

# **REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN DENMARK 1992-2016**

**NUMBERS, WAITING TIMES, SETTLEMENT AND LEGISLATION**

**BY CAMILLA HVIDTFELDT AND MARIE LOUISE SCHULTZ-NIELSEN**



The ROCKWOOL Foundation Research Unit

---

Study Paper No. 133

# **Refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark 1992-2016**

**Numbers, waiting times, settlement and legislation**

**By Camilla Hvidtfeldt and Marie Louise Schultz-Nielsen**

---

Copenhagen 2018

## Refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark 1992-2016

---

Study Paper No. 133

Published by:

© The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit

Address:

The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit

Ny Kongensgade 6

1472 Copenhagen, Denmark

Telephone +45 33 34 48 00

E-mail: [kontakt@rff.dk](mailto:kontakt@rff.dk)

<https://www.rockwoolfonden.dk/en>

November 2018

# Indhold

1	Foreword .....	5
2	Introduction .....	6
2.1	Why is it important to investigate waiting times and settlement? .....	6
2.2	The structure of this report .....	7
3	The asylum process in Denmark .....	8
4	Data .....	11
5	Numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers and recognised refugees .....	13
5.1	Gross number of asylum seekers and number of registrations .....	13
5.2	Recognised refugees and the percentage of asylum seekers recognised .....	15
5.3	Asylum applications and residence permits .....	18
6	Trends in waiting time for refugees—the broad lines .....	20
6.1	Waiting time for refugees in the Danish asylum system, 1993–2016 .....	21
6.2	Waiting times for refugees: breakdown by status and country of origin .....	26
7	Waiting times in Norway—and a single statistic for Switzerland .....	35
8	The settlement of refugees in Denmark from 1997–2016 .....	38
8.1	Spatial dispersal policy .....	38
8.2	Which municipalities have received the greatest numbers of refugees? .....	39
8.3	The regional settlement of refugees .....	42
8.4	Regional settlement and the ethnic origins of refugees settled in Denmark .....	43
9	The Danish Aliens Act, 1992–2017 .....	46
9.1	The period 1992–1996: The ‘Yugoslavs Act’ .....	47
9.2	The period 1997–2001: The Dublin Convention and the Kosovo Emergency Act ..	49
9.3	The period 2002–2006: The <i>de facto</i> concept is abolished and rules for family unification are made even more strict .....	50
9.4	The period 2007–2011: Integration tests and points systems .....	52
9.5	The period 2012–2014: The points systems are scrapped .....	53
9.6	The period 2015–2017: The refugee crisis .....	55
10	Summary .....	58
	Appendix 1 .....	63
	Appendix 2 .....	66
11	References .....	67
11.1	Websites consulted .....	72



# 1 Foreword

In light of the recent refugee crisis in the period 2013–2016, when Denmark admitted nearly 20,000 refugees from Syria, integration of refugees is now high on the Danish political agenda. Successful integration is of great importance for the Danish welfare state, from both economic and social perspectives.

To comprehend the extent of the task of integration, however, it is necessary to consider the most recent figures in a broader perspective and, if possible, to learn from past experience. Consequently, in March 2016 the Board of the Rockwool Foundation decided to finance a project that would create an overview of the numbers of refugees in Denmark, the waiting times they experienced in the asylum system before admission, and the process of settling them. The project was to provide data that would serve as the basis for subsequent analyses of the significance of these factors for the integration and the health of refugees.

I would like to express my thanks to Statistics Denmark for making their register data available to us. As usual, they provided expert and helpful advice in the project approval process and regarding the selection of variables.

At the Research Unit, Camilla Hvidtfeldt and Marie Louise Schultz-Nielsen have been the principal driving forces behind the project. They have carried out the calculations and analyses in the report, with the aid of student assistants Rebecca Overgaard Udsen, Mie Hjortskov Andersen, Caroline Abrahamsen and Drilon Helshani. In addition, Bent Jensen (Head of Communication) contributed valuable comments on the draft text.

In connection with the publication of the research, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Bente Bondebjerg (former Consultant on Integration Issues at the Danish Refugee Council) and Eva Singer (currently Head of the Asylum Department at the Danish Refugee Council), who acted as external reviewers of the manuscript. Bente Bondebjerg was also extremely helpful in the start-up phase of the project, offering the benefit of her comprehensive knowledge of the history of refugees in Denmark over the past thirty years, especially with regard to settlement. I would also like to give special thanks to Tim Caudrey for a careful translation of the Danish publication.

As with all projects at the ROCKWOOL Foundation Research Unit, this publication has been written in complete academic independence of any third party, including the Foundation itself. The Foundation has, however, allocated sufficient resources for the project to be carried out. The Research Unit thus owes the Board of the ROCKWOOL Foundation, under the chairmanship of Lars Nørby Johansen, and the President of the ROCKWOOL Foundation, Elin Schmidt, warm thanks for their cooperation.

Copenhagen, October 2017 (translation October 2018)

*Jan Rose Skaksen*

## 2 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present an overview of key issues that concerned asylum seekers and refugees newly arrived in Denmark over the period 1992–2016.

Interest in topics relating to refugees has once again risen markedly on the Danish political agenda, especially since the refugee crisis in 2015, when images of refugees wandering on foot along Danish motorways imprinted themselves on the consciousness of many Danes, reminding them that global problems can become very local ones. At the same time, the phenomenon of refugees is an old and familiar one. The UN Refugee Convention dates from 1951, and it came into being in light of the huge streams of refugees that the world had seen during and after World War II. Over the years, Denmark has received refugees from European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, and also from more distant countries such as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq and Somalia.

One of the largest refugee groups received in Denmark to date came as a result of the civil war in Yugoslavia, and the period covered by this report begins in the years when many of these refugees arrived in the country. Developments in issues concerning newly arrived refugees are traced over the subsequent 25 years, finishing in 2016, when the civil war in Syria was the cause of a new stream of refugees.

A number of key parameters are used in elucidating developments concerning refugees over the past 25 years. These concern the number of asylum seekers arriving in the country, the countries from which they came, the number of applicants that were granted refugee status, the length of time taken to decide each case, and where the refugees were settled after receiving their residence permits. By juxtaposing the figures related to trends in numbers of asylum seekers and refugees with Danish legislation in the area and the changes in it, we hope to create a more complete and cohesive picture of developments in the area.

In this report, the term *asylum seeker* denotes a foreigner who seeks protection under the Refugee Convention and thereby the right to reside in another country—in this case, Denmark—but who has not yet been recognised as a refugee. A *refugee* is a person who has had his or her application for asylum granted (Ministeriet for flygtninge, udlændinge og integration, 2003).

### 2.1 Why is it important to investigate waiting times and settlement?

The time that refugees wait for a decision on their asylum application and the settlement of refugees are both included in this analysis because previous research has shown that these factors have significance for the integration of refugees and for their health, and thus both for the individuals concerned and for society as a whole. For example, Damm has shown on the basis of Danish data that the place in which refugees are settled has significance for

their later attachment to the labour market, and for the risk of their children becoming involved in crime (Damm, 2005; Damm & Dustmann, 2014). Similarly, data from Sweden indicate that the location in which refugees are settled has an effect on the risk of their developing diabetes (White et al., 2016). Finally, research has shown that an increased concentration of people from non-Western backgrounds as a result of settlement of refugees can affect voting behaviour among ethnic Danes (Dustmann, Vasiljeva, & Damm, 2016a). Political decisions concerning where and how refugees are to be settled thus has considerable and long-term significance.

With regard to waiting time, a number of qualitative studies have demonstrated that asylum seekers experience the time spent waiting for a decision on their applications as very stressful (Brekke, 2010; Vitus, 2010; Weiss et al., 2017). Children who spend many years in the asylum system become passive and demoralised. They are greatly affected by any psychological illness of their parents – and many of the parents do suffer from psychological disorders (Christensen & Vitus Andersen, 2006). There are a number of quantitative studies which paint the same picture as the qualitative papers. For example, studies conducted in Denmark and the Netherlands have found that longer waiting times within the asylum system are correlated with an increased occurrence of psychological problems among asylum seekers (Hallas et al., 2007; Laban et al., 2008; Nielsen et al., 2008; Silove et al., 2000). One large-scale study of asylum-seeking children showed that waiting time was not in itself a statistically significant explanatory factor for mental health problems when a number of other factors were taken into account, including the number of relocations between asylum facilities during a given period (Goos-en et al., 2014). However, the overall picture is that waiting time is experienced as psychologically very stressful.

From individual, ethical and societal perspectives, therefore, there are good reasons to study the changes in asylum seekers' waiting times in Denmark and the patterns of their settlement over the past quarter of a century

## *2.2 The structure of this report*

The report is structured as follows. Section 3 provides a brief description of the asylum process in Denmark. Then, Section 4 presents the data on which the analyses are based. Section 5 describes the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in Denmark over the period 1992–2016, including percentages of asylum seekers finally recognised as refugees. Section 6 presents calculations of the mean waiting times from seeking asylum until the issuing of a residence permit. In Section 7, waiting time in the Danish asylum system is put into perspective through comparison with the figures available from Norway. The geographical areas of settlement of refugees after processing in the asylum system are described in Section 8, while Section 9 contains a brief historical survey of significant changes in the Danish Aliens Act. Section 10 summarises the contents of the report.

### 3 The asylum process in Denmark

Foreigners who believe they have a right to protection in accordance with the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention are permitted to seek asylum in Denmark. This applies regardless of whether or not they already hold a residence permit for Denmark. All asylum seekers are registered by the police and must fill in an asylum application form. After a (normally) short waiting period applicants are called to an *information and motivation interview*, where they are questioned about their background and reasons for fleeing their country. Up until 1996 this interview was conducted by the police, but today it is the Immigration Service that undertakes this task. On the basis of the interview, and possibly taking other supplementary information into account, the Immigration Service decides whether the application is admissible for further processing or whether the asylum seeker should be returned to another country (Mouzourakis et al., 2016). Such a return may be carried out either in accordance with the Dublin Regulation<sup>1</sup> or if an assessment is made that the asylum seeker comes from a safe country outside the EU (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2016a).

The cases of asylum seekers that are adjudged to be admissible are processed in accordance with one of three different procedures: 1) the normal procedure, 2) the manifestly unfounded application procedure and 3) the expedited manifestly unfounded application procedure. Most applications are processed under the normal procedure. The majority of cases processed under one of the two types of manifestly unfounded application procedure end with rejection. The Immigration Service decides all asylum applications on the basis of a specific and individual assessment of each asylum seeker's case. General information related to the asylum seeker's background is taken into account in making the individual evaluation, with great weight being placed on conditions in the asylum seeker's home country.

---

<sup>1</sup> The provisions of the Dublin Regulation mean that before an asylum case is processed, the authorities must determine whether the asylum-seeker was registered and/or had applied for asylum in another EU country before seeking asylum in Denmark. If that is found to be the case, Denmark is entitled to request the relevant country to receive the applicant back (Indenrigsministeriet, 1999). Most such requests from Denmark are accepted (see Section 9.2).

**Table 3.1 The various types of residence permit for refugees**

Residence status	Description	Aliens Act	Time period <sup>1</sup>
Convention status	Applies to refugees who fulfil the requirements of the UN 1951 Refugee Convention. It concerns people who have a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion' (Christensen et al., 2000, p. 22).	Section 7, Subsection 1	Still applies
<i>De facto</i> refugee status	Refugees who are not covered by the Refugee Convention, but who have 'other similar or substantial' grounds for not returning to their country of origin (ibid.; our translation). These factors must create a well-founded fear of persecution for the refugee if he or she were to return home (ibid., p. 379).	Section 7, Subsection 2	Abolished July 2002
Subsidiary protection status	Refugees who are not covered by the UN Refugee Convention, but who face a 'risk of being executed or subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment' if they return to their country of origin (Starup, 2012, p. 82; translation).	Section 7, Subsection 2	Applicable from July 2002 onward
Temporary protection status <sup>2</sup>	Refugees who are not covered by the UN Refugee Convention but who come from countries 'marked by arbitrary acts of violence and attacks on civilians' (Jacobsen et al., 2017, p. 276; our translation).	Section 7, Subsection 3	Applicable from February 2015 onward
Quota refugees	Refugees who are resettled in Denmark in agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Since 1989, it has been agreed that Denmark will provide places for 500 quota refugees annually. The Immigration Service assesses all quota refugee cases before residence permits are granted.	Section 8	Still applies <sup>3</sup>
Humanitarian grounds for residence	A residence permit can be granted to a registered asylum seeker if significant humanitarian considerations warrant it. However, humanitarian residence permits are only granted as exceptions, and in very special cases.	Section 9 b	Still applies
Other grounds	A residence permit can also be granted on other grounds, for example in the best interest of children. This applies both to unaccompanied minor and to accompanying children.	Section 9 c	Still applies

<sup>1</sup> For applications submitted within this time frame.

<sup>2</sup> The description applies only to the most recently introduced temporary protection status (September 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Since September 2016, acceptance of quota refugees by Denmark has been suspended.

At the time of writing, rejections of applications made on the basis of the normal procedure are forwarded automatically to the Refugee Appeals Board, which is an independent, quasi-judicial body. Rejections of asylum applications that have been processed in accordance with one of the two manifestly-unfounded procedures are put to the Danish Refugee Council, which states whether or not it is in agreement with the rejection by the Immigration Service (giving the Refugee Council a right of veto). If the Refugee Council is in agreement with the Danish Immigration Service, the case ends there with the rejection of the application; if the Refugee Council does not agree with the decision, the case is sent back for reassessment in accordance with the normal procedure (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2013a). Residence permits may be granted on various grounds, and both the types of residence permit given and the periods of validity of such permits have varied over the period 1992–2016.

A brief overview of various types of residence permit for refugees is presented in Table 3.1 (for a more detailed and precise description of the legislative basis for residence, see Section 9). Section 6.2 is based on the types of residence permit mentioned above. Refugees are divided there into the categories 1) Convention status, 2) *de facto*/ protection status/ temporary protection status, 3) quota refugees and 4) a group consisting of people who have been granted asylum on other grounds: on humanitarian grounds, on ‘very special grounds’, and on the basis of applications for asylum submitted abroad. It is a ministry (at the time of writing, September 2018, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration) that issues humanitarian residence permits. Practice with regard to the issuing of humanitarian residence permits generally became more restrictive during the period 1992–2016 (Justitsministeriet, Udlændingeafdelingen, 2015).

## 4 Data

The data in this report come from three sources: official annual reports, the Danish Immigration Service and by Statistics Denmark. All register data have been received and processed in anonymised format.

The official annual reports are from the Danish Immigration Service and various ministries. They are used here specifically to describe the percentages of successful applications for asylum and the numbers of person-years worked in the Immigration Service, but also to contextualise changes over time, and to harmonise our own calculations made on the basis of register data with the official statistics.

Data from the Immigration Service providing information on all refugees who were granted residence permits between 1 January 1993 and 31 December 2016 are used for the analyses of waiting times. Only those refugees who sought asylum in the period 1 January 1991 to 31 December 2016 are included. The principal items of information obtained from the Danish Immigration Service are the date of the first application for asylum, the date of the first issue of a residence permit, and information about residence status. Waiting time in the asylum system is calculated as the difference between the date of application and the date of the issue of a residence permit. No information is available about where asylum seekers resided between applying for asylum and the grant of their residence permit.

The data from the Immigration Service were linked to register data on demographic factors (sex, age and municipality of residence), information about entries to and exits from Denmark, and grounds for the grant of the residence permit.<sup>2</sup> The register data were used, among other things, to assess the extent to which a refugee had stayed in Denmark before applying for asylum. This might be the case, for example, if a person had arrived in Denmark on a tourist visa, as a student, or in connection with family reunification with another refugee.

One of the main aims of this report is to elucidate changes in waiting times over the analysis period. This information will provide the basis for future analyses of the effects of differences in waiting times on health and integration after asylum is granted. The effects of waiting time on people who live in Denmark for a period before applying for asylum are difficult to interpret in part because living in Denmark before applying for asylum might have enabled them to acquire skills such as Danish language proficiency that could be of advantage with respect to integration. With regard to settlement – which is discussed in Section 8 – it is again most relevant to focus on newly arrived refugees who apply for asylum without any previous period of stay in Denmark, since this is the group that requires most help from municipal authorities with housing, etc. The majority of the figures and tables in this report are therefore based on people who apply for asylum immediately on arrival in Den-

---

<sup>2</sup> The registers used were 'BEF', 'VNDS' and 'OPHG'.

mark without having had any previous registered stay in the country and who are successful in their applications. Appendix 1 presents a comparison of the various data sources.

The figures showing waiting times in Sections 6 and 7 are based on 78,000 refugees who a) had recognised refugee status as the first registered grounds for the grant of a residence permit, b) had never been registered in Denmark before they applied for asylum and c) had valid data available concerning their waiting time. Since quota refugees did not have to wait in Denmark for an asylum decision to be made, and their waiting time is consequently unknown, they are not included in the figures showing waiting times. Quota refugees are included in Table 6.1, however, and in consequence the number of refugees included in the calculations for that table increases to 92,894.

The analyses concerning the settlement of refugees are based on data on the grounds for granting a residence permit that were obtained from Statistics Denmark. These data only go back to 1997, in contrast to the data from the Immigration Service, which go back to 1993. Another source of differences in the report is that the data recorded by Statistics Denmark on the grounds for the granting of a residence permit include *imputed values*. These imputed values are not actual registered grounds for residence permits granted by the Danish authorities, but values assigned to immigrants for whom the grounds for granting permission to reside are not known. The imputed values are generated using an algorithm that gives particular weight to the country of origin and date of arrival (Danmarks Statistik, 2014).

However, the differences between the numbers that are arrived at by accessing different sources of data in different ways are small, and the data material must therefore be considered to be highly valid.

## 5 Numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers and recognised refugees

### 5.1 Gross number of asylum seekers and number of registrations

In this section, we describe the trends in the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees coming to Denmark by examining the *half-yearly totals of spontaneous asylum seekers*. A spontaneous asylum seeker is a foreign national who has not been previously resident in Denmark as a refugee who enters Denmark and requests asylum. Spontaneous asylum seekers must apply to the police, and can request asylum by applying in person either at a police station (for example, at the border) or at the Sandholm reception centre for asylum seekers. Quota refugees are not counted as spontaneous asylum seekers. The Immigration Service uses two different methods of counting the number of spontaneous asylum seekers. First, there is a count of all persons applying for asylum in Denmark, regardless of whether their case is processed in Denmark or not. This is the *gross number of asylum seekers*. This figure ‘includes persons who are returned to a safe third country, transferred or re-transferred to another EU Member state under the Dublin Regulation, as well as withdrawals and disappearances under the preliminary asylum procedure’ (Statistical Overview Migration and Asylum 2015, 2016, p. 12). The gross number of asylum seekers also includes persons who already have permission to be in Denmark, for example with a tourist or work visa or on grounds of family reunification. Second, there is a count of the number of spontaneous asylum seekers whose cases are actually processed in Denmark. This figure is the *number of registrations*.<sup>3</sup> According to the Danish Immigration Service, the number of registrations gives an indication of the ‘pressure on asylum case processing’ (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2002a, p. 8; our translation).

