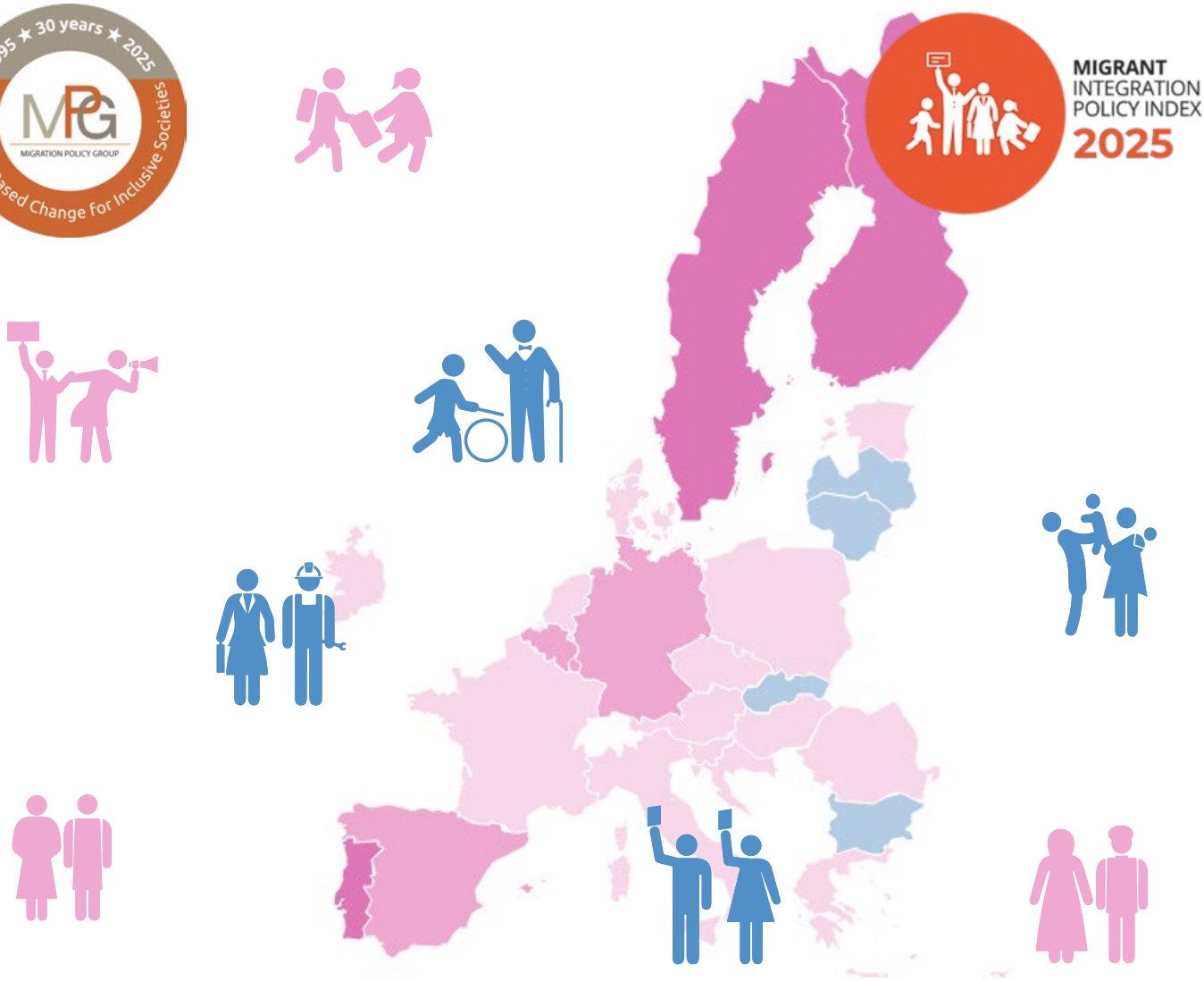

Unlocking Integration - Enabling Participation

MIPEX 2025 – A Roadmap for Inclusive Policy in the EU

Policy Brief

Başak Yavçan and Marianna Gorgerino

September 2025

The Migration Policy Group is an independent Brussels-based think-and-do tank. We conduct evidence-based projects, research and campaigns in the areas of integration, migration and anti-discrimination.
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The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is the most comprehensive, reliable and used tool to compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants across Europe and the world. The 2025 update for all EU countries is part of MPG's New Europeans Initiative, linking indicators on civic and political participation with indicators on wider social and economic participation.

The New Europeans Initiative is a programme of the Migration Policy Group aimed at making European democracy fit for an increasingly diverse and internationally mobile society. We research policies, identify best practices, and promote evidence-based solutions.
www.neweuropeans.eu

Full MIPEX results & online tool: www.mipex.eu

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Key Takeaways

MIPEX measures the state of development of integration policies along 58 indicators in 8 policy areas, using a scale from 0 to 100. Across all 27 EU countries, main results include:

Overall State of Integration in the EU.

- Average MIPEX **score: 54/100.** Overall stagnation of integration policies across the EU.
- Three leaders: **Sweden, Finland, Portugal** (favourable approach).
- Post-2004 EU member states (average 44) lag behind pre-2004 EU countries (average 63).

Areas of Strength

- **Anti-discrimination** protections relatively strong (score: 78).
- **Permanent residence** moderately secure (61).
- **Labour market integration** improving in some countries (55).

Areas of Weakness

- **Political participation** extremely low (37).
- **Access to nationality** weak (44) and worsening in many countries.
- **Education** still underdeveloped (50), despite recent progress.

Recent Policy Trends (2019–2023)

- Small overall improvement (+0.8 points).
- Gains in: education (+3), labour market (+1), anti-discrimination (+1).
- Declines in: citizenship (-1), political participation (-1), permanent residence (-0.1).

Some Notable National Reforms

- **Germany**: more inclusive citizenship rules.
- **Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland**: weakened political consultative bodies.
- **Slovenia & Greece**: visible labour market reforms.
- **Portugal & Croatia**: more inclusive family reunification.
- **Spain**: new comprehensive anti-discrimination law

Impact of Ukrainian Refugee Arrivals

- Positive albeit limited spillover effects on healthcare and education policies in Eastern Europe.
- Translation services, multilingual guidance, and targeted school support expanded.

Risks & Concerns

- Rising trend of stricter citizenship and family reunification requirements.
- Weak political participation undermines democratic inclusion.
- Restrictive policies foster exclusion, prejudice, and social division.

Policy Implications

- Integration is a viable alternative to restrictive migration agendas.
- EU policy debates (e.g., New Pact on Migration and Asylum) must address wide disparities in national integration frameworks.
- More investment is needed in education, political participation, and secure residence rights to ensure long-term inclusion.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction **8**

1.1 Why Inclusive Integration Policies? 8

1.2 Why Use MIPEX? 10

1.3 What Does MIPEX Measure? 10

2. Key Findings **12**

2.1 Integration Policies in the EU: the State of Play 12

2.2 Policies Matter: Evidence on Integration Outcomes 18

2.3 Conclusions and Recommendations 19

4. MIPEX Results Across 8 Policy Areas **21**

4.1 Labour Market Mobility 21

4.2 Family Reunification 26

4.3 Education 31

4.4 Political Participation 36

4.5 Permanent Residence 41

4.6 Access to Nationality 46

4.7 Anti-Discrimination 51

4.8 Health 56

Annex: List of Areas Assessed by Indicators 62

References 64

Table of maps

Map 1: MIPEX overall scores (EU27 - 2023/2024) 12

Map 2: Labour Market Mobility (EU27 - 2023/2024) 21

Map 3: Family Reunification (EU27 - 2023/2024) 26

Map 4: Education (EU27 - 2023/2024) 31

Map 5: Political Participation (EU27 - 2023/2024) 36

Map 6: Permanent Residence (EU27 - 2023/2024) 41

Map 7: Access to Nationality (EU27 - 2023/2024) 46

Map 8: Anti-discrimination (EU27 - 2023/2024) 51

Map 9: Health (EU27 - 2023/2024) 56

Table of figures

Figure 1: MIPEX overall scores (EU27 - 2023/2024) 14

Figure 2: MIPEX Policy Areas (EU27, 2019 vs. 2023) 15

Figure 3: Labour Market Mobility (EU27 - 2023/2024) 23

Figure 4: Family Reunification (EU27 - 2023/2024) 28

Figure 5: Education (EU27 - 2023/2024) 33

Figure 6: Political Participation (EU27 - 2023/2024) 38

Figure 7: Permanent Residence (EU27 - 2023/2024) 43

Figure 8: Access to Nationality (EU27 - 2023/2024) 48

Figure 9: Anti-discrimination (EU27 - 2023/2024) 53

Figure 10: Health (EU27 - 2023/2024) 59

1. Introduction

1.1 Why Inclusive Integration Policies?

Effective integration policies are essential for building inclusive, cohesive and prosperous societies. They play a crucial role not only in enabling migrants to fully participate in their new communities but also in supporting social stability, economic growth and democratic resilience across Europe. When integration is well-managed, it benefits both newcomers and the wider population by fostering equal opportunities, reducing inequalities and strengthening trust in public institutions. It also promotes political participation and civic engagement, empowering migrants to contribute to decision-making processes, community life, and the democratic functioning of society. However, the state of integration policies across the European Union (EU) remains mixed, reflecting varying levels of political will and investment in supporting the long-term inclusion of migrants. It is precisely for this reason that the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) tracks policy developments over time, supporting evidence-based decision-making and fostering learning from successful approaches. The index also strengthens transparency and accountability, enabling governments, media, and advocacy groups to evaluate performance and advocate for improvements.

MIPEX evaluates and compares how effectively countries support the integration of migrants. Until now, covering 56 countries across six continents, MIPEX assesses policies in eight key areas:

- labour market mobility
- family reunification
- education
- permanent residence
- political participation
- access to nationality
- anti-discrimination
- health

By drawing on a comprehensive set of indicators, MIPEX provides a clear, comparative picture of how national frameworks enable migrants to participate fully in society. It has become a **globally recognised benchmark,** supporting governments, EU institutions, and civil society in monitoring progress, identifying gaps, and advancing more inclusive and effective integration policies. Due to the robustness and policy relevance of its methodology, MIPEX has become an international reference to monitor and compare national integration policies across countries.

The impact of MIPEX

Over the years, MIPEX has become a trusted reference across a wide range of actors and contexts – from international organisations such as the EU and UNHCR, to national and local institutions like the UK's House of Lords, NGOs, and major media outlets – who use its comparable data to inform discussions and guide decision-making. Recognised as the most widely cited index on integration and citizenship policies, MIPEX is relied upon by both qualitative and quantitative researchers, as well as governments, civil society, academia, the press, and financial institutions, making it a key source of evidence for policy debates, research, and initiatives on migrant integration.

The European Commission's Joint Research Center noted that "no other index currently offers the same coverage," and highlighted that MIPEX's periodic updates make it one of the few "alive" sources of migration policy data, allowing comparisons across countries and over time (JRC, 2017). MIPEX's relevance was further recognised in early drafts of the UN Global Compact for Migration, which encouraged states to engage with the index to identify challenges and share best practices, while its labour market strand is listed as a good practice by the International Labour Organisation.

MIPEX has influenced policy debates across Europe. In 2021, Switzerland's government cited MIPEX in a report on racist discrimination, reflecting the country's low ranking in migrants' access to democratic rights. In Portugal, the High Commission for Migration regularly has used MIPEX data to assess policy development, while Finland's 2023 Integration Conference drew on MIPEX to discuss new citizenship integration requirements with stakeholders.

Building on MIPEX's international reputation, MPG has developed complementary indexes to assess regional and local integration policies, including the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM, 2016–2022), the regional REGIN/MIPEX-R, and the local MIPEX-L, alongside a forthcoming multi-level Integration Governance Self-Assessment Tool. These initiatives are supported by EU programmes and the Council of Europe, alongside this MIPEX update for all 27 EU Member States, which is being conducted with a new Political Participation Policy Index (Yavçan, Yilmaz, & Gorgerino, 2024) funded through the EU Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

In addition, the Migration Research Hub, coordinated by IMISCOE – Europe's largest academic network dedicated to migration and integration – makes use of MIPEX data to illustrate integration policy trends across the continent. Its impact in scholarship is also evident: a recent google scholar search shows over 7,400 citations referencing MIPEX. Between 2019 and 2024, the MIPEX website reached an average of 50,000 unique users annually, and between 2020 and 2024 MIPEX was cited over 1,000 times in academic publications and mentioned around 300 times per year in global media outlets.

This report presents the findings of the latest update, **MIPEX 2025**, covering all **27 EU Member States** for the period **2020 to 2023/2024**. Data for EU countries was collected between 2023 and 2024, ensuring a timely and accurate reflection of recent policy developments. Updates for several non-EU countries are currently in progress and will be published in due course. This report presents key findings and the analysis of results in the eight policy areas. More information, including the analysis for each individual EU country, can be found on the interactive MIPEX website www.mipex.eu.

1.2 Why Use MIPEX?

Accessing reliable and up-to-date evidence to inform reforms, design initiatives, and promote equality is a common challenge for policymakers, practitioners and researchers working on integration. MIPEX helps fill this gap by providing a robust resource to evaluate, compare, and strengthen integration policies across diverse national contexts.

The index sheds light on the key factors influencing how migrants settle and participate in society, offering evidence that can be used to assess past developments and guide future policy choices. Beyond serving as a comparative benchmark, **MIPEX's primary purpose is to raise standards and support more effective integration outcomes across national contexts.**

1.3 What Does MIPEX Measure?

MIPEX assesses policies and legal frameworks that shape integration across societies. At its core, integration is grounded in the principle of equal opportunities for all. The concept of integration is based on a two-way process, in which both the host community and migrant communities actively engage. In this context, equal access to rights and services with minimal barriers is considered a fundamental tenet of integration and is reflected in higher MIPEX scores. From a socio-economic perspective, this means that migrants should have the same opportunities as others to lead dignified, independent, and active lives. From a civic perspective, it ensures that all residents share equal rights and responsibilities within society.

When migrants feel safe, respected, and included, they are better able to contribute to their host country, both socially and economically. Over time, this sense of security enables them to access more opportunities, take on greater responsibilities, enjoy more rights, and – if they choose – become full citizens.

Integration, however, is not a one-size-fits-all process. It depends on the needs of individuals and local communities. While many factors play a role, government policy is crucial because it establishes the legal and political framework that guides integration. By removing barriers, promoting equal treatment, and supporting participation, governments can create conditions for genuine equality and shared membership in society.

How does MIPEX decide the scores?

The MIPEX score is built on a series of indicators spanning the 8 key policy areas (see Annex). These indicators were developed in consultation with leading scholars and institutions, ensuring that current laws and policies can be benchmarked against the highest international standards through rigorous comparative research.

Each of the eight areas is broken down into specific policy indicators, framed as questions targeting particular aspects of integration policy. Answers to the questions are assigned values on a scale (e.g., 0–50–100), with a score of 100 representing full compliance with best practices in equal treatment.

Within each policy area, the individual indicator scores are averaged to produce an overall score for that area. These indicators were reviewed by leading scholars and migration policy practitioners and refined over various waves of MIPEX data collection phases. These 8 area scores are then averaged once more to generate a country's overall MIPEX score.

What are the highest standards used by MIPEX?

For each of the 8 policy areas, MIPEX identifies the highest European and international standards designed to ensure equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all. These standards are drawn from authoritative sources such as Council of Europe conventions and EU directives. Where only minimum standards exist, MIPEX relies on Europe-wide policy recommendations.

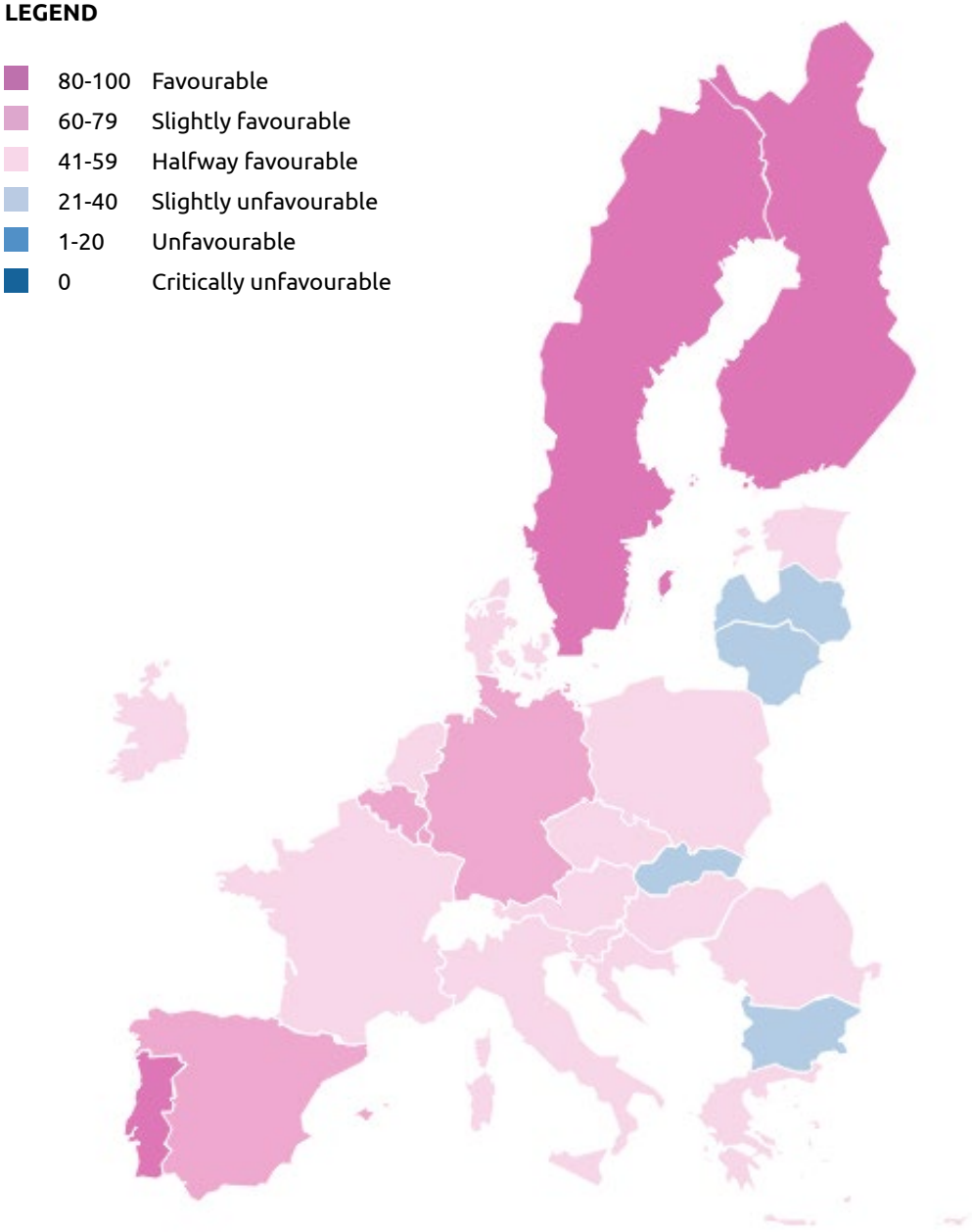
The research process

Already in the previous edition, MIPEX relied on 58 carefully selected indicators to provide a comprehensive assessment of integration policy in each country. The questionnaires for the current update, covering the years 2020-2023/2024, were completed by national experts, one for each EU country. Data collection took place between 2023 and 2024.

