

Article

What information is there on British migrants living in Europe?: Jan 2017

This report seeks to establish what statistics are available that can be used to estimate the number of British migrants living in the European Union (EU). These data are not National Statistics. They have been collected by ONS from Eurostat and other European statistical offices.

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1 . Main points

- Around 900,000 UK citizens are long-term residents of other EU countries; the largest age group is aged 30 to 49 years.
- Spain is host to the largest number of British citizens living in the EU (308,805); just over a third (101,045) of British citizens living in Spain are aged 65 years and over.
- France, Ireland and Germany are also home to relatively large numbers of British citizens.
- There is a large difference between numbers of UK born (287,600) and UK citizens (112,090) in Ireland.
- These data count those living in the EU for 12 months or longer.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

This report seeks to establish the statistics that are available to estimate the number of British people living in the European Union (EU).

These data are not National Statistics. This report has been compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from data collected by Eurostat based on the 2010 to 2011 round of censuses in Europe and other data from European statistical offices. These data are chosen because the method of data collection allows confident analysis at detailed levels and they are rich data, which will allow ONS to conduct further demographic analysis of British citizens living in the EU.

3 . Migration statistics - background

Migration statistics can be based on several definitions of a migrant and different definitions of migrants are useful for different purposes.

Place of birth identifies migrants as people who were born in a country other than the one they live in. The advantage of this method is that place of birth does not change and it is a clear and simple question to answer. However, it fails to include some British citizens born overseas (for example, those born to armed forces personnel stationed in Germany) or foreign nationals born in the UK.

Citizenship identifies migrants as people with a different citizenship to the country they are resident in. This can be a complex definition, as people's citizenship can change and multiple citizenships can be held. It can also be a difficult question for migrants to answer, as citizenship may be associated with national identity rather than legal status.

"A person who moves from their country of usual residence for a period of at least 12 months" is the United Nations definition of an international migrant. It can be hard to measure. The International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is used to produce the UK's official migration estimates, asks travellers how long they intend to stay when they arrive in the UK (or leave to go abroad). Such intentions are, of course, subject to change and the published Long-Term International Migration figures include an adjustment for this, by identifying how people's intentions and actual behaviour compare. The census, by contrast, seeks to identify such migrants with the question: "One year ago, what was your usual address?"

Migration statistics also take different forms:

- stocks measure how many people are resident in a country (staying for 12 months or longer) and can be broken down by country of birth or citizenship
- flows measure how many people change their country of residence for at least one year, thus becoming long-term migrants; flows do not estimate how many migrants are present in a country at any one time, they are useful to identify changes in levels and patterns of migration

Different definitions suit different purposes. For the purposes of identifying British migrants living overseas, who may be affected by the UK exit from the EU, the most useful statistics are the stocks of British citizens.

4 . How the data are compiled

These data are published by the Eurostat Census Hub. Eurostat collected data from all of the EU ¹ and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states² 2010 to 2011 Censuses. The censuses reported here are a mixture of questionnaire censuses, register-based (administrative data) censuses and combined (register and survey) censuses. The 2011 UK Census was a questionnaire census.

In questionnaire censuses, adjustments are made to the data to account for foreign residents that may not be counted if they do not complete the census. For register censuses, adjustments are made for foreign residents that may not be registered or that are erroneously counted because they have left the country and are not deregistered on the registration system.

Although the data are 5 years old, there are several reasons why these data provide the best estimate of British citizens living in the EU:

- they are available for all countries in the EU and EFTA
- they are rigorously collected and verified
- they are one of the only sources of data using the “citizenship” definition
- they are rich data, which allow further demographic analysis of British citizens living in the EU
- the counts measured in 2011 are not greatly different to those that exist today; where countries have more recent data, this has been checked and no major differences are apparent

All “residents” counted in this analysis have stayed, or plan to stay, in the host country for 12 months or longer. This means that short-term migrants and circular migrants (for example, repeated migration between locations, such as British citizens who spend part of the year in the EU and part of the year in the UK) are not counted. Any British citizens who spend only part of the year living in the EU are not counted in these data.