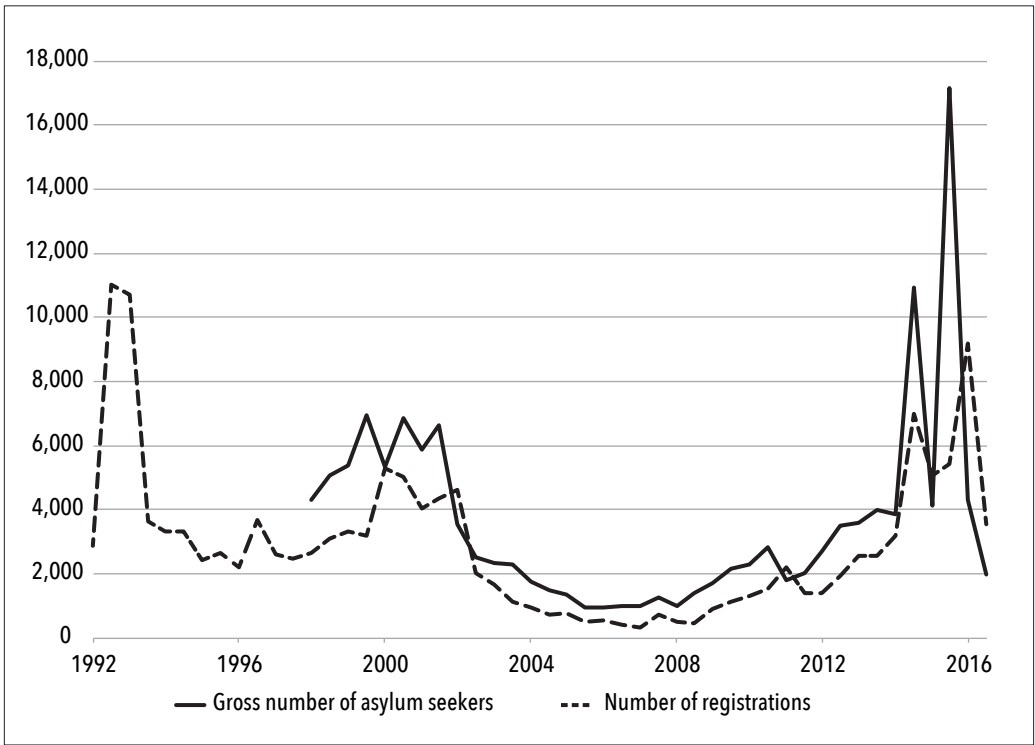
Figure 5.1 shows the gross number of asylum seekers and the number of registrations for the period 1992–2016. Both numbers are calculated according to the half-year period in which application for asylum was made. It is evident from the figure that there have been large variations in the number of spontaneous asylum seekers. There were two periods in particular where the numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers were very high: around the turn of the year 1992/1993, and around 2015–2016. The first of these peaks was due to the very large number of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the second is explained by asylum seekers from Syria. The variations are thus a reflection of major wars that took place in or close to Europe.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Danish terms are *bruttoansøgstallet* [gross number of asylum seekers] and *registreringstallet* [number of registrations]. The gross number of asylum seekers is equivalent to the number of asylum applicants as defined by EUROSTAT ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Asylum\\_applicant](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Asylum_applicant)) and reported in EUROSTAT statistics. However, small differences may be found between the figures given by EUROSTAT and the figures in this publication, as the figures we use from the Danish Immigrant Service include corrections to the data made after they were delivered to EUROSTAT.

Figure 5.1 clearly shows that the pattern of the gross number of asylum seekers slightly anticipates the pattern of the number of registrations, and that the former – as expected – is greater than the latter. The difference in date is due to the fact that it takes time to decide whether an individual asylum case is to be processed, and thus is to be registered. The higher level of the gross number of asylum seekers comes about because, firstly, under the Dublin Regulation Denmark sends more asylum seekers back to other countries than it receives (see Section 9.2), and secondly, because a number of asylum seekers withdraw their applications or simply vanish before the introductory phase of the asylum case processing can begin. For example, 29 percent of the 9,162<sup>4</sup> spontaneous asylum seekers (gross figure) who applied for asylum in 1998 ended their applications in the introductory phase and thus were not included in the number of registrations for that year (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2002b).

**Figure 5.1. The gross number of asylum seekers and the number of registrations, shown according to the half-year period in which application was made, 1992-2016**



Note: The gross number of asylum seekers includes all persons applying for asylum in Denmark, whereas the number of registrations only includes persons whose applications are accepted for processing in Denmark. The gross number of asylum seekers is available from 1998 onwards only.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service.

<sup>4</sup> In other calculations by the Immigration Service, including the numbers on which our Figure 5.1 is based, the gross number of asylum seekers for 1998 is a little higher, namely 9,370.

If one is seeking a reflection in the figures of the pictures imprinted on the memories of many Danes of fleeing Syrians wandering along Danish roads in the late summer of 2015, it is in the gross number of asylum seekers that one must look. Similarly, if one wishes to link the closing of the Swedish border and the subsequent reintroduction of border controls in Denmark and the EU agreement with Turkey with a sudden drop in the numbers of asylum seekers, it is again in the gross number of asylum seekers that one must search.

In the period 1992–94 a total of 34,882 asylum seekers were registered, while the corresponding figure for 2014–16 was 33,386. As a result of the increase in 2014–2016, then, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Denmark reached a level that was on a par with, but no higher than, the number associated with the war in the former Yugoslavia. Figure 5.1 also shows that the half-yearly number of registrations varied within the range of 2,000 to 4,000 in the period from the second half of 1993 up to and including the second half of 1999, within the range of around 4,000 to 5,000 in 2000 and 2001, and within a much lower range from the second half of 2002 until the second half of 2013. In the middle of this last period, the half-yearly total of registrations fell to below 500.

There are several possible causes for the fall in the total around 2002. First among the possible explanations is that the number of asylum seekers in the EU as a whole declined at this time, from around 370,000 annually in 2002 to under 200,000 in 2006 (Schultz-Nielsen, 2016). A second possible explanation is that Denmark introduced a number of new restrictions on access to asylum in 2002. These restrictions included removing the possibility of seeking asylum in Denmark from overseas, abolishing the concept of *de facto* refugees in Danish legislation, and making it easier to refuse to grant asylum in cases where the asylum seeker had close ties with some other country (see Section 9.3). Analyses of flows of refugees in Europe have shown that such restrictions can affect the number of asylum seekers (Hatton, 2016; Schultz-Nielsen, 2016).

## ***5.2 Recognised refugees and the percentage of asylum seekers recognised***

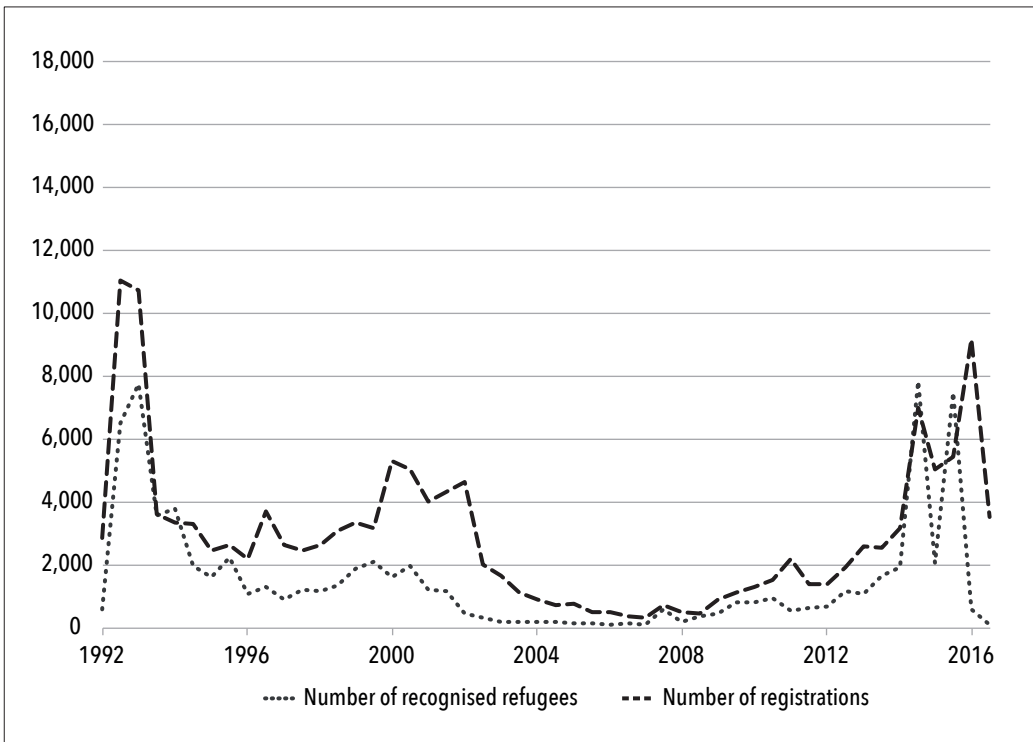
In the long term it is not the number of asylum seekers, but the number of recognised refugees, that is of primary interest for Denmark; it is they who will have to be integrated into, and who will probably live for many years in, Danish society. Next, therefore, we will focus on how many asylum seekers are eventually granted asylum and thus become recognised as refugees.

As explained in the description of the data (Section 4), we are concerned here with refugees who have not previously had permission to reside in Denmark or appeared in Danish registers. In addition, we have decided not to include quota refugees in the figures below. This is in part because Danish legislation and international agreements meant that the annual total of quota refugees was relatively stable up until 2016, and thus there was no relationship between the numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers and the number of quota refugees during the period examined. Furthermore, the characteristics of quota refugees were typically

different from those of spontaneous asylum seekers; for example, a majority of the quota refugees came from Myanmar and Indonesia (Schultz-Nielsen, 2016, p. 21).

Figure 5.2 builds on Figure 5.1, and again shows the number of registrations, but now with the addition of the number of recognised refugees (for the sake of clarity, the gross number of asylum seekers is omitted). The figure shows that even though not all asylum seekers are granted residence permits in Denmark, the number of recognised refugees closely follows the number of asylum seekers. Again, both sets of numbers are given according to the half-year period in which application for asylum was made.

**Figure 5.2. The number of registrations and the numbers of recognised refugees, shown according to the half-year period in which application for asylum was made, 1992-2016**



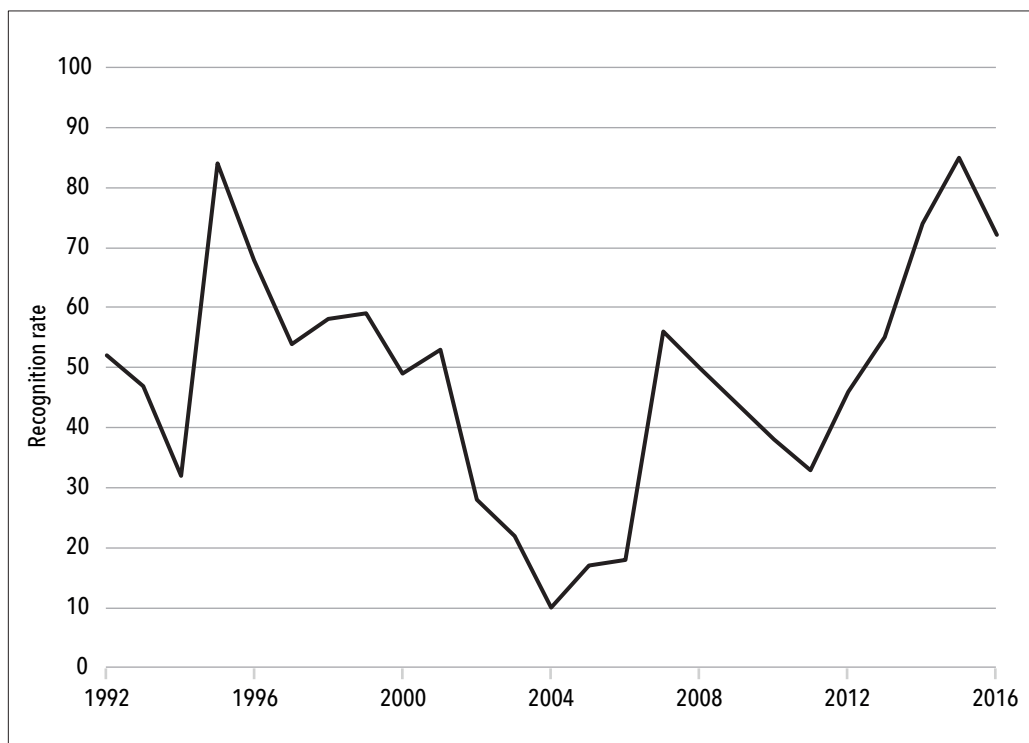
Note: The number of registrations only includes applications from asylum seekers who had their cases processed in Denmark. The following are omitted from the calculations of the number of recognised refugees: 1) refugees who appear in Danish civil registers *before* the date at which application for asylum was made; 2) refugees for whom no known valid date of application for asylum is available; and 3) quota refugees. The figures are based on 147,512 registered spontaneous asylum seekers and 78,000 recognised refugees.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

As is to be expected, the number of recognised refugees is less than the number of registrations. In some periods the difference between the two numbers was small; in others, larger.

The distance between the two numbers is an expression of the proportion of asylum seekers that had their claims for protection recognised. This proportion—termed the *recognition rate*—depends inter alia on which groups of refugees sought asylum in Denmark (for example, as defined by their country of origin), and on the level of danger in those countries as assessed by the Immigration Service.

**Figure 5.3. Average recognition rate in asylum cases, 1992–2016**



Notes: The recognition rate expresses the proportion of residence permits granted to refugees (Convention status, *de facto* protection status or temporary protection status) out of the total of asylum cases decided by the Danish Immigration Service. Cases which are re-examined by the Refugee Appeals Board are not included. Nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina are included in the recognition rate for 1996, and Iraqi interpreters are included in the recognition rate for 2007.

Sources: Indenrigsministeriet (1996 and 1999); Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/Udlændingestyrrelsen (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011); Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/Udlændingestyrelsen (2006); Udlændingestyrelsen (2002a, 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016b and 2017b).

Figure 5.3 shows the changes in the recognition rate over the period 1992–2016. The recognition rate ‘shows the proportion of permits given [...] in relation to the total number of decisions on asylum in asylum cases under consideration at the Immigration Service’ (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2016a, p. 15; our translation). The recognition rate is thus calculated on the basis of the date of the decision, equivalent to the date of issue of a residence permit, and not—as in Figures 5.1 and 5.2—on the basis of the date of application for asylum. It is evident from Figure 5.3 that there was great variation in the recognition rate throughout

the period. Most dramatically, the recognition rate dropped from 53 percent in 2001 to only 10 percent in 2004. This fall is also reflected in Figure 5.2, where the difference between the number of asylum seekers and the number of recognised refugees grew especially large at this point in time. The drop in the recognition rate occurred in conjunction with the many major changes in legislation in 2002 (see above, and also Section 9.3).

In addition, Figure 5.3 shows that the mean recognition rate was very high in 1995 and 2015 (84 and 85 percent for these years respectively). This is linked to the large rises in asylum seekers from specific countries in these periods, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina and Syria respectively.

### *5.3 Asylum applications and residence permits*

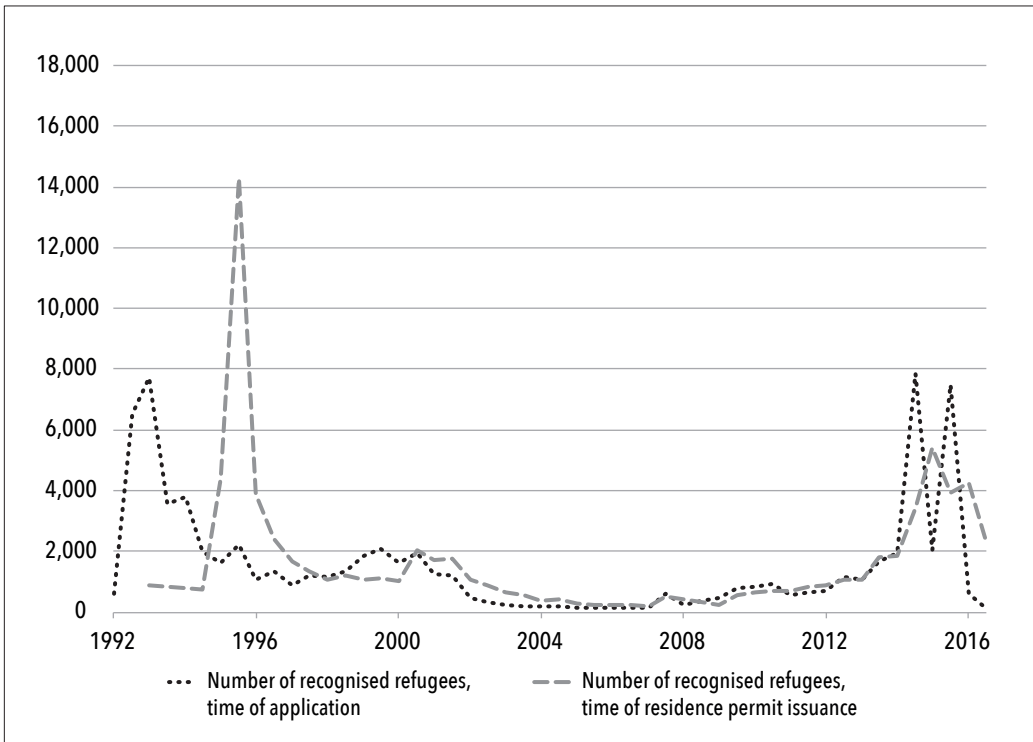
This paper has so far described the character of the flows of asylum seekers and refugees to Denmark when the point of measurement is the date of application for asylum. The application date, and thus the number of asylum seekers counted at a given date, is of particular interest to authorities and institutions that are concerned with asylum seekers, including the Immigration Service, the Red Cross and other providers of services to asylum seekers. In contrast, from the perspective of other actors in Danish society it is the date of the issue of a residence permit that is more relevant, as this marks the refugees' emergence into society, which is when work on integration can begin in earnest. Figure 5.4, therefore, shows the trends in the half-yearly total of recognised refugees, calculated for both the date of application and the date of issue of residence permit (again excluding quota refugees and limited to first-time applicants not previously appearing in Danish registers). Thus, the graph shows the same individuals, but at two different dates.

Once again, the large flows of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1996) and Syria (2015–2016) account for the most noticeable features in the figure. During the period 1995–1997, Denmark recognised 21,080 refugees who had not been registered in the country previously (excluding quota refugees). In 2014–2016 the number was 21,404 refugees (using the same criteria for inclusion). The two international crisis were thus of similar levels in terms of the numbers refugees in Denmark to which they led.

Figure 5.4 also reflects the special Danish legislation concerning asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. This legislation from 1992 and 1993 gave temporary residence permits to individuals from the former Yugoslavia (see Section 9.1). The legislation allowed the authorities to postpone the processing of refugees' asylum applications for up to two years (Indenrigsministeriet, 1996, p. 96). In January 1995 new legislation was introduced whereby the majority of the civil war refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina were granted temporary residence permits; these were to be made permanent if the refugees were still in need of protection after two years. The postponement of case processing and the change in the law in 1995 are reflected clearly in the distance between

the two first peaks in the graph around the years 1992–1993 and 1995. The first peak was when asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia arrived and registered, and the second was when a very large group of war refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (nearly 15,000 people) were granted residence permits during the second half of 1995. As will be shown later, the distance between the two peaks—from 1993 to 1995—gives an indication of how long the majority of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina had to wait to obtain their residence permits, i.e. around two years.

**Figure 5.4. Half-yearly totals of recognised refugees, shown according to the date of application for asylum and the date of issue of a residence permit, 1992-2016**



Note: The following are omitted from the calculations of the number of recognised refugees: 1) refugees who appear in Danish civil registers before the date at which application for asylum was made; and 2) quota refugees. Based on observations for 78,000 recognised refugees.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

## 6 Trends in waiting time for refugees—the broad lines

The issue of the length of time that asylum seekers wait for a decision in their cases arises from time to time in the public debate in Denmark. Often these discussions result from stories of how some asylum seekers have been kept waiting in the asylum system for an inhumanely long time. A notable point about the debate, however, is that until now there have been no figures available on average waiting times that have been both comparable over time and covering a lengthy period. In the following, then, we present what—to the best of our knowledge—is the first coherent picture of waiting times in the Danish asylum system for the period 1992–2016.

It has only been possible to obtain individual level data for recognised refugees, and in consequence it has not been possible to describe the trends in waiting times for asylum seekers whose cases ended in rejection. There can be little doubt, however, that the processing times for spontaneous asylum seekers whose cases are assessed as being admissible for processing but which end in rejection are longer than the processing times for applicants who are granted residence permits. This is because the cases of such asylum seekers are more difficult to decide and must sometimes be considered by several different bodies. In addition, after a decision to reject an application a significant further period of time normally passes before the applicant finally leaves Denmark.

This view of the facts is supported by a number of sources from the Immigration Service. For example, the Immigration Service Annual Report for 2016 notes that ‘rejections typically demand more time than acceptances, and it is calculated that a case that ends in rejection typically takes three times as much time as an equivalent case that results in a permit being issued’ (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2017a, p. 18); our translation). As far as the time for the actual processing of the case is concerned, it is stated in ‘Nøgletal på udlændingområdet’ (Key figures relating to foreign nationals) for 2001 and 2002 that the mean case processing times for granting permits were 112, 133 and 191 days<sup>5</sup> in 1998, 2000 and 2002 respectively, while they were 156, 190 and 224 days respectively for the same years in cases which ended in rejection of the applications. The mean total times spent in the asylum system for people who finally left Denmark were 318, 264 and 551 days respectively—much longer than the actual case processing times (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2002a, pp. 18-19; Udlændingestyrelsen, 2003a, pp. 21-22).

---

<sup>5</sup> Only spontaneous asylum seekers registered after January 1996 are included in these and the subsequent figures in this section concerning case processing times. The first figures include only the time from when the Immigration Service received a case to when it took a decision. The time that passed before a decision was made on whether to process an asylum case in Denmark, and processing times with other authorities, such as the police or the Refugee Appeals Board, are not included. Case processing times for Convention and *de facto* refugees are included, but not times for other categories of refugees, including those granted asylum on humanitarian grounds. The figures are weighted averages.