To ensure consistency and accuracy, MPG's research team reviewed the responses, cross-checking them against publicly available data and legal documents. In addition, MPG research team conducted a question-by-question consistency check with each country-expert, checking also the changes over time to make sure that similar policies and changes were evaluated in the same way across all countries. Where additional clarification was needed, the MPG came back to the country experts for further evidence and explanation. Once verified, the data for all 27 EU countries were analysed by MPG's team and used to produce this report.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Integration Policies in the EU: the State of Play



Map 1: MIPEX overall scores (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Effective integration policies are essential for building inclusive, cohesive and prosperous societies. They play a crucial role not only in enabling migrants to fully participate in their new communities but also in supporting social stability, economic growth and democratic resilience across Europe. When integration is well-managed, it benefits both newcomers and the wider population by fostering equal opportunities, reducing inequalities and strengthening trust in public institutions. However, the state of integration policies across the European Union (EU) remains mixed, reflecting varying levels of political will and investment in supporting the long-term inclusion of migrants.

Integration policies in the 27 EU countries are, on average, only *halfway favourable* (54/100). That means, on average, countries' policies are creating as many obstacles as opportunities for immigrants to participate and settle in their new home country. Immigrants enjoy many basic rights and, to a certain extent, long-term security, but not equal opportunities.

Besides the low average scores, migrant integration frameworks vary widely across member states. Owing to the lack of harmonisation in this area, only three countries – Sweden, Finland and Portugal – adopt a *favourable* approach to integration. They are followed by Belgium, Spain, Germany and Luxembourg, which show *slightly favourable* policies. The majority of EU countries fall into the *halfway favourable* category, while Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia exhibit a *slightly unfavourable* policy environment for integration.

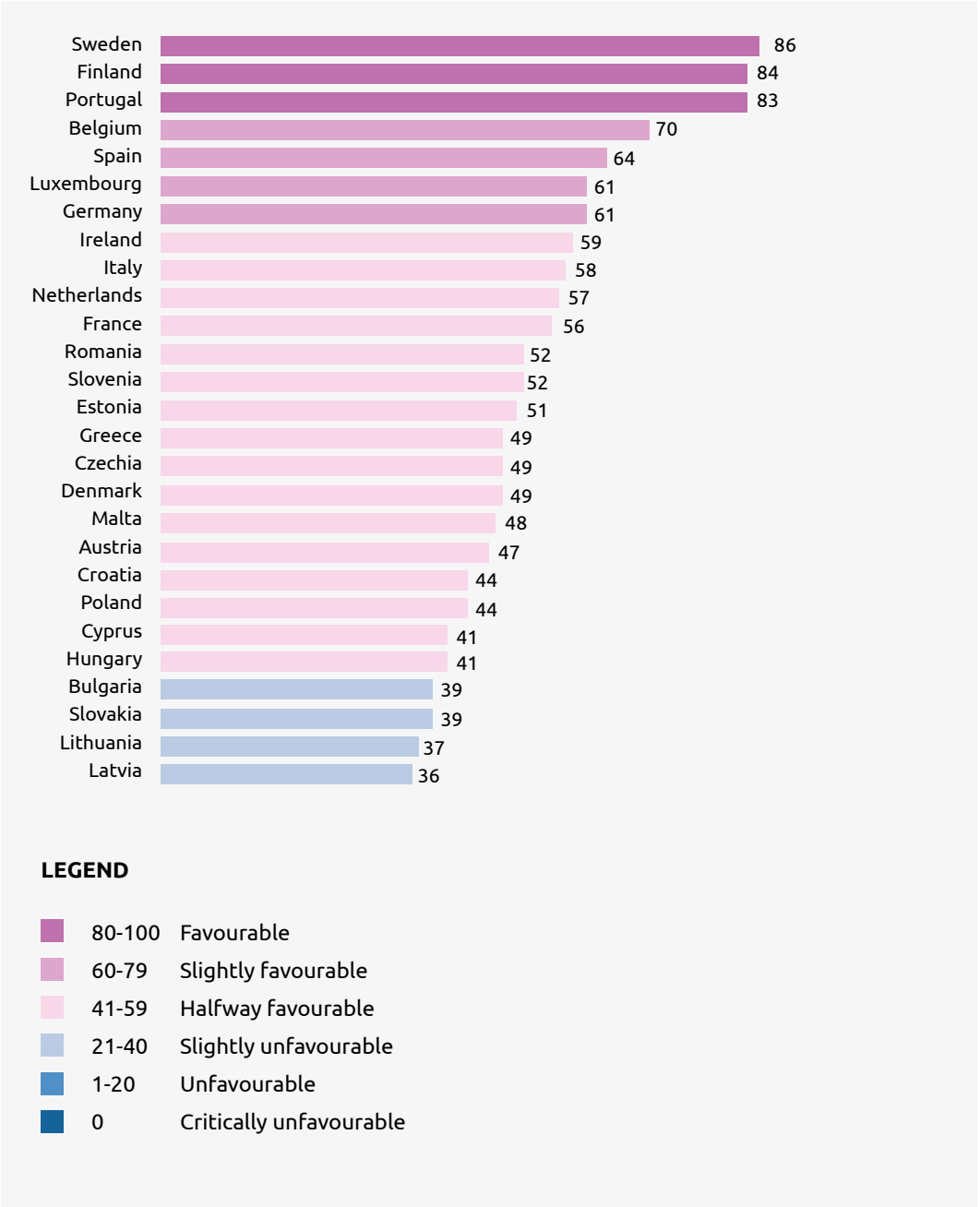
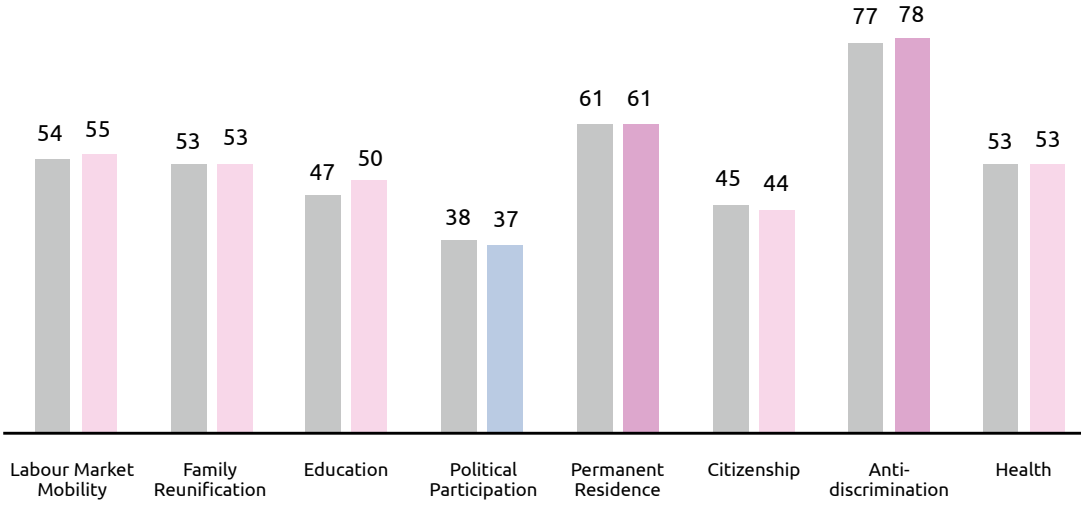


Figure 1: MIPEX overall scores (EU27 - 2023/2024)



LEGEND

80-100	Favourable
60-79	Slightly favourable
41-59	Halfway favourable
21-40	Slightly unfavourable
1-20	Unfavourable
0	Critically unfavourable

2019

Figure 2: MIPEX Policy Areas (EU27, 2019 vs. 2023)

A country's integration policies can be partly explained by the state of its democracy and economic development and its history of immigration. On the one hand, immigrants generally face greater obstacles in emerging destination countries with smaller numbers of immigrants, such as the Eastern EU countries (in the EU-13 countries that have joined the EU since 2004, the average score in 2023 is 44). On the other hand, in wealthier and traditional destination countries, immigrants usually benefit from more equal rights and opportunities (for the EU-14 current member states that were part of the EU before 2004, the average score in 2023 is 63). These discrepancies indicate that migrants in one EU member state have access to an entirely different set of services with implications for their labour market integration, social cohesion, identification and feelings of belonging.

When eight different areas of integration dimensions of MIPEX are considered, migrants generally benefit from solid protections and security in areas such as anti-discrimination (78), permanent residence (61), and labour market integration to a lesser extent (55). However, major challenges remain in the areas of political participation (37), access to nationality (44), and, to a lesser extent, access to education (50) despite the recent improvements in this area in some countries.

Stagnation in EU Integration Policies

Between 2019 and 2023, integration policies in the EU (excluding the UK) improved by only 0.8 points on the MIPEX scale, reflecting an overall stagnation of integration policies. The aforesaid stagnation is also visible when the updated policy scores averages are compared with the previous wave, where in most areas there are no sizeable changes. This slight progress was driven primarily by significant advancements in education (+3 points), labour market (+1), and anti-discrimination (+1). In contrast, other areas showed limited or negative change: citizenship (–1), family reunification (+0.4), health (+0.7), permanent residence (–0.1), and political participation (–1). In many countries, progress in one area was offset by restrictions in another. For instance, Slovenia expanded labour market access through reduced waiting periods for asylum seekers and broader employment support but experienced a sharp decline in family reunification due to stricter income criteria and the introduction of a language test. Similarly, while France strengthened its support for migrant students and teachers, it simultaneously imposed more stringent requirements for renewing permanent residence and increased barriers to healthcare access.

Progress in Labour Market Mobility

Notably, labour market policies have seen improvements across the board due to the better implementation of the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU). Following infringement proceedings by the European Commission, Belgium and Slovenia fully transposed and implemented the directive, streamlining the application process, reducing administrative burdens, and enabling adult family members of TCNs to contribute economically immediately upon arrival. With the recast Single Permit Directive, which entered into force in 2024 (to be transposed by May 2026), third-country nationals will benefit from equal access to the labour market through a faster and more flexible application process, greater security thanks to the right to change employers and allowances for periods of unemployment, as well as strengthened equal treatment covering working hours, leave and holidays, gender equality, the right to strike, and participation in trade union and association activities, potentially leading to a positive MIPEX score change in this area.

Countries such as Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg and Slovenia implemented meaningful reforms, particularly in the recognition of qualifications and access to public employment services. The main improvement in labour market integration took place in Slovenia. Since 2020, Slovenia has expanded labour market access for migrants by reducing waiting periods for asylum seekers, extending public employment services to more permit holders; in 2023, it also introduced pre-integration programmes in countries of origin and launched targeted support for migrant youth and women facing language, financial or social barriers. Greece has also made significant improvements by equalising the recognition process for foreign academic qualifications and expanding targeted employment support for third-country nationals and beneficiaries of international protection.

Health and Education: The Impact of Ukrainian Refugees and COVID-19

Since 2022, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees has contributed to improvements in healthcare and education policies, particularly in Eastern EU countries. In healthcare, these countries have enhanced the translation of health information, expanded research on migrant health, and promoted the involvement of migrants in both the dissemination of information and the planning of health services, with notable progress in countries such as Estonia, Poland and Romania. However, legal entitlements remained mostly unchanged. Although the COVID-19 pandemic raised awareness about migrants' access to healthcare – particularly in relation to vaccination campaigns and the availability of translated health information – it does not appear to have led to substantial, long-term policy changes in health integration.

Similarly, in education, support for foreign pupils has expanded in response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees, leading to more inclusive and responsive policies in countries such as Poland, Czechia and Slovakia. While many of these measures were initially designed to meet the urgent needs of Ukrainian learners, they have also yielded broader benefits for migrant students more generally. In addition, countries like Greece, Austria, France, Croatia, and Spain have implemented positive educational reforms, including the provision of translation services at counselling centres, multilingual guidance on the education system, and improved language instruction supported by state-led evaluation and curriculum monitoring.

Stricter Rules for Citizenship and Family Reunification

There is growing political momentum across many EU countries to tighten the requirements for acquiring citizenship, particularly through higher language proficiency levels, longer residency periods and increased economic and integration demands. Although EU citizenship policy scores have largely remained stagnant, most changes since 2018 have been regressive, and further declines are likely. Countries such as Greece, Cyprus, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands have introduced or proposed stricter naturalisation criteria, which risk creating barriers to integration, particularly for vulnerable migrant groups. In contrast, Germany's 2024 reform marked a liberalisation by reducing the residency requirement and recognising dual citizenship.

The trend of tightening conditions is also observed in family reunification policies, where stricter requirements are being introduced alongside some notable exceptions. Several countries, including Ireland, Slovenia and the Netherlands, have introduced more stringent requirements related to income, language proficiency and housing. Slovenia experienced the sharpest decline due to new requirements introducing a language test for family

members (from 2024) and stricter income criteria for family reunification that exclude social benefits (since 2021). However, some countries have moved in a more inclusive direction: Portugal now grants families of visa applicants the right to enter at the same time, while Croatia has limited the grounds for rejection, withdrawal or refusal of status.

Still Waiting for a Seat: Few Opportunities for Political Participation

While being a crucial aspect of migrants' engagement in society, political participation remains the weakest area of integration policies. As detailed in the 2024 Comparative Report of MPG's Political Participation Policy Index, non-EU citizens continue to encounter limited voting rights and have few opportunities to engage through robust consultative bodies or adequately supported migrant organisations (Yavçan, Yilmaz, & Gorgerino, 2024). Recent developments have further exacerbated this trend, mainly due to weaker consultative bodies (e.g., Ireland, Luxembourg, Denmark) and a lack of active information policy (e.g., Finland, Ireland). In Luxembourg, the National Council for Foreigners (CNE), which was a strong consultative body with representatives from both EU and non-EU immigrants, was abolished in 2023 and replaced by a High Council without any quotas for foreigners or nationals. Similarly, in Denmark, the Council for Ethnic Minorities was replaced in 2020 by a weaker National Integration Council, and a 2019 legal change extended the residence requirement for non-Nordic, non-EU citizens to vote locally from 3 to 4 years. In Ireland, the 2017 Integration Strategy had promised continued support for migrant political participation, including consultative forums, but these commitments have not been maintained since the strategy ended.

Evolving Anti-Discrimination Policies

This lack of political inclusion stands in contrast to developments in anti-discrimination policies, which have seen more consistent progress across the EU since the 2000 EU legislation.[1] In the past five years, they have been strengthened, especially in four EU countries, namely Spain, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia. Spain recorded the most significant improvement following the adoption of a comprehensive non-discrimination law in 2022. The new legislation broadened the prohibited grounds of discrimination, expanded the scope of protection, and strengthened the mandate of the national equality body. By contrast, only Hungary and Ireland have seen setbacks in their anti-discrimination approaches. In Ireland, since the end of the 2017 strategy, there have been no positive action measures. In Hungary in 2020, the Parliament dissolved the independent Equal Treatment Authority, transferring its duties to the multi-purpose Ombudsman.

2.2 Policies Matter: Evidence on Integration Outcomes

Inclusive integration policies foster a virtuous cycle of inclusion, encouraging openness, mutual respect, and engagement. When migrants are treated as equals and integration is approached as a shared societal investment, both immigrants and the general public are more likely to interact on equal terms. Such environments promote mutual understanding and reduce prejudice. Research using overall MIPEX scores shows that strong and comprehensive integration frameworks tend to foster more positive public perceptions

1 Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC).

of immigrants, accompanied by greater recognition of their contributions to host societies (Gregurović, 2021).

While persistent inequalities between migrants and natives remain, integration policies can play a crucial role in addressing these gaps. For instance, in the health domain, migrant-friendly policies are associated with improved immigrants' access to healthcare and fewer instances of unmet medical needs (Dourgnon, Pourat, & Rocco, 2023). Moreover, anti-discrimination measures not only heighten awareness of inequality but also strengthen public support for initiatives that promote diversity (Blommaert & Coenders, 2024).

Empirical evidence shows that inclusive integration policies play a vital role in supporting the most vulnerable members of society, whereas restrictive measures tend to disproportionately harm them. For example, targeted labour market measures are especially beneficial for low-educated migrants by mitigating structural and administrative barriers that can devalue skills acquired abroad (Muñoz Comet & Miyar Busto, 2025). Similarly, restrictive family reunification regimes tend to disproportionately affect newly arrived sponsors with fewer resources, particularly third-country nationals from poorer or conflict-affected regions (Ahlén, 2024).

Integration policies can also shape the ways in which immigrants and the wider society interact with each other and engage in civic and political life. For instance, citizenship regimes are strongly linked to immigrants' acceptance within society and their sense of belonging, with both ius soli provisions and naturalisation requirements directly influencing overall naturalisation rates (Stadlmair, 2017). Finally, public trust and a shared civic identity are more likely to flourish where political participation is inclusive (Sarrasin, Green, & Van Assche, 2020), helping to narrow the gap in democratic engagement between immigrants and non-immigrants (Aleksynska, 2011).

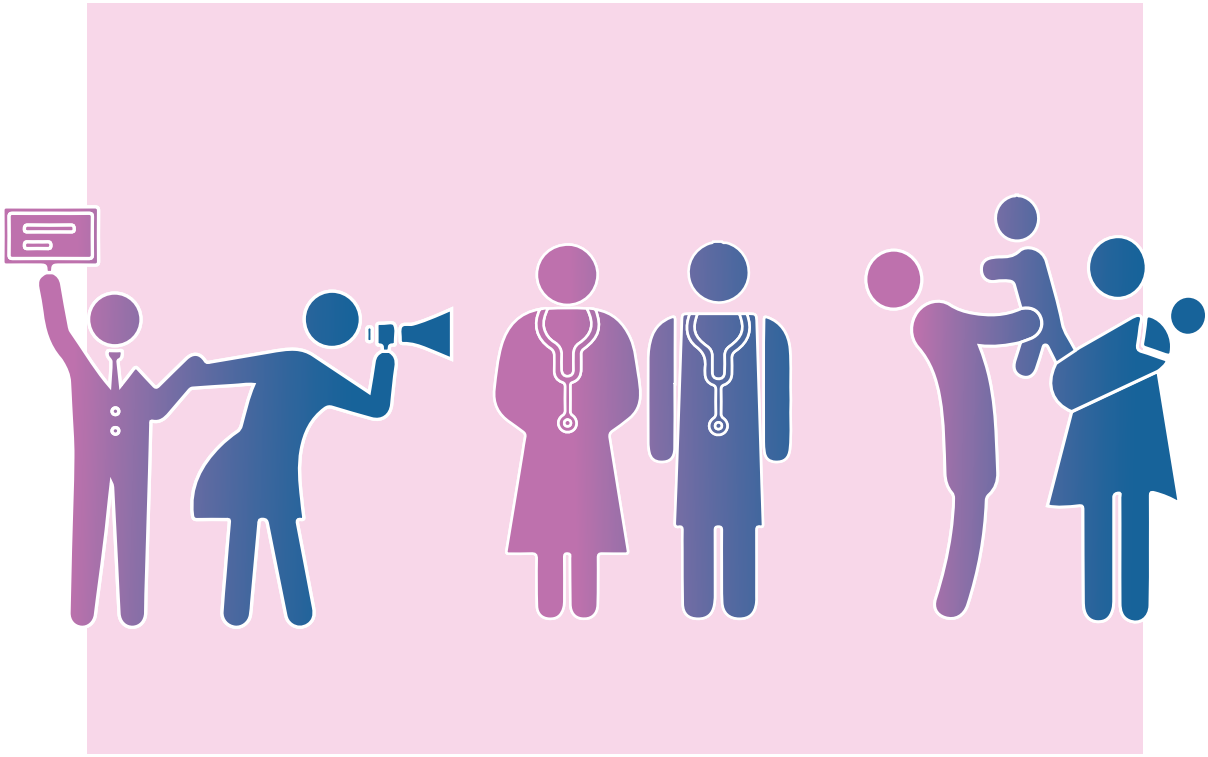
2.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The prevailing political climate in the European Union – marked by a strong emphasis on restrictive migration controls and return policies, coupled with comparatively limited investment in integration – provides a concerning backdrop to these findings. The relative neglect of integration is particularly disquieting, given its proven potential as a pragmatic and sustainable strategy for addressing many of the societal challenges that are often cited as justification for more restrictive measures.