In the table of British citizens, those with multiple citizenships have one citizenship selected for Eurostat reporting. This is determined in the following order:

1. citizenship of reporting country
2. other EU member state citizenship
3. non-EU member state citizenship

This means that a person with both French and British citizenship, living in France, is not counted as British in these data. This definition is relevant for identifying those citizens who do not have citizenship of another EU state to use when the UK exits the EU.

In some instances, Eurostat have not been able to collect data from a country, usually due to data confidentiality rules of individual member statistical offices. Where this is the case, ONS has sought to find an alternative source. This is clearly documented in the report.

This report includes the EFTA states, as changes to EU-UK free movement may have implications in these countries. EFTA states are not counted in the totals.

Notes for: How the data are compiled

1. The current formation of the EU (28 countries) is used in this article. Although Croatia joined the EU in 2013, Croatia conducted an EU-standard census in 2011 as a pre-requisite for membership.
2. The EFTA countries are Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

5 . Number of British citizens living in Europe in 2011, by age

The data show that Spain is host to the largest number of British citizens living in the EU. France, Ireland and Germany are also home to relatively large numbers of British citizens (Table 1). British citizens make up 0.2% of the population of the EU (excluding the UK) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states combined. The highest concentration of British citizens is in Cyprus, with 2.9% of the population holding only British citizenship. Similarly, 2.5% of the population of Ireland and 1.6% of the population of Malta have only British citizenship.

Table 1: The age of British citizens living in Europe in 2011

Country of residence	Total	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
All EU members	890,299	83,589	90,044	280,042	247,501	189,105
Spain	308,805	25,625	24,205	64,450	93,475	101,045
France	157,062	20,674	14,976	42,543	48,727	30,141
Ireland	112,090	11,091	17,549	44,994	24,166	14,290
Germany	96,200	6,080	12,100	36,540	29,480	12,020
Netherlands	^a 41,373	^a 4,578	^a 1,940	^a 29,181	^a 2,669	^a 3,005
Belgium	24,975	3,545	3,768	8,989	6,193	2,480
Cyprus	24,046	1,802	1,954	4,875	8,011	7,404
Italy	22,673	1,470	1,445	9,117	7,104	3,537
Sweden	18,119	1,181	2,517	9,025	3,716	1,680
Portugal	15,774	1,568	1,138	3,601	5,313	4,154
Greece	15,388	810	1,114	4,635	5,833	2,996
Denmark	14,700	1,151	2,243	6,403	3,478	1,425
Austria	8,431	1,010	1,257	3,403	1,851	910
Malta	6,652	390	520	1,531	2,054	2,157
Luxembourg	5,480	1,047	940	2,054	1,161	278
Czech Republic	5,182	312	815	2,889	922	213
Finland	3,454	136	448	2,016	649	205
Bulgaria	2,605	143	113	702	1,200	447
Hungary	2,602	270	452	1,041	519	320
Poland	2,058	179	294	969	438	177
Slovakia	605	220	31	251	78	25
Romania	^b 521	^b 94	^b 66	^b 196	^b 125	^b 40
Slovenia	386	23	20	175	121	47
Croatia	334	43	17	136	95	43
Estonia	310	34	38	166	59	13
Latvia	243	28	39	106	44	26
Lithuania	^c 231	^c 85	^c 45	^c 54	^c 20	^c 27

Sources: Eurostat, 2011, CBS Statline (Netherlands), 2011

Notes:

1. For notes on this table, see Appendix 1

Table 2: The age of British citizens living in the European Free Trade Area in 2011

Country of residence	Total	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
Switzerland	^d 33,796	^d 4,770	3,774	14,966	7,452	2,834
Norway	14,667	913	1,700	6,725	3,649	1,680
Iceland	545	20	153	261	88	23
Liechtenstein	^e 57	^e 8	^e 6	^e 25	^e 13	^e 5

Sources: Eurostat, 2011, Swiss Populations and Household Survey, 2015, UN 'Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin', 2015.