Note that these figures are not comparable with other calculations of waiting times in the asylum system given in this report, because of significant differences in the methods of calculation. One important difference is that the figures above represent case processing times that exclude waiting time prior to registration (see footnote 6).

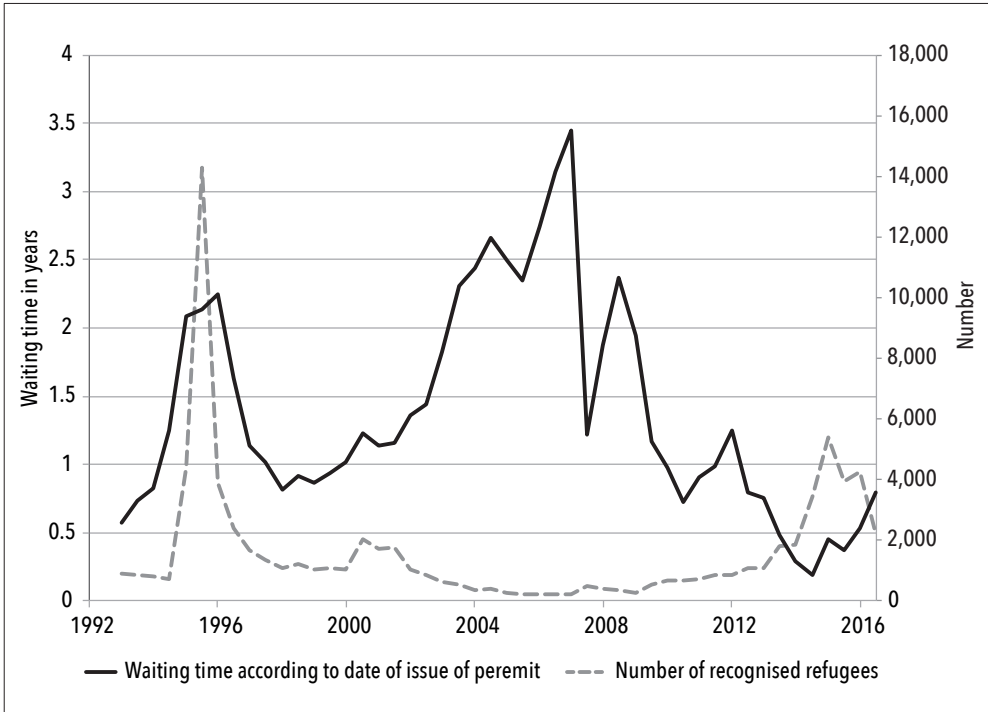
### *6.1 Waiting time for refugees in the Danish asylum system, 1993–2016*

Figure 6.1 shows the mean waiting times in years for recognised refugees and, as in Figure 5.4, the numbers of recognised refugees, both calculated for the half-year period in which the refugees were granted a residence permit. As previously, only refugees with refugee status as their first observed grounds for permission to reside in Denmark and who were not registered in the country before applying for asylum are included in the calculations. In addition, quota refugees are not taken into account in calculating waiting times, since they did not have to wait within the Danish asylum system.

Figure 6.1 shows that the mean waiting time varied greatly throughout the period (waiting times are read on the y axis on the left-hand side of the graph). At the start of the period, coinciding with the processing of a large number of cases of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia, waiting times increased to the very high level of over two years for the more than 14,000 refugees who received their residence permits in the second half of 1995. Waiting times then fell during the period up until 2000, in parallel with the decline in the number of recognised refugees, which finished at a level of around 1,100 people half-yearly in the period 1998–2000. Refugees who obtained their residence permits in this period waited around one year on average. From 2002, when many major changes in legislation came into effect (see above and Section 9.3), the number of recognised refugees and the length of waiting times no longer varied in parallel. While the number of recognised refugees fell to an historically low level, mean waiting times rose to an historical high for those who were finally granted residence. The few refugees in Denmark who got through the asylum process successfully during the period from the second half of 2003 to the first half of 2007 had waited for around two and a half years on average, and in the case of those emerging from the system in the first half of 2007, waiting time had been over three years.

Finally, in the last part of the analysis period from 2007–2016, a significant fall occurred in the mean waiting times. The refugees who were given residence permits from between the second half of 2013 and the first half of 2016 had waited in the asylum system for around six months or less on average. This was despite the fact that, as Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show, there had been a very large increase in the number of asylum seekers.

**Figure 6.1. Half-yearly numbers of recognised refugees, and mean waiting times in the asylum system for recognised refugees, shown according to the date of issue of a residence permit , 1993–2016**

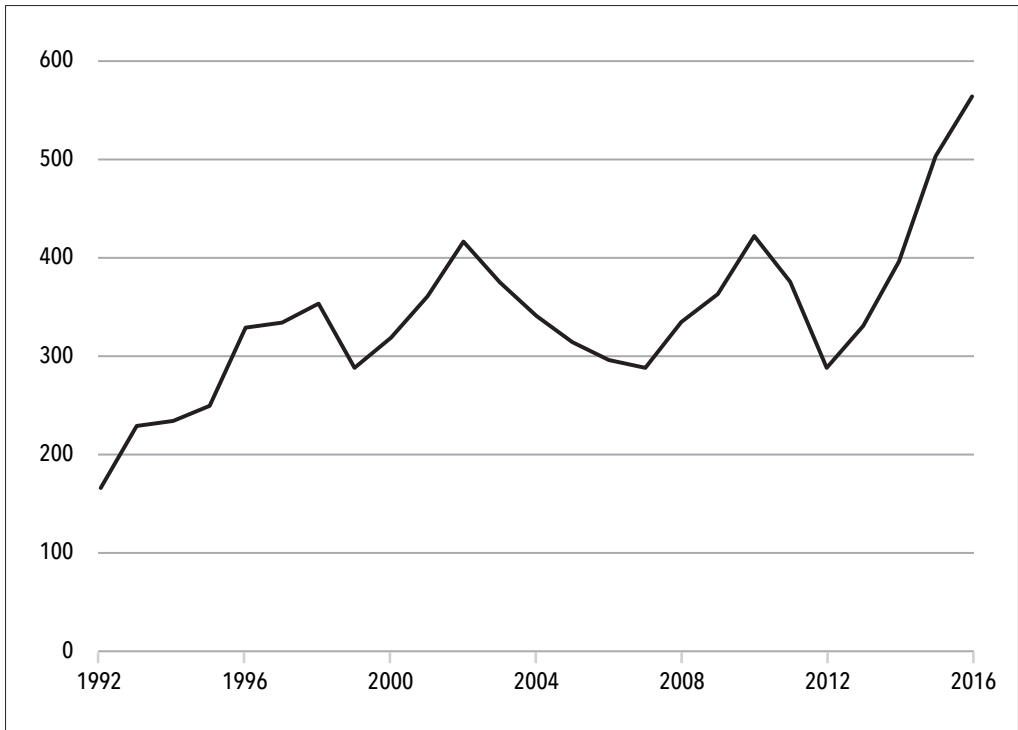


Notes: Only includes individuals who were not recorded in Danish civil registers prior to applying for asylum. Quota refugees are not included. The figure is based on information on 78,000 recognised refugees.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

There are several explanations for the short waiting times in the last period observed. First, the refugees coming to Denmark were dominated by asylum seekers from just one country of origin, namely Syria. Syrians made up 35 percent of all spontaneous asylum seekers (gross figure) in 2012–2016 and were thus clearly the largest group (the second largest were Afghans, according to our own calculations based on ‘Tal og Fakta 2016’ (Figures and facts, 2016) (Udlændingestyrelsen, 2017b). Second, in the case of the Syrians there was little doubt that they had a legitimate claim on protection and could not be sent back to their home country. This was reflected in a high mean recognition percentage, and a very high mean recognition percentage specifically for Syrians (96–99 percent in the years 2013–2016; see Figures 5.3 and 6.7). Case processing for this group of asylum seekers was probably not as demanding as for others. Finally, resources for the Immigration Service were increased. In terms of personnel, more than 500 person-years were worked annually in the Immigration Service in 2015 and 2016, whereas the total was between 300 and 400 annually in 1996–2012 (Figure 6.2). However, these person-years were worked in the whole of the Immigration Service and not just the asylum section, and thus variations in person-years worked were not exclusively related to the use of resources on asylum cases.

**Figure 6.2. Number of person-years worked annually in the Danish Immigration Service, 1992-2016**



Note: For the years 1993–1997 the figures are taken from Chapter II, 'Teknologi og ressourcer' (Technology and resources), Figure 2 in Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsberetning 1998 (Danish Immigration Service Annual Report for 1998).

Sources: Udlændingestyrelsen (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012); Udlændingestyrelsen (1999, 2003b, 2004b, 2005b, 2006, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b, 2016c and 2017c).

Waiting times, and the composition of refugee categories, can also be presented by examining the means in different periods. Table 6.1 thus shows how the refugees accepted by Denmark in the period 1992–2016 are distributed on a number of background variables. Refugees are divided up according to the date of issue of their residence permits, and refugees arriving in a given period are classed as a cohort. Again, only refugees who had not been registered in Denmark before the date at which they first sought asylum are included.

As can be seen from the two rows in the table with numbers of individuals, the numbers of refugees with measurable waiting times are lower than the total number of refugees described in the table. This is primarily due, as mentioned previously, to the fact that it is impossible to calculate waiting times for quota refugees, or—in certain cases—to the lack of information about date of arrival, date of issue of a residence permit, or date of birth (see also Appendix 1). The table places figures on the patterns that have already been described. For example, it shows that only around 5,000 refugees (including quota refugees) were granted recognition in each of the periods 2002–2006 and 2007–2011, while five to six times as many individuals were recognised as refugees in periods when there were many

asylum seekers. The table also shows that people from Bosnia and Herzegovina made up 55.6 percent of all recognised refugees for the period 1993–1996, while nearly 2/3 (63.6 percent) of all recognised refugees in 2012–2016 were Syrians.

The table also shows how the distribution of different grounds for granting refugee status has changed over the period. In 1993–1996 recognised refugees were dominated by people with *de facto* refugee status (63.7 percent), while Convention refugees were clearly the largest group in 2012–2016 (63.9 percent). After the abolition of the *de facto* concept in Danish legislation, people granted refugee status on humanitarian and other grounds (‘Other grounds’ in the table) made up the exceptionally high proportion of nearly 28 percent of all recognised refugees in 2002–2006. However, since the total number of recognised refugees was also very low in this period, the large proportion granted residence on ‘Other grounds’ was not the result of the group having grown numerically larger, but rather an indication that there were very few refugees afforded Convention or protection status in this period (see Section 6.2 and Figure 6.4).

Other patterns of interest concern changes in the age and sex distribution of the refugees. Sex ratio changed from an almost equal distribution of males and females among recognised refugees in 1993–96 to a clear majority of males (68 percent) in 2012–2016. The almost equal distribution of the sexes in the 1993–1996 cohort may indicate that many of the refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived as whole families, while this was not true to the same extent for later cohorts. If instead of considering only refugees themselves we examine the sex distribution among both refugees and family reunification immigrants related to refugees, we find that previous studies have shown that the larger proportion of men among later cohorts is in part balanced by a larger proportion of women among immigrants arriving in connection with family reunification with refugees (Schultz-Nielsen, 2017).

With regard to age on arrival, the mean age altered very little over the period studied, being between 24 and 26 years throughout. This fairly constant mean age, however, conceals changes in the distribution of the various age groups. Thus, the proportion of children aged between 0 and 12 years fell from 26.5 percent in the 1993–1996 cohort to only 15.7 percent in the 2012–2016 cohort. The proportion of refugees aged over 50 almost halved, from 9.1 percent at the start of the period to 4.9 percent at the end. It follows, therefore, that the age groups in the middle range must have constituted a larger proportion of the recognised refugees at the end of the period; and the table does indeed show that the proportions of both the 18–25 and the 25–35 age groups rose by eight to nine percentage points from the first to the last cohorts. In the 2007–2011 cohort the 12–18 years age group made up a larger percentage than previously of the total of recognised refugees—14 percent, as opposed to around 9 percent in other periods. However, this proportion decreased once more in the 2012–2016 cohort.

**Table 6.1 Demographic characteristics (percentage distributions and mean ages), and mean and median waiting times in the asylum system for recognised refugees in the period 1993–2016, by period in which the residence permit was issued**

Cohort	1993–1996	1997–2001	2002–2006	2007–2011	2012–2016	All years
Males	54.6%	62.7%	58.6%	64.0%	68.5%	61.6%
Mean arrival age	26.0 yrs	26.2 yrs	24.5 yrs	24.0 yrs	26.4 yrs	25.9 yrs
Arrival age group						
0–12 years	26.5%	24.1%	26.8%	21.5%	15.7%	22.3%
12–18 years	9.4%	8.5%	11.1%	14.1%	8.7%	9.5%
18–25 years	11.6%	11.1%	11.3%	18.5%	20.5%	14.8%
25–35 years	23.7%	28.9%	26.4%	26.3%	32.0%	27.7%
35–50 years	19.7%	19.7%	18.7%	15.1%	18.2%	18.8%
+50 years	9.1%	7.7%	5.6%	4.4%	4.9%	6.9%
Country of origin						
Afghanistan	2.0%	17.2%	9.8%	17.8%	3.9%	7.6%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	55.6%	9.8%	7.7%	0.9%	0.1%	21.0%
Iraq	7.9%	30.8%	11.0%	12.4%	0.7%	10.9%
Iran	2.2%	4.3%	8.3%	9.6%	4.6%	4.5%
Somalia	11.5%	12.1%	6.6%	1.2%	4.6%	8.2%
Syria	0.6%	1.0%	2.1%	14.3%	63.6%	21.2%
Other	20.1%	24.8%	54.5%	43.8%	22.6%	26.7%
Residence permit						
Convention	19.9%	21.0%	16.3%	30.0%	63.9%	34.1%
<i>De facto</i> , etc.	63.7%	51.1%	25.8%	29.4%	28.5%	44.4%
Quota	6.2%	12.8%	30.2%	29.6%	6.5%	11.6%
Other grounds	10.2%	15.1%	27.7%	11.0%	1.1%	9.9%
Number	30,568	18,461	7,841	7,697	28,417	92,984
Mean waiting time (days)	713	384	726	469	179	462
Median waiting time (days)	809	314	562	255	133	315
Number with available information on waiting time	28,283	13,978	4,772	5,119	25,848	78,000

Notes: The table only includes refugees who were not recorded in the registers at Statistics Denmark before the date on which they applied for asylum. In addition, refugees with imputed values for the grounds for their residence permits are not included.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

Finally, Table 6.1 shows the previously discussed decline in mean waiting time. While refugees whose cases were decided in 1993–1996 had waited for 713 days on average, those who entered Danish society in 2012–2016 had only waited a mean of 179 days from when they applied for asylum to when they received a residence permit. The table also gives the

median waiting times. The median is a measure of the value that divides the people in a period into two equally sized groups, and is thus a better expression of the time that the majority of people waited in a given period, especially if the distribution of waiting times is skewed, so that some people wait a very long or a very short time. As the table shows, the median was above the mean waiting time in 1993–1996 (809 days as opposed to 713), and below the mean in 2012–2016 (133 days as against 179). This means that many refugees experienced a wait of over two years in the first of these periods and under five months in the second.

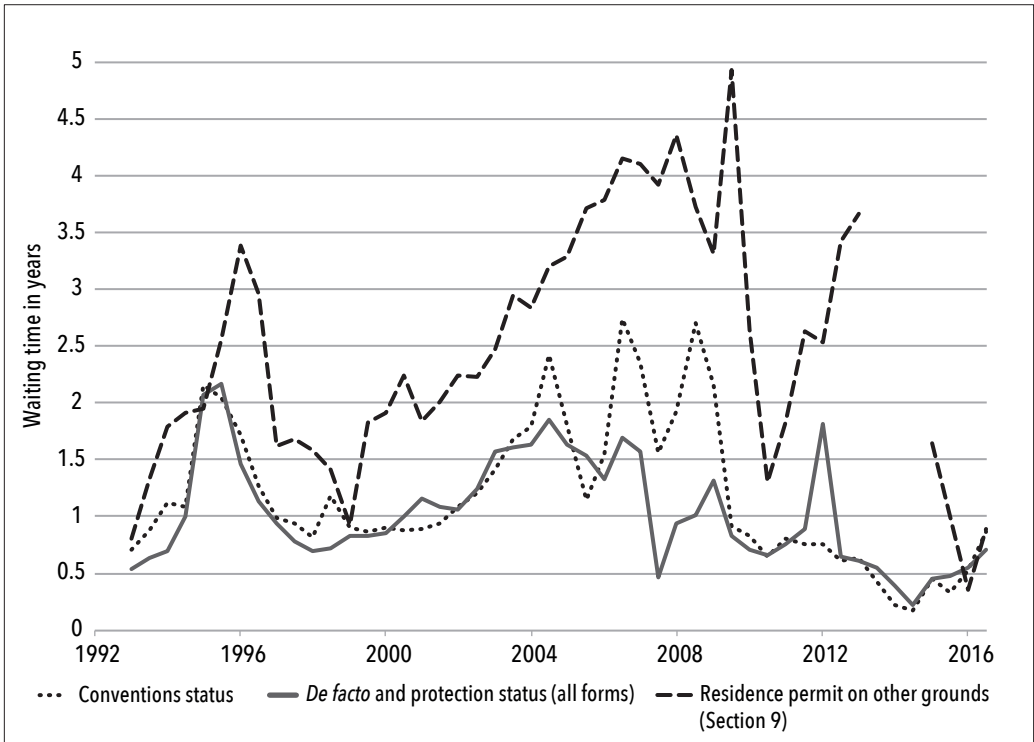
## 6.2 *Waiting times for refugees: breakdown by status and country of origin*

Overall, the time that refugees waited for a decision in their asylum cases fell over the years 1992–2016, although with an increase around the year 2002. However, the mean waiting time conceals large differences between different groups. As has already been discussed, waiting time varies according to country of origin, but it is also linked to the grounds for residence—refugee status—that the refugees are finally granted. Refugee status indicates whether refugees have received permission to live in Denmark because they are covered by the UN Refugee Convention (Convention status) on the basis of their need for protection, for instance if they cannot return to their country of origin because of war there (*de facto*/protection/ temporary protection status), or on humanitarian or other grounds. In the following, waiting times are first broken down by grounds for residence permit/ status. After this, trends are examined for refugees from the countries of origin from which Denmark has received the most refugees during the analysis period, of which the largest groups are refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Syria, followed by refugees from Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq. Finally, we present the mean waiting times and their distributions for refugees from the countries of origin with the largest numbers.

Figure 6.3 shows the waiting times for individuals with the three grounds for being granted residence listed above, i.e. 1) Convention status, 2) protection status (including *de facto* and temporary protection status) and 3) other grounds. The graph shows that trends in the mean waiting times for asylum seekers who are finally granted Convention or protection status largely run in parallel. It is the refugees in the group ‘Other grounds for residence’ who wait longest in the asylum system. This group covers people with various grounds for being granted residence: refugees granted residence under Section 9, Subsection 5 of the Aliens Act (which include people from the former Yugoslavia) make up 27 percent of them; people granted residence on humanitarian grounds account for another 17 percent; while refugees with unknown grounds for residence beyond being covered by Section 9 constitute a further 34 percent. One-third of the refugees in the category ‘Other grounds for residence’ had their cases decided by a government ministry. Several different bodies were thus involved in the cases of many of these refugees, and it is therefore probable that the cases were harder to decide than those that resulted in permission for residence being granted under Section 7 (Convention or protection status). The involvement of multiple

authorities may contribute to explaining the longer waiting times in the asylum system for people granted residence under Section 9. Figure 6.3 indicates that it was the waiting times for people with other grounds for residence (Section 9) which raised the mean waiting times in the period around 2002–2007.