The MIPEX findings reveal considerable divergence in migrant integration policies across EU member states. In other words, the arrival location of migrants significantly affects the services and policies they can access, ultimately shaping their life trajectories. Ongoing discussions at the EU level – such as the implementation of the EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum – must take these disparities into account, and member states should be supported through more inclusive policy frameworks. It is of particular concern that, despite significant external pressures such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, member states' integration policies have seen limited evolution in meeting emerging societal needs in a holistic manner. These crises highlighted the vulnerabilities and essential contributions

of migrants, yet failed to prompt a corresponding shift toward more comprehensive and responsive integration frameworks.

As reflected in the average scores across policy areas – examined in greater detail in the following section – several domains warrant heightened attention. The trend toward increased requirements for citizenship, permanent residency and family reunification is particularly concerning, as it poses significant challenges for migrants in establishing secure futures in their new countries. Despite some targeted efforts – such as those aimed at high-skilled migrants – several barriers to coherent labour market integration remain. Last but not least, migrants still do not have a seat at the table, as evidenced by the low scores in the area of political participation, even though inclusive civic engagement is a cornerstone of cohesive and democratic societies.

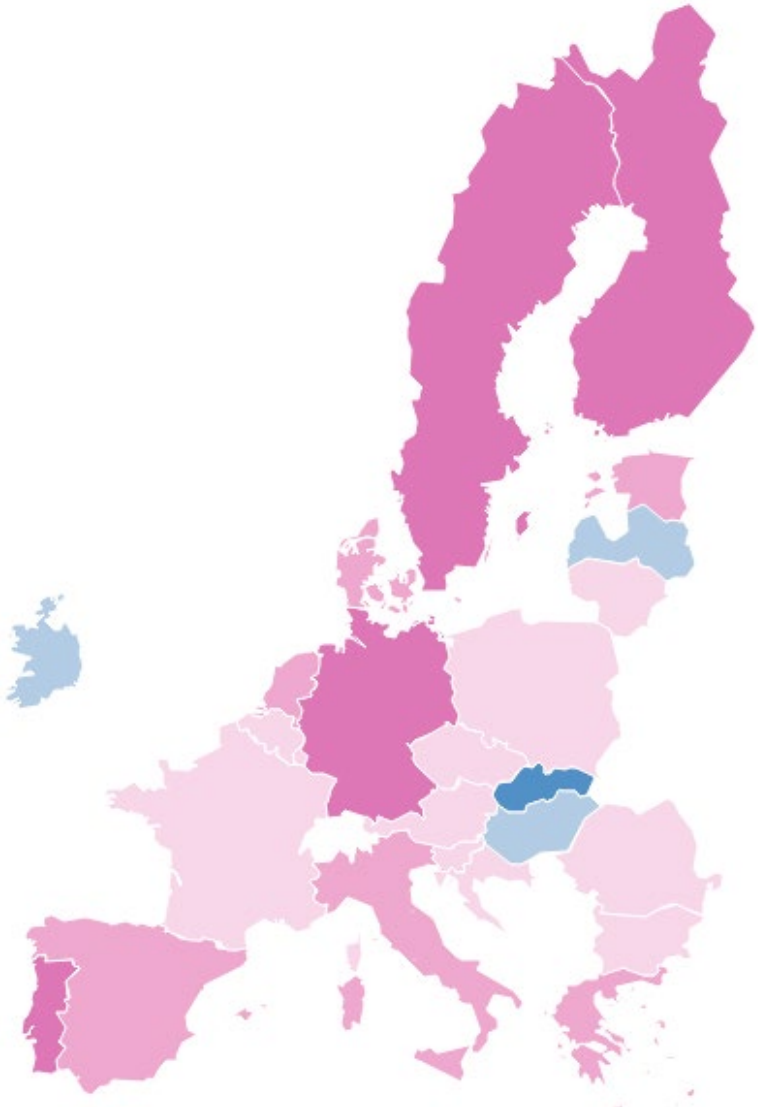


4. MIPEX Results Across 8 Policy Areas

4.1 Labour Market Mobility

LEGEND

	80-100	Favourable
	60-79	Slightly favourable
	41-59	Halfway favourable
	21-40	Slightly unfavourable
	1-20	Unfavourable
	0	Critically unfavourable



Map 2: Labour Market Mobility (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: Do immigrants have equal rights and opportunities to access jobs and improve their skills?

Labour market integration happens over time and depends on the general integration policies, context, immigrants' skills and reason for migration. Successful labour market integration in turn strengthens social cohesion, supports stable policies, reduces inequalities, and improves access to rights, especially education, for migrants and their children, while boosting economic growth and public finances. It is therefore important to understand the legal structures in place that ensure equal access to labour market and targeted policies for immigrants to expedite this process. During the period covered by this MIPEX update, several significant EU-wide developments took place. Some measures applied to all third-country nationals, such as enforcing EU law granting labour market access to dependent family members. Others targeted specific groups, including Ukrainian refugees, facilitating their access to certain professions like psychological counselling, or highly skilled migrants, with policies easing their entry into the labour market.

Labour market mobility policies in EU qualify as only *halfway favourable* for promoting equal quality employment over the long-term (55/100). In most countries, family members and permanent residents can access the labour market and employment services, as well as social security and assistance. However, full equality of rights and opportunity in the labour market is still far from being achieved, especially in the public sector. Most categories of third country nationals looking for work can have their academic qualifications recognised, but only few countries offer targeted programmes for economic integration of migrants. This lack of support makes the process particularly complicated for vulnerable groups, such as women and youth.

Immigrants benefit from better access to employment and targeted support in Northern, Central and Western European countries such as Portugal, Sweden, Finland, and Germany, though Ireland stands as a notable exception. Eastern European countries like Slovakia, Hungary, and Latvia offer comparatively weaker support. Among recent destination countries, Portugal stands out for its inclusive approach to the labour market, supporting both immigrant and emigrant workers.

Over the past few years, several EU countries have implemented positive reforms in the labour market. From 2019 to 2023, the MIPEX average score for labour market integration in EU countries increased by 1.6 points. Significant progress was made in Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Slovenia. These improvements include the recognition of foreign qualifications in Greece, enhanced access to public employment services in Cyprus and Slovenia and expanded targeted support in Luxembourg.

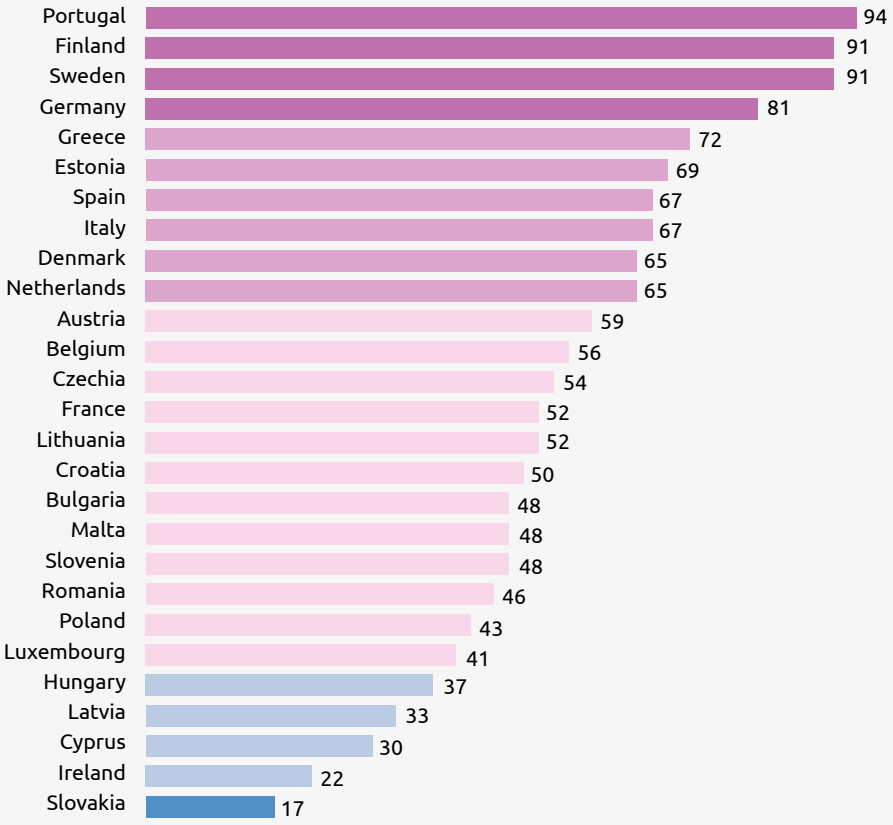


Figure 3: Labour Market Mobility (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Access to the labour market

- Not all foreign residents with the right to work have full equal access to the labour market. Only 6 EU countries grant immediate labour market access to all categories of legal residents, while 3 countries delay full access for both labour and family migrants. 18 countries deny immediate labour market access for newcomers on temporary work permits.
- Public sector jobs are often only open to national or EU citizens. Only 7 countries guarantee equal access to public sector jobs, while 10 others impose certain conditions for access.
- Labour market access is most favourable in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Finland and Belgium. In contrast, obstacles are greatest in Slovakia, Cyprus and Ireland, where newcomers cannot access work as easily or as quickly as national citizens.
- Access to self-employment is equal for newcomers in most EU countries (14), with limiting conditions imposed in 9 other countries. In 4 countries (France, Slovakia, Latvia, Romania) certain (or most of) sectors and activities are reserved solely for national citizens.

Access to general support

- Most categories of newcomers can access public employment offices, higher education and vocational training, often thanks to EU law. However, only 7 countries give full access to study grants and scholarships for third country nationals.
- Recognition procedures for skills and foreign qualifications are granted equally in 16 EU countries. Among those, Netherlands stands out with a streamlined and highly digitalised process. 8 countries have different procedures for migrants and nationals, with greater fees and requirements for documents. Only 3 countries have ad hoc or no procedures for the recognition of titles for certain nationalities or fields of study (France, Hungary and Ireland).

Targeted support

- Targeted support is a major area of weakness in most countries. Rarely are general services able to address the specific needs of the foreign-trained or very low-educated, or of migrant women and youth.
- Only 4 EU countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden) have targeted language and professional trainings, coupled with programmes to encourage the hiring of third-country nationals.
- Specific targeted measures for both migrant youth and migrant women are available in 8 EU countries.

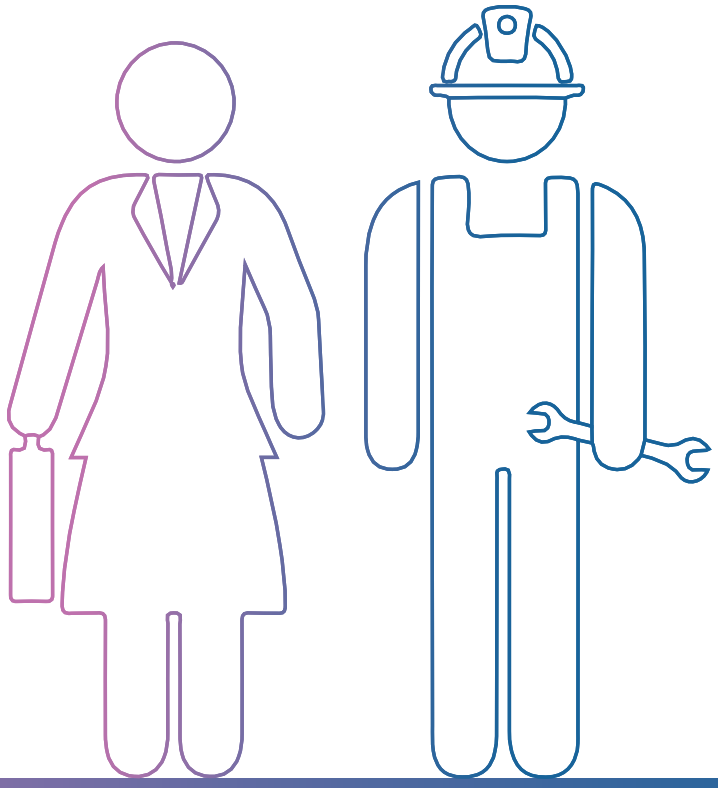
Workers' rights

- Permanent residents generally enjoy the same access to social security and assistance as nationals.
- Access to social security and assistance for temporary residents differs significantly from country to country. Temporary workers and family members enjoy full and equal access in 12 countries (e.g. France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Croatia) but are partially or totally excluded from the social security system in the majority (15) of countries.

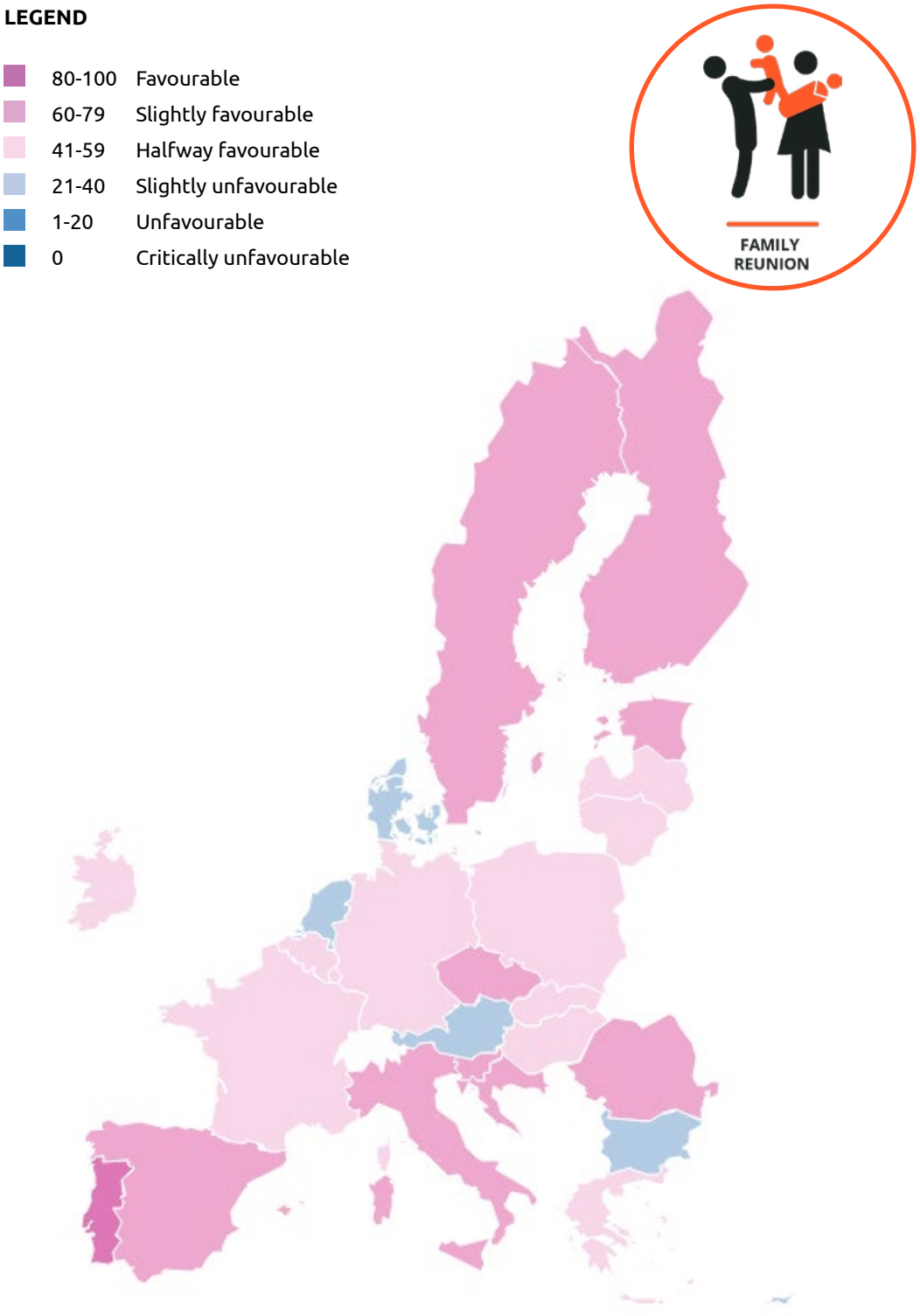
Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

Employment outcomes for both immigrants and non-immigrants are largely influenced by individual skill levels and the prevailing economic and social conditions. Labour market mobility policies across MIPEX countries address long-term structural challenges within labour markets. These policies aim to enhance equity by facilitating access for immigrants to the same types of stable and high-quality employment opportunities typically available to locals.

Evidence from scientific studies using MIPEX indicates that labour market mobility policies are effective in promoting the acquisition of skills and education, the development of sustainable careers, and broader public acceptance of immigrants. In contexts where such policies are well-formulated and implemented, immigrant men and women are more likely to improve their language proficiency and professional competencies domestically and to apply these effectively within the labour market (Aleksynska & Tritah, 2011). Furthermore, inclusive labour market mobility policies contribute to shaping more positive public perceptions, whereby immigrants are increasingly viewed as economic contributors rather than as sources of competition or threat (Guzi, Kahanec, & Mýtna Kureková, 2015; Callens & Meuleman, 2016).



4.2 Family Reunification



Map 3: Family Reunification (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: How easily can immigrants reunite with family?

Family reunification policies determine if and when separated families can reunite and settle in their new home. These policies determine the stability of the statuses of family members, their access to rights and services. An important theme of migration policies, family unification is sometimes delayed during refugee crises and lately, the requirements expected from the sponsor are increased leading to right infringements.

On average, family reunification policies in EU are only halfway favourable for promoting family reunification and integration (53/100). Portugal is the only country where family reunification policies are categorised as favourable. Besides Portugal, policies are more favourable in the Nordics, and in several countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, such as Estonia, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Spain.

In most countries, reunited families enjoy a secure status and basic equal rights. However, policymakers and parties often disagree when it comes to defining the concept of family and the conditions for reunion. At one end, inclusive definitions keep requirements minimal (e.g. income at or below social assistance level; no specific accommodation requirements). At the other end, many Western European countries restrict eligibility to the nuclear family and expect transnational families to live up to standards that many national families could not: high incomes, no social benefits and the ability to pass language or cultural tests. There is usually a high fee to pay and little support (e.g. Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands). Increasingly, countries make exceptions for the highly skilled and the wealthy, but rarely for the most vulnerable (minors and beneficiaries of international protection).

