

Germany: 38,000 illegal immigrants caught by Federal Police

Figures seen by DW show how many people were caught by German Federal Police after they entered the country illegally between January and November 2018. The total number of illegal arrivals is probably higher.



More than 38,000 people were caught entering Germany illegally between January and November 2018, German Federal Police have told DW.

Over 28,000 people entered Germany by land, with most — some 10,300 — entering from Austria.

By comparison, some 9,270 people arrived illegally at airports and more than 1,120 people at sea ports.

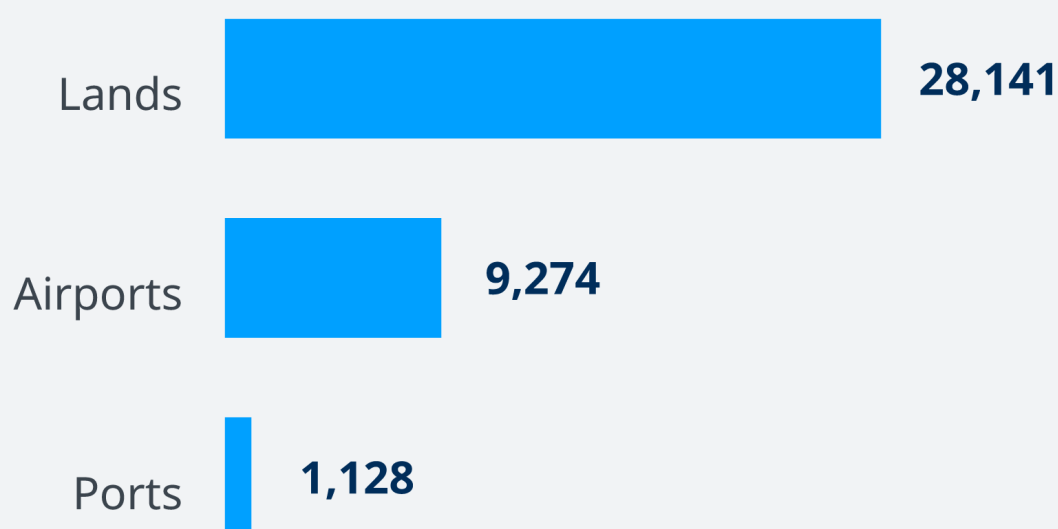
Read more: How do refugees in Germany view Seehofer's tougher migration plan?

Most of the migrants were from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Figures likely too low

The true number of illegal entries was likely higher because the figures did not include the number of people who were not caught after entering the country, police said.

Most illegal immigrants entered Germany on land



Source: German Federal Police

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The figures were also higher for Austria because temporary border checks were most comprehensive along the German-Austria border, they added.

The next highest number of illegal crossings was registered at Germany's border with the Czech Republic (3,931), followed by Switzerland (3,724) and France (3,406).