**Figure 6.3. Half-yearly mean waiting times, calculated according to the date of issue of a residence permit; by refugee status. 1992-2016**



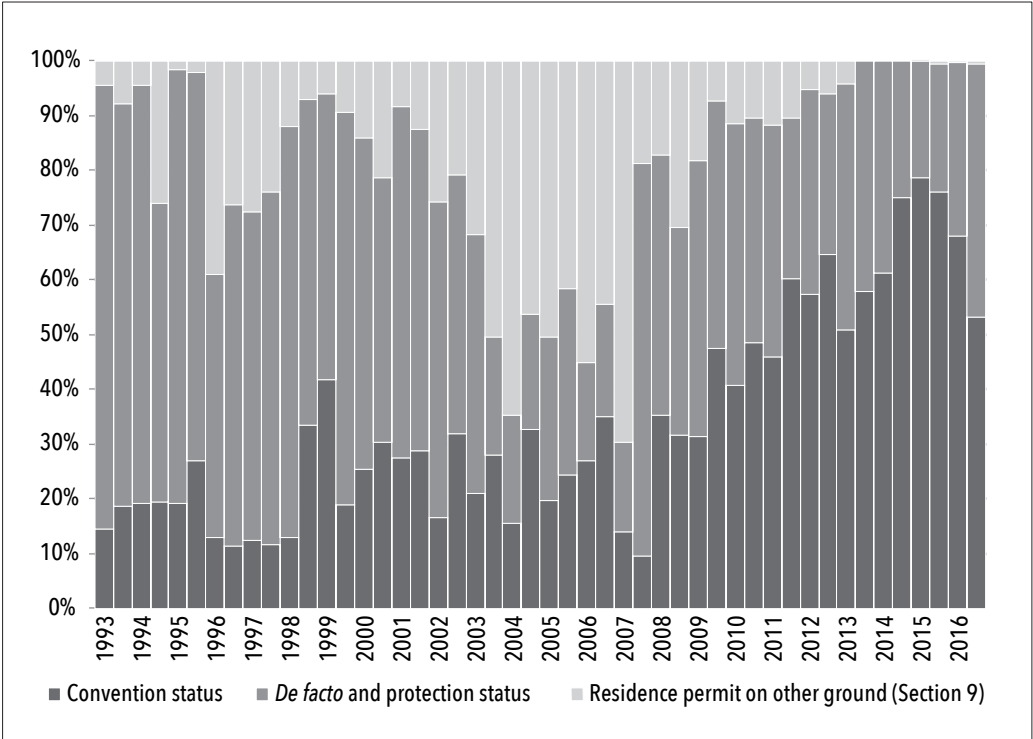
Notes: The figure only includes individuals who were not recorded in Danish civil registers prior to applying for asylum. Quota refugees are excluded. The graph does not show values where the calculation of the mean waiting time is based on fewer than ten observations.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

In Figure 6.4 we examine more closely the distribution of the different types of basis for a residence permit: Convention status, *de facto* and protection status, and ‘Other grounds’. Quota refugees are not included. Like the number of spontaneous refugees, the number of recognised refugees, and the mean waiting time, the distribution of grounds for residence changed after 2002. As Table 6.1 also shows, the proportion of refugees granted residence on ‘other grounds’ changed greatly in the period 2003–2008. From having made up between 10 and 30 percent, the proportion increased to over 50 percent (see Figure 6.4). In the first half-year periods of 2004 and 2007 there were approximately seven out of ten of all recognised refugees without previous registration in Denmark who were granted refugee status on ‘other grounds’. As mentioned previously, however, it is important to emphasise

that the rise in the proportion of refugees granted residence on ‘other grounds’ is not an indication that the number of refugees granted this status also rose. Refugee status granted on ‘other grounds’ increased proportionately because there were many fewer refugees granted Convention or protection status in the years 2002–2012.

**Figure 6.4. Distribution of types of refugee status granted to recognised refugees in the period 1993-2016**



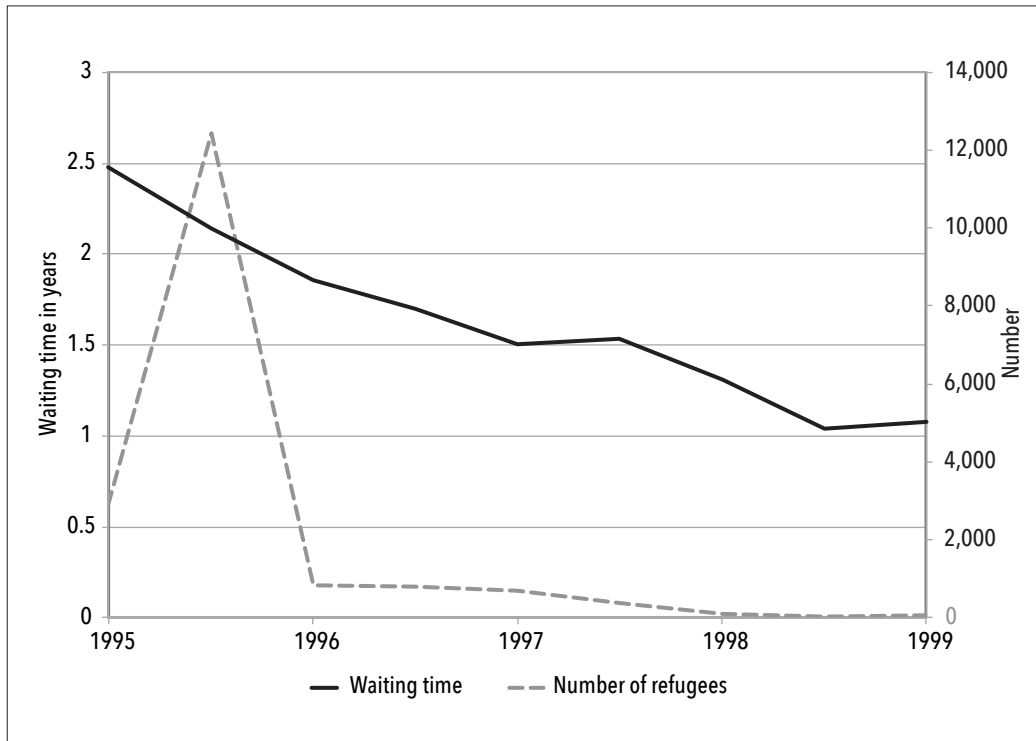
Notes: Only includes individuals not found in Danish registers before they applied for asylum. Quota refugees are not included.  
 Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

It is a recurring feature found in this report that asylum seekers and refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Syria stand out because of their large numbers. In the following, therefore, a closer examination is made of the waiting times and numbers of recognised refugees for these two groups.

Figure 6.5 shows the mean waiting times for and numbers of recognised refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period 1995–1999, by date of issue of residence permit (once again, only those recognised refugees are included who had never been registered in Denmark before making their applications for asylum). It can be clearly seen that waiting times fell steadily through the period for this group. This steady fall in waiting time was a result of the legislation regarding people from the former Yugoslavia and from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first of these pieces of legislation put on hold the processing of asylum appli-

cations for people from the former Yugoslavia (Acts of Parliament of November 1992 and June 1993). The latter piece of legislation was passed over two years later (January 1995), and meant that all asylum seekers from Bosnia and Herzegovina received their residence permits as quickly as the asylum system could process their cases (see Section 9.1). These pieces of legislation meant that those people who fled early from the civil war in Yugoslavia waited much longer in the Danish asylum system than those who arrived later. The difference in the mean waiting time was up to one and a half years.

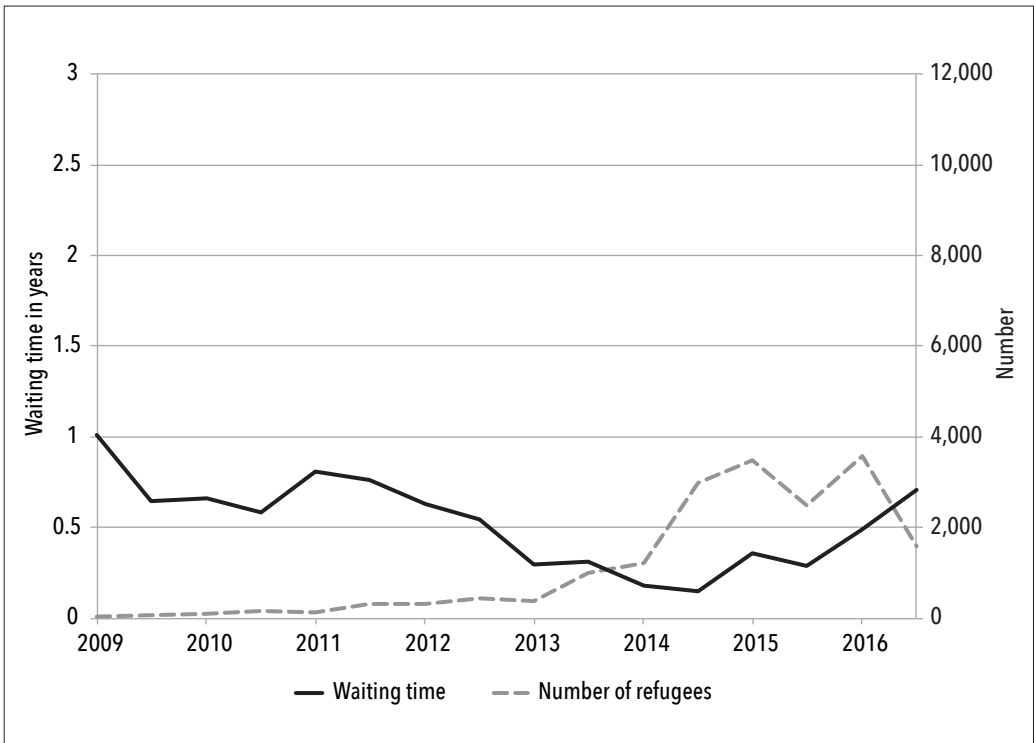
**Figure 6.5. Mean waiting times and numbers of recognised refugees per half year, by date of issue of a residence permit. Individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995-1999**



Note: Only includes individuals not found in Danish registers before they applied for asylum.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

**Figure 6.6. Mean waiting times and numbers of recognised refugees per half year, by date of issue of a residence permit. Individuals from Syria, 2009-2016**



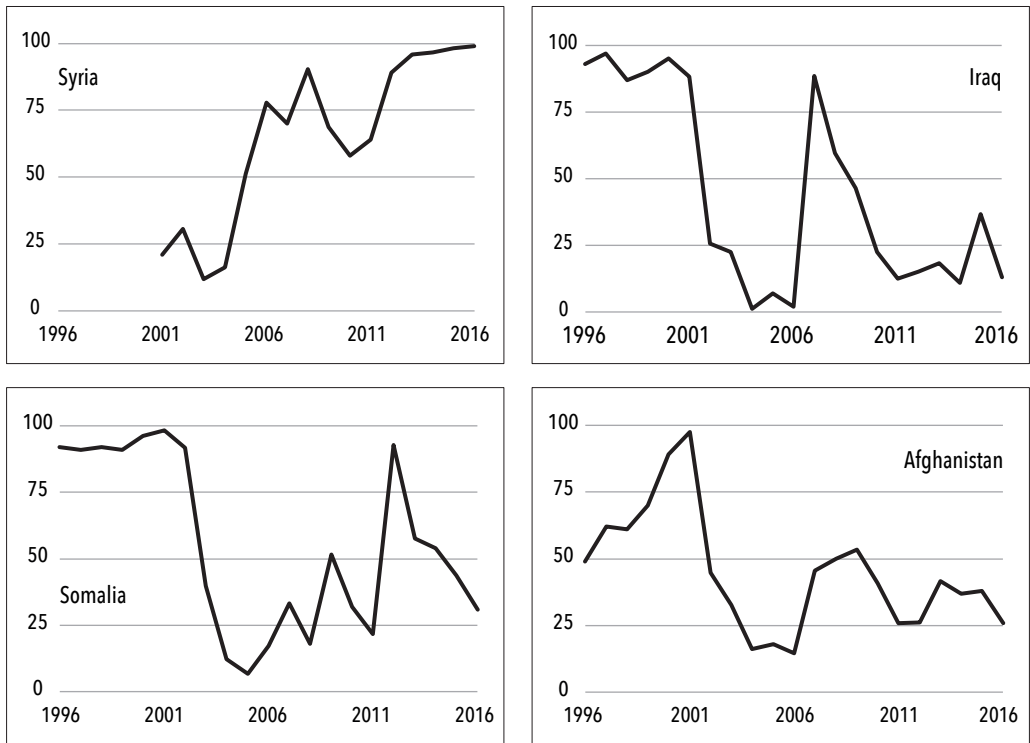
Note: Only includes individuals not found in Danish registers before they applied for asylum.  
 Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

Figure 6.6 shows the waiting times and numbers of recognised refugees for individuals from Syria. In terms purely of numbers, the refugee inflows to Denmark from Syria and from Bosnia and Herzegovina resemble on another. In the period 1995–1998, a total of 18,327 people from Bosnia and Herzegovina were given Danish residence permits, the greatest number of these permits by far being issued in the second half of 1995. Similarly, 17,448 refugees from Syria were granted Danish residence permits during the years 2013–2016. The two refugee crises were thus similar in terms of their size.<sup>6</sup> The refugees from Syria arrived and were given recognition over a longer period than those from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who arrived over the course of a very short time, and who were nearly all granted refugee status at the same time.

<sup>6</sup> The VAN8K statistics bank shows that 514 individuals from Syria immigrated to Denmark with asylum as the basis for granting their residence permits in the first two quarters of 2017. Even though some of these people may have had other grounds for residence in Denmark before being granted asylum, the figures do demonstrate that refugees from Syria were still being recognised at that date.

On the other hand, the pictures with regard to waiting times are very different. For example, the mean waiting time was much lower for the Syrian refugees, being as little as two to three months in the middle of 2014. Their waiting times did rise, however, towards the end of 2016, though never to a level that approached that of the time the people from Bosnia and Herzegovina waited in the 1990s. As has already been touched upon, the short waiting time was associated with the fact that the recognition rate for Syrians was very high in the years 2015–2016 (almost 100 percent). This is illustrated in Figure 6.7, which shows the recognition rates for four of the countries from which the most refugees came to Denmark after 1997, namely Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan.

**Figure 6.7. Recognition rates for spontaneous asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq, 1996–2016. Percentages.**



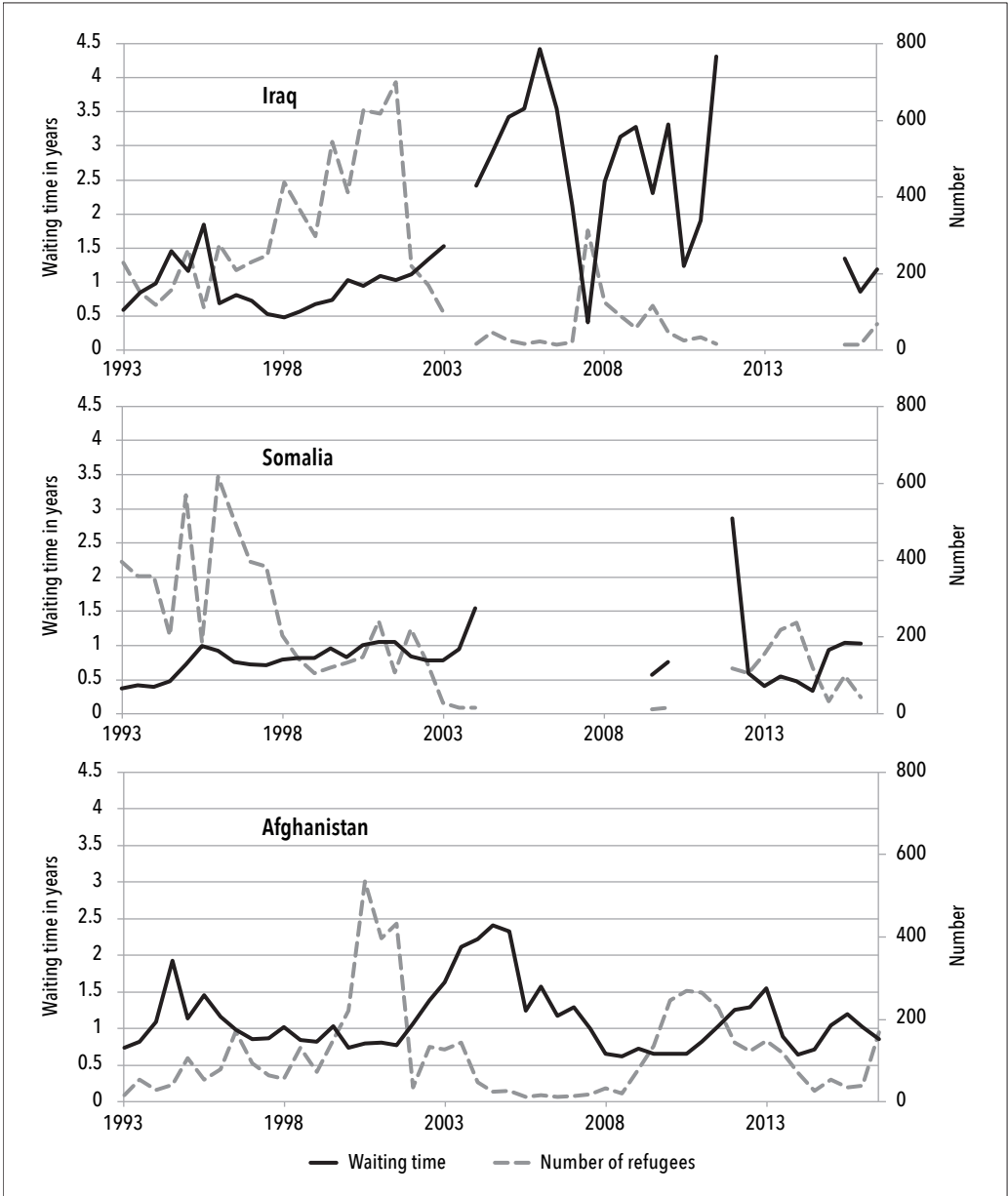
Sources: Indenrigsministeriet (1996 and 1999); Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/Udlændingestyrelsen (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011); Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingestyrelsen (2006); Udlændingestyrelsen (2002a, 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016b and 2017b).

Figure 6.7 shows that the recognition rates were very high for asylum seekers from Iraq and Somalia in the years 1996–2001, and rather less for applicants from Afghanistan. In the period following the abolition of the *de facto* concept and the other changes in Danish legislation mentioned above, the recognition rates fell for all the four countries shown in the figure—Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan—and in 2004 they reached a low point,

just as was the case for the overall recognition rate. In fact, only nine asylum seekers from Iraq were granted residence permits out of a total of 630 from that country whose cases were decided in 2004 and 2006 (Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjeneste, 2007, 2008; Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingestyrelsen, 2006; Udlændingestyrelsen, 2005a). In 2007 the recognition rate for Iraqis rose to 88 percent. This was probably due to the fact that 308 Iraqi interpreters were granted residence permits in that year (Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjeneste, 2008). Figure 6.8 shows the numbers of recognised refugees from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, and their waiting times. Once again, a clear shift is visible around 2002. The number of recognised refugees from all three countries fell, and the waiting times increased for the few refugees who were granted residence permits in the period 2003–2008. The figure also shows that waiting times varied considerably. This is because the calculations for large parts of the period are based on very small numbers of individuals (the graph line is not shown at all when the calculations are based on fewer than 10 individuals).

The graph lines for the Iraqis are the most remarkable. First, as the figure shows, there were some groups of Iraqi refugees who waited over four years for their cases to be settled—and, note, that was only in those cases that ended in a decision to grant a residence permit. Second, the mean waiting time for Iraqis fell dramatically from over two years in the first half of 2007 to under six months in the second half of that year. This fall in waiting time coincided with a rise in the recognition rate for Iraqis (see Figure 6.7) and with the granting of residence permits to over 300 Iraqi interpreters (see above). Thus, while many Iraqi asylum seekers waited a very long time for decisions in their cases between 2003 and 2013, the interpreters had much shorter waits.

**Figure 6.8. Half-yearly mean waiting times for, and numbers of, recognised refugees from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, calculated on the basis of dates of issue of residence permits**



Notes: Only includes individuals not found in registers at Statistics Denmark before they applied for asylum. The graph lines are not shown if fewer than ten refugees from the relevant country of origin received residence permits in the half-year period in question.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Danish registers.

Table 6.2 shows the mean waiting times for refugees from selected countries of origin. Figure 6.8 might seem to suggest that asylum seekers from Iraq were among those who waited longest on average in the Danish asylum system. But as Table 6.2 shows, that was not the case. Over the entire period 1993–2016, it was refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina that waited longest. The 19,066 people from that country for whom waiting times are known and whose refugee status was the first known basis for residence in Denmark waited on average for more than 767 days, i.e. more than two years. The 7,642 refugees from Iraq who obtained residence permits within the analysis period waited only around half as long on average, 386 days. Waiting times for Iraqis did approach those for people from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the periods 2002–2006 and 2007–2011, when they were 639 and 668 days respectively. However, there were relatively few Iraqis whose cases were held up in the asylum system during these periods, which explains why their extended waiting times did not have a greater effect on the average waiting time for Iraqis for the whole period.