Since 2019, family reunification policies have remained largely unchanged in most EU countries, while they have deteriorated in Slovenia (-9), the Netherlands (-1), and Ireland (-2). In these countries stricter requirements related to income, language proficiency, and housing have been introduced. Slovenia experienced the most significant decline, primarily due to amendments to the Foreigners Act. Effective from 2024, these changes require family members to pass a Slovenian language test. Additionally, since 2021, family reunification in Slovenia has required proof of means of subsistence, limited to net salary and explicitly excluding social benefits. Few countries have moved in a more inclusive direction: Portugal (+6) now grants families of visa applicants the right to enter at the same time, while Croatia (+6) has limited the grounds for rejection, withdrawal, or refusal of status.

Given the current political climate and increasing populist influence, transnational families face an uncertain future. Family reunification is increasingly politicised, and policies are mainly restricted according to numbers of applications, rather than to integration-related evidence.

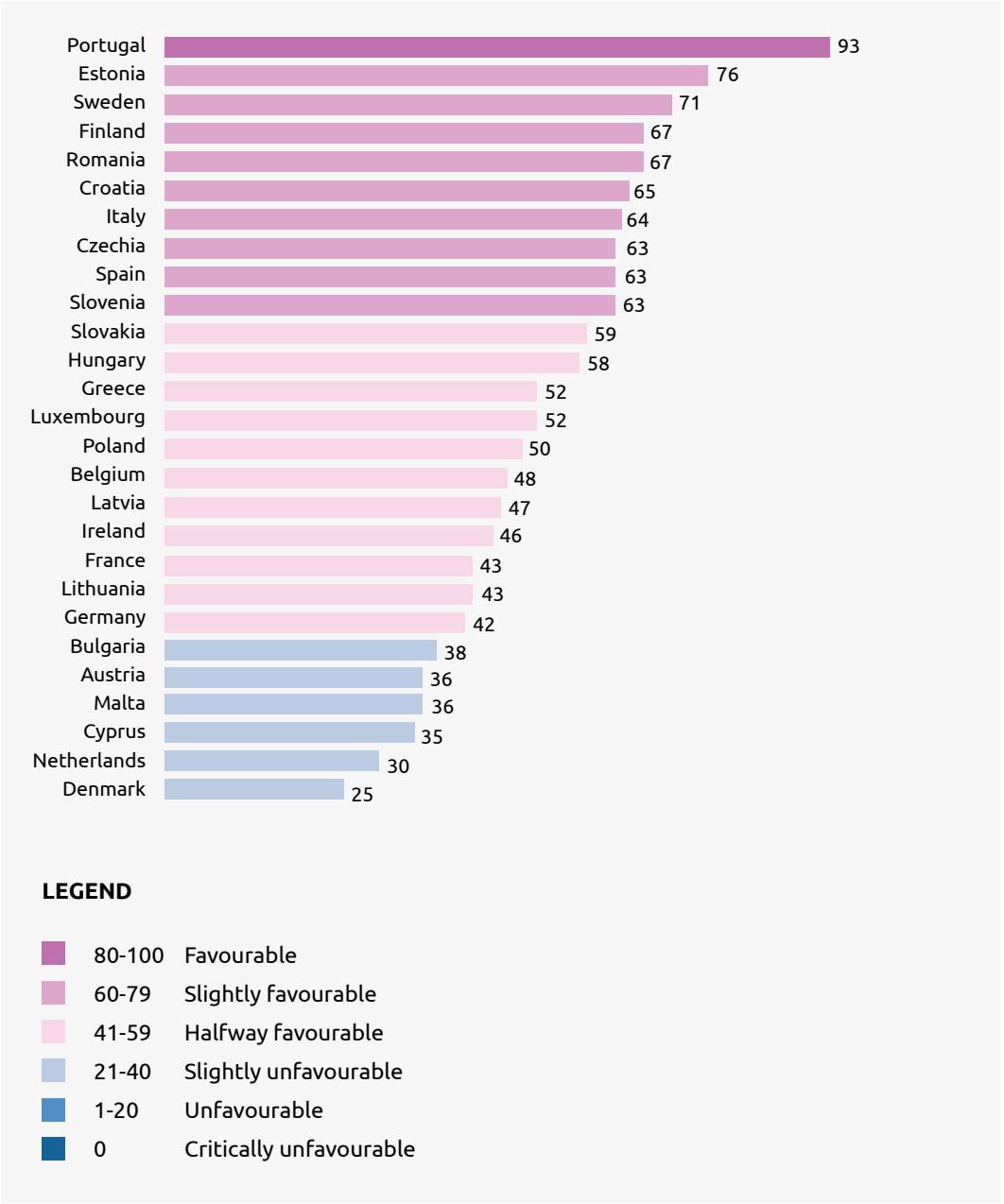


Figure 4: Family Reunification (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Eligibility

- In 6 countries, legal foreign residents may sponsor their spouse/partner or minor children after living there for less than a year. In 10 countries, over a year of residency is required, while 11 countries impose no minimum residency requirement at all.
- Among EU countries, only Czech Republic, Portugal and Slovenia allow reunification with both parents/grandparents and adult children. Hungary allows reunification only with parents. In 11 countries, reunification with dependent relatives is either not permitted or left to the authorities' discretion, while 12 countries apply restrictive definitions of dependency and require specific conditions, such as particular health needs or financial circumstances.

Conditions

- Economic resource requirements: Sponsors in Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal and Finland can use any legal source to prove a basic income. In contrast, 16 other countries require sponsors to be employed or not reliant on social assistance. 7 countries set the required income level above the standard for social assistance, excluding low-income families from eligibility.
- 19 countries limit family reunification with in-country language or integration requirements (e.g., completion of course, test, interview, ...)
- Only 4 countries impose pre-entry language requirements: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands. Only the Netherlands imposes a pre-entry integration test.

Security of status

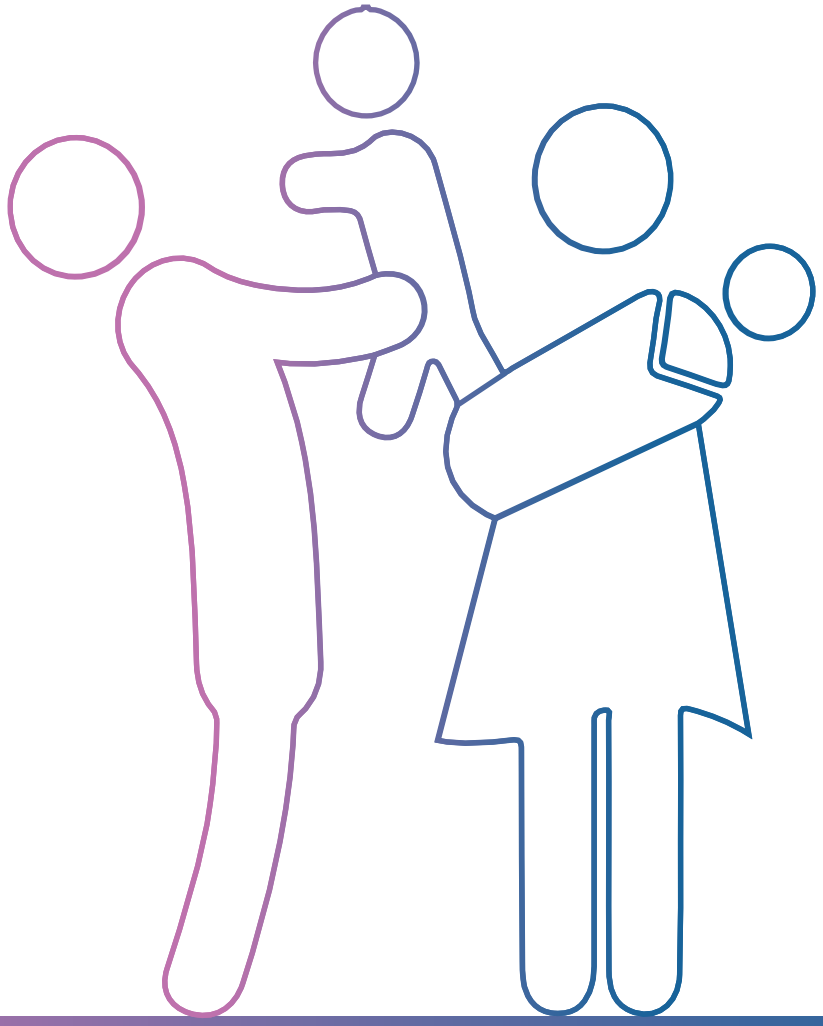
- Discretionary procedures in most EU countries (22) mean that families who meet the legal requirements can still be rejected on various grounds. Discretion is a major problem in newer destination countries.
- Personal circumstances considered: Some – if not all – of an applicant's links to the country must be weighted in their favour, including evidence of physical or emotional violence, duration of sponsor's residence in the country, solidity of family relationship. All factors are considered in 10 countries, while none of them are taken into account in Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania.
- Residence permits for family members are as long and renewable as that of their sponsor in 13 EU countries.

Rights associated

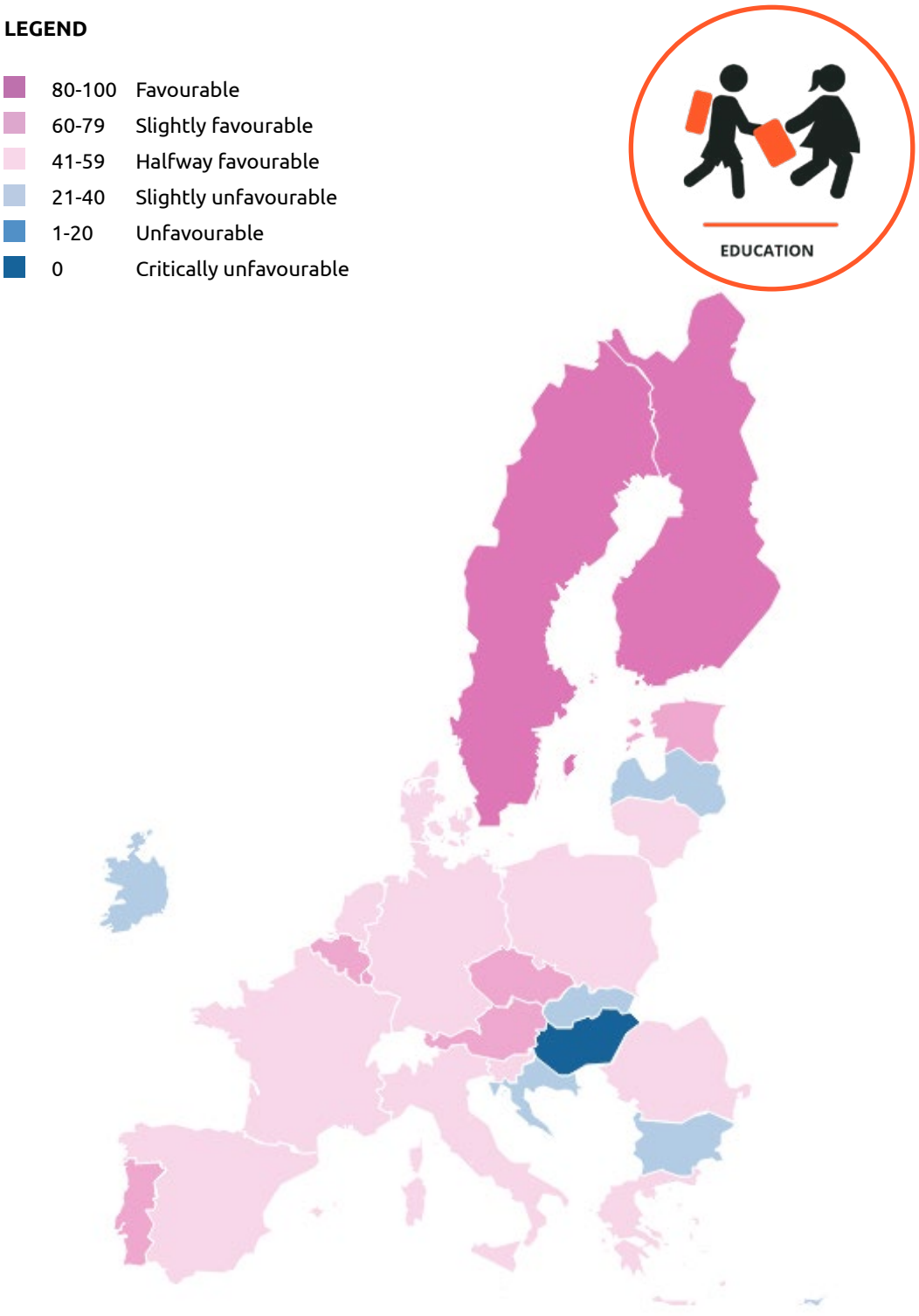
- The path to an autonomous residence permit is discretionary and long (more than 5 years) in 11 EU countries.
- Parents and children wait up to three years for autonomous residence permits in 7 countries (Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Italia, Portugal, Spain, Sweden).

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

The structure and design of family reunification policies can greatly influence the lives of those immigrant families separated across borders. Inclusive approaches to family reunification can strengthen immigrants' ability to enjoy their right to family life, which in turn supports broader integration. When such policies are in place, families are better positioned to reunite, settle down in the country, gain stable employment, access a better place to live, and age with dignity in their new country (Guzi, Kahanec, & Mýtna Kureková, 2015; Ambinakudige & Lichter, 2019; Sand & Gruber, 2018). In contrast, restrictive policies often create obstacles that limit these opportunities. They tend to weaken social ties, contribute to mental health challenges, and negatively affect labour market participation, partly because uncertainty discourages long-term investment in employment and skill-building.



4.3 Education



Map 4: Education (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: Are education systems responsive to the needs of immigrant children?

Ensuring that migrant pupils are fully integrated into national education systems is not only a legal obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and EU anti-discrimination laws, but also essential for building a skilled workforce, fostering social cohesion, and maintaining political stability. Failing to do so risks long-term economic losses, deeper social divides, and weakened public trust in institutions. Nonetheless, education remains a significant area of weakness in the integration policies of most countries (50/100). Most immigrant pupils receive little support in finding the right school or class, or in 'catching up' with their peers. Most countries leave it to the general education system to fix (or exacerbate) cultural problems risking immigrants' future life prospects.

Education policies are often insufficiently tailored to the unique needs of migrant students, lacking a coordinated and inclusive strategy that ensures equitable access and outcomes. However, there are notable exceptions. The Nordic countries, for example, take an individualised, needs-based approach, with targeted education policies to address the educational situation of migrant pupils. In contrast, countries such as France, Italy, Spain, and Germany have been slower to adapt their education systems to the realities of increasingly diverse student populations. Some Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Czechia and Slovakia, have expanded assistance for all or some groups of foreign students, particularly in response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees since 2022.

The EU27 MIPEX score for education (excluding UK) improved by +3 points between 2019 and 2023. Immigrants have benefitted from positive reforms in countries like Greece, Austria, France, Croatia and Spain. Since 2021, Austria has improved migrant education policies by offering translation services at counselling centres, providing multilingual guidance on the education system, and enhancing language instruction through state-led evaluation and curriculum monitoring. Greece has enhanced refugee children's access to education through a recent state-funded program with UNICEF and introduced targeted support measures for Ukrainian children. Croatia has updated in multiple languages a 'Guide Through Integration', providing written information on the Croatian education system and orientation services for migrant students.

However, the majority of EU countries have made no major changes to education since 2019 (e.g., Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Luxembourg). Ireland is the only country to register a decrease in its education score, primarily due to less accessible guidance on the Irish education system.

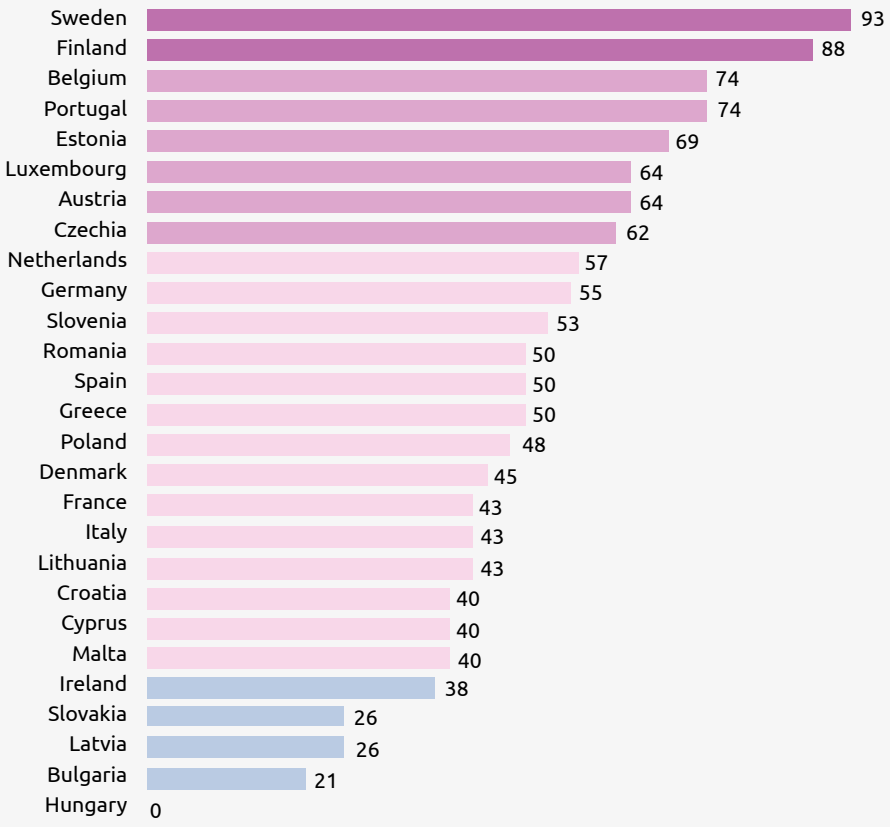


Figure 5: Education (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Access

- Despite some improvements, immigrant pupils receive limited support with accessing or completing pre-school, vocational and higher education.
- In 10 EU countries, all categories of migrants, including undocumented migrants, are explicitly guaranteed by law the same access to compulsory education as nationals, with no restrictions on access to non-compulsory education.
- Immigrants face particularly significant obstacles when accessing higher education. In the majority of EU countries (16/27), they do not receive any tailored support. Support aimed at increasing both their access to and successful participation in higher education is available only in Finland and France.

Targeting needs

- Only 6 EU countries provide systematic academic guidance and financial resources to schools with immigrant pupils.
- Only 6 countries provide extensive educational guidance at all levels, including written information on educational system in migrant language of origin, provision of resource centres for orientation of migrant pupils and provision of interpretation services for families of migrant pupils.
- Immigrants are entitled to language support in both pre-primary and compulsory education in 11 EU countries, but these courses are frequently not held to the same standard as the rest of the curriculum.