Notes:

1. For Notes on this table, see Appendix 1

6 . Born in the UK and living in Europe, 2011

Country of birth is an alternative way of looking at those who have a connection to the UK (Table 3). However, it fails to include some foreign nationals born in the UK, or British nationals born abroad. It gives a less precise estimate of how many British citizens might be affected when the UK exits the EU because they do not have citizenship of another EU state to use.

Table 3: The age of those born in the UK and living in the European Union in 2011

Country of residence	Total	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
All EU members	1,138,965	121,886	127,364	392,853	291,773	205,078
Spain	296,220	15,765	22,055	70,835	91,495	96,070
Ireland	287,600	30,820	49,241	123,797	55,517	28,225
France	169,945	18,617	16,745	45,999	54,628	33,956
Germany	80,290	6,640	9,000	29,510	26,060	9,090
Italy	58,309	4,458	4,579	27,985	14,957	6,330
Netherlands	^a 47,297	^a 5,234	^a 2,218	^a 33,359	^a 3,051	^a 3,435
Cyprus	31,495	1,768	4,080	9,421	8,987	7,239
Belgium	23,628	2,505	3,153	8,184	5,944	3,842
Sweden	21,914	2,661	2,964	9,109	4,696	2,484
Portugal	19,131	3,436	2,040	4,444	5,220	3,991
Greece	18,294	1,367	2,049	5,933	6,200	2,745
Poland	18,209	14,843	1,037	1,286	824	220
Denmark	16,582	1,941	2,567	6,426	3,775	1,873
Malta	10,484	507	1,208	3,527	2,755	2,487
Austria	9,369	1,086	1,286	3,479	2,407	1,111
Czech Republic	4,823	400	661	2,560	797	388
Finland	4,547	717	672	2,082	810	266
Luxembourg	4,226	491	597	1,821	1,061	256
Hungary	3,597	778	589	1,182	708	340
Bulgaria	3,042	483	159	719	1,223	458
Slovakia	3,003	2,512	84	275	88	44
Romania	2,393	1,879	100	204	154	54
Lithuania	1,881	1,696	68	56	25	36
Latvia	981	747	39	107	71	17
Croatia	678	235	78	189	121	52
Slovenia	552	96	54	213	134	55
Estonia	475	204	41	151	65	14

Sources: Eurostat, 2011, CBS Statline (Netherlands), 2011.

Notes:

1. For notes on this table, see Appendix 2

Table 4: The age of those born in the UK and living in the European Free Trade Area in 2011

Country of residence	Total	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
Switzerland	^b 41,324	^b 5,832	3,950	16,244	10,288	5,010
Norway	18,016	1,792	2,161	7,080	4,080	2,903
Iceland	1,087	216	239	376	180	76
Liechtenstein	^c 57	^c 8	^c 6	^c 25	^c 13	^c 5

Sources: Eurostat, 2011 Swiss Population and Household Survey, 2015, UN 'Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin', 2015.

Notes:

1. For notes on this table, please see Appendix 2

For notes on these tables, please see Appendix 2.

There are some notable differences between estimates when defining migrants by country of birth and defining them by citizenship.

Table 5 shows the EU countries with the greatest difference between these 2 measures.

Table 5: Differences between UK born and British citizenship

More UK born than British citizens			
	UK born	British Citizens	Difference
Ireland	287,600	112,090	175,510
Italy	58,309	22,673	35,636
Poland	18,209	2,058	16,151
France	169,945	157,062	12,883

More British citizens than UK born			
	British Citizens	UK born	Difference
Germany	96,200	80,290	15,910
Spain	308,805	296,220	12,585
Belgium	24,975	23,628	1,347
Luxembourg	5,480	4,226	1,254

Source: Eurostat, 2011

The number of those born in the UK and living in Ireland is more than twice the number of British citizens living in Ireland. Because of the longstanding free movement agreement between the UK and Ireland, a large number of Irish citizens are born in the UK. Many Irish nationals may have dual nationality and because they are living in Ireland, are counted as Irish citizens in these data.

