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative

## Key Policy Documents

Law For Foreigners (2021)

Law for Foreigners and by-laws

Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection and by-laws

Law on Citizenship

Law on Border Control

Law on Police and bylaws

Regulation With Legal Enforcement for the Application of the Foreign Law (\*) During The Emergency And By-Laws

Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment

Law on Social Protection (104/19)

## Relevant Publications

Human Resources Management Strategy 2020-2022

National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration 2017 - 2020

North Macedonia | Profile 2021 Migration Governance Indicators, IOM

The Republic of North Macedonia remains prone to emigration. According to the census 2021, the country's overall population amounts to **2.097.319** inhabitants, of which over **260.000** represent North Macedonians living abroad for over 12 months and foreigners temporarily living in North Macedonia. Meanwhile, the country's resident population stands at **1.836.713** revealing a decline of nearly 10% since the last census in 2002. According to UN DESA, close to 700.000 North Macedonian citizens live abroad, mainly in Albania, Kosovo, Germany, Serbia, and Italy.

The economy of North Macedonia has been doing fairly well over the past two decades. However, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a **4.5% decline in GDP**. The country's unemployment rate remains at around **16.5 %** and represents one of the reasons for emigration on par with other socio-economic drivers. The growing labour emigration drives up the flow of remittances, which increased **from 2.7% of the GDP in 2019 to 3.4% of the GDP in 2020**.

According to the reports of the North Macedonia Bureau of Statistics, in 2020, almost 1082 residents emigrated from North Macedonia, most of whom left for Germany, Turkey, Switzerland, Albania, Cyprus, and Italy. The main reasons for leaving are family reunion (36.3%) and employment (42.8%), mainly in construction and hospitality. In 2020, **16.338** Macedonians received residence permits in the EU, mainly in Germany (8.033), Croatia (2.235), Italy, Austria, and Slovenia (over 1000 each). Nearly 75% of permits are issued for family reasons and work purposes, with Germany issuing the majority for the former and Croatia for the latter. In terms of duration, most residence permits issued in 2020 were valid over 12 months (58%). Meanwhile, the number of all valid permits at the end of 2020 amounted to over **205.000**, with the majority issued by family, other and work reasons (50%, 32% and 16% respectively).

In 2019, **12.726 Macedonian citizens** of Turkish origin emigrated to Turkey due to economic ties with this country. Moreover, from 2002 to 2019, about **90.000 Macedonian citizens** obtained Bulgarian passports that simplify their emigration to the EU. There is no evidence whether those who emigrated with a Bulgarian passport have been registered as Bulgarians, which may downplay the Macedonian migrant stock abroad.

The total number of asylum seekers from North Macedonia increased two-fold from **1715 in 2020 to 3982 in 2021**, yet representing a moderate figure compared to the peak observed in 2015. Within the EU – primarily, in Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, and Italy – North Macedonians submitted as many as **3.020** applications in 2021. The same year, the stock of recognized refugees from North Macedonia reached **1842 persons**, with over half residing in Germany and France.

When it comes to statistics on returns, in 2020, 2.360 **North Macedonian citizens** were ordered to leave the EU, mostly from Germany (**735**), France (**465**), and Austria (**225**). The return rate remains consistently high. With 2.005 persons returned, it stood at 83% in 2019, while declining to 61% in 2020. With the support of the EU and Member States' funding, the IOM implements the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program supporting capacity building of North Macedonia's return system and facilitating access to Assisted Voluntary Return.

In 2019, North Macedonia hosted **76.493** immigrants, most of whom were nationals of Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Turkey, and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the flow of immigrants in 2020 amounted to 1848 persons, most of whom were foreigners. Employment is the main reason for immigration. In 2020, the country issued **3.672 work** permits to foreign workers, of whom 593 were EU citizens.

Being located along one of the main routes for mixed migration movements to Europe, North Macedonia detected over **20,874** irregular border crossings in 2021. In 2020, **211 persons lodged applications for asylum** in the country, out of which 22% were from Afghanistan, 16% from Pakistan, 12% from Turkey, and 11% from Syria. As a rule, most cases are discontinued due to the high rate of claim abandonment. In 2020, the Sector for Asylum issued only two decisions granting subsidiary protection, 39 negative decisions to 46 persons, and 201 decisions for the discontinuation of asylum procedures. North Macedonia still needs to find a sustainable solution for **259 refugees** from Kosovo, mostly Roma, of which 14 have refugee status, 122 possess subsidiary protection and 123 are tolerated. The practice of cancelling subsidiary protection has left some of these individuals without a regulated status in the country. In August and September 2021, North Macedonia started temporarily hosting some 193 evacuees/refugees from Afghanistan. They are eligible to receive a 90-day temporary stay, which can be extended. Meanwhile, due to the war in Ukraine, **684 refugees** have arrived in North Macedonia as of June 2022, according to UNHCR data.

North Macedonia has ratified all main international conventions related to the status of refugees, migrant workers, the rights of the child, and UN protocols against smuggling and trafficking. In 2021, the Parliament of North Macedonia adopted the **Resolution on Migration Policy for 2021-2025** that focuses on strengthening the capacities for migration governance, migration data management, factoring the development aspects of migration, and promoting partnerships and international cooperation. The same year, the country endorsed the **National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2021-2025)**.

As of 2005, North Macedonia is an EU candidate country; however, the remaining bilateral issues between Bulgaria and North Macedonia prevent the accession talks from moving forward. The country has made significant progress in joint patrols with the Albanian and Kosovo police. North Macedonia is part of the Brdo-Brijuni process, the Prague Process, and the Regional Initiative for Migration and Asylum, among others. In terms of international cooperation on migration, North Macedonia also cooperates with various UN and EU agencies, as well as OSCE.

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