**Table 6.2 Descriptive statistics for waiting times, by country of origin and cohort**

Country of origin	Statistic	1993–1996	1997–2001	2002–2006	2007–2011	2012–2016	All years
Afghanistan	Mean	415	299	641	281	403	360
	N	549	2,152	576	1,312	928	5,517
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mean	790	524	752			767
	N	16,949	1,512	520			19,066
Iraq	Mean	356	304	639	668	507	386
	N	1,514	4,483	635	842	168	7,642
Somalia	Mean	239	307	330		297	277
	N	3,192	1,985	449		1,136	6,832
Syria	Mean	323	343	488	280	133	146
	N	167	158	130	901	17,450	18,806

Note: If fewer than 100 persons from a given country and in a given cohort received residence permits, the statistics for them are excluded.

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark.

Refugees from Syria, who mainly arrived during the period 2012–2016, had the shortest mean waiting time of refugees from the countries of origin listed, only 146 days. The Somalis were another group who waited for less than a year on average, and that throughout the entire period. They were also the only national group among those listed for whom waiting time did not increase dramatically from the period 1997–2001 to the period 2002–2006. While waiting times for refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq more than doubled from the period 1997–2001 to the period 2002–2006, the mean waiting time for Somalis increased by only 23 days, from 307 to 330 days.

## 7 Waiting times in Norway—and a single statistic for Switzerland

Just as it has been difficult to find accessible sources of information for trends in the mean waiting time for asylum seekers in Denmark, so information from other countries on waiting times, and in particular on trends in waiting times, is also limited. Nevertheless, we have found some representative figures for recognised refugees from Norway, and also a single figure for a sub-group of the recognised refugees in Switzerland. Since it is not possible to recalculate the foreign data, the Danish data for recognised refugees have been recalculated to match the foreign data as far as possible. Despite great efforts to make the Danish figures comparable with those from foreign sources, however, the comparisons can only be presented with a strong note of caution. It is entirely conceivable that there are differences between the Danish and foreign situations, for example in the delineation of concepts and in practice in administration and registration, which it has not been possible to take into account.

The most detailed and accessible information that we have found comes from Norway. The report entitled ‘Opphold i asylmottak’ (Residence in the asylum reception system) (Weiss et al., 2017) describes conditions for refugees who arrived in the Norwegian asylum centre during the period 2005–2010, and who were settled by 2015 at the latest. This Norwegian study includes only refugees who had reached 18 years of age by the end of 2015 (Weiss et al., 2017a, p. 29), and consequently only people born before 1998 are included in the Danish data for comparison. The mean waiting times are shown for both countries, and it has been decided to calculate the mean waiting times for the four countries of origin from which many refugees have come to both Denmark and Norway.

The Norwegian figures divide waiting time into a) the time taken to decide the case (from the date of application for asylum to the date of issuing a residence permit) and b) the time that passes before the refugee is settled in a municipality. For Denmark, there are no direct measurements available of the length of time from the issuing of a residence permit to the refugee being settled in a new home. However, the Danish registers do contain the date when a refugee is registered for the first time in their new municipality of residence. This date of registration is used here to calculate an approximation of the period from the issue of a residence permit to settlement in a permanent place of residence.

Table 7.1 shows the mean waiting times in Denmark and Norway. The first point to note from the table is that while Denmark recognised 4,059 refugees not previously recorded in the Danish registers before they applied for asylum during the period 2005–2015, Norway recognised 18,904 refugees during the same period. It is not clear whether the Norwegian figure includes any refugees that had resided in Norway before seeking asylum. However, even with that reservation, there is no doubt that Norway recognised many more refugees than Denmark in the period 2005–2015.

The second point that emerges from the table is that the mean waiting time until permission to reside was granted did not differ greatly between the two countries. Refugees waited on average 416 days in Norway and 376 days in Denmark. Furthermore, the median waiting time was virtually the same (282 days in Norway and 280 in Denmark). On the other hand, the time from when refugees received a residence permit until they were settled in new homes was very different in the two countries. In Denmark, it was on average only 40 days from the date of issue of the residence permit to the date of registration in a Danish municipality. In Norway, it took more than six months (206 days) from the issue of a residence permit to settlement. The difference between Norway and Denmark in this respect is probably connected to the fact that in Denmark, it is the Immigration Service that decides on the basis of quotas where refugees should live, whereas Norwegian municipalities can decide for themselves how many refugees they will accept, and from which categories (Departementenes sikkerhets- og serviceorganisasjon Informasjonsforvaltning, 2017, pp. 47-49).<sup>7</sup>

It is also evident from Table 7.1 that the mean waiting time from seeking asylum to the issue of a residence permit varied considerably depending on the country of origin, and that this variation was not the same for Denmark and Norway. For example, while refugees from Afghanistan waited for similar lengths of time in the two countries, people from Somalia waited 621 days in Denmark as against 359 days in Norway. Furthermore, many fewer refugees from Somalia were recognised in Denmark than in Norway (138 as against 3,177).<sup>8</sup> The difference in waiting times might be an indication that the evaluations of how dangerous it would be to send asylum seekers back to Somalia were different in Denmark and Norway during the analysis period.

Waiting times for asylum seekers from Iran differed as well, but in this case the waiting time was approximately twice as long in Norway as in Denmark (735 days as opposed to 364). However, the median waiting time for Iranian asylum seekers in Norway was considerably less than 735 days, which suggests that the cases of a small number of the Iranian asylum seekers in Norway caused an increase in the mean. The numbers of Iranian asylum seekers who received residence permits in Norway and Denmark were very similar in the analysis period (661 and 644).

---

<sup>7</sup> The Danish quotas are calculated, first, on the basis of an estimate of how many refugees will arrive in the country in the following year, and second, on the basis of a distribution key, which is fixed according to the size of the population of each municipality, and the proportions in the population of immigrants, refugees and members of refugees' families who have entered the country through family reunification (see also Section 8.1).

In Norway, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security has overall responsibility for the settlement of refugees (Departementenes sikkerhets- og serviceorganisasjon Informasjonsforvaltning, 2017, p. 47). As in Denmark, numbers for settlement and distribution among municipalities are determined on the basis of criteria such as size of population, the housing market, the labour market, the extent of previous settlement, etc. However, in contrast to Denmark, municipalities are simply encouraged to accept refugees, and they are free to decide for themselves how many they will take. In practice, over 90 percent of refugees are settled by agreement between municipalities and the state (ibid.).

<sup>8</sup> This comparison does not take into account the fact that the number of asylum seekers from Somalia was significantly greater in Norway than in Denmark in the period 2005-2010.

**Table 7.1. Waiting times for decisions in asylum cases for selected groups of refugees in Denmark and Norway. Refugees who sought asylum in the period 2005-2010 whose cases were concluded before the end of 2015**

Denmark	Number of days from application for asylum until a residence permit was granted			Number of days from the issue of a residence permit to the first date of registration in a Danish municipality		
Country of origin	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median	N
Afghanistan	346	271	1,176	40	40	1,012
Iraq	252	168	541	39	39	468
Iran	365	278	642	41	40	599
Somalia	753	621	138	36	36	113
All countries	376	280	4,059	40	40	3,619
Norway	Number of days in 'reception' before the issue of a residence permit			Number of days in 'reception' after the issue of a residence permit		
Country of origin	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median	N
Afghanistan	433	273	2,924	188	158	2,899
Iraq	433	355	1,695	242	145	1,655
Iran	735	471	661	178	125	654
Somalia	406	359	3,177	232	181	3,141
All countries	416	282	18,904	206	154	18,483

Note: Only includes refugees a) who were aged 18 or over at the end of 2015, b) who were not recorded in Danish civil registers before seeking asylum and c) for whom valid information was available concerning waiting time.

Sources: Weiss et al. (2017) and own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark.

In addition to the data for Norway, there is a single figure available for waiting time for recognised refugees in Switzerland. On the basis of data from the State Secretariat for Migration (Secrétariat d'Etat aux migrations, SEM), Hainmueller et al. (2016) calculated the mean waiting time for 17,360 refugees with protection status (F-status) who sought and were granted asylum in Switzerland between 1994 and 2004 and who did not have to wait for more than five years for their cases to be de-cided. They found the mean waiting time for this group to have been 1.82 years (SD = 1.31 years). If equivalent limitation of the data is made for Denmark, so that only persons with protection status and a maximum of five years waiting time are considered, it is found that this group waited on average 1.00 years (SD = 0.57 years). In other words, the refugees granted protection status who arrived in Denmark in a comparable period waited for a shorter time on average than the corresponding refugees in Switzerland. The few figures available for waiting times in the asylum system for recognised refugees thus do not suggest that refugees wait for longer in Denmark for decisions on their asylum applications than is the case in other countries.

## 8 The settlement of refugees in Denmark from 1997-2016

Immediately after receiving permission to reside in Denmark, refugees are settled in a municipality (see Section 7). This section presents a short introduction to the legislation in this area and to where in the country refugees have been housed.

### 8.1 *Spatial dispersal policy*

A clear spatial dispersal policy for newly arrived refugees has been in effect in Denmark since 1986, with the aim of distributing refugees across the whole of Denmark (Damm, 2005). Before 1999, it was the Danish Refugee Council that was responsible both for deciding where refugees would be settled and for running an 18-month introductory programme that included classes in Danish language and culture, employment training, etc. The Refugee Council was thus tasked with finding permanent homes for the refugees in the country's various municipalities. The Council took into account a number of factors, including the opportunities existing in each municipality for housing and integrating the refugees; this meant considering the availability of social housing and the prospects for education and employment (*ibid.*). In order to increase the opportunities for refugees to establish social networks, it was regarded as a positive factor if there were other nationals of the same country living in the municipality. On the other hand, it was regarded as a negative point if there were many other immigrants living in the same place, since one major concern was to avoid very heavy concentrations of foreigners in any given residential areas. Refugees were encouraged to remain in the municipality to which they had been allocated throughout the whole period of the introductory programme, though there were no formal restrictions on relocation.

After the passing of the Integration Act (Act of Parliament L474 of 10/07/1998), a three-year integration programme was introduced, and responsibility for both the integration programme and for housing was transferred to the municipalities. At the same time, payment of the introductory allowance (a special benefit payable to people newly arrived in Denmark during the period when they were participating in the introductory programme) was linked to settlement. A refugee who left his or her allocated settlement municipality in the course of the first three years thus risked losing his or her introductory allowance, which for many was the primary source of income. By far the majority of refugees therefore chose to remain in the municipality in which they had been settled during the first years after their arrival, and this effect became even more marked after 1999 (Nielsen & Jensen, 2006).

Since then, the distribution of refugees among municipalities has been organised according to the following system. Each spring, the Danish Immigration Service makes an estimate of how many refugees can be expected to arrive in Denmark that year. The municipalities are then to divide up the newly arrived refugees between them according to a quota system.

Should they be unable to agree, the division is carried out by the Immigration Service. The distribution is based on number of residents in each municipality and the numbers of immigrants and refugees<sup>9</sup> already living there. Although the dispersal system is largely based on these municipal allocation keys, individual factors are also considered in deciding the settlement location. If a refugee already has relatives in Denmark (and particularly if they are close family members), this is taken into account, and from July 2016 onwards there has been a more specific focus on the employment opportunities on the local labour market for individual refugees.

Once a refugee is allocated to a municipality, it is the task of the municipal authorities to help that person find a home. Up until 2003 municipalities were required by law to find refugees permanent housing within three months; however, that demand proved difficult to fulfil, and the formulation in the law was altered to 'as quickly as possible'. A crucial factor in the selection of housing is that it must be affordable for the refugee concerned. Most refugees have very weak attachment to the labour market, especially during the early part of their residence in Denmark, and they are often dependent on public benefits. In consequence, municipalities have to find housing that is sufficiently cheap, and this has been especially difficult during the periods when the benefits paid to newly arrived refugees have been lower than normal social assistance.<sup>10</sup> The problem is greatest in the larger towns and the cities, where rents are generally higher than in other areas. On the other hand, in smaller municipalities with cheaper, rural levels of rent, the authorities may have greater difficulty in ensuring that refugees have reasonable commuting times by public transport to their places of daily work or study.

## ***8.2 Which municipalities have received the greatest numbers of refugees?***

An overview of where refugees were settled in the period from 1997 to 2016 is presented below. This overview is based on absolute numbers of refugees in order to show where refugees who arrived at given times were settled. It would also have been possible to choose to calculate the proportion of refugees in the population (in numbers per thousand), but in order to assess the distribution of the burden among municipalities it would then have been necessary to provide extra information, for example on refugees' residential moving patterns over time and on the ethnic composition of the population in each municipality, which would have been beyond the scope of this report.

---

<sup>9</sup> Up until July 2016 it was the total number of foreign nationals, excluding citizens of the Nordic countries, the EU and the EEA, which was used as the basis of the calculation. After that date the figure was based on the number of non-Western immigrants, excluding not only citizens of the Nordic countries, the EU and the EEA, but also other foreign nationals who had received residence permits in connection with work, study, internships or au pair work, in accordance with Executive Order no. 980 of 28/06/2016.

<sup>10</sup> This was the case from 2002 to 2011, when introductory benefit was at a very low level, and again from 2015 onwards, when integration benefit was introduced. 0

The numbers presented here include all individuals whose first registered Danish residence permit was as a refugee (all categories of refugees are included, including quota refugees). The calculations also include a small number of cases where no specific grounds for Danish residence are known, but where Statistics Denmark believes that the people concerned were refugees (see also Section 4 and Appendix 1). On the other hand, refugees' family members who came to Denmark for family reunification are not included. It should be noted that mergers of municipalities, first on the islands of Bornholm (2003) and Ærø (2006) and then in the rest of the country (2007) meant that the number of municipalities changed during the period covered by the analysis.

Table 8.1 shows which municipalities received the largest numbers of refugees in the periods 1997–2001 and 2002–2006. Refugees are counted as being resident in the municipality where they were living on 1 January in the year after their arrival. Around 19,600 new refugees arrived in Danish municipalities over the five years 1997–2001. The City of Copenhagen received the most refugees (1,393), followed by the other cities and large towns of Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg and Esbjerg (see Table 8.1). In total, 17 percent of the new refugees were settled in the five municipalities which received the greatest numbers of refugees.

**Table 8.1. The five municipalities receiving the most refugees in the years 1997–2006. Numbers of refugees received**

Municipality	1997–2001	Municipality	2002–2006
City of Copenhagen	1,393	City of Copenhagen	193
Aarhus	544	Aarhus	152
Aalborg	516	Aalborg	144
Odense	499	Gentofte	142
Esbjerg	319	Silkeborg	98
Top five municipalities	3,271	Top five municipalities	729
Top five as a percentage of all	17%	Top five as a percentage of all	9%

Source: Own calculations based on records at Statistics Denmark.

In the years 2002–2006, significantly fewer refugees (8,400) were settled in Denmark than during the previous five-year period. This may have been connected with both a decline in numbers of refugees internationally and the considerable changes in Denmark's refugee policy in 2002, described in detail in Section 9 of the Danish Aliens Act, 1992–2017. Overall, however, the situation was reflected in the issuing of fewer residence permits to refugees, especially after 2003 (see Figure 5.4). At the same time there were marked changes in which municipalities received the most new refugees. As would be expected, the country's largest municipality, the City of Copenhagen, continued to be at the top of the list, but this time with only 193 new refugees; next came Aarhus (152) and Aalborg (144), followed by the medium-sized municipalities of Gentofte (142) and Silkeborg (98). The total number of

new refugees received by these five municipalities accounted for just nine percent of all the new refugees in the period. Thus, the concentration of refugees in the ‘top five’ municipalities fell considerably in comparison with the preceding period. This finding accords with those of previous studies, which showed that the geographical dispersal of refugees was greater after the introduction of the Integration Act (Nielsen & Jensen, 2006).

In total, nearly 8,000 refugees arrived during the period 2007–2011—close to the number in the preceding period. However, as a result of mergers, Danish municipalities were significantly larger after 2007 than they were before, which meant that on average each municipality received more refugees (see Table 8.2). The Municipality of Thisted topped the list with 264 refugees, followed by Jammerbugt (246), Viborg (225), Silkeborg (204) and Vejle (180); Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg had all ceased to appear among the first five municipalities. In total, the top five municipalities received 14 percent of all newly arrived refugees; however, because of the municipal mergers, this percentage cannot be directly compared with those of earlier periods.

**Table 8.2. The five municipalities receiving the most refugees in the years 2007-2016. Numbers of refugees received**

Municipality	2007-2011	Municipality	2012-2016
Thisted	264	Aarhus	1,032
Jammerbugt	246	Aalborg	980
Viborg	225	Odense	706
Silkeborg	204	Viborg	669
Vejle	180	Esbjerg	664
Top five municipalities	1,119	Top five municipalities	4,051
Top five as a percentage of all	14%	Top five as a percentage of all	14%

Source: Own calculations based on records at Statistics Denmark.

As Figure 5.4 showed, significantly more refugees arrived in Denmark in the period 2012–2016—a total of 29,600 people, which was more than in the two previous periods put together. Aarhus, the municipality at the top of the list, received 1,032 new refugees; Aalborg was close behind with 980, followed by Odense (706), Viborg (669) and Esbjerg (664). Four of the five largest municipalities in Denmark thus featured on the list, the notable exception being the City of Copenhagen. The top five municipalities on the list received in total 14 percent of all the new refugees in the period. This largely corresponds to the proportion for the previous period, though with a significant change in the municipalities involved.

### 8.3 The regional settlement of refugees

If, over time, the City of Copenhagen came to receive relatively fewer refugees than a number of other municipalities, did that mean that the Capital Region as a whole gradually received a smaller proportion of the refugees than other regions of Denmark? This matter is elucidated below.

Table 8.3 shows the dispersal of refugees in regional terms. The analysis is based on the administrative division of Denmark into five regions as it exists today. The same present-day division is used for earlier years, before the introduction of the current administrative structure, allowing the figures to be compared over time.

In the period from 1997 to 2001 the Capital Region received 21.1 percent of all the new refugees, but the proportion fell considerably in the next two periods before rising slightly once more to 16.5 percent in the final period of the analysis, 2012–2016. The sharp fall between the first two periods may well have been to the introduction of the Integration Act and to the fact that the municipalities took over responsibility for distributing the new refugees in 1999. This interpretation is supported by a separate calculation (not shown here) which indicates that the Capital Region received 24 percent of refugees in 1997–1998, but only 19 percent in the years 1999–2001, i.e. immediately after the Integration Act came into force.

**Table 8.3. Regional distribution of newly arrived refugees, 2007-2016, percentages**

Regions	Year of arrival				Total
	1997-2001	2002-2006	2007-2011	2012-2016	
Capital Region	21.1	17.6	15.1	16.5	17.9
Central Denmark	24.6	23.8	25.4	26.1	25.3
Northern Jutland	13.2	15.4	17.3	14.5	14.5
Region Zealand	16.3	15.9	18.3	18.2	17.3
Region of Southern Denmark	24.7	27.3	23.9	24.8	25.0
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.1	99.9
Number <sup>1</sup>	19,638	8,362	7,991	29,606	65,597

<sup>1</sup> The figures in this table include observations for which the residence permit grounds were imputed by Statistics Denmark. This is the primary reason that the period 1997-2016 includes 3,180 more observations than shown in Table 6.1

Source: Own calculations based on records at Statistics Denmark.

However, another factor which may have played a part is that in working out the dispersal keys for the allocation of new refugees to municipalities, the number of refugees and other immigrants already living in a given municipality is taken into account. Since large proportions of both refugees and other immigrants live in the cities and large towns of Denmark, and since previous studies have shown that refugees have a tendency to migrate into cities, an area such as the City of Copenhagen (or the whole Capital Region) will in time accumulate more refugees even if they are not allocated settlement there in the first place (Andersen, 2015; Damm, 2009a, 2009b; Damm, Tranæs & Schultz-Nielsen, 2006).

While the proportion of newly arrived refugees who were allocated to the capital generally decreased over the course of the analysis period, the reverse tendency can be seen in the Central Denmark Region, where the proportion rose from 24.6 percent in the first period to 26.1 percent in the last. The proportion dispersed to Northern Jutland also rose, from an initial 13.2 percent to 17.3 percent in the period 2007–2011, though it then declined again to 14.5 percent. Region Zealand also received a proportion of refugees which increased until the period 2007–2011, rising from 16.3 to 18.3 percent, but largely remained largely stable thereafter. Finally, the Region of Southern Denmark received the same proportion of refugees (24.7 percent) in the first and last periods, but a greater proportion, namely 27.3 percent, in the years 2002–2006.

Overall, the Central Denmark Region (25.3 percent) and the Region of Southern Denmark were those that received the most refugees over the course of the entire analysis period. They were followed by the Capital Region (17.9 percent), Region Zealand (17.3 percent) and Northern Jutland (14.5 percent). This distribution should be viewed primarily in the light of the sizes of the populations of the regions and of their ethnic compositions.