There are just over 35,000 more “born in the UK” living in Italy than “British citizens” living in Italy. These may be Italians who have moved to the UK, had families and then returned to Italy. There have historically been relatively high levels of migration from Italy; this migration was at its highest in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

There are 16,000 more UK born residents of Poland than British citizens living in Poland. Under 15s account for 14,000 of these. These children are presumed to have been recently born to Polish migrants living in the UK who have since returned to live in Poland.

Belgium has a greater number of UK born migrants than it does British citizens; the difference is marked amongst those aged 65 and over. (This might be explained by the children born to Belgian refugees during the First World War.¹)

Amongst those living in Spain and Germany, the number of British citizens outnumber the number of people born in the UK. For Spain, this is a small proportion of the total number; for Germany, this difference represents 17% of British citizens and is evident at all ages above 15 years old (Table 6).

Table 6: Differences between UK born and British citizenship for those resident in Germany

	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
British citizens living in Germany	6,080	12,100	36,540	29,480	12,020
UK born living in Germany	6,640	9,000	29,510	26,060	9,090

Source: Eurostat, 2011

Hundreds of thousands of British armed forces personnel have been stationed in Germany since the Second World War, the children of those who have stayed in Germany may account for the large difference. In Germany, up until the year 2000, being born in Germany did not confer citizenship. Instead, the parent's citizenship was given to the child, so children born to British parents would only be eligible for British citizenship. Since 2000, a child born in Germany to non-German parents is eligible for German citizenship (if one or more parents has a permanent residence permit or has lived in Germany for 8 years), so children born to British parents could have German citizenship. This may explain why the difference doesn't exist to the same degree for those aged under 15 years.

Notes for: Born in the UK and living in Europe

1. For more information, see these articles: [War Refugees Committee: Minutes, Papers and History Cards](#) (National Archives) and [World War One: How 250,000 Belgian refugees didn't leave a trace](#) (BBC).