New opportunities and Intercultural education

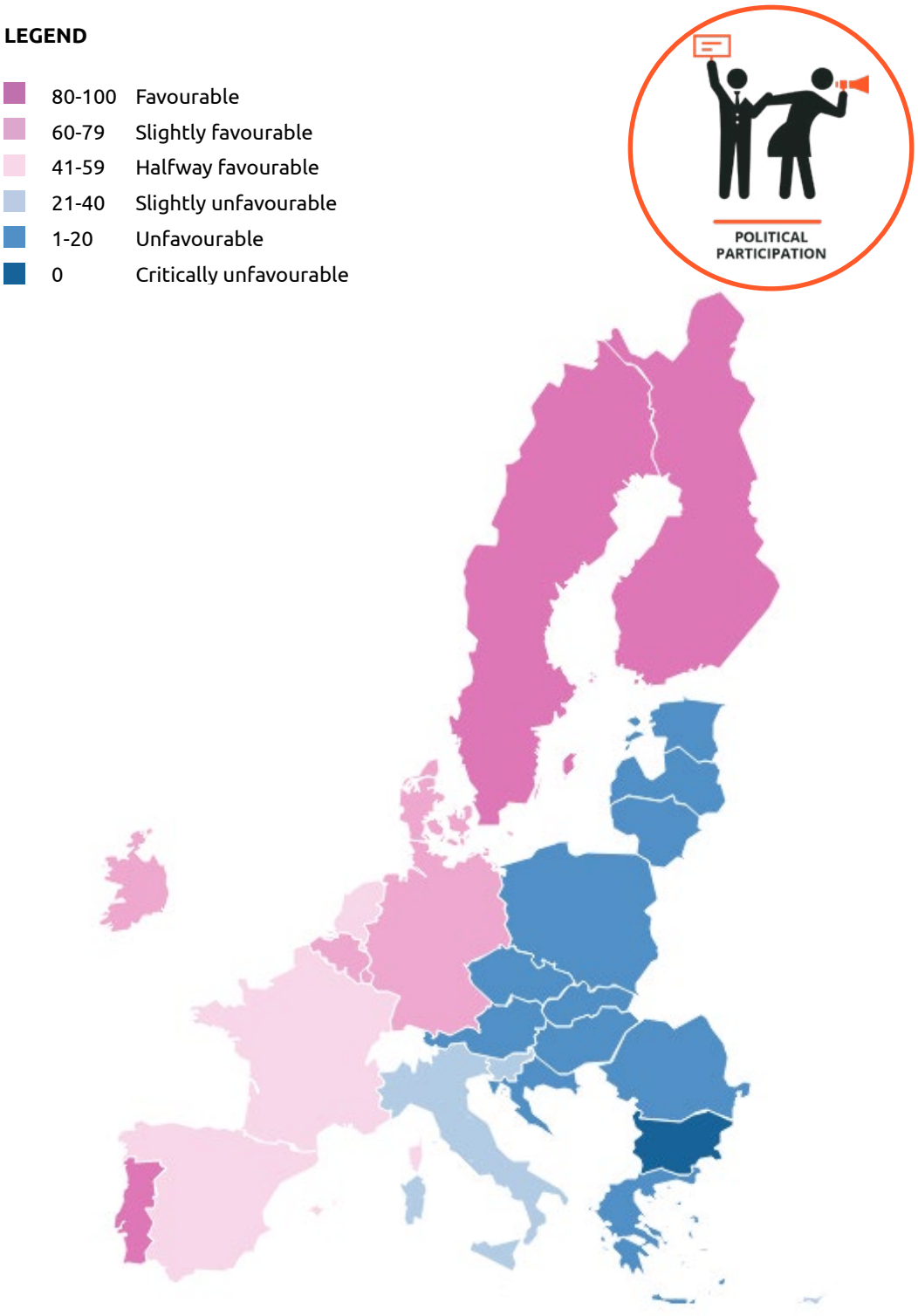
- Schools in most EU countries (24/27) encourage the appreciation of cultural diversity, either as a stand-alone subject or throughout the curriculum. Only 5 countries provide both options at the same time, while 3 countries provide neither (Denmark, France, Hungary).
- The large majority of EU MIPEX countries (21/27) do not have any measures in place to bring immigrants into the teacher workforce. Only Finland, France, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden have adopted measures to do so.
- Teacher training covers intercultural education and diversity in only five EU countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Romania, the Netherlands). In 15 countries diversity training is offered but not formally required. In the remaining 7 countries, these policies are still missing or only provided on an ad-hoc basis.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

The limited scope and effectiveness of targeted education policies in many MIPEX countries may help explain the persistence of achievement gaps among vulnerable student populations, as well as the fact that not all students, particularly those with immigrant backgrounds, feel secure or included within their schools. Research suggests that more inclusive general education systems benefit all students, regardless of immigration status. However, the impact of migrant education policies remains an underexplored area in international research, despite growing recognition of its importance for integration.

Where policies are well-conceived and implemented, they contribute not only to academic success, supporting students from diverse backgrounds across various education tracks and helping more to pursue higher education, but also to the social inclusion of all students (Kislev, 2016; Ham, Song, & Yang, 2020). These measures create learning environments where children, including those eligible for targeted support, can thrive both academically and socially. Moreover, inclusive education policies foster a sense of pride, safety and belonging among immigrant pupils, aligning their school experience more closely with that of their non-immigrant peers (Choi & Cha, 2019; Veerman, 2014; Ham, Yang, & Cha, 2017). Further research has shown that restrictive education policies can hinder labour market participation and productivity (OECD, 2015), ultimately resulting in the underutilisation of skills and lost potential within the workforce (Savatic et al., 2025; Aldieri et al., 2024)

4.4 Political Participation



Map 5: Political Participation (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: Are immigrants granted the right and opportunity to participate in political life?

Participation in political decision-making is a critical dimension of migrants' engagement in host societies, as it both affirms their contributions and enables them to shape the social and political structures in which they live. Active political inclusion fosters democratic renewal and supports the development of more equitable and cohesive societies. In contrast, persistently low levels of political participation among migrants undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions, weaken social integration, and result in policies that fail to reflect the diversity of the population. Without meaningful opportunities for political engagement, integration remains incomplete - and democracy, less representative.

Political participation is the weakest area of integration policy (37/100). Most immigrants are granted little opportunity to inform and improve the policies that affect them daily. As shown in the comparative report of MPG's Political Participation Policy Index 2024 in greater detail, non-EU citizens face restricted voting rights and they can rarely rely on strong consultative bodies or well-supported migrant organisations (Yavçan, Yilmaz, & Gorgerino, 2024). There is a stark divide between Eastern and Western Europe in terms of political opportunities. In Western European countries, migrants tend to benefit from broader voting rights, more robust consultative mechanisms, increased funding for migrant-led organisations, and stronger support from mainstream institutions. Among the highest-scoring countries in this area are the Nordics, Portugal, Luxembourg and Belgium. On the other side of the spectrum, political participation is still absent (or almost absent) from integration strategies in many Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. In these countries, despite European norms and some encouraging practices at local level, national policies continue to overlook migrant political inclusion.

Since 2019, political opportunities for migrants in EU countries have slightly declined. While a few countries including Slovenia, Croatia, and Poland have introduced limited positive reforms, the overall trend is concerning. Many countries are weakening the role of consultative bodies, failing to renew national strategies on political participation, or scaling back efforts to actively inform migrants of their rights, as seen in Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, and Ireland.

MPG's Political Participation Policy Index 2024 looks deeper into the composition (national appointees rather than representatives of migrant populations) and competences of these bodies and shows even in cases where consultation is mandated, the actual impact can be limited, a trend which risks undermining integration efforts, exacerbating social fragmentation, and diminishing the quality of democratic governance.

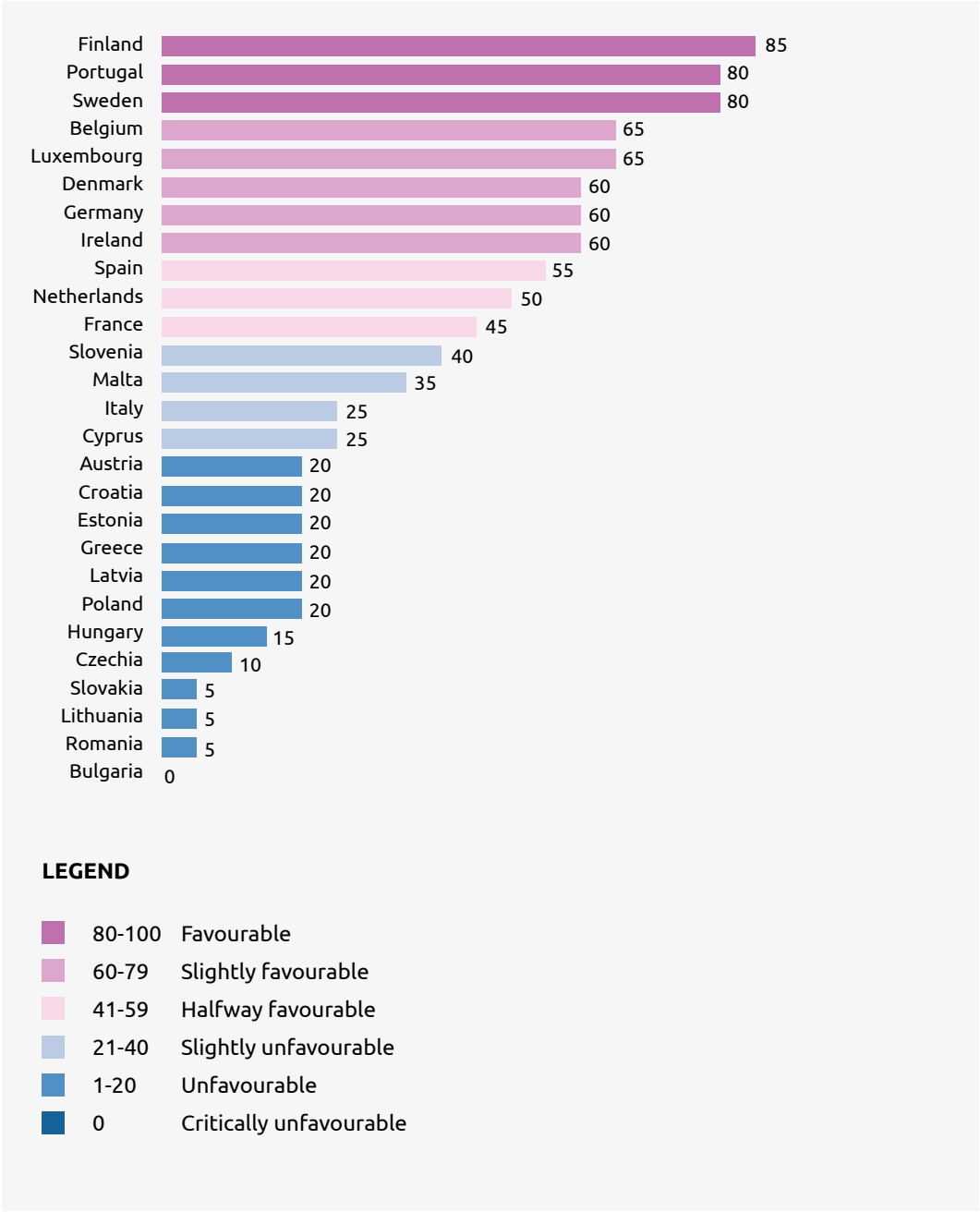


Figure 6: Political Participation (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Electoral rights

- Overall, third country nationals have no right to vote in 12 EU countries.
- Nordic countries grant the most inclusive voting rights in the EU. Non-EU nationals can stand as candidates and vote in local elections in six EU countries (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Sweden).
- Immigrants can vote locally under major restrictions (e.g. after five years of residence, via special registration procedures or only in certain municipalities) in 9 EU countries.
- Voting rights are long fought and hard won. They were granted to migrants in Czechia in 2001; Estonia, Lithuania and Slovenia in 2002; Luxembourg and Slovakia in 2003; Belgium in 2004 and again in Luxembourg in 2011.
- Once passed, voting rights are difficult to revoke. Greece is the first country in recent history to repeal voting rights for immigrants (2013).

Political liberties

- Immigrants can join political parties with no restrictions in the majority of EU countries (17/27).
- The remaining EU countries (Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia) deny immigrants the basic political liberties of joining a political party or founding a political association.

Consultative bodies

- Immigrants are regularly consulted in 8 EU countries. However, in 4 of them (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Croatia) members of the consultative bodies are appointed by the state.
- Eight EU countries have no formal mechanisms for consulting foreigners at the national level.
- Most bodies are not strong or independent enough to create meaningful opportunities for immigrants to affect policy change. They tend to be weak, government-led, sometimes government-appointed, and too poorly funded to engage migrants and represent their diverse interests. Those with weak standing can aggravate issues of trust, interest or professionalism for immigrants and policymakers.
- With a declining role in time, their composition increasingly reflects national appointees rather than representatives of migrant populations. As a result, even in cases where consultation is mandated, the actual impact of these bodies is limited.

Implementation policies

- In 13 EU countries, immigrant organisations can rely on funding or some form of in-kind support. The funding in 8 of these countries comes with no attached conditions beyond being a partner in consultations set by the state.
- Funding for immigrant organisations usually depends on a government's priorities rather than on community needs

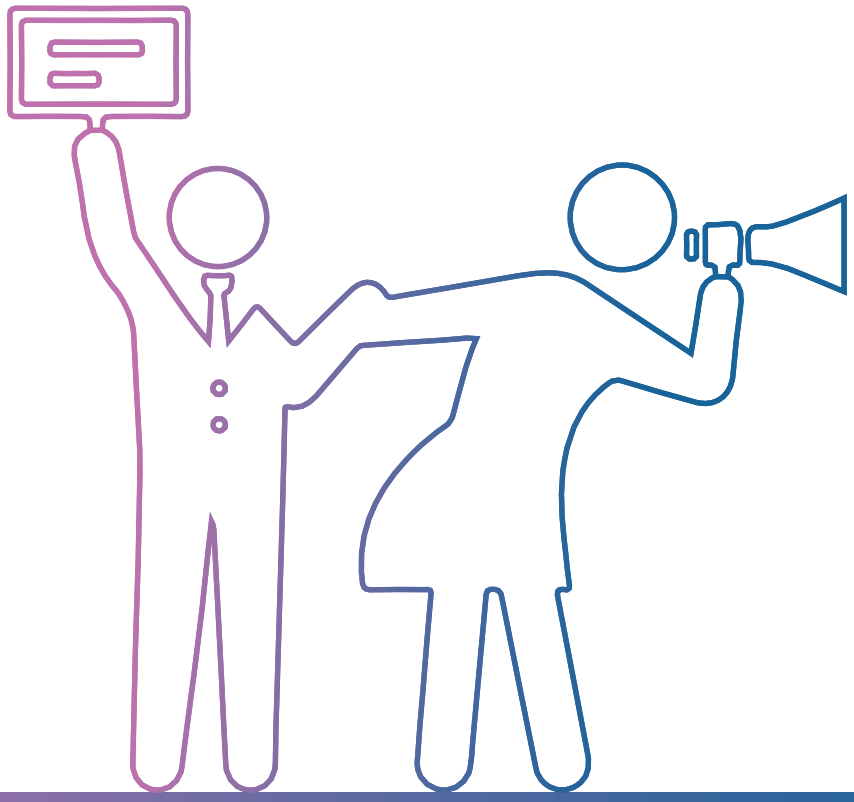
- Information on political participation/political or related rights for immigrants is provided in 14 EU MIPEX countries, but only in Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden have policies that provide this information in a targeted, individualised manner for migrants.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

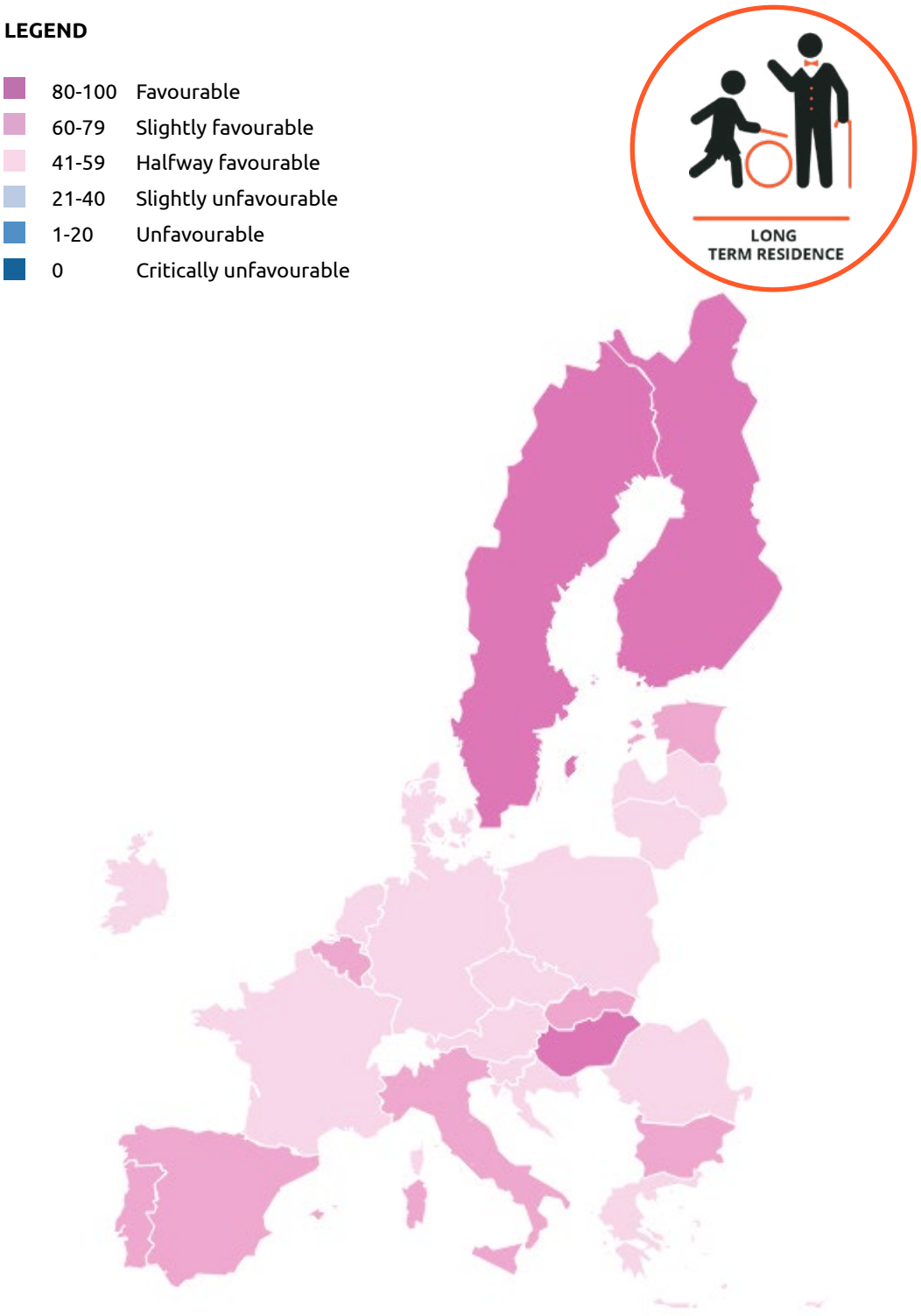
When immigrants are denied the opportunity to engage meaningfully with political institutions or decision-makers, their involvement in democratic life - whether through voting, civic activism, or public discourse - is significantly limited. The extent to which they are able to contribute equally to public life is closely shaped by the design and inclusiveness of policies. Existing international research consistently shows a strong association between inclusive political participation policies and democratic engagement

Such inclusive policies have the potential to reduce disparities between immigrant and non-immigrant populations in terms of political behaviour and civic involvement. Under inclusive policies, immigrants are more likely to participate in formal and informal democratic processes, including voting, engaging with political parties or civil society groups, and taking part in protests or other forms of collective action (Aleksynska, 2011).