#### ***8.4 Regional settlement and the ethnic origins of refugees settled in Denmark***

How were refugees from different countries of origin dispersed around the regions of Denmark? This question is considered in this subsection on the basis of the largest refugee groups in the years 1997–2016, namely refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Syria, the last of these groups being the subject of special analyses in Subsection 6.2. Refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina are not among those included here, since the great majority of them arrived in Denmark before 1997 (see Figure 6.5).

The ethnic compositions of the refugee population for each region are presented in Table 8.4. This shows that there were refugees from all four nationalities in all five regions, but that the regional patterns of distribution were not the same. Refugees from Afghanistan made up 10.7 percent of the total, but they accounted for a larger proportion of those settled in Region Zealand (12.4 percent) and the Capital Region (11.2 percent) than the

national average, and a smaller proportion in Region Central Denmark in particular (9.4 percent). Iraqis comprised 13.1 percent of all refugees, but as with the Afghans, a larger proportion were allocated to the Capital Region (17.0 percent) and Region Zealand (16.2 percent) than to the other regions. In the Region of Southern Denmark in particular, Iraqis made up a relatively low proportion of the refugee population (9.5%).

**Table 8.4. Regional distribution of newly arrived refugees, 1997-2016. Percentages**

Regions	Country of origin					Total
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Somalia	Syria	Other	
Capital Region	11.2	17.0	6.4	24.9	40.5	100.0
Central Jutland	9.4	13.1	9.4	32.8	35.4	100.1
Northern Jutland	10.5	11.0	8.9	25.1	44.4	99.9
Region Zealand	12.4	16.2	6.0	31.4	33.9	99.9
Region of Southern Denmark	10.5	9.5	6.0	34.1	39.9	100.0
Total	10.7	13.1	7.4	30.4	38.5	100.0
Number <sup>1</sup>	7,002	8,615	4,831	19,912	25,237	65,597

Note<sup>1</sup>: The figures in this table include observations for which the residence permit grounds were imputed by Statistics Denmark. This is the primary reason that the period 1997-2016 includes 3,180 more observations than Table 6.1

Source: Own calculations based on records at Statistics Denmark.

Refugees from Somalia made up 7.4 percent of the total, but they were more heavily concentrated in Central Denmark and Northern Jutland, where they accounted for 9.4 percent and 8.9 percent of the refugee populations respectively, than in the other regions, where around 6 percent of refugees were from Somalia. As mentioned previously, Syrians constituted the largest refugee group after 1997, accounting for three out of every ten refugees (30.4 percent). Relatively high proportions of Syrians were settled in the Region of Southern Denmark (34.1 percent) and the Central Denmark Region (32.8 percent), followed by Region Zealand, whereas ‘only’ one quarter of the refugees were from Syria in the Capital Region and Northern Jutland. Nearly 39 percent of refugees originated from countries other than those named in the list, the proportions of these ‘other’ refugees being greatest in Northern Jutland (44.4 percent), followed by the Capital Region (40.5 percent) and the Region of Southern Denmark (33.9 percent), while the proportions were significantly lower in the Central Denmark Region (35.4 percent) and Region Zealand (33.9 percent). These variations may be explained to some extent by the facts that the dispersal at regional level has varied over time, as shown in Table 8.3, and that the nature of the flow of refugees in any given year is highly dependent on external circumstances such as war and poor conditions of life in the countries of origin (Schultz-Nielsen, 2016).

All in all, the analysis shows that the Danish refugee spatial dispersal policy led to a wider dispersal of the refugees in Denmark across the country after the passage of the Integration Act in 1999, and that the City of Copenhagen and the Capital Region as a whole received a gradually declining share of the new refugees. However, in the period considered the ethnic composition of the populations of the various municipalities also changed, as a result of the general movements of the immigrant populations whereby many types of migrants—not just refugees—settled in Denmark from abroad or moved from one municipality to another. Such migrations are reflected in the municipality quotas. Thus, the trend towards a wider dispersal of the refugees should be viewed in relation not only to the change in dispersal policy in 1999, but also to other population changes. Over the entire period, the greatest numbers of refugees were settled in the Central Denmark Region and the Region of Southern Denmark, which together received half of all the new refugees. The ethnic composition of the refugee populations varied to a certain extent across the five regions. If we examine where the proportions of people from certain countries of origin are highest, we see that proportion of Afghans is highest in Region Zealand, the proportion of Iraqis in the Capital Region, the proportion of Somalis in the Central Denmark Region and the proportion of ‘Other Nationalities’ in Northern Jutland. Overall, however, the countries listed above are all represented in every region, and with a relatively even distribution.

## 9 The Danish Aliens Act, 1992-2017

Decisions concerning which foreigners should have the right to reside in Denmark are governed by the Aliens Act, which thus provides the framework for determining at any given point in time who has the right to settle in Denmark. This section presents a brief outline of the changes to the provisions of the Act over the period from 1992 to 2017 which were of significance for refugees and for family members of refugees desiring to come to Denmark for family reunification. There were a great many such changes. In total, 145 amendments to the Aliens Act and other relevant legislation are noted here for the period from 1992 to June 2017.<sup>11</sup> Some of these amendments were corrections made as a consequence of changes to other legislation; some related to the expansion of the EU and other prevailing conditions which were not of immediate relevance to refugees and their families; but a great many of the changes were of significance for refugees and family reunification immigrants. In the following, therefore, we have decided to focus on the main themes in the amendments to the Act that are deemed to be of the most relevance for our subject. Special laws are also included if, as with the changes to the Aliens Act, they concern residence permission for foreigners, in this case only from specific countries/regions of origin such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. It must be emphasised that this is not a legalistic treatment of all the changes in the Aliens Act, but simply a brief overview intended to describe the main trends in the selected amendments.

The first chapter of the Aliens Act states which groups have the right to reside in Denmark. The rules regarding access to Denmark for refugees are, as Table 3.1 shows, described in Sections 7 and 8 and are drafted in relation to the UN 1951 Refugee Convention, to which Denmark was a signatory from the outset. The convention stipulates that people with ‘a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion’ are to be afforded protection (Christensen et al., 2000, p. 22). Consequently, it is possible for persons who fulfil the provisions of the Convention to obtain permission to reside in Denmark (Aliens Act, Section 7.1). Granting residence to people who are covered by the terms of the Refugee Convention is one of the founding principles of the Aliens Act and has applied since the Act was first drafted in 1983. However, people may have substantive grounds for flight other than those listed in the UN Refugee Convention. Consequently, Section 7.2 lists certain regulations concerning who else can be afforded protection, even if they are not covered by the UN Refugee Convention. These rules were substantially altered over the period 1992–2017, but in 1992 the rules covered any foreigner ‘who due to circumstances similar to those laid down in the Convention or other serious reasons ought not to be required to return to his or her native country’ (Act of Parliament L462 of 26/06/1987; our translation). Refugees granted permission to reside in Denmark on these grounds were described as having *de facto* status.

---

<sup>11</sup> A complete list of amending Acts of Parliament related to the Aliens Act is provided in Appendix 1.

Finally, residence permits were granted under Section 8 to quota refugees, who came to Denmark by agreement with the UN. This group was made up of people living in UN refugee camps, and for many years around 500 such refugees came to Denmark annually. Denmark suspended this scheme in September 2016.

The right to family reunification may be obtained under the provisions of Section 9 of the Aliens Act. These provisions are based on the principle of family unity and the right to family life, which stems from conventions on human rights ( Christensen et al., 2006, p. 127). As a rule, spouses or others in permanent partnerships and children who are minors may be eligible for family reunification with persons living in Denmark. For family reunification with spouses, the person living in Denmark must be a citizen of Denmark or a Nordic country, a refugee, or a foreigner who has held a permanent residence permit for Denmark for a specified number of years.

The rules concerning family reunification have changed greatly over the past quarter of a century, but started out in the early 1990s by stating that children under the age of 18, spouses and permanent partners<sup>12</sup> and, to a certain extent, parents over the age of 60 were eligible for family reunification with a person resident in Denmark. A number of supplementary requirements were added in subsequent years, such as stricter demands regarding support obligations and requirements concerning the ability of the person living in Denmark to provide financial support for the family reunified family members. A requirement concerning attachment to Denmark and other countries (which was amended several times) and an extension of the age requirement were introduced a little later, as well as a number of criteria related to labour market skills (for adults) and an assessment of potential ability to integrate (for children). In general, however, practice with regard to family reunification for refugees was a little less demanding than for other persons, in that refugees needing continued protection are not free to live in their home countries and thus cannot be reunited with their families there. In some cases, therefore, a number of the requirements listed above can be dispensed with, insofar as they conflict with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

### *9.1 The period 1992-1996: The 'Yugoslavs Act'*

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the 1990s a person living in Denmark could be reunited with children who were minors, parents over 60 years of age, and spouses; but in 1992 the rules were made more stringent. Thereafter, family reunification with parents was only permissible if there were no other children living in the home country, and it became possible to enforce requirements for the (adult) child in Denmark to provide support for the parents. Family reunification for the purpose of marriage was only allowed if both spouses

---

<sup>12</sup> The rules are the same for spouses and permanent partners, so both groups are designated simply as 'spouses' hereinafter.

were over the age of 18. In order to combat pro forma marriages, divorce within three years of the marriage meant that the person entering the country for family reunification lost his or her residence permit (Act of Parliament L482 of 24/06/1992). Later, it became possible to enforce requirements for the person living in Denmark to demonstrate the ability to support the spouse entering the country for family reunification (Act of Parliament L421 of 01/06/1994).

As a result of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, around 9,000 spontaneous asylum seekers entered Denmark in 1992 (Indenrigsministeriet, 1996). In November 1992 the 'Yugoslavs Act' was passed; this provided for the issuing of temporary residence permits to people from the former Yugoslavia (Act of Parliament L933 of 28/09/1992). The new law meant that in particular people with urgent need of medical treatment (Section 1) and spontaneous asylum seekers (Section 15) could obtain temporary residence permits for Denmark. These people had no automatic right to family reunification, but the rules could be dispensed with in special cases of a humanitarian nature for spouses and children who were minors (Section 4, Subsection 2). At the outset the Act only applied to spontaneous asylum seekers who had arrived in Denmark before December 1992, but it was extended in June 1993 to cover asylum seekers arriving after that date as well. An invitation scheme was introduced (Section 15a) whereby people from Bosnia and Herzegovina who had the greatest or most acute need for protection could be granted temporary residence in Denmark if they had not obtained protection elsewhere (Act of Parliament L459 of 30/06/1993). In this connection, a local office was opened in Zagreb with the authority to issue temporary residence permits. At the same time, a visa requirement was instigated for all persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By the end of 1994, the first Bosnian refugees to arrive in Denmark had been in the country for two years, at which point the time limit for the deferment of processing of asylum claims expired. In January 1995 the 'Bosnians Act' was passed. This added a new provision to the Aliens Act (Section 9, Subsection 2, Paragraph 5) which meant that Bosnian refugees whose applications for asylum had been refused were granted temporary residence permits (Act of Parliament L34 of 18/01/1996). These temporary residence permits became permanent after two years (Ankestyrelsen, 2014). At the same time, the Bosnian refugees were offered the same access to integration programmes, welfare benefits, etc. as other refugees.

The Dayton Peace Accord of November 1995 created the possibility of a lasting peace in the former Yugoslavia, and the earlier scheme for accepting refugees from the area was altered to a quota scheme in April 1996 (Act of Parliament L327 of 30/04/1996).

In the same year, a number of administrative changes were introduced, primarily aimed at making the processing of asylum cases more efficient. These changes related to the work of the Refugee Council, to counselling asylum seekers and to the work of hearing asylum cases, which was transferred from the police to the Danish Immigration Service (Act of Parliament L381 of 14/06/1996).

## 9.2 The period 1997-2001: The Dublin Convention and the Kosovo Emergency Act

In June 1997 the Aliens Act was made more stringent, with the aim of preventing fraud. The new legislation made it possible to require finger prints to be taken, to exchange pictures with police forces in other countries, and to require a DNA test in family reunification cases (Act of Parliament L407 of 10/06/1997).

The Dublin Convention came into force in Denmark from 1 September 1997. It was aimed at ensuring that asylum cases were processed in one EU country only, namely the first country to be entered by the asylum seeker in question. This meant that when a foreign national sought asylum in Denmark, an investigation was made of the person's identity and arrival route, and of whether he or she had arrived via another EU country. If another EU country was responsible for processing the asylum request and agreed to consider the case, the asylum seeker was sent to the country in question to decide the case. Similarly, asylum seekers were sent to Denmark from other EU countries if Denmark was the country of arrival in the EU. From the outset in 1997, however, Denmark sent more asylum seekers back to other countries than it received from other EU member states (Indenrigsministeriet, 2000, p. 39). At almost the same time, Denmark joined the Schengen Agreement, but in relation to rules for asylum the provisions of this agreement were based largely on the same as the principles as the Dublin Convention and did not lead to any major changes (Act of Parliament L410 of 10/06/1997).

In July 1998 the Aliens Act was amended once again, among other things by defining precisely what the *de facto* concept meant, in that it emphasised that residence permits granted under Section 7, Subsection 2 of the Act required the existence of substantial grounds which 'involve a well-founded fear of persecution or similar injustice' (Christensen et al., 2006, p. 379; our translation). Changes were also made in the regulations regarding the issuing of permanent residence permits and family reunification (Act of Parliament L473 of 01/07/1998).

The changes in the family reunification rules meant on the one hand a limitation on the possibilities for requiring that the resident spouse should be able to provide for the spouse entering the country, but on the other hand that the resident spouse should have held a permanent residence permit for Denmark for a minimum of three years (and thus a minimum of six years of residence in total). In addition, the possibilities for refusing family reunification were increased in cases where there was a suspicion of a pro forma or forced marriage (Jacobsen et al., 2017, p. 462).

The 'Kosovo Emergency Act' was passed in April 1999 (Act of Parliament L251 of 28/04/1999). The new legislation meant that Denmark could take a fixed quota of displaced people from Kosovo (in the former Yugoslavia) who were still in Kosovo itself or the area nearby. The residence permits issued under this legislation were temporary, but could be renewed after six months. The legislation also covered spontaneous asylum seekers from

Kosovo, who could be expected to be in need of temporary protection (Indenrigsministeriet, 2001, p. 204)). No asylum applications that might have been made by holders of residence permits issued under the emergency law were processed while those permits were valid. However, the processing of such asylum cases could not be deferred for more than two years.

In March 2000 the UNHCR issued new recommendations concerning the displaced Kosovo Albanians, since the majority of them were now able to return home; however, in some cases there were special circumstances that meant that they still needed protection. The Kosovo Emergency Act was repealed in May 2000. The temporary scheme was ended, and new legal provisions were made in the Aliens Act for people who still needed temporary protection (Act of Parliament L427 of 31/05/2000).

At the same time, the rules for family reunification with a spouse were made more stringent with the introduction of an ‘attachment requirement’. This stated that the total degree of attachment to Denmark of the two spouses should be at least as great as their attachment to another country. Furthermore, a requirement was introduced for family reunification that the family member resident in Denmark should have adequately sized living accommodation at his or her disposal (Act of Parliament L424 of 31/05/2000 and Indenrigsministeriet, 2001, p. 208). However, it was possible to give exemption from these requirements for family reunification with a refugee resident in Denmark if the refugee was still in danger of persecution in his or her home country.

### ***9.3 The period 2002–2006: The de facto concept is abolished and rules for family unification are made even more strict***

In November 2001 the existing Danish coalition government made up of the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals was replaced by a coalition of the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservatives. Over the subsequent five years the new government tightened up the provisions of the Aliens Act in a number of ways.

The most notable of these changes came into force from 1 July 2002 (Act of Parliament L365 of 06/06/2002). The changes in the legislation meant, firstly, that the *de facto* refugee status was abolished and replaced by the ‘B status’ concept, which accorded eligibility for residence only ‘if being returned to the home country would place the foreign national at risk of execution or of being subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’ (Starup 2012, p. 82; our translation). The abolition of the *de facto* concept had its ‘greatest effect on asylum practice in cases concerning war refugees and asylum seekers who felt strong subjectively-perceived fear, but where that fear could not be regarded as being well founded’ (Jacobsen et al., 2017, p. 275; our translation).

Secondly, the period of residence in Denmark required before a foreign national could obtain a permanent residence permit was increased from three to seven years. Thirdly, it became still harder to qualify for family reunification, with both a tightening of the attachment requirement and the introduction of the ‘age 24 rule’, which required that both spouses/cohabiting partners should have reached 24 years of age before family reunification could take place. For refugees (including those with ‘B’ status) it was possible to give exemption from the rules from the outset provided that the marriage had been entered into before the refugee fled his or her home; later, the interpretation of the rules was modified to make it possible to grant an exemption even for refugees who married after fleeing their home country (Christensen et al., 2006, p. 130). Fourthly, the rules concerning the first country of asylum were made stricter, so that a residence permit could be refused in cases where a refugee had a ‘close’ connection with a third country. Previously, a residence permit could only be refused if the connection with another country was closer than that with Denmark. Finally, the regulations were eased for immigration to Denmark for study, internships and au-pair work, and new schemes were introduced to attract highly-qualified labour (Hviid et al., 2010). Thus, a number of changes were introduced which, taken together, made it harder for refugees and those seeking family reunification to obtain permission to reside in Denmark, but eased the process of coming to Denmark for purposes of work or study. In addition, a change was made to the appeals bodies, in that the Refugee Appeals Board was reduced in number by the two representatives from the Foreign Ministry and the Danish Refugee Council.

From 1 May 2003, the expulsion procedure was tightened up for asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected. Rejected asylum seekers received a lump sum of around DKK 3,000 each if they actively cooperated with preparing for their return to their home countries. If they did not cooperate, they were placed on the ‘lunch box programme’ (providing food – and later money for food – but nothing more), and after a month were transferred to Center Sandholm (the primary Danish reception centre for asylum seekers). A regulation concerning an obligation for failed asylum seekers to report to the police was introduced, and the possibilities for restricting their freedom were extended (Act of Parliament L291 of 30/04/2003).

The usual period of legal residence in Denmark required before a permanent residence permit could be issued was seven years in 2003 (Christensen et al., 2006, p. 535). However, because of the political desire to provide incentives for immigrants to become integrated quickly into Danish society, the legislative change in June 2003 made possible a more rapid access to permanent residence after five years, and in some cases after three years if a person had been part of the Danish labour market throughout the period of residence (Act of Parliament L425 of 10/06/2003).

With effect from 1 July 2003, a reform was introduced to labour market activation and education for adult asylum seekers. After that date, a formal agreement was to be entered into between the asylum seeker and the authority responsible for housing him or her regarding

activation and education. All asylum seekers were to receive a basic social welfare allowance, but a supplementary allowance would only be paid if the contract was honoured by the asylum seeker. Individuals over 18 years of age were to participate in courses in Danish language, culture and society, while children of obligatory schooling age were to receive specially targeted teaching, possibly in combination with participation in normal primary/lower secondary school classes where appropriate.

The '28 years' rule was introduced as from January 2004. This related to family reunification of spouses, and meant that there was exemption from the rule concerning the degree of attachment to Denmark if the spouse resident in Denmark had been a Danish citizen or had lived in Denmark for 28 years. This new rule was of great significance for Danes living abroad (Act of Parliament L1204 of 27/12/2003).

The age for family reunification for children was reduced in 2004 from 18 to 15 years. According to comments on the Bill presented to Parliament, this change was instigated out of a desire to encourage children of immigrants living in Denmark to come to the country as early as possible in their lives. However, refugees continued to have the right to be reunified with their children until the children turned 18 if a refusal would contravene Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for example if the refugee (as mentioned earlier) still had no possibility of returning to live in his or her home country (Act of Parliament L427 of 09/06/2004).

With the entry of Denmark into Eurdac and the Dublin II Regulation in 2005, it became standard practice to take the fingerprints of asylum seekers in order to check whether they had previously sought asylum in another EU member state (Act of Parliament L323 of 18/05/2005). At the same time, the adoption of Act of Parliament L324 of 18/05/2005 strengthened the information basis in cases of health-related humanitarian residence permits.

The provisions of the law regarding the selection of quota refugees were altered in June 2005. Until that point, the selection of refugees had been based on the need for protection, but henceforth emphasis was to be placed on the refugees' potential for integration in Denmark (Act of Parliament L403 of 01/06/2005).

#### ***9.4 The period 2007-2011: Integration tests and points systems***

The rules for family reunification were made stricter in April 2007, in that adult family members coming to Denmark for the purpose of family reunification could no longer simply sign an integration declaration, but also had to pass an integration examination which tested knowledge of Danish language and society. However, an exemption from these provisions could be granted if refusal of a residence permit would conflict with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Act of Parliament L379 of 25/04/2007). The

law also toughened the provisions for obtaining a permanent residence permit. Applicants were thenceforth required to pass an integration examination that included a Danish language test; moreover, they had to have had at least 2½ years of full-time employment.