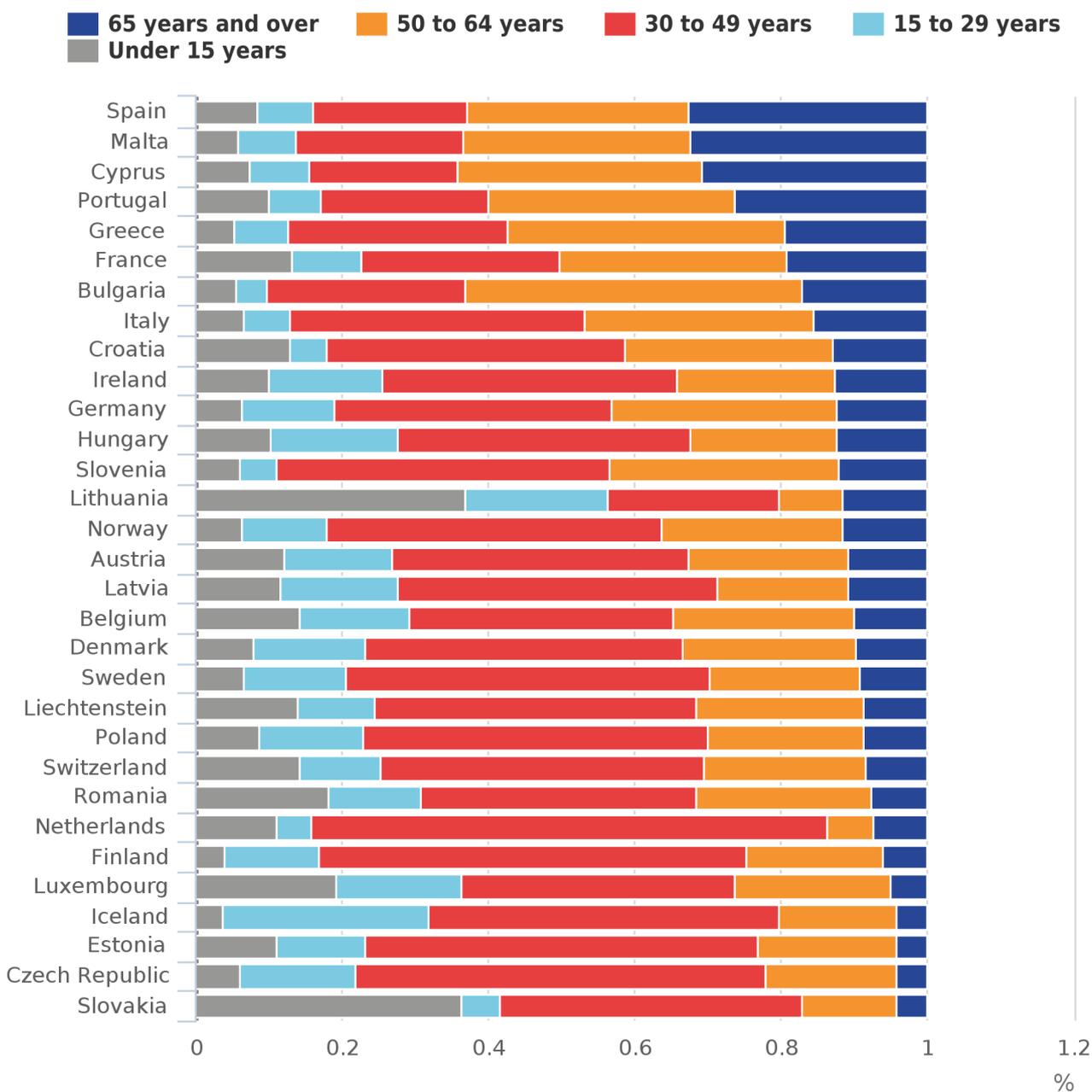
7 . Age profiles by country – what are the differences?

Age data are ranked to show countries where residing British citizens are most likely to be of retirement age (Figure 1).

Of the 308,805 British citizens living in Spain, 32.7% are 65 or older and in Malta too, this is the largest age group. As well as in Spain and Malta, in Cyprus, Portugal, Greece, France and Bulgaria, most British citizens living there are aged 50 or over.

The proportion of British citizens who are aged 30 to 49 years old is greater in the Netherlands than for any other country. At 70.5%, it is likely that most of them are going for work.

Figure 1: Age profiles by citizenship, 2011 European Census data, ranked by biggest proportion of 65 years and older