Over time, these policies also help foster more equitable levels of political engagement, trust and satisfaction among immigrant communities (Helbling et al., 2017; Welge, 2014). Inclusive political frameworks not only benefit immigrants but also positively influence broader societal attitudes. They are linked to increased public trust, lower perceptions of economic threat and a stronger sense of civic identity, as opposed to one rooted primarily in ethnicity or origin (Callens & Meuleman, 2016; Sarrasin, Green, & Van Assche, 2020).



4.5 Permanent Residence



Map 6: Permanent Residence (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: How easily can immigrants become permanent residents?

Inclusive permanent residence policies turn migration from a temporary arrangement into a mutual long-term investment between the migrant and the host society. They are not just a legal formality - they are a catalyst for economic productivity, social trust, and democratic stability. The path to permanent residence is slightly favourable for integration in MIPEX EU countries (61/100). After 5 years, most residents can apply for a long-term residence status and rights equal to national citizens, but only after proving that they are self-sufficient. Permanent residence is a normal part of the integration process in top-scoring countries, such as the Nordics, Spain, Slovenia and Portugal. Most EU countries have traditionally granted permanent residence upon arrival or after just a few years, so that migrant workers, families and refugees can start their settlement process with secure and near-equal rights. However, restrictive and costly conditions can be hard to meet.

Countries are quite reluctant to reform their legal routes to permanent residence. The overall score for permanent residence has remained quite stagnant over the past years, with a slight decrease since 2014. The trend is to extend the conditions that were once reserved for citizenship to permanent residence. For example, language requirements have been tightened and income requirements made even higher, making it as difficult for immigrants to become permanent residents as it is for them to become citizens. In the past 5 years in EU, the most significant changes happened in Slovenia and Belgium. Slovenia introduced stricter income and language requirements, while Belgium, introduced a positive reform in 2021 by increasing the validity of the permanent residence card from 5 to 10 years.

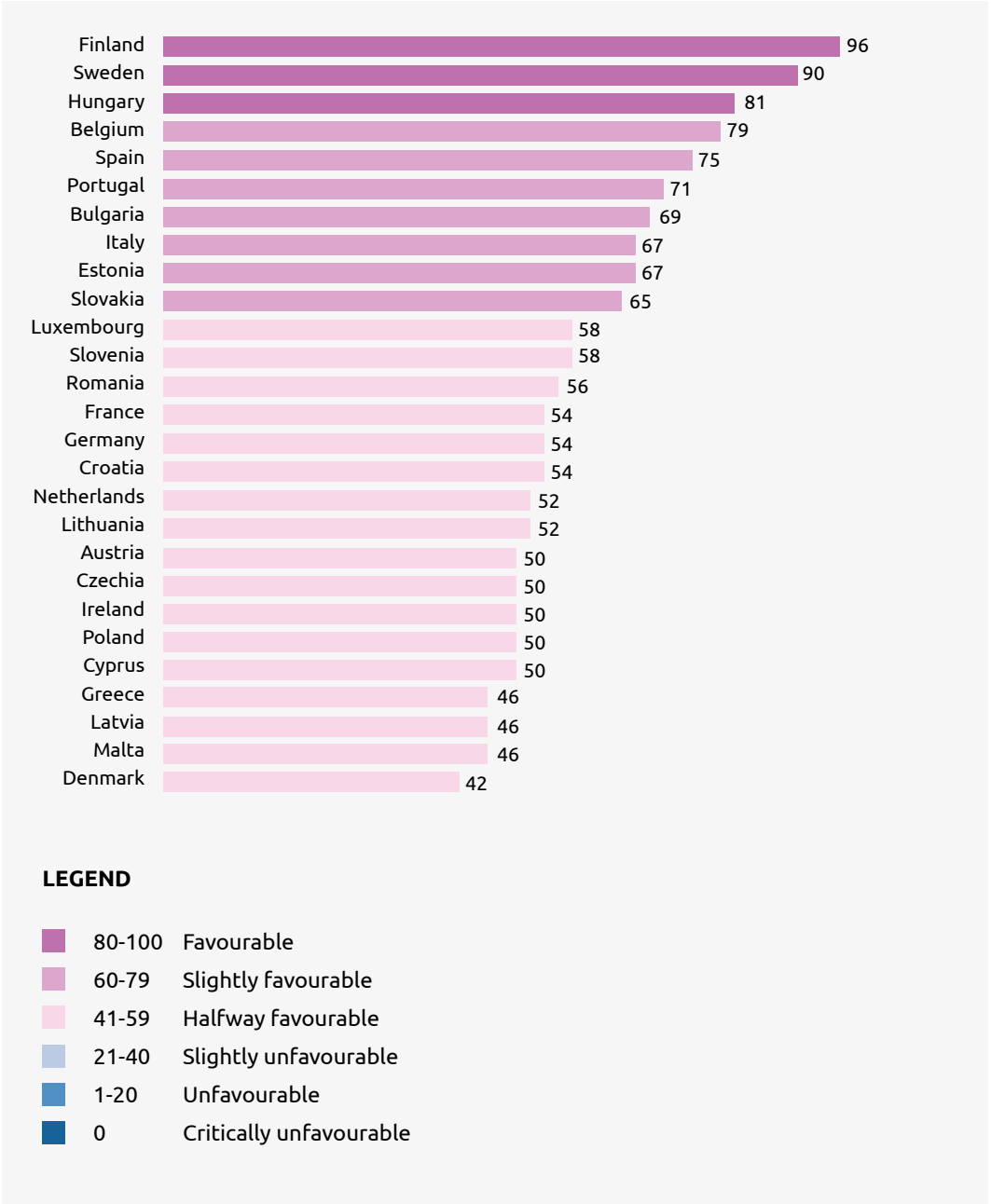


Figure 7: Permanent Residence (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Eligibility

- In most EU countries, temporary residents are eligible for permanent residence after five years, or slightly less in some cases. Denmark and Ireland are the exceptions, requiring longer periods: eight years in Denmark, and between five to eight years in Ireland, where no truly permanent status is offered.

Conditions

- The conditions for becoming a permanent resident are radically different for immigrants across EU MIPEX countries.
- Immigrants benefit most from the inclusive and flexible approach to permanent residence in Belgium, Finland and Spain.
- 17 countries impose a language assessment, while the others have no requirement or only require a voluntary course.
- Demanding economic resource requirements – e.g. requiring income linked to employment or no use of social assistance – are likely too high for many immigrants to succeed in 14 EU countries.

Security of status

- In 11 EU countries, the procedure for renewing permanent residence is automatic. In 16 countries it is renewed upon further application, leaving immigrants only halfway secure in their new status.
- In none of the EU countries is the renewal of permanent residence conditional upon meeting the original requirements.
- The permitted period of absence from the country is one year or less in most EU MIPEX countries (21/27). Only in Portugal and France the period is greater than three years.
- Residence is relatively secure in Western Europe, though never as secure as it is for national citizens. Authorities in most countries retain discretion to refuse or withdraw a permit even after decades, although personal circumstances must usually be considered and there exists the possibility to appeal.

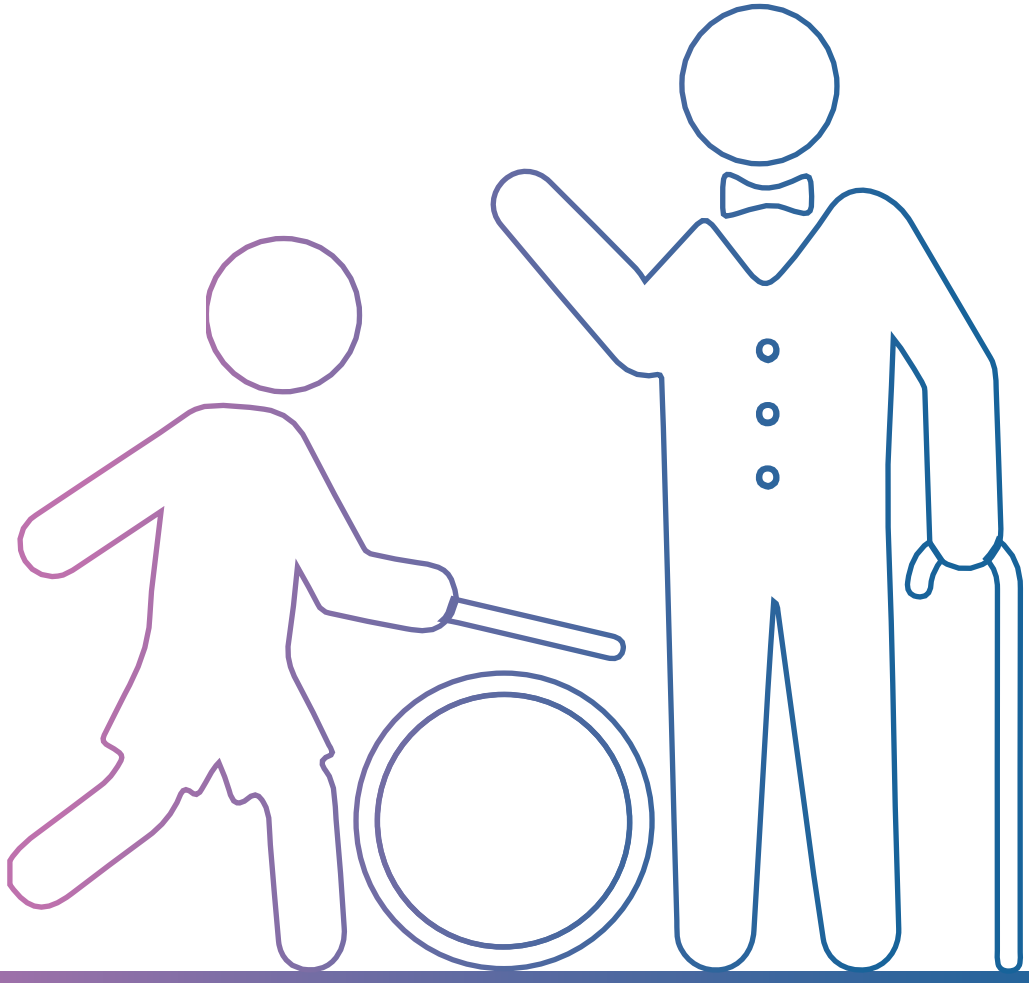
Rights associated

- Permanent residents have the same right to access to social security and assistance as citizens in all EU MIPEX countries.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

A country's approach to permanent residence offers critical insight into whether it views itself as a destination for long-term settlement or continues to resist acknowledging its role as a country of immigration. Policies governing access to permanent status play a pivotal role in shaping immigrants' long-term integration, particularly in relation to their ability to establish roots and achieve stable, meaningful employment.

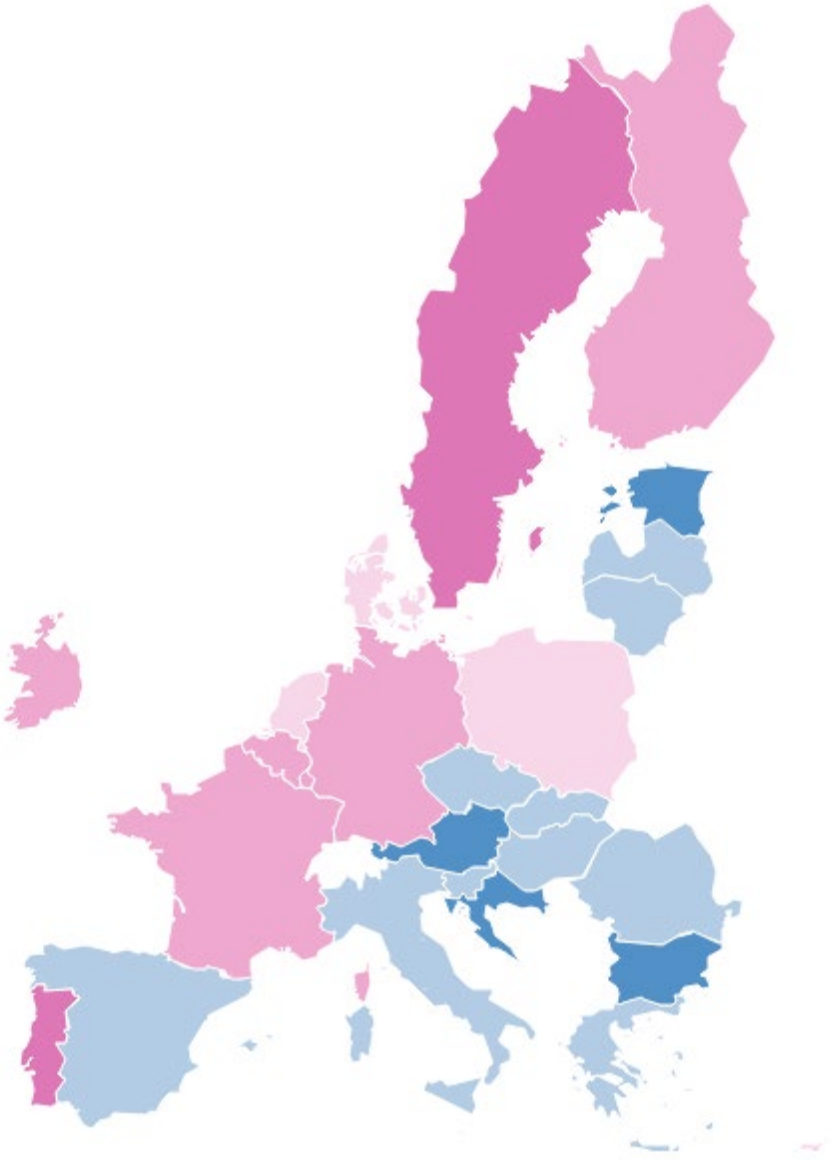
While some academic research has explored the connection between permanent residence frameworks and integration outcomes using MIPEX data, this area remains under-researched. Restrictive approaches can leave immigrants vulnerable, trapped in unstable employment situations and uncertain legal conditions that undermine their prospects for advancement. In contrast, more inclusive systems tend to support long-term settlement, enabling immigrants to build secure lives and access better opportunities in the labour market (DeWaard, 2013; Guzi, Kahanec, & Mýtna Kureková, 2015; Corrigan, 2015).



4.6 Access to Nationality

LEGEND

	80-100	Favourable
	60-79	Slightly favourable
	41-59	Halfway favourable
	21-40	Slightly unfavourable
	1-20	Unfavourable
	0	Critically unfavourable



Map 7: Access to Nationality (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: How easily can immigrants become citizens?

Naturalisation policies extend beyond their administrative function; they serve as critical mechanisms for facilitating the integration of migrants into host societies. When formulated in an inclusive manner, such policies can enhance equal participation in civic, social, and economic life, mitigate marginalisation, and contribute to the development of cohesive and stable communities. Conversely, restrictive naturalisation regimes may impede integration processes, entrench social inequalities, and exacerbate societal divisions.

Nationality policies qualify as only *halfway favourable* for promoting naturalisation of immigrants (44). Nationality policies are a major area of weakness in most European countries, especially Austria, the Baltics, and Eastern Europe. The highly discretionary, expensive path to citizenship often discourages rather than encourages migrants to apply. Several countries (13/27) still have not caught up with international reform trends on dual nationality and citizenship entitlements for children. By contrast, immigrants have favourable opportunities to become citizens in many countries, e.g., Portugal, Sweden, Ireland, Finland, Luxembourg.

A key trend emerging from the country-specific analysis is the growing political momentum across many EU states to tighten the requirements for acquiring citizenship. Although citizenship policy scores across the EU have largely remained static, with only a few exceptions, most changes since 2018 have been regressive, and ongoing debates suggest that further declines in these scores are likely in the near future. In countries like Greece and the Netherlands, recent reforms have increased the difficulty of naturalisation by raising language requirements to the B1 level. Similarly, Cyprus has raised the threshold for required economic resources. In contrast to this restrictive trend, Germany's 2024 citizenship reform marked a significant liberalisation, introducing improvements such as the recognition of dual citizenship and a reduction of the residency requirement from eight to five years. However, following the cut-off date for MIPEX scoring, both Finland and Belgium adopted more restrictive policies. Finland now requires eight years of uninterrupted residence (up from five), while Belgium has introduced higher application fees, enhanced language requirements, and stricter integration criteria. Additionally, ongoing discussions around raising language proficiency standards are taking place in Germany, Sweden, and even the Netherlands, where such requirements are already relatively demanding. Other developments include Sweden increasing its residency requirement from five to eight years, and continued use of ten-year residency and proof of integration in France, Austria, and Sweden. These strict requirements risk becoming significant barriers to naturalisation, an important step toward deeper integration, if they are not designed to be accessible to all migrant groups; without adequate support measures such as free or flexible language and integration courses, transparent assessment criteria, and consideration of socio-economic disparities, such measures may ultimately alienate rather than include.

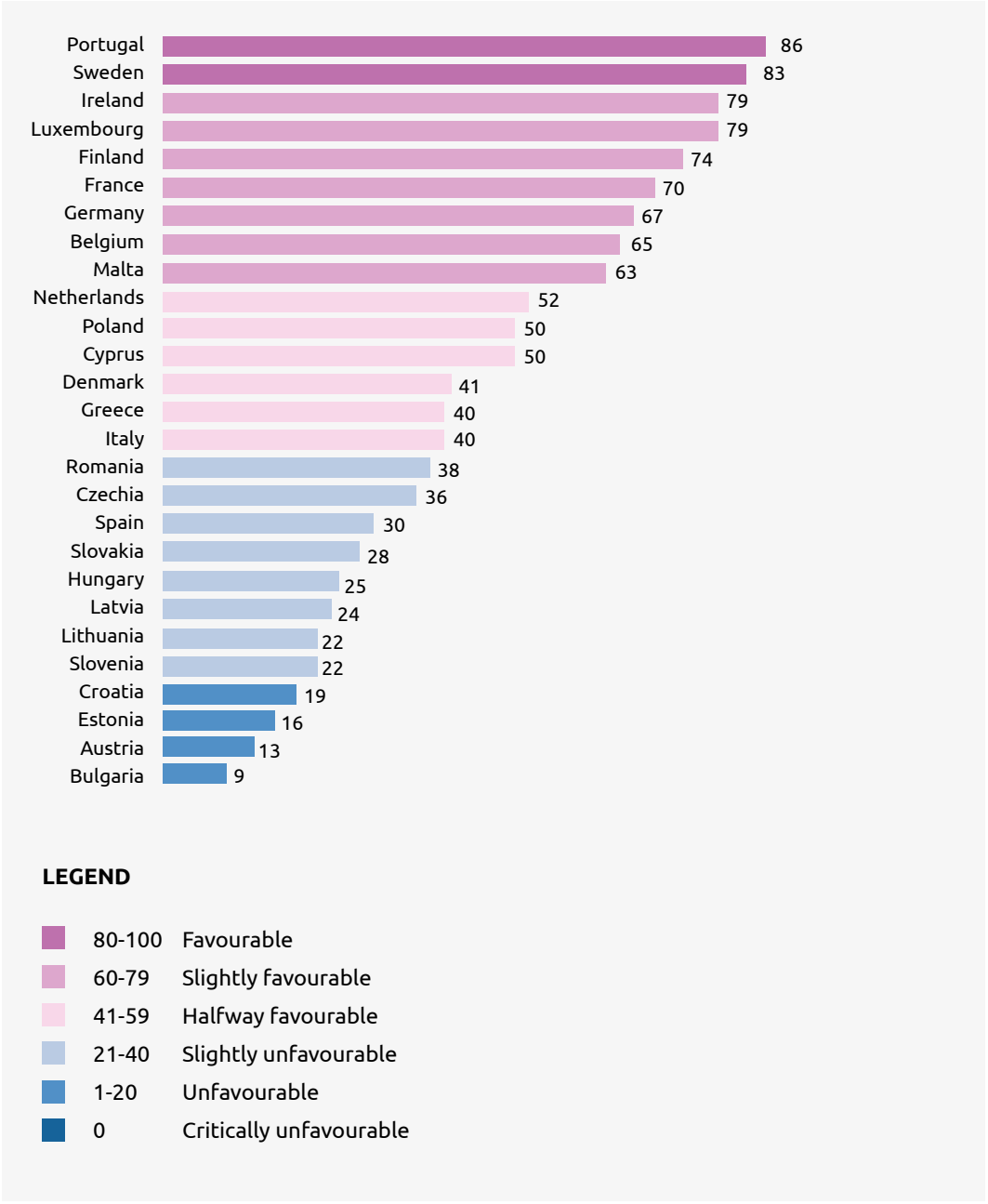


Figure 8: Access to Nationality (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Eligibility

- Ordinary first-generation immigrants need to be resident for five years or less in 9 MIPEX EU countries, namely Finland, France, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Malta and Luxembourg.
- Citizenship entitlements exist in 14 EU countries for children born or educated in the country to foreign parents. Among these, children can acquire citizenship upon simple application or declaration after birth in 9 EU countries, while in the remaining countries citizenship is automatic but attached to conditions of the parents. None of the EU countries have unconditional birthright citizenship for the second generation.