The regulations regarding foreigners present in Denmark on ‘tolerated stay’ conditions<sup>13</sup> were made stricter in December 2008. These foreign nationals were now to be obliged to report regularly to the Sandholm asylum seekers’ centre, and the punishment for failure to report was increased from a normal four months’ imprisonment to one year (Act of Parliament L1397 of 27/12/2008).

Further tightening up of the law followed in March 2010, when the rules on expulsion were strengthened, checking was increased through the synchronisation of registers, and a points system was introduced for obtaining permanent residence after a minimum of four years of residence. This meant that applicants for permanent residence had to accumulate a total of 100 points. Of these, 70 points were related to the fulfilment of compulsory requirements concerning employment, the ability to support oneself and passing Danish examinations, while the remaining 30 points could be obtained from fulfilling supplementary requirements, for example through active citizenship activities and other integration achievements (Act of Parliament L572 of 31/05/2010).

A points system for family reunification was introduced in July 2011. This meant that over and above the other requirements in force, family reunification was conditional on the spouse living outside Denmark fulfilling a points requirement. People under 24 years of age had to acquire 120 points, while the requirement was half that (60 points) for people over 24. Points were given for completed courses of education, employment experience, knowledge of certain European languages and not being resident in housing areas where there were social problems. The same amendment to the Act also tightened up the attachment requirement, in that the two spouses’ total attachment to Denmark should be ‘significantly greater’ and not as previously just ‘greater’ than that to another country, and the guarantee sum was raised from DKK 50,000 to DKK 100,000 (Act of Parliament L601 of 14/06/2011).

## *9.5 The period 2012–2014: The points systems are scrapped*

After the formation in October 2011 of a new government coalition comprising the Social Democrats, the Socialist People’s Party and the Social Liberals, a number of the most recent changes to the law passed by the previous right-of-centre government were repealed. The points system for family reunification and the immigration examination were abolished first, and a new Danish examination was introduced, which the spouse coming in to the

---

<sup>13</sup> Foreigners who have no residence permit but who cannot be removed from the country for some reason – i.e., who are ‘effectively unreturnable’ – remain in Denmark on ‘tolerated stay’ conditions.

country had to pass within six months of arrival (Act of Parliament L418 of 12/05/2012). Also repealed was the requirement that the two spouses' total attachment to Denmark should be 'significantly greater' than that to another country, and the wording was returned to 'greater'; similarly, the guarantee sum was reduced from DKK 100,000 to the previous level of DKK 50,000. This effectively scrapped most of the changes made in 2011 by the right-of-centre government. In addition, the '28 years rule' was amended to become a '26 years rule', so that it was possible to obtain an exemption from the attachment requirement after 26 years of citizenship rights in Denmark.

The points system relating to permanent residence permits was abolished in June 2012 (Act of Parliament L572 of 18/06/2012). Instead, requirements were introduced for at least five years of residence in Denmark (as opposed to four years previously), full-time employment or education in at least three of the previous five years, and current employment or education. Pensioners were exempted from these activity requirements, and refugees could, on certain conditions, obtain permanent residence permits after eight years, even if they had not fulfilled the other requirements. Furthermore, the Refugee Appeals Board was increased in number by two representatives from the Foreign Ministry and the Danish Refugee Council.

From May 2013, asylum seekers who had resided in Denmark for at least six months were allowed to live and work outside the asylum centres (Act of Parliament L430 of 01/05/2013). At the same time, some of the casework in the initial phase of the asylum process was transferred from the police to the Immigration Service.

In June 2013 Denmark signed up to the Dublin III Regulation which, like the earlier Dublin agreements, stated that applications from asylum seekers should be processed in the first EU member state which they had entered. However, the new regulation placed greater emphasis on protecting the interests of children in cases of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (Act of Parliament L1619 of 26/12/2013).

The composition of the governing coalition changed in February 2014, with the Socialist People's Party leaving the administration and a new government being formed by the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals.

In May 2014 a change was made to the criteria for the selection of quota refugees, in that the earlier requirement regarding integration potential was replaced by a selection criterion based on the idea that resettlement in Denmark would lead to 'a lasting improvement in life situation' for the refugee concerned (Act of Parliament L515 of 26/05/2014).

## 9.6 *The period 2015-2017: The refugee crisis*

In light of developments in the war in Syria and the increased flow of asylum seekers to Denmark, the government decided in February 2015 to introduce a new temporary protection status for certain groups of refugees for whom the situation in their home country was ‘marked by arbitrary acts of violence and attacks on civilians’ (Jacobsen et al. 2017, p. 276; our translation). In the commentary contained in the Act, it was emphasised that the change did not expand access to asylum in Denmark, but simply granted temporary residence to a group who would otherwise have been eligible for residence permission under Section 7.2 of the Aliens Act (Act of Parliament L153 of 18/02/2015 and Justitsministeriet, 2015). In the first instance these refugees were granted residence for a maximum of one year at a time; after three years the period could be increased to two years, if the refugee still needed protection.

In the following month, controls were strengthened at airports and other border points. Fines were increased for illegal entry to and for illegal residence and work in Denmark, and the penalties for helping immigrants to enter the country illegally were likewise made heavier (Act of Parliament L271 of 25/03/2015).

When the right-of-centre Danish Liberal Party took over the reins of government in June 2015, and the number of asylum seekers increased to a level reminiscent of that of 1992/1993, the police were granted extended powers to deal with the volume of asylum seekers; they were even empowered in very special cases to prohibit the movement of trains, buses and ferries across Danish national borders (Act of Parliament L1273 of 20/11/2015). In December, measures were adopted that allowed transport operators to be held responsible for ID checks if temporary border controls were instituted (Act of Parliament L1499 of 11/12/2015). This meant that heavy fines could be levied on shipping, bus and train operators, etc. if they carried passengers into the country without valid documentation.

The increased flow of refugees to Europe effectively rendered inoperative the common border controls within the Schengen Area. Sweden, which received the greatest number of asylum seekers per head of the population among all EU member states, introduced ID checks at the border with Denmark in January 2016 and imposed transport operator ID check responsibilities on ferry, bus and train operators. Denmark then introduced temporary controls at the border with Germany, and these were extended several times.

In February 2016 the rules regarding family reunification were toughened significantly for people with temporary protection status. Their right to family reunification was deferred by two years, meaning that the qualifying period became three years in total (Act of Parliament L102 of 03/02/2016). This meant that family members either had to remain in their home country or flee as asylum seekers themselves. Similarly, the requirements for obtaining a permanent residence permit were made more stringent, so that it was now necessary to have resided in the country for six years, to have had 2½ years of employment during

the previous three years (this demand was enforced for refugees as well), and to have a good knowledge of Danish language and culture. The new legislation also provided for the seizure of any large amounts of cash or objects with a value of over DKK 10,000 carried by the refugees in order to help pay for their stay – a provision that led to this Act of Parliament being dubbed the ‘Jewellery Law’.

In March 2016 the EU entered into an agreement with Turkey aimed at slowing the flow of refugees and other migrants from Turkey to the nearby Greek islands. This agreement appeared to contribute to a reduction in the number of refugees entering Greece. As Figure 5.1 shows, the gross number of asylum seekers for the second half of 2016 was the lowest in four years. In the long run, however, it seemed that this reduction in refugees coming to Europe via Greece would be offset by an increase in refugees and migrants arriving via other routes, for example across the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy.

In Denmark itself, agreements between the government on the one hand and the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the parties to the labour market on the other were concluded in March 2016 with the aim of getting more refugees into employment, for example by making the integration programme more employment-oriented and strengthening verification procedures once refugees were settled in municipalities. The majority of these changes came into force in July 2016 and were related to the Integration Act, but the agreements also led to changes in the Aliens Act (Act of Parliament L665 of 08/06/2016).

At the end of 2016 the Refugee Appeals Board was once again reduced in size with the removal once more of the two members from the Foreign Ministry and the Danish Refugee Council (Act of Parliament L1561 of 13/12/2016). The membership of the Refugee Appeals Board thus became the same in number as in the years 2002–2011 under the right-of-centre governments, but was smaller than in the periods both before and after those dates under governments led by the Social Democrats.

The requirements for obtaining a permanent residence permit became even more demanding in May 2017, with the period of residence required being increased from six to eight years, and the requirements for being self-supporting similarly being raised. The period required for being in employment was raised from 2½ years within the previous three years to 3½ years within the previous four years (Act of Parliament L436 of 09/05/2017).

In the same month a law was adopted permitting Denmark to ignore the provisions of the Dublin III regulation in a crisis situation and to refuse admittance to refugees at the border. This law was described as an ‘emergency brake’ and could be activated for four weeks at a time (Act of Parliament 17/05/2017).

On the basis of a judgement in the European Court of Human Rights, the ‘26 years rule’ was abolished in May 2017, so that it was no longer possible to grant exemption from the

attachment requirement after 26 years of Danish citizenship rights (Act of Parliament L504 of 23/05/2017). A new residence regulation was introduced simultaneously as a consequence of this, placing Danes returning from residence abroad on the same footing as foreign employees (Act of Parliament L505 of 23/05/2017).

On the same day, legislation was passed giving PET, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service, direct electronic access to records held by Danish authorities dealing with foreign nationals (Act of Parliament L506 23/05/2017).

In June 2017, changes to the Aliens Act were introduced relating to ‘Order and discipline in accommodation centres for unaccompanied minor foreign nationals’, ‘Increased use of biometrics to establish the identity of foreign nationals in asylum cases’ and ‘Increased financial support in cases of repatriation, etc.’ (Acts of Parliament L702, L703 and L704 of 08/06/2017). These three pieces of legislation were the last of the 145 Acts of the Danish Parliament amending the Aliens Act that were passed during the period from 1992 to June 2017.

To briefly summarise developments in the Aliens Act, the changes at the beginning of the 1990s were influenced by the civil war in Yugoslavia and the desire to help nationals of that country who were in need of protection by means of a special law. At the same time, rules for family reunification were made tougher, a development which proved to be a general trend running throughout the period. The period 1997–2007 was particularly influenced by Denmark’s joining the Dublin Convention, but the adoption of the Kosovo Emergency Act and the introduction of the attachment requirement in family reunification cases represented crucial changes in the opportunities for being granted permission to reside in Denmark. The most significant changes in the period occurred in 2002 when the *de facto* concept was scrapped in Denmark, while the rules for family reunification were made stricter, including the toughening of the attachment requirement and the introduction of the ‘24 years’ rule. In the subsequent period up to 2011 there were constant changes, most often designed to make the rules more stringent. These included the launch of the points system for permanent residence permits and family reunification, and the introduction of the integration test in family reunification cases. Some of the toughest rules were repealed after the change of government in October 2011, and from May 2013 asylum seekers were permitted to live and work outside the asylum centres. The refugee crisis of 2015 led to the introduction of temporary residence for certain refugees. After the accession of the new right-of-centre government, police powers for handling asylum seekers were extended, temporary border controls were introduced, and the rules for family reunification for persons with temporary protection status were made more stringent.

## 10 Summary

The aim of this report is to describe some central features related to the initial period spent in Denmark by asylum seekers and refugees for the years 1992 to 2016. An asylum seeker is a person applying for protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, whereas a refugee is an asylum seeker whose application has been approved. The description in the report is based on time series of key figures regarding the number of asylum seekers, the number of refugees and the average time asylum seekers in Denmark wait from the date of their application for asylum until the date of approval of the application. Some of these key figures are new, while others have in part been published previously in annual reports from the Danish Immigration Service, but are here presented in a consolidated format for a period of 25 years. All figures are based on information made available by the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark. In order to contextualise the figures and time series within a legislative framework, the report also contains a review of important changes in the Danish Aliens Act. Finally, the report contains an overview of the Danish dispersal policy and of the allocation and dispersal of refugees to Danish regions for settlement during the period 1997–2016.

The analyses show that the number of registered asylum seekers varied greatly over the analysis period, i.e. from 1992 to 2016, with peaks during the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and in Syria over recent years. During the years 1992–1994 around 34,900 spontaneous asylum seekers were registered in Denmark, compared with 33,400 in the years 2014–2016. The number of asylum seekers in the most recent refugee crisis thus reached a level similar to—but no greater than—that recorded with the arrival of the refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The half-yearly number of registered asylum seekers was above 10,000 in the second half of 1992 and the first half of 1993, but then fell to an average of 2,900 during the period 1999–2000. From 2000 to 2002 the half-yearly number of asylum seekers was around 4,200; then the figure fell to below 1,000 half-yearly during the period 2004–2009—the lowest level in the analysis period.

The sharp decline in the number of asylum seekers after 2002 should be viewed not only in relation to a general reduction in the international flow of refugees, but also in the context of significant changes in the Danish Aliens Act, which among other things abolished the concept of *de facto* refugees. The *refugee recognition rate*—that is, the share of asylum seekers who have their claims for protection recognised, and thus their applications approved—also declined sharply in this period, from 53 percent in 2001 to 10 percent in 2004, an exceptionally low figure. From 2009 onwards, the number of asylum seekers began to rise once more. Until 2013, however, the half-yearly number of registered asylum seekers remained below 2,000; thereafter it increased again, and on average nearly 5,600 asylum seekers were recorded half-yearly in the years 2014–2016, with the highest number registered during the refugee crisis in the first half of 2016.

Like the number of asylum seekers, the refugee recognition rate also fluctuated considerably over the period. This may be explained by changes in the Aliens Act, in the international flow of refugees, and in conditions in the refugees' countries of origin. At the beginning of the 1990s, the overall recognition rate was around 50 percent, but because of the large number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and their special circumstances, the rate increased to 84 percent in 1996. The largest groups of asylum seekers in Denmark in the following years comprised Iraqis, Afghans and Somalis. The recognition rate remained exceptionally high (around 90 percent) for Iraqis and Somalis up until 2001, while the rate was somewhat lower—especially at the beginning of the period.

for Afghans. Around the years 2001–2002 the recognition rates declined sharply for all three nationalities. After that, the rates varied, though with a generally rising trend; however, in 2016 the rates were still below 35 percent for asylum seekers from all three countries, while the recognition rate was close to 100 percent for Syrians.

Waiting time—that is to say, the time taken from the registration of an application for asylum to the pronouncement of a decision—was also examined in the study. Information on waiting time exists for those asylum seekers who applied for asylum after arriving in Denmark and who were subsequently granted the right to reside in the country. The analysis shows that the years 1992–1996 were marked by a high share of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia and an increasing waiting time. The mean waiting time during this period peaked at over two years for the approximately 14,300 refugees who were issued with residence permits in the second half of 1995. Subsequently, the number of recognised refugees fell to around 1,200 half-yearly, and waiting time decreased to around one year.

Following changes in the Danish Aliens Act, the recognition rate dropped, and a half-yearly mean of only around 430 refugees were recognised from the second half of 2002 until 2011. At the same time, waiting times increased and generally continued to do so until the first half of 2007, when the mean waiting time reached nearly three and a half years, the highest level during the analysis period. From 2007 waiting time declined progressively (with some variations), a trend which continued even after 2009, when the numbers of recognised refugees began to increase again. In the first half of 2015 the half-yearly number of refugees reached around 5,400, while the mean waiting time fell to below six months. From that point onwards waiting time once again began to increase a little, and in the second half of 2016 it was more than nine months.

The variations in waiting time were probably due to several factors. First, *high pressure on the asylum system* caused by a large number of asylum seekers probably prolonged waiting times. When pressure on the asylum system is the main factor affecting waiting time, the number of asylum seekers and the mean waiting time will move roughly in parallel with one another, and this was indeed the case in Denmark in the period from 1993 to 2002. However, after 2002 the number of asylum seekers and the waiting time no longer varied in tandem, meaning that other factors must have been involved as well. A second factor probably be-

came important at this point, namely *changes in the law*. In 2002, the concept of *de facto* refugees was abolished in Danish legislation, possibly causing a backlog in the case processing of asylum seekers and thus increased waiting times. A third significant factor that probably contributed to variations in waiting times — both in the overall mean waiting time and in waiting times for different national groups — was *the assessment by the Danish authorities of how dangerous the situation was in the countries of origin of the asylum seekers*. Such assessments are in part reflected in the refugee recognition rates, which varied appreciably for different countries of origin. If there is very little doubt that asylum seekers from a given country need protection — as has been the case, for example, with people from Syria in recent years — this will often be reflected in both a high recognition rate and a shorter waiting time. A fourth factor which may have affected the mean waiting time was *the allocation of resources* to the area of aliens and asylum. A larger number of case workers will, all else being equal, reduce the mean waiting time, and there were changes in the resources available in Denmark during the analysis period.

To the factors listed above must be added a very important explanation for the waiting time for a given individual asylum seeker, namely the *particular conditions* pertaining in the case. The Immigration Service makes individual assessments for each and every asylum seeker. In this, the information provided by the asylum seeker at the information and motivation interview can be of great significance. Moreover, the waiting time for the individual can vary greatly in accordance with the extent to which the asylum seeker can document his or her account. However, such individual factors do not alter the fact that some of the patterns in the mean waiting time can be explained by more general factors.

A closer examination of which groups experienced shorter and longer mean waiting times during the analysis period reveals that refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina top the list at 767 days, while Syrians had the shortest waiting time at an average of only 146 days. The short waiting time for Syrians is probably due both to the allocation of resources to the Immigration Service and to the fact that Syrians' asylum cases are relatively easy to decide, given the situation in their home country.

Waiting times for refugees from other countries from which relatively large numbers of asylum seekers have been granted residence permits in Denmark lie in between these two extremes, though with considerable variations over the course of the period examined. For example, the waiting time for refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia was around 300 days on average in the period 1997–2001. After that, the mean waiting times for refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq more than doubled to around 640 days during the period 2002–2006, while the waiting time only changed slightly for refugees from Somalia. During the years 2012–2016, waiting times fell for all these three nationalities, but nevertheless remained significantly higher than those for Syrians.

A comparison with waiting times in Norway over the period 2010–2015 shows that the mean waiting times until a residence permit was granted were very similar. However, in

Denmark it took only around 40 days after the issue of a residence permit for an individual refugee to be housed and registered as a resident in a municipality, whereas in Norway this process took more than six months. Thus, overall waiting time until settlement is longer in Norway than in Denmark. Calculations for Switzerland similarly indicate that waiting time in that country is longer than in Denmark.

When a refugee is granted a residence permit, he or she is settled in a Danish municipality. A spatial dispersal policy has existed in Denmark since 1986, its purpose being to distribute newly arrived refugees across the whole country. At the outset, the Danish Refugee Council was responsible for both the settlement and the integration programmes, but the municipalities took over these responsibilities in 1999. Distribution keys were introduced at both regional and municipal levels, calculated on the basis of the size and ethnic make-up of the existing populations, and these keys were used in the allocation of new refugees to regions and municipalities.

An analysis of where newly arrived refugees were living in the year after they were granted a residence permit shows that many of them had their homes in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, especially in the early period of their residence. After the introduction of the new municipal distribution key in 1999 this tendency became less marked, and the proportion of refugees who were settled in the Capital Region fell from 21.1 percent in the period 1997–2001 to 16.5 percent in 2012–2016, while the proportions settled in other regions of the country increased. Over the whole period 1997–2016 the greatest numbers were settled in the Central Denmark Region and the Region of Southern Denmark, each of which received around 25 percent of the newly arrived refugees. The Capital Region and Region Zealand came next, with 17.9 percent and 17.3 percent respectively, while the remaining 14.5 percent were settled in Northern Jutland. At the end of the analysis period, members of the large groups of refugees from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan had been settled in all the five regions, and while slightly more Iraqis were living in the Capital Region, there were more Somalis in the Central Denmark Region and more Afghans in Zealand.

Research has shown that a concentration of individuals from the same country of origin in a given residential area can have an effect on the refugees' labour market attachment, on the risk of their children becoming involved in criminal activities, and on the voting behaviour of the local population as a whole (Damm, 2014; Damm & Dustmann, 2014; Dustmann et al., 2016). In addition, it has been found that being housed in poor neighbourhoods can increase the risk of developing diabetes (White et al., 2016). It is therefore far from being unimportant where refugees are settled.

From a societal perspective, it is also important that the asylum-seeking process is not damaging to refugees' prospects for successful integration later on. Research indicates that long waiting times for asylum seekers can have adverse psychological consequences for both children and adults, and can engender feelings of powerlessness and inertia. Less is known about whether length of waiting time can have an impact on other factors, such as

acquisition of the language and labour market participation, but the potential negative consequences for health of prolonged waiting times are enough to make this issue a problem. Even though there were signs that waiting times were on the rise again in the second half of 2016, they were still nowhere near as long as the mean waiting times for refugees who received their residence permits during the periods 1995–1996 and 2003–2006. This can be regarded as a positive development for individual asylum seekers arriving in Denmark, even though the reason for the reduced waiting times—that Syrians are in such obvious need of protection—is in itself tragic.