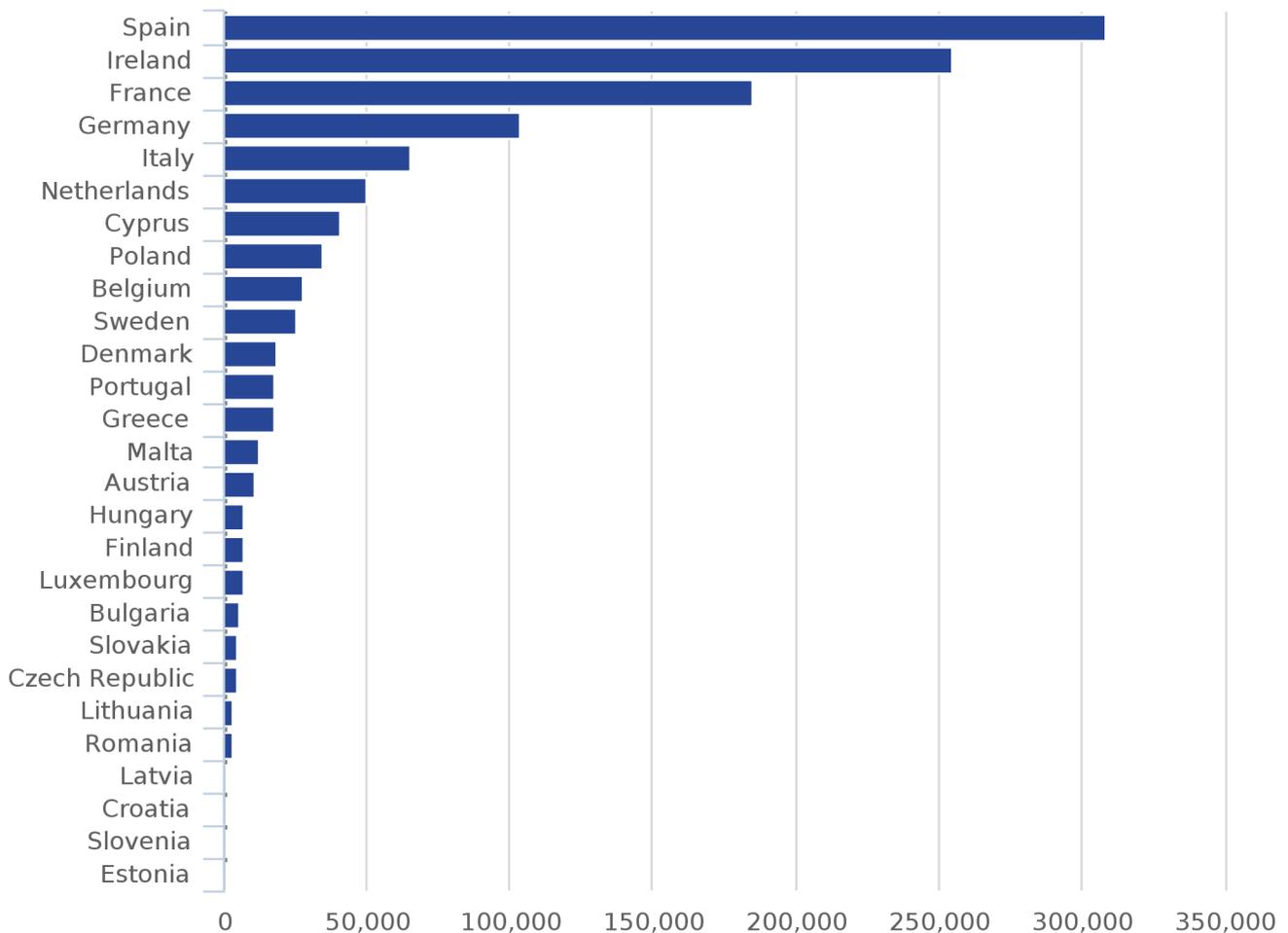
Source: Eurostat, 2011, CBS Statline (Netherlands),2011

8 . The United Nations “1.22 million British people live in the European Union”

To now, the United Nations’ statistics showing UK born migrants living in other EU member states have been widely used. These are from the UN publication [Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin](#) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015)(Figure 2).

There are differences between these data and Eurostat Census data.

Figure 2: Number of UK born migrants living in other EU member states, 2015 estimates



Source: United Nations “Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin” (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015)

The data are for a 2015 reference point. This harmonised reference point is achieved by “ageing on” 2010 to 2011 Censuses, applying the UN’s assumptions, for example, how many UK born migrants have immigrated to and emigrated from each country. It is an estimate designed to illustrate the extent of global migration (produced for the whole world, not only the EU).

The UN uses the “country of birth” definition for these data for 25 out of 27 EU nations (for Belgium and the Czech Republic the UN uses the “foreign citizens” definition). These data will include many Irish and Polish citizens whilst not counting British citizens born overseas.

The UN data provide a high-level estimate for each country. The EU-Census data enable further analysis by other characteristics, for example, age, occupation and industry.

We believe it is better to use the more detailed census data in order to estimate the number of British citizens living abroad.

The UN “Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin” can be used to corroborate the change in the counts of UK born migrants living in the EU in the last 5 years. The time series suggests that the number of UK born migrants living in the EU has been relatively stable from 2010 to 2015 (Table 7).