Conditions and security of status

- Language requirements differ significantly across countries. Only Ireland and Sweden carry out no language assessment; 7 countries require A2 proficiency and 18 require B1 proficiency or apply discretionary procedures.
- Immigrants do not have to undergo an integration requirement in 10 EU countries. In most of EU countries, they must pass a test as part of the process (15/27). Only Belgium and Luxembourg allow ordinary applicants to complete a specific course.
- Proof of income or employment is required for citizenship in the majority of countries (20/27). Among these, 7 countries require that applicants demonstrate a minimum income, while the remaining 13 countries impose more demanding requirements.
- Criminal record requirements are demanding in most EU countries (24/27). Applicants are ineligible if sentenced to imprisonment for less than five years, or charged with other offences (e.g. misdemeanours or minor offenses).

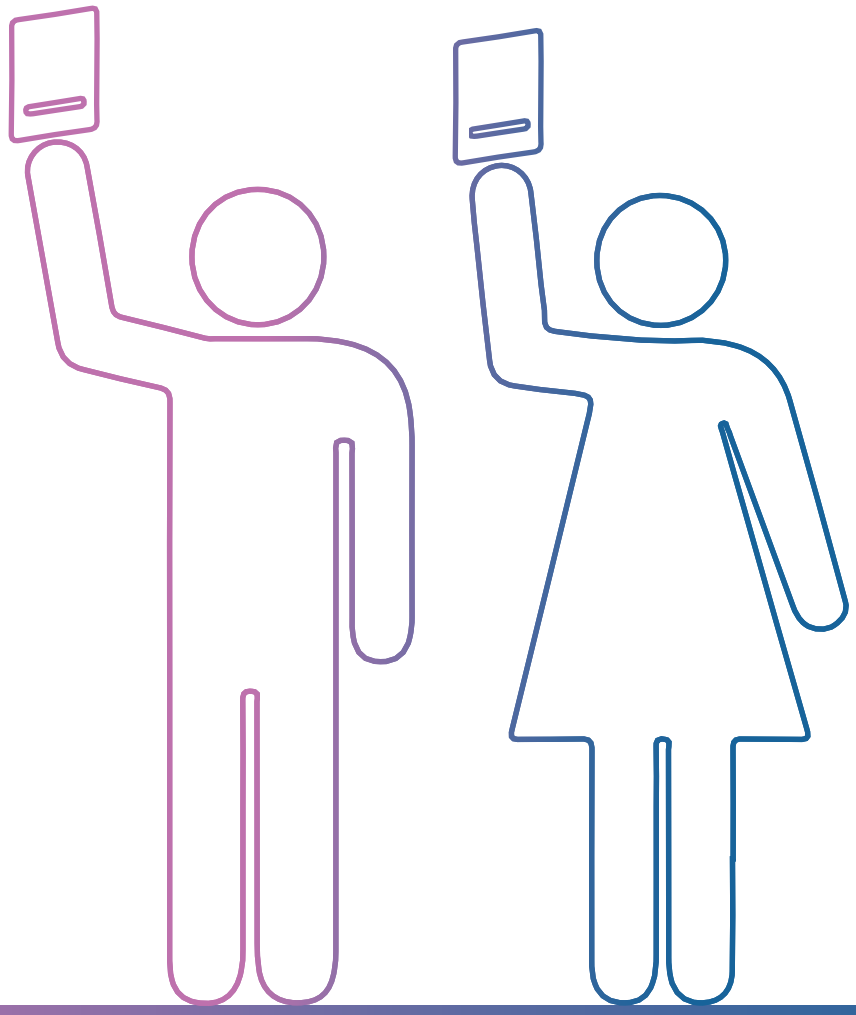
Dual nationality

- Dual nationality is fully embraced by the majority of EU countries (17, including Greece, Italy, Hungary, Czechia, Ireland), while 7 other countries only allow dual nationality based on exceptions.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

Reducing the legal and procedural barriers that prevent immigrants from acquiring citizenship plays a vital role not only in facilitating formal naturalisation, but also in fostering a deeper sense of inclusion and equal membership within society. Among all areas of integration policy, nationality policies have received considerable scholarly attention, with numerous studies examining how access to citizenship influences broader integration outcomes through the lens of MIPEX.

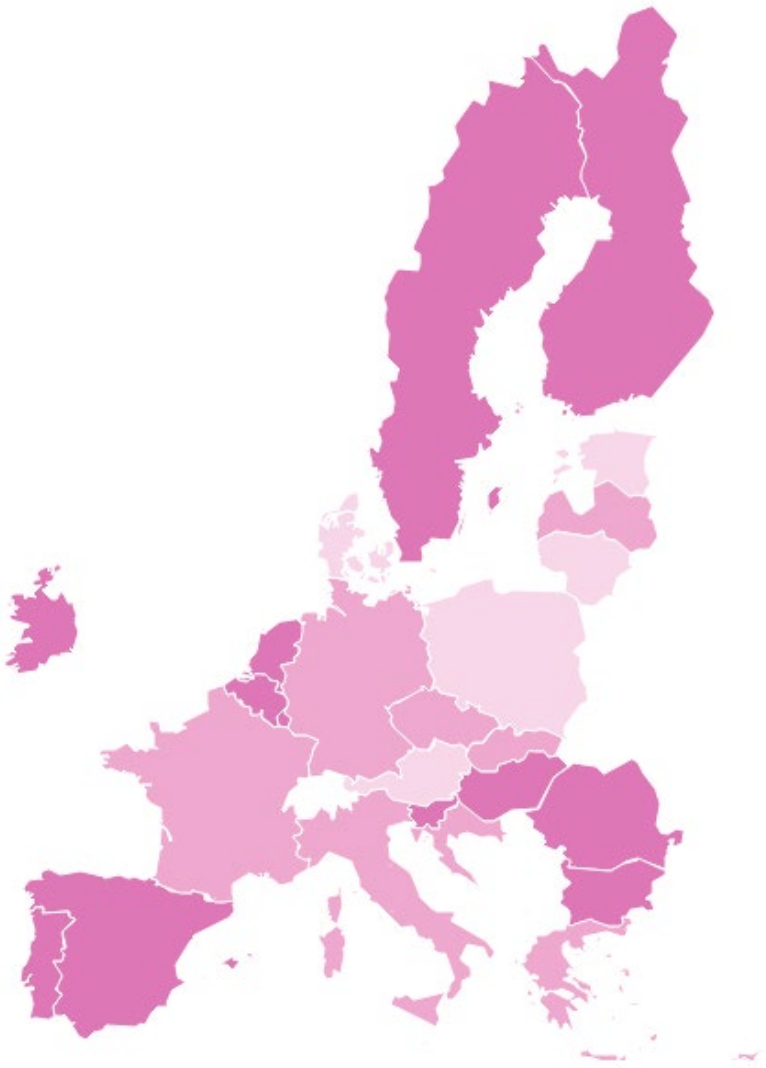
The possibility to successfully naturalise is closely tied to the structure of nationality laws, particularly regarding provisions for dual nationality, birthright citizenship and the specific administrative and legal conditions required for application (Vink, Prokic-Breuer, & Dronkers, 2013; Stadlmair, 2017; Huddleston & Falcke, 2020). Beyond legal status, inclusive citizenship frameworks can also contribute to more positive integration trajectories, enhancing individuals socio-economic status, increasing political participation, strengthening their sense of belonging and building trust in institutions and society more broadly (Hoxhaj, Vink, & Prokic-Breuer, 2019; Hunger, 2018; Sarrasin, Green, & Van Assche, 2020; Kaya, 2017).



4.7 Anti-Discrimination

LEGEND

	80-100	Favourable
	60-79	Slightly favourable
	41-59	Halfway favourable
	21-40	Slightly unfavourable
	1-20	Unfavourable
	0	Critically unfavourable



Map 8: Anti-discrimination (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: Is everyone effectively protected from racial/ethnic, religious, and nationality discrimination in all areas of life?

Anti-discrimination policies are foundational to the successful integration of migrants, as they provide the legal and normative framework necessary to ensure equal treatment, social inclusion, and access to opportunity, also serving as a proxy for well enforcement. Without them, integration efforts risk being undermined by persistent inequality, exclusion, and social fragmentation.

Policies are slightly favourable for victims of discrimination to be informed of their rights and seek justice (78/100). Victims are best informed and supported to seek justice in some EU Member States, notably Belgium, Finland, Portugal and Sweden. In Eastern Europe, Romania and Bulgaria stand out as favourable environments for victims pursuing justice.

Since the adoption of EU law in 2000, anti-discrimination has been the greatest and most consistent area of improvement in integration policy across Europe.

Over the past five years, anti-discrimination policies in EU27 countries have improved by an average of 1.5 points. Four EU MIPEX countries (Spain, Romania, Croatia, and Slovenia) have implemented positive reforms. Spain recorded the most significant improvement following the adoption of a comprehensive non-discrimination law in 2022. The new legislation broadened the prohibited grounds of discrimination, expanded the scope of protection, and strengthened the mandate of the national equality body. By contrast, only Hungary and Ireland have seen setbacks in their anti-discrimination approaches - Ireland due to the absence of positive action measures, and Hungary as a result of the downgrading of its equality body.

14 EU MIPEX countries protect against ethnic, racial, religious and, often, nationality discrimination in all areas of public life.

Despite these improvements in legal protection, equality policies are often limited to voluntary initiatives, such as action plans and diversity charters, which do not set out obligations or monitoring mechanisms. In fact, only 11 countries have laws that include positive action measures related to ethnicity, race, or religion, as well as provisions for assessing their impact. Furthermore, many national equality bodies are either weak, recently established, or chronically under-resourced, limiting their capacity to support victims of discrimination and effectively enforce existing laws. As a result, legal commitments risk being reduced to nominal commitments rather than instruments of real change.

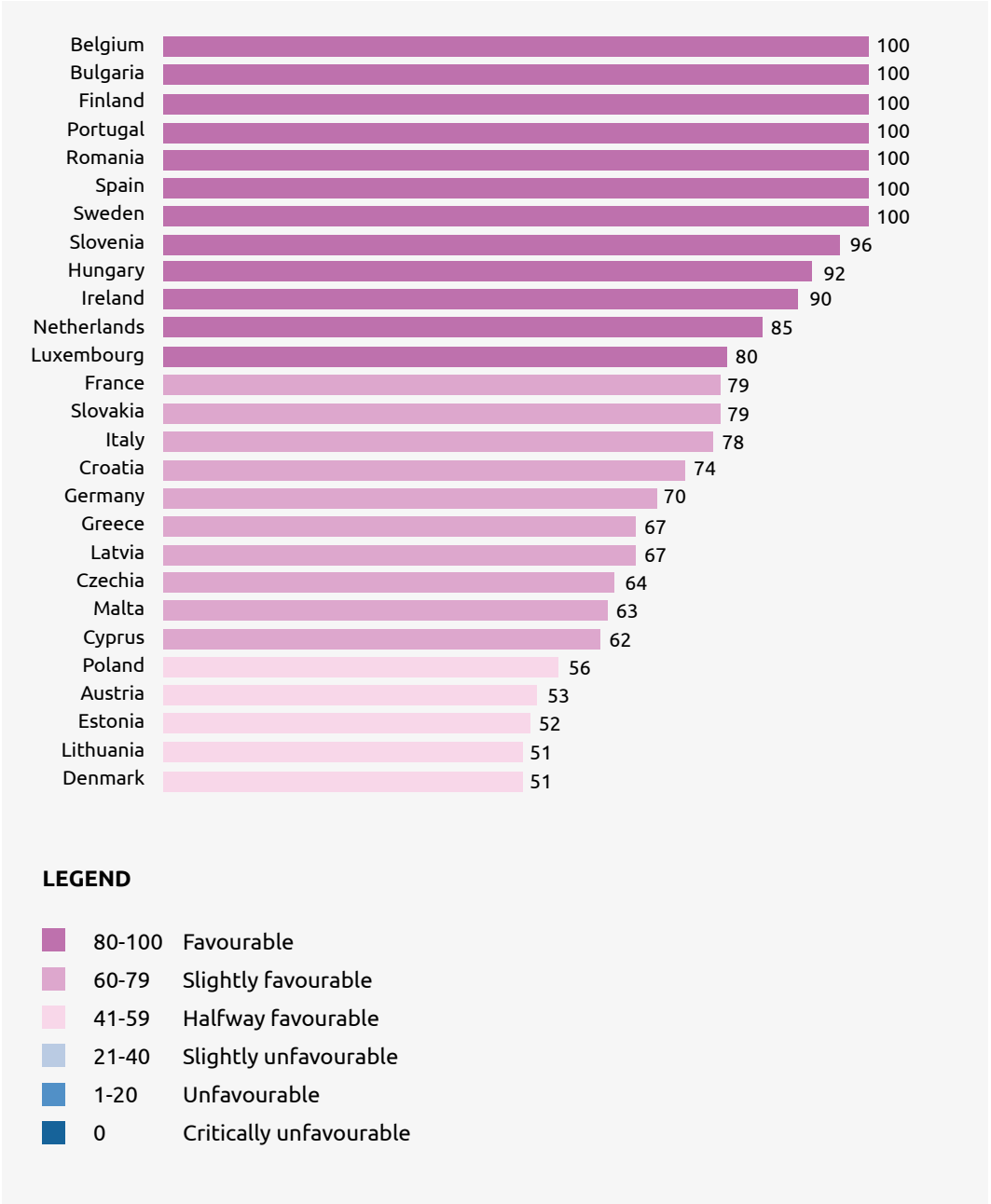


Figure 9: Anti-discrimination (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Coverage in law

- Nearly half of EU countries (13) prohibit discrimination based on nationality, race/ethnicity and religion.
- In the remaining 14 countries, legislation typically covers two of these grounds, most often race/ethnicity and religion.
- Anti-discrimination law in Spain has now expanded to cover all three grounds.

Fields of application

- Everyone is protected against ethnic, racial, religious and nationality-based discrimination in all areas of life in half of the EU countries (14).
- Gaps emerge in different areas of life. All three grounds of discrimination are more often prohibited in employment and vocational training (18 countries) but slightly less often in education (16), access to and supply of public goods and services (15) and social protection (16).
- Protections are critically missing or weak in many areas of life in Poland, Lithuania, Estonia.

Enforcement mechanisms

- Victims benefit from strong enforcement mechanisms in most European countries.
- Weaknesses are found in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Slovakia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Estonia.

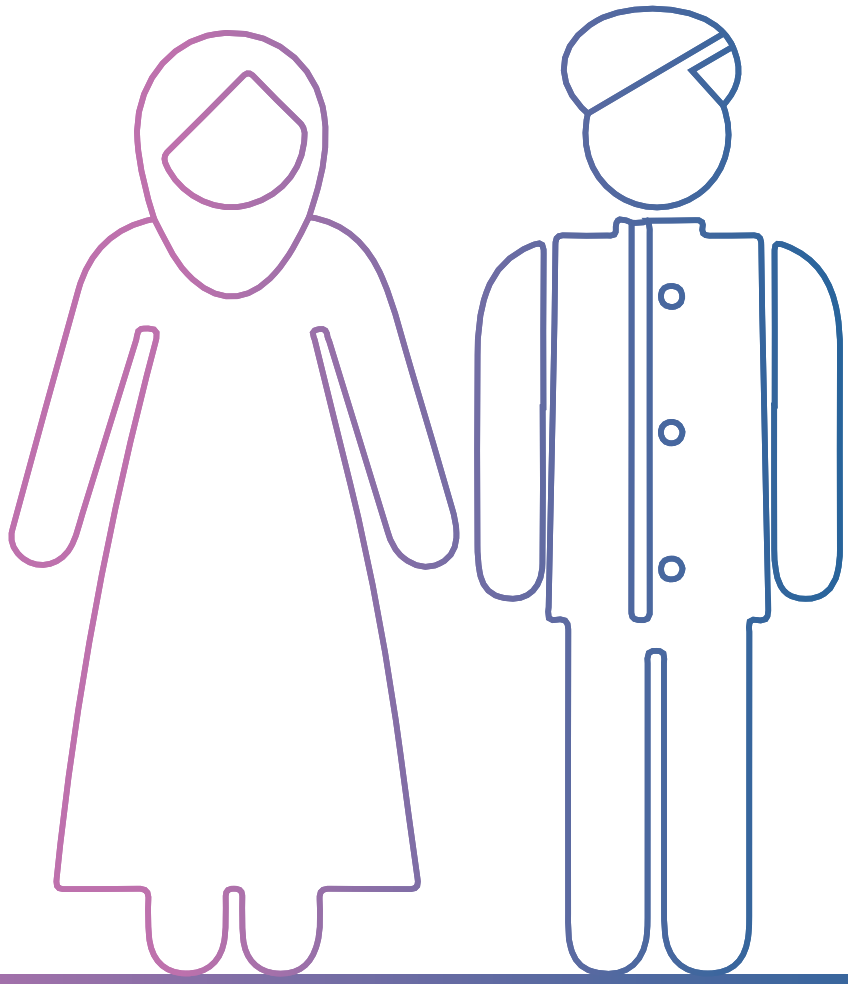
Equality policies

- Specialised equality bodies have the mandate to assist victims of ethnic, racial, religious and nationality-based discrimination in more than half of the EU countries (15/27). Italy stands out as having the weakest equality body, which lacks independence as it is fully managed by and operates within the Prime Minister's Department.
- Equality bodies have very limited power to investigate, assist victims or begin legal proceedings in Czechia, Denmark, Italy, Poland, Luxembourg, Germany.
- The law provides for the introduction of positive actions that could benefit people with immigrant background in 19 countries. However, countries such as Austria, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands do not have such measures in place.
- Both equality bodies and policies (positive actions) are, to some extent, strong in Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Bulgaria. Victims can also turn to strong bodies in France, Latvia, Netherlands, Slovenia and Romania.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

The gradual development of comprehensive anti-discrimination policies in many MIPEX countries appears to contribute significantly to long-term shifts in public perceptions, awareness of rights, institutional trust, and the likelihood of reporting discriminatory experiences. The connections between discrimination, integration, and policy responses have been examined in various studies using MIPEX.