## Appendix 1

The report makes use of several different sources to calculate the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees. Throughout the report, we have chosen only to count refugees who had applied for refugee status for the first time, and who had not previously been recorded in Danish civil registers. As explained in the description of the data in Section 4, this choice is linked to the fact that the calculations in the report describe refugees on the basis of the date of their arrival in Denmark and the date on which they were issued with a residence permit. If we had included people who had resided in Denmark for a period before they sought asylum, this would have skewed the statistics with respect to the numbers of new refugees arriving in Denmark during different periods. Even though it would also be relevant to elucidate settlement patterns, etc. for people who, for example, first arrived in Denmark for family reunification and then later acquired refugee status, this is not the aim of the report.

In Appendix Table 1 and Appendix Figure 1 we compare the two data series used in the calculations of waiting times (Section 6) and of patterns of settlement (Section 8). In addition, we show how much greater the recorded number of refugees would have been if the report had included everyone who was given refugee status at one time or another. In both the table and the figure, refugees are shown according to the date when they were first registered in a Danish municipality. This means that the numbers in the various periods are identical with those in the description in Section 8, but deviate a little from the presentation in Table 6.1.

Appendix Table 1 shows, firstly, that the data series with calculations of waiting times contains the fewest observations. This is not surprising, since this series includes neither quota refugees nor persons with imputed values (i.e. individuals whose formal status is not known, but who are believed with a degree of certainty to be refugees). Furthermore, a small number of refugees have been excluded from this series because there are no valid data available for their date of arrival in Denmark, the date of issue of their residence permit or, in a very few cases, their date of birth.

As stated in the description of Table 6.1, the number of quota refugees very largely explains the difference between data series 1 and data series 2. The remainder of the difference lies in the fact that series 2 includes imputed values. Data series 3 is significantly larger than the other two. This is due in particular to the fact that it includes people who were resident and registered in Denmark before they sought asylum. Data series 3 is the series that will most closely resemble figures from, for example, Statistics Denmark's StatBank or the calculations by the Immigration Service of the annual numbers of people who are granted refugee status, though with the difference that duplicate entries are not included in data series 3.

**Appendix Table 1. Comparison of different data sources for the numbers of refugees in Denmark, shown by date of registration in a Danish municipality**

Period	1993– 1996	1997– 2001	2002– 2006	2007– 2011	2012– 2016	All years
Data series 1: Refugees not previously registered in Denmark and with valid observations for waiting time	28,195	13,830	4,855	5,020	26,013	77,913
Quota refugees in the same periods	1,888	2,308	2,323	2,280	2,031	10,830
Data series 2: Refugees not previously registered in Denmark and with valid observations for background variables, including those with imputed values		19,643	8,363	7,991	29,608	65,605
Of which, imputed		3,445	1,310	1,151	2,209	8,115
Data Series 3: All persons with refugee status, including those with imputed values	34,884	25,832	9,593	8,617	31,071	109,997

Data series 1: Data used in calculations of waiting times (Sections 6 and 7). Based on data from the Immigration Service. Contains only information on refugees who were not recorded in Danish registers before seeking asylum, and for whom valid data are available for dates of application and of issue of a residence permit. Imputed values excluded. Quota refugees are not included, since no data are available for their waiting times.

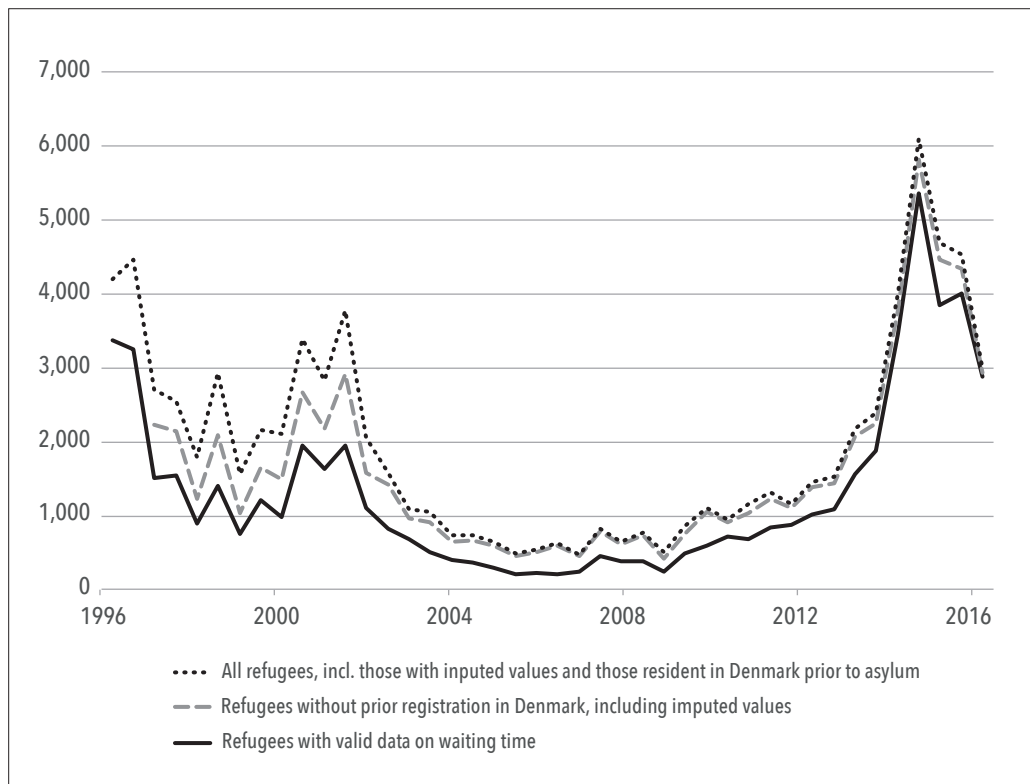
Data series 2: Data used in presentations of places of settlement (Section 8). Based on data from Statistics Denmark ('OPHG' register). Includes only refugees who were not previously registered with other grounds for a residence (or otherwise previously listed in Danish civil registers) before seeking asylum. Persons with imputed values are included if no other information is available. Quota refugees are included.

Data series 3: All persons who have been granted asylum in Denmark and who are registered as refugees. Includes persons with imputed residence permits and those who do not otherwise appear in Danish civil registers (for example, because of very short periods of stay in Denmark). Contains data from both the Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark ('OPHG' register).

General notes: All individuals appear once only in any given data series. Refugees are separated into periods/cohorts according to their date of registration in a municipality. If they were never registered in the migration registers (OPHG or VAN), the year in which they first appeared in Statistics Denmark's population register ('BEF') is used instead.

Appendix Figure 1 shows the same figures as Appendix Table 1, but divided up according to the half year in which the refugees were registered in a Danish municipality. It is apparent from the figure that data series 2 and data series 3 differ from one another mainly at the beginning of the period, and are largely similar from 2004 onward. However, the most important point illustrated by the figure is that all three data series move in parallel. The patterns shown by using one of the series therefore very probably apply equally for the others.

**Appendix Figure 1. Half-yearly numbers of refugees shown according to the half year in which they were registered for the first time in a Danish municipality**



Source: Own calculations based on data from the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark.

## Appendix 2

List of the 145 amendments to Acts of Parliament relevant to the Aliens Act, 1992–2017.

L385 of 20/05/1992, L386 of 20/05/1992, L482 of 24/06/1992, L933 of 28/11/1992, L459 of 30/06/1993, L462 of 30/06/1993, L464 of 30/06/1993, L421 of 01/06/1994, L33 of 18/01/1995, L34 of 18/01/1995, L382 of 14/06/1995, L290 of 24/04/1996, L380 of 22/05/1996, L381 of 22/05/1996, L473 of 12/06/1996, L1052 of 11/12/1996, L407 of 10/06/1997, L410 of 10/06/1997, L980 of 17/12/1997, L473 of 01/07/1998, L474 of 01/07/1998, L1037 of 23/12/1998, L140 of 17/03/1999, L251 of 28/04/1999, L353 of 02/06/1999, L424 of 31/05/2000, L425 of 31/05/2000, L427 of 31/05/2000, L458 of 07/06/2001, L134 of 20/03/2002, L193 of 05/04/2002, L362 of 06/06/2002, L365 of 06/06/2002, L367 of 06/06/2002, L1044 of 17/12/2002, L60 of 29/01/2003, L291 of 30/04/2003, L292 of 30/04/2003, L386 of 28/05/2003, L387 of 28/05/2003, L425 of 10/06/2003, L1204 of 27/12/2003, L283 of 26/04/2004, L427 of 09/06/2004, L428 of 09/06/2004, L429 of 09/06/2004, L323 of 18/05/2005, L324 of 18/05/2005, 402 of 01/06/2005, 403 of 01/06/2005, L243 of 27/03/2006, L301 of 19/04/2006, L429 of 10/05/2006, L532 of 08/06/2006, L538 of 08/06/2006, 89 of 30/01/2007, L379 of 25/04/2007, L504 of 06/06/2007, L505 of 06/06/2007, L507 of 06/06/2007, 264 of 23/04/2008, L431 of 01/06/2008, L485 of 17/06/2008, L486 of 17/06/2008, L1334 of 19/12/2008, L1336 of 19/12/2008, L1397 of 27/12/2008, L1398 of 27/12/2008, L313 of 28/04/2009, 483 of 12/06/2009, L486 of 12/06/2009, L487 of 12/06/2009, L493 of 12/06/2009, L1511 of 27/12/2009, L400 of 21/04/2010, L571 of 31/05/2010, L572 of 31/05/2010, L573 of 31/05/2010, L1542 of 21/12/2010, L1543 of 21/12/2010, L1604 of 22/12/2010, L248 of 30/03/2011, L463 of 18/05/2011, L601 of 14/06/2011, L613 of 14/06/2011, L758 of 29/06/2011, L833 of 06/07/2011, L326 of 11/04/2012, L418 of 12/05/2012, L566 of 18/06/2012, L567 of 18/06/2012, L569 of 18/06/2012, L571 of 18/06/2012, L572 of 18/06/2012, L430 of 01/05/2013, L432 of 01/05/2013, L433 of 01/05/2013, 434 of 01/05/2013, L647 of 12/06/2013, L863 of 25/06/2013, L1605 of 26/12/2013, L1616 of 26/12/2013, L1617 of 26/12/2013, L1618 of 26/12/2013, L1619 of 26/12/2013, L85 of 28/01/2014, L515 of 26/05/2014, L516 of 26/05/2014, L738 of 25/06/2014, L1488 of 23/12/2014, L1500 of 23/12/2014, L1539 of 27/12/2014, L153 of 18/02/2015, L176 of 24/02/2015, L271 of 25/03/2015, L394 of 14/04/2015, L685 of 27/05/2015, L1273 of 20/11/2015, L1499 of 11/12/2015, L1575 of 15/12/2015, L1741 of 2/12/2015, L102 of 03/02/2016, L612 of 08/06/2016, L661 of 08/06/2016, L664 of 08/06/2016, L665 of 08/06/2016, L1561 of 13/12/2016, L1743 of 27/12/2016, L1744 of 27/12/2016, L1745 of 27/12/2016, L81 of 24/01/2017, L188 of 27/02/2017, L189 of 27/02/2017, L228 of 07/03/2017, L235 of 14/03/2017, L249 of 20/03/2017, L436 of 09/05/2017, L476 of 17/05/2017, L504 of 23/05/2017, L505 of 23/05/2017, L506 of 23/05/2017, L701 of 08/06/2017, L702 of 08/06/2017, L703 of 08/06/2017, L704 of 08/06/2017.

## 11 References

- Andersen, Hans Skifter. (2015). *Indvandring, integration og etnisk segregation Udviklingen i indvandrernes bosætning siden 1985*. Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut, Aalborg Universitet.
- Ankestyrelsen. (2014). *Bosniske krigsflygtninge fra medio 90'erne: Fakta om integration*, 2014.
- Brekke, J.-P. (2010). Life on hold: the impact of time on young asylum seekers waiting for a decision. *Diskurs K ndheits- Und Jugendforschung*, 5(2), pp. 159–167.
- Christensen, E., & Vitus Andersen, K. (2006). *Livsvilk r for b rn med familie p  danske asylcentre*. Socialforskningsinstituttet.
- Christensen, L. B., Hallberg, K., Homann, G., Kj r, K. U., Koch, I. E., Lassen, N., Mikkelsen, P.B., Thomassen, H., Vedsted-Hansen, J. (2006). *Udlandingeret* (3. udgave.). K benhavn.: Jurist- og  konomforbundets Forlag.
- Christensen, L.B., Hansen, N-E, Homann, G., J rgensen, E. B., Kj r, K., Kj rum, M., Wendland, L. (2000). *Udlandingeret* (2. udgave.). K benhavn.: Jurist- og  konomforbundets Forlag.
- Damm, A. (2005). *The Danish Dispersal Policy on Refugee Immigrants 1986-1998: A Natural Experiment?* (Working Paper No. 05–3). University of Aarhus, Aarhus School of Business, Department of Economics.
- Damm, A. P. (2009a). Determinants of recent immigrants' location choices: quasi-experimental evidence. *Journal of Population Economics*, 22(1), pp. 145–174.
- Damm, A. P. (2009b). Ethnic Enclaves and Immigrant Labor Market Outcomes: Quasi-Experimental Evidence. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 27(2), 281–314. <https://doi.org/10.1086/599336>
- Damm, A. P. (2014). Neighborhood quality and labor market outcomes: Evidence from quasi-random neighborhood assignment of immigrants. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 79, pp. 139–166.
- Damm, A. P., & Dustmann, C. (2014). Does Growing Up in a High Crime Neighborhood Affect Youth Criminal Behavior? *The American Economic Review*, 104(6), 1806–1832.
- Damm, A. P., Tran s, T., & Schultz-Nielsen, M. L. (2006). *En befolkning deler sig op?* Rockwool Fondens Forskningsenhed. Gyldendal.

Danmarks Statistik. (2014). *Opholdstilladelser på individniveau*.

Departementenes sikkerhets- og serviceorganisasjon Informasjonsforvaltning. (2017). *Integrasjon og tillit Langsiktige konsekvenser av høy innvandring* (Norges offentlige utredninger No. 02).

Dustmann, C., Vasiljeva, K., & Damm, A. P. (2016). Refugee Migration and Electoral Outcomes. *CReAM; Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration*. Retrieved from [http://www.cream-migration.org/publ\\_uploads/CDP\\_19\\_16.pdf](http://www.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_19_16.pdf)

Goosen, S., Stronks, K., & Kunst, A. E. (2014). Frequent relocations between asylum-seeker centres are associated with mental distress in asylum-seeking children: a longitudinal medical record study. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 43(1), pp. 94–104.

Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., & Lawrence, D. (2016). When lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees. *Science Advances*, 2(8), e1600432.

Hallas, P., Hansen, A. R., Stæhr, M. A., Munk-Andersen, E., & Jorgensen, H. L. (2007). Length of stay in asylum centres and mental health in asylum seekers: a retrospective study from Denmark. *BMC Public Health*, 7(1), 288.

Hatton, T. J. (2016). Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Policy in OECD Countries. *American Economic Review*, 106(5), pp. 441–445.

Hviid, K., Jensen, F. W., Olesen, K., & Flyvholm, M.-A. (2010). *Rekruttering af udenlandsk arbejdskraft: Indvanderers arbejdsmiljø og tilknytning til arbejdsmarkedet i Danmark*. Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø (NFA).

Indenrigsministeriet. (1996). *Udlændinge '96. En talmæssig belysning af udlændinge i Danmark*.

Indenrigsministeriet. (1999). *Udlændinge '98. En talmæssig belysning af udlændinge i Danmark*.

Indenrigsministeriet. (2000). *Udlændinge 2000 – En talmæssig belysning af udlændinge i Danmark*.

Indenrigsministeriet. (2001). *Årbog om Udlændinge i Danmark 2001- Status og udvikling*

Jacobsen, B. D., Larsen, N. H., Lassen, N. M., Lindholm, J., & Vedsted-Hansen, J. (2017). *Udlændingeret. Indrejse, Visum, Asyl og Familiesammenføring* (4. udgave). Jurist- og Økonomforbundets Forlag. København.

Justitsministeriet. Lov nr. 153 af 18. februar om ændringer af udlændingeloven (2015).

Justitsministeriet, Udlændingeafdelingen (2015): *Redegørelse for praksis for meddelelse af humanitær opholdstilladelse*. Sagsnr. 2012-945-0002. Dok.1358449.

Laban, C. J., Komproe, I. H., Gernaat, H. B. P. E., & Jong, J. T. V. M. de. (2008). The impact of a long asylum procedure on quality of life, disability and physical health in Iraqi asylum seekers in the Netherlands. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 43(7), 507, pp. 843–851.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjenesten. (2007). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2006*.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjenesten. (2008). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2007*.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjenesten. (2009). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2008*.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjenesten. (2010). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2009*.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingetjenesten. (2011). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2010*.

Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration/ Udlændingestyrelsen. (2006). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2005*.

Ministeriet for flygtninge, udlændinge og integration. (2003). *Årbog om udlændinge i Danmark 2003 status og udvikling*

Mouzourakis, M., Fierens, R., Pollet, K., & Woollard, C. (2016). *AIDA Asylum Information Database Admissibility, responsibility and safety in European asylum procedures*. ECRE European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

Nielsen, C. P., & Jensen, K. en B. (2006). *Integrationslovens betydning for flygtnings bosætning*. København: AKF-Forlag.

Nielsen, S. S., Norredam, M., Christiansen, K. L., Obel, C., Hilden, J., & Krasnik, A. (2008). Mental health among children seeking asylum in Denmark – the effect of length of stay and number of relocations: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 8(1), 293.

Schultz-Nielsen, M. (2017). Labour market integration of refugees in Denmark. *Nordic Economic Policy Review*, pp. 35–58.

Schultz-Nielsen, M. L. (2016). *Hvad bestemmer antallet af asylansøgere til Danmark og resten af Europa?* Rockwool Fondens Forskningsenhed.

Silove, D., Steel, Z., & Watters, C. (2000). Policies of Deterrence and the Mental Health of Asylum Seekers. *JAMA*, 284(5), pp. 604–611.

Starup, P. (2012). *Grundlæggende udlændingeret I*. København: Jurist- og Økonomforbundets Forlag.

Statistical Overview Migration and Asylum 2015. (2016). Denmark.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2007). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2006*.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2008). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2007*.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2009). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2008*.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2010). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2009*.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2011). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2010*.

Udlændingetjenesten. (2012). *Udlændingetjenesten. Årsrapport 2011*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (1999). *Udlændingestyrelsen Årsberetning 1998*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2002a). *Nøgletal på udlændingeområdet 2001*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2002b). *Ny type statistik på asylområdet: Forløbsanalyser i spontane asylsager* (US Statistikserie Nr. 1).

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2003a). *Nøgletal på udlændingeområdet 2002*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2003b). *Udlændingestyrelsen - årsrapport 2002*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2004a). *Nøgletal på udlændingeområdet 2003*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2004b). *Udlændingestyrelsen Årsrapport 2003*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2005a). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2004*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2005b). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2004*.

Udlændingestyrelsen. (2006). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2005*.

- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2012). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2011*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2013a). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2012*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2013b). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2012*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2014a). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2013*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2014b). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2013*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2015a). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2014*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2015b). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2014*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2016a). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2015*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2016b). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2015*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2016c). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2015*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2017a). *Årsrapport 2016*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2017b). *Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet 2016*.
- Udlændingestyrelsen. (2017c). *Udlændingestyrelsen. Årsrapport 2016*.
- Vitus, K. (2010). Waiting Time The de-subjectification of children in Danish asylum centres. *Childhood*, 17(1), pp. 26–42.
- Weiss, N., Djuve, A. B., Hamelink, W., & Zhang, H. (2017). *Opphold i asylmottak. Konsekvenser for levekår og integrering*.
- White, J. S., Hamad, R., Li, X., Basu, S., Ohlsson, H., Sundquist, J., & Sundquist, K. (2016). Long-term effects of neighbourhood deprivation on diabetes risk: quasi-experimental evidence from a refugee dispersal policy in Sweden. *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*, 4(6), pp. 517–524.

## *11.1 Websites consulted*

<http://www.asylumineurope.org/comparator/asylum-procedure>. Accessed 13/10 2017.

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Asylum\\_applicant](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Asylum_applicant). Accessed 20/9/2018.



THE ROCKWOOL  
FOUNDATION

---

Research