Table 7: Number of UK born migrants living in other EU member states, for 2010 and 2015

	Number of UK born migrants
2010	1,176,154
2015	1,216,041

Source: UN ‘Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by destination and origin’

9. Appendix 1: Notes and definitions for Tables 1 and 2, Age of British citizens living in Europe in 2011

^a The Netherlands doesn't provide census data by age to Eurostat. ONS has replaced the Eurostat data with information available online from Statistics Netherlands. The information comes from the national register and is for 2011.

^b Romania does not provide this information to Eurostat. Although usually data for Romania is treated and analysed alongside Bulgaria, as the "EU2" accession countries that joined in 2007, demographically it has more similarities with the EU8 countries. In particular, the pattern of children born in the UK but living in Romania is more similar to the EU8 countries than Bulgaria. Therefore, ONS has estimated the number of British citizens living in Romania from country of birth data. Across EU8 countries there are large numbers of children born in the UK (see Table 8) who are not British citizens. The ratio between citizenship and country of birth was calculated for the 7 EU8 countries for which both pieces of information are available. This was then applied to Romania's country of birth data to estimate citizenship.

^c Lithuania does not provide these data to Eurostat and could not provide it when approached by ONS, because of confidentiality. Instead, ONS has estimated these data from country of birth data, in the same way as is estimated for Romania. See Table 8.

Table 8: EU8 ratio of citizenship to country of birth

	Under 15 years	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over
British citizens (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia)	1,066	1,689	5,597	2,181	821
Born in the UK (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia)	21,276	2,573	5,830	2,712	1,114
EU8 average ^c ratio of citizenship to country of birth	0.05 : 1	0.66 : 1	0.96 : 1	0.81 : 1	0.74 : 1
Born in the UK, living in Romania	1,879	100	204	154	54
Estimated Citizens living in Romania (Born in UK x ratio of citizenship to country of birth)	94	66	196	125	40
Born in the UK, living in Lithuania	1,696	68	56	25	36
Estimated Citizens living in Lithuania (Born in UK x ratio of citizenship to country of birth)	85	45	54	20	27

Source: Office for National Statistics

^d The Swiss Federal Statistics Office doesn't publish statistics on citizenship of those under 15 (Switzerland combines survey data and register data to create its census - citizenship comes from the Structural Survey, which is only asked of those aged 15 or older). Instead, ONS has taken the Swiss reports from the Swiss Populations and Household Survey of those aged under 15 who were born in the UK – 5,832 in 2015 (2011 data not available). A ratio of citizenship: country of birth is taken from the other age groups (29,026 : 35,492) and applied to the country of birth data for those under 15 (to give 4,770). The total for Switzerland includes this adjusted count.

^e Liechtenstein does not provide this information because of confidentiality. Instead, ONS has used the estimate from the 2010 [Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin](#) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015)). Note the limitations of these estimates discussed in this report. The 57 are allocated to age groups using the Switzerland age distribution, with the rationale that similar banking sectors attract similar workers).

10. Appendix 2: Notes and definitions for Tables 3 and 4, Age of those born in the UK and living in Europe in 2011

^a The Netherlands does not provide this information because of confidentiality. Statistics Netherlands does not publish single countries of birth for migrants. Instead, ONS used the estimation from the 2010 [Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin](#) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015)). Note the limitations of these estimates discussed in this report. The 47,297 are distributed according to the age distribution of citizenship data.

^b Switzerland's EU census hub data are based on the Structural Survey, which surveys only those aged 15 or older. The Swiss Populations and Household Survey counts 5,832 0 to 15 year olds born in the UK in 2015 (2011 data not available), which are added here and added to the total.

^c Liechtenstein does not provide this information because of confidentiality. Instead, ONS used the estimation from the 2010 [Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin](#) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015)). Note the limitations of these estimates discussed in this report. The 57 are allocated to age groups using the Switzerland age distribution, with the rationale that similar banking sectors attract similar workers).