Read more: Bavaria demands random police checks across Germany

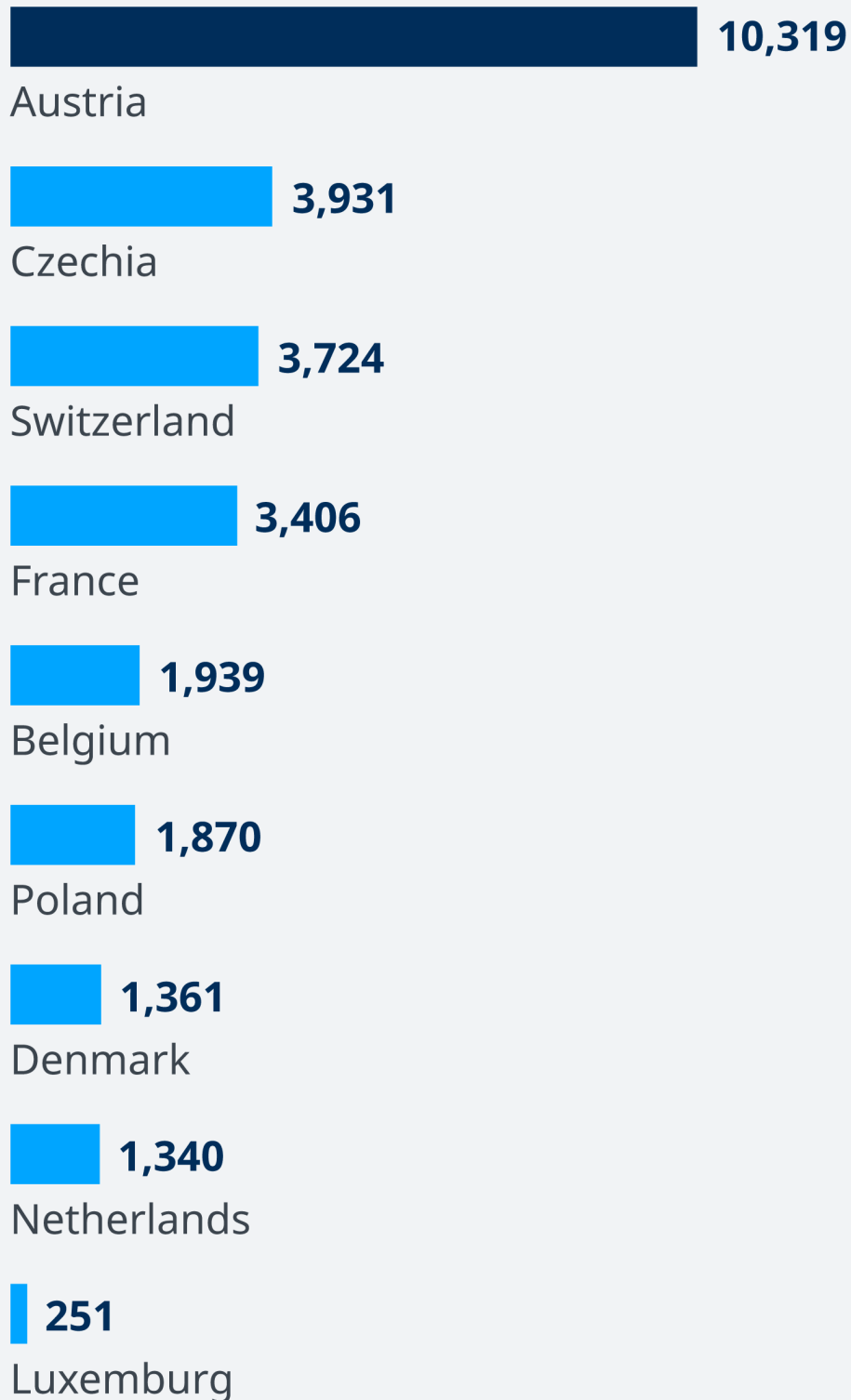
Fall since 2015

Some 14,000 people who entered Germany by land illegally in 2018 traveled on buses or trains, according to figures seen by the *Rheinische Post* newspaper.

The total number of registered illegal arrivals has been falling since the height of the European migration crisis in 2015, when Federal Police caught more than 217,000 people entering the country illegally.

That figure fell to nearly 112,000 in 2016 and again in 2017 to just over 50,000.

Most illegal immigrants entered from Austria



Focus on Austria

German lawmakers have squabbled repeatedly over the country's migration policy since German Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow nearly a million refugees from North Africa and the Middle East enter the country in mid-2015.

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Most refugees entered the country from Austria, prompting the government to reimpose border checks along the German-Austrian border in late 2015. The government stepped up those checks again in June 2018.

Controls along Germany's land border with other countries are less extensive. All of its neighbors are members of the 26-country visa-free Schengen zone.

Police checks of passengers' identity documents on buses and trains may end soon. The European Court of Justice has ruled that Germany's Schengen membership prohibits such controls.

Germany's Federal Administrative Court still needs to review the decision.

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