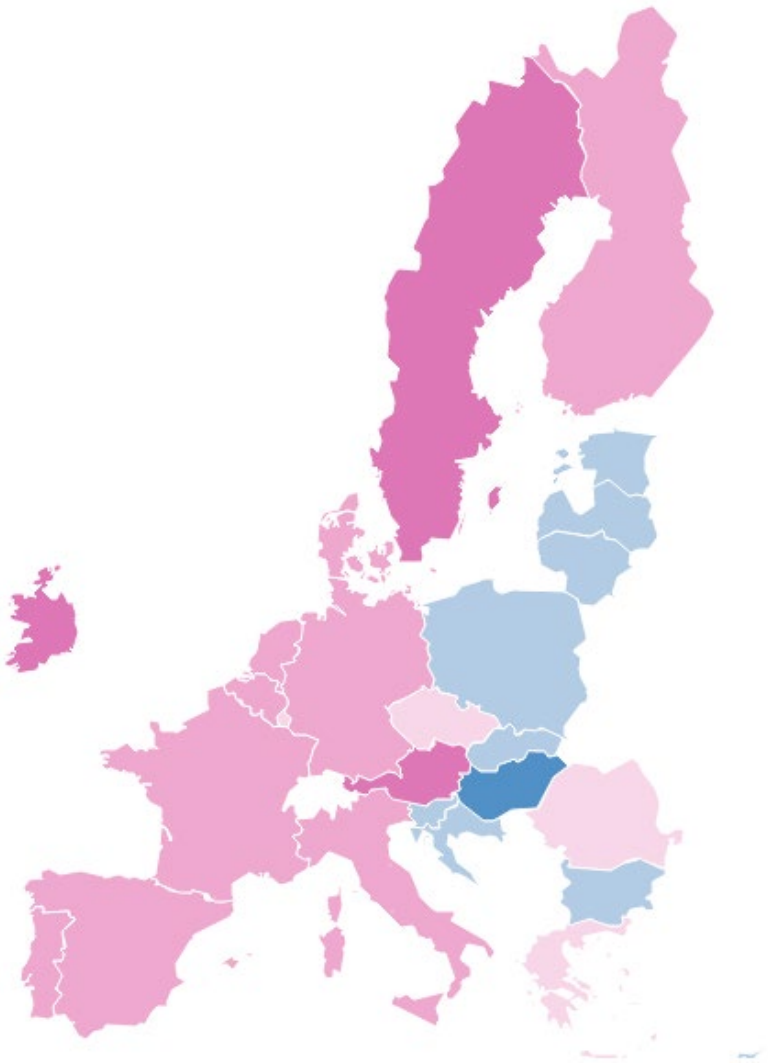
Discrimination is a persistent feature across societies, but in countries where legal protections are robust, individuals are more likely to recognise discriminatory practices and understand their rights under the law (Ziller, 2017). Strong anti-discrimination policies are also associated with higher levels of institutional trust, particularly in relation to law enforcement and the judiciary (Röder & Mühlau, 2012), and they foster a broader sense of societal trust and confidence in democratic systems (Ziller, 2017; Ziller & Helbling, 2019). Over time, individuals who are informed about their rights are more likely to report discrimination and less likely to identify as a discriminated minority. In this way, anti-discrimination frameworks can act as a long-term mechanism to reduce exclusion, strengthen social trust, and support immigrants' sense of belonging within the host society (Verkuyten, 2018).



4.8 Health

LEGEND

80-100	Favourable
60-79	Slightly favourable
41-59	Halfway favourable
21-40	Slightly unfavourable
1-20	Unfavourable
0	Critically unfavourable



Map 9: Health (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Policy indicators: Is the health system responsive to immigrants' needs?

Inclusive healthcare policies are essential to ensuring that all residents – regardless of legal status, nationality, or language – can access timely, affordable, and culturally appropriate medical care. Migrant health relates to 15 Target Areas of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, with its imperative of 'Leaving No One Behind'. In addition to its consequences in the area of public health protection and equality, better access to healthcare builds trust in public institutions and supports migrants' overall well-being and ability to participate in society. Health integration policies in EU countries qualify as halfway favourable for promoting healthcare coverage and ability to access services for immigrants (53/100).

At the top end of the MIPEX scale, health systems are usually more 'migrant-friendly' in countries with a strong commitment to equal rights and opportunities. Health policies are favourable in Ireland, Sweden and Austria, and are slightly favourable in Finland, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Portugal.

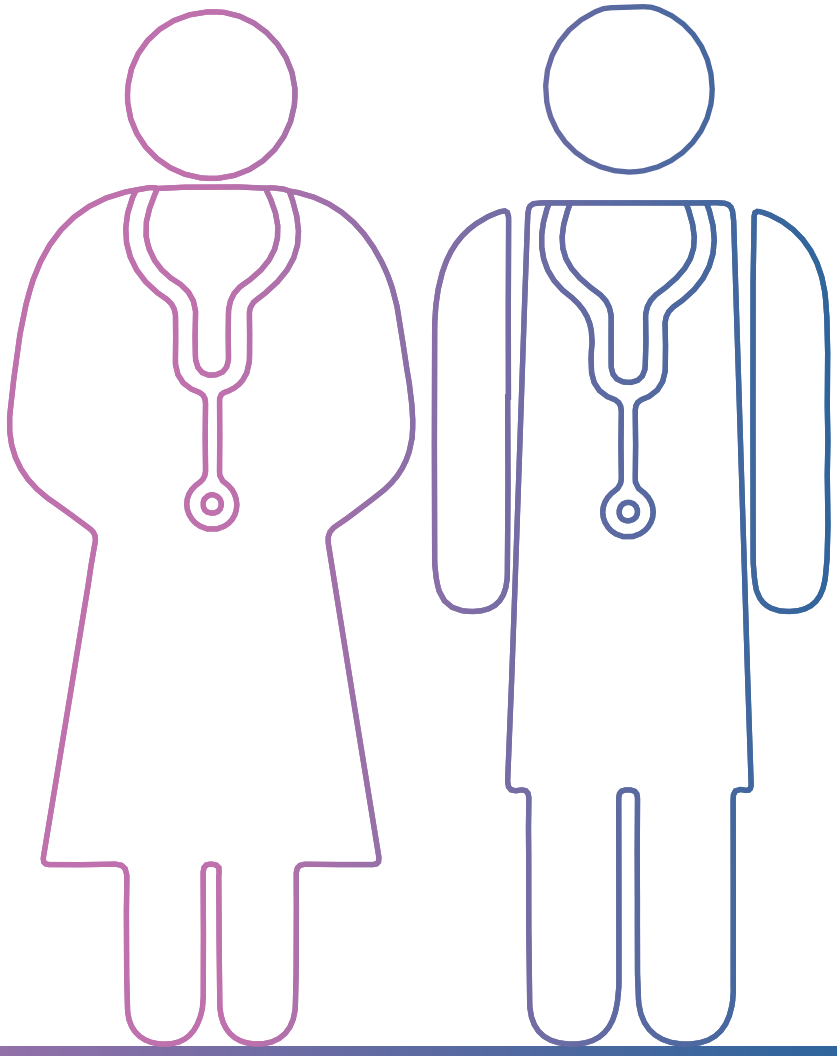
At the other end of the MIPEX scale, health systems are least inclusive in countries with restrictive integration policies, such as most of Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, the Baltics). Across the 8 strands of MIPEX, policies on Health are positively related to policies in most other strands. In only a few countries were migrant health policies markedly more favourable than the country's overall MIPEX score (e.g., Austria, Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Spain) or less favourable (e.g., Hungary, Croatia, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Poland).

Health scores have shown minimal change in recent years, remaining largely stagnant since 2019. Between 2019 and 2023, health policies worsened in Latvia, Spain, Greece, France, Hungary, and Slovakia, while slight improvements were recorded in Portugal, Finland, Poland, Estonia, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Romania. Most improvements were seen in the areas of accessibility of health services and efforts to mainstream migrant health across service providers, while entitlements remained mostly unchanged. A negative exception was France, which, in 2019, introduced stricter eligibility conditions and extended waiting periods for coverage – specifically, a three-month waiting period and a minimum residency requirement under the Protection Universelle Maladie (PUMa) system.

Migrant health policies are related to countries' experience of immigration and financial resources. In countries with smaller immigrant populations (e.g., Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria), little may be done to promote their inclusion in the health system. In contrast, migrant health policies tend to be better developed in countries with more international migrants. Within countries, health services in regions with large immigrant populations tend to be more responsive to migrants' health needs (e.g. in Austria, Italy, Spain). A country's wealth, as measured by GDP per capita, also strongly influences scores on the health strand. Countries that have difficulty providing adequate health services to national citizens seem reluctant to adapt service delivery to the needs of migrants and are more likely to adopt a "one size fits all" approach.

In several Eastern European countries, particularly Estonia, Poland, and Romania, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees since 2022 has brought increased attention to migrant health. Positive developments include improved translation of health information, a rise in research on migrant health, and greater involvement of migrants in the provision of information and the planning of health services. These policy changes, while primarily aimed at addressing the needs of Ukrainian refugees, appear to have also benefitted migrants more broadly.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic helped to raise awareness of migrants' access to healthcare, it does not seem to have had a substantial long-term impact on health integration policies. Efforts to include migrants in vaccination campaigns were often motivated more by public health safety concerns than by a genuine commitment to improving migrants' rights or access to healthcare.



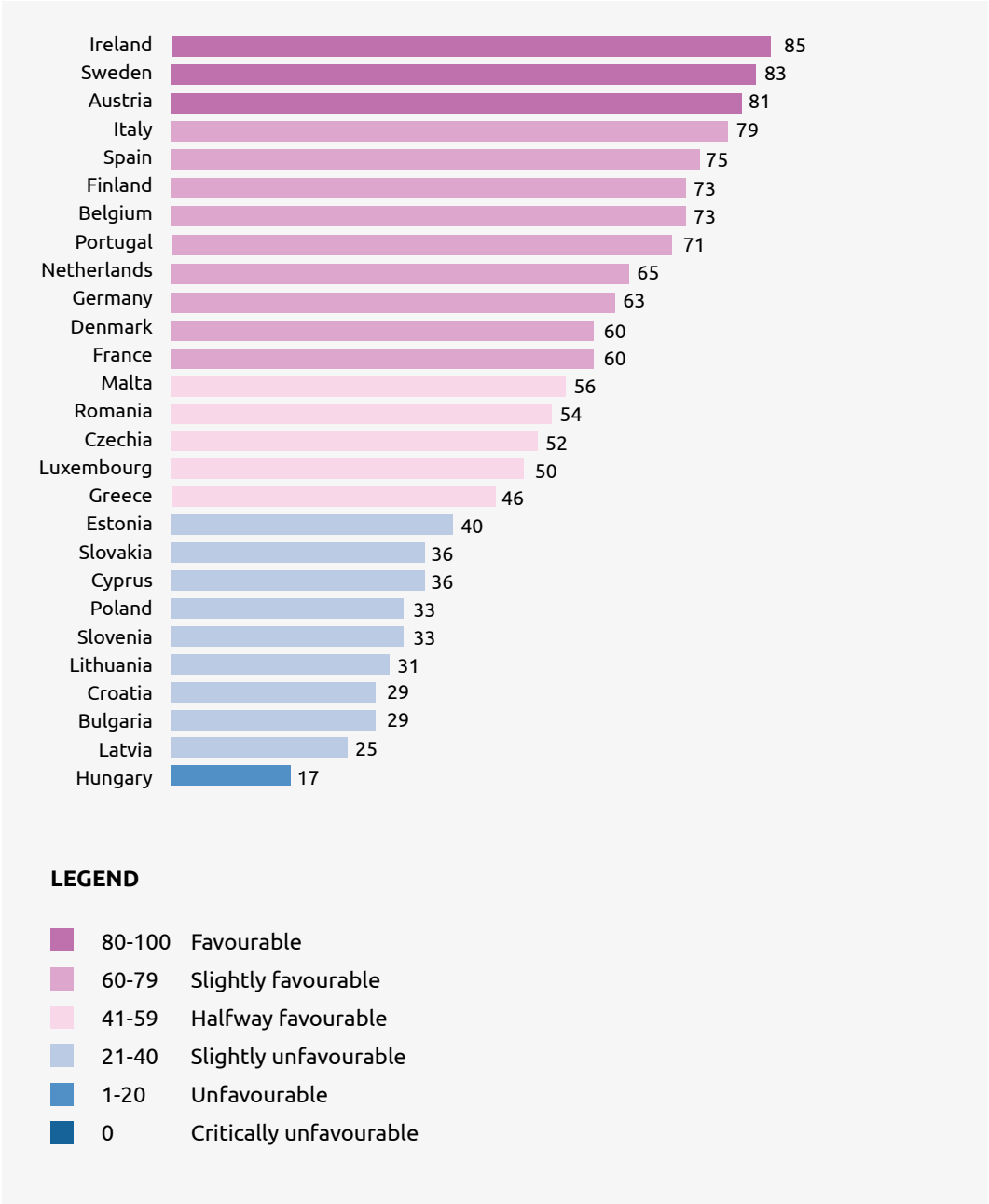


Figure 10: Health (EU27 - 2023/2024)

Key findings

Entitlements

Migrants' entitlements to healthcare coverage is often hampered by administrative barriers. These obstacles include requirements for documents that may be difficult for migrants to obtain, or discretionary decisions about how urgently their treatment is needed and whether they are able to pay for it themselves.

- **Legal migrants:** The conditions vary significantly across countries: in some countries, legal residents may have unconditional entitlements but limited only to emergency care, while in others, they have conditional access to the same range of services as those for national citizens. Beyond these legal conditions, 12 EU MIPEX countries present no administrative barriers to legal migrants.
- **Asylum seekers:** Conditions of coverage may include waiting periods, remaining in an assigned location or having inadequate financial resources. Germany, for instance, imposes the condition that entitlement to more than emergency care is only granted to asylum seekers or refugees who have been in the country for longer than 15 months. Only 7 EU countries impose no administrative barriers for asylum-seekers.
- **Undocumented migrants:** This group faces the greatest legal and administrative barriers to obtaining coverage. All countries impose some form of administrative obstacles for undocumented migrants: where coverage for this group is limited to emergency care, a barrier always exists in the form of a discretionary judgement about whether the migrant's health problem constitutes an emergency. Since 2019, no progress has been observed in addressing limited entitlements and barriers for undocumented migrants.

Accessibility of health services

- Legal migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are regularly reached with targeted information on entitlements and use of health services in Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Belgium and Italy.
- In 9 EU countries, all three groups are regularly reached with targeted information on health education and health promotion.

Responsive services

- Qualified interpretation services for patients with inadequate proficiency in the official language(s) are provided free of charge in 10 EU countries, but not available in 9 EU countries. In the remaining countries, interpretation can be arranged, but the migrant must pay for it.
- In 16 EU countries, immigrant patients and communities are involved to some extent in designing and providing health information and services.

Policies to promote change

- Most countries have funding bodies that have supported research on migrant health over the past five years. However, Luxembourg, Greece, Hungary, Croatia, and Latvia have provided no support for such research.
- Comprehensive policies to mainstream migrant health have emerged in Ireland and Sweden, while health system in other countries lack a systematic approach to address migrant or ethnic minority health issues.

Policies matter: Evidence on integration outcomes

Significant disparities in national integration policies have substantial and direct consequences for the health and well-being of immigrant populations. Although further research is needed to better understand the effects of specific targeted migrant health policies, a growing body of research has begun to map the relationship between policy environments and health outcomes for migrants drawing on insights from MIPEX.

In contexts with more inclusive integration policies, health indicators for immigrants – such as self-reported health, prevalence of chronic illnesses, rates of diabetes, frailty, and even mortality – tend to align more closely with those of the general population (Bakhtiari, Olafsdottir, & Beckfield, 2018; Giannoni, Franzini, & Masiero, 2016; Reus Pons, Vandenheede, & de Valk, 2015; Walkden et al., 2018; Juárez et al., 2019).

Conversely, restrictive policy environments are linked to disproportionately negative health outcomes for immigrant communities. Studies focusing on social equity show that restrictive policies limit migrants' access to health services, reinforcing inequities (Giannoni, Franzini, & Masiero, 2016). These pre-existing barriers to care were resulted in worse outcomes immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic (Bojorquez et al., 2024).

Annex: List of Areas Assessed by Indicators

1. Labour Market Mobility

1.1. Immediate access to labour market
1.2. Access to public sector
1.3. Access to self-employment
1.4. Public employment services
1.5. Education, vocational training and study grants
1.6. Recognition of academic qualifications
1.7. Economic integration measures of TCNs
1.8. Economic integration measures of youth and women
1.9. Access to social security

2. Family Reunion for Foreign Citizens

2.1. Residence period
2.2. Eligibility for dependent parents/ grandparents and dependent adult children
2.3. Pre-entry integration requirement
2.4. Post-entry integration requirement
2.5 . Economic resources
2.6. Accommodation
2.7. Duration of validity of permit
2.8. Grounds for rejection, withdrawal, refusal;
2.9. Personal circumstances considered
2.10. Right to autonomous residence permit for partners and children

3. Education

3.1. Access to compulsory and non-compulsory education
3.2. Access to higher education
3.3. Educational guidance at all levels
3.4. Provision of support to learn language of instruction
3.5. Measures to address educational situation of migrant groups
3.6. Teacher training to reflect migrants' learning needs
3.7. School curriculum to reflect diversity
3.8. Measures to bring migrants into the teacher workforce
3.9. Teacher training to reflect diversity

4. Political Participation

4.1. Right to vote and stand in national and local elections
4.2. Membership in political parties
4.3. Strength of national consultative body
4.3. Active information policy
4.4. Public funding/support for national immigrant bodies

5. Permanent Residence

5.1. Residence period
5.2. LTR Language requirement
5.3. Economic resources
5.4. Duration of validity of permit
5.5. Renewable permit
5.6. Periods of absence allowed
5.7. Access to social security and assistance

6. Access to Nationality

6.1. Residence period
6.2. Citizenship for immigrant children (birthright and socialisation)
6.3. Naturalisation language requirement
6.4. Naturalisation integration requirement
6.5. Economic resources
6.6. Criminal record
6.7 Dual nationality for first generation

7. Anti-Discrimination

7.1. Law covers direct/indirect discrimination, harassment, instruction
7.2. Employment & vocational training
7.3. Education
7.4. Social protection
7.5. Access to and supply of public goods and services, including housing
7.6. Enforcement mechanisms
7.7. Mandate of specialized equality body – grounds
7.8. Mandate of specialized equality body – powers
7.9. Law covers positive action measures

8. Health

8.1. Health entitlements for legal migrants
8.2. Health entitlements for asylum-seekers
8.3. Health entitlements for undocumented migrants
8.4. Administrative discretion and documentation for legal migrants
8.5. Administrative discretion and documentation for asylum-seekers
8.6. Administrative discretion and documentation for undocumented migrants
8.7. Information for migrants concerning entitlements and use of health services
8.8. Information for migrants concerning health education and promotion
8.9. Availability of qualified interpretation services
8.10. Involvement of migrants in information provision, service design and delivery
8.11. Support for research on migrant health
8.12. Whole organisation approach

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2025