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NEWSLETTER

STATISTICS

Intercountry adoptions in a year of polycrisis¹

ISS/IRC analyses intercountry adoption (ICA) statistics yearly since its inception, three decades ago. The analysis provides with a global and comprehensive picture on current ICA trends and their evolution throughout the years.

What can we make of the number of ICAs carried out in 2022, given the pressing reality of children's lives globally during the year? [UNICEF](#) described 2022 as a year in which children were growing up in a world of polycrisis, with the ongoing fallout from COVID-19, violent conflicts, climate change and environmental degradation, skyrocketing costs of living and outbreaks of diseases. The global economic crisis exacerbated the deprivations facing the most vulnerable children with 2022 projections showing one in four children living under national poverty lines in 2023, putting the world four years behind the pre-COVID trajectory for child poverty reduction (see [UNICEF Annual Report 2022](#), p.5).

How then is this reflected in the 2022 ICA figures? And most importantly, how do we interpret 2022 ICA figures in comparison with the COVID-19 peak years (2020 and 2021)? Equally so, how do we consider 2022 figures from a decade perspective, in the context of the overall decrease in ICAs since the peak in 2004? Are the 2022 statistics to be seen as a continuation of the ICAs trends during Covid-years (see ISS/IRC [2021](#) and [2020](#) analysis) or rather as a continuation of the trends of the decrease in ICAs that had been observed before the COVID-19 pandemic (see ISS/IRC [2019 analysis](#) for example)?

A constant decrease in ICAs over the decades

The 2022 analysis is based on data from 17 receiving States.

A total of 3323 ICAs were reported to have been completed in 2022, a 14% decrease from the 3884 ICAs reported in 2021, 9.7% decrease from 3683 in 2020 at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic and 47% decrease from 6316 pre COVID in 2019.

¹ A time of great disagreement, confusion and suffering that is caused by many different problems happening at the same time and together have a very big effect ([Cambridge Dictionary](#)).

See Table. No.1 below:

Receiving State ⁱ	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021-22 Fluctuation
United States of America ⁱⁱ	8'668	7'094	6'441	5'648	5'372	4'714	4'059	2'971	1'622	1'785	1435	-19.6%
Italy ⁱⁱⁱ	3'106	2'825	2'206	2'216	1'872	1'439	1'394	1'213	669	680	565	-16.9%
Canada ^{iv}	1'367	1'242	905	895	790	621	658	576	416	384	414	+7.8%
France ^v	1'569	1'343	1'069	815	953	685	614	421	244	252	232	-7.9%
Spain ^{vi}	1'669	1'188	824	799	567	531	445	370	195	171	173	+1.2%
Sweden ^{vii}	466	341	345	336	257	240	185	170	92	118	98	-16.9%
Germany ^{viii}	801 (420)	661 (272)	209	308	213	81	91	85	81	64	81	+26.5%
The Netherlands ^{ix}	488	401	354	304	214	210	156	145	70	75	64	-14.6%
Finland ^x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	67	57	-14.9%
Norway ^{xi}	231	154	142	132	126	127	87	91	41	62	45	-27%
Denmark ^{xii}	219	176	124	97	84	79	64	46	23	32	41	+28%
Switzerland ^{xiii}	212 (314)	169 (280)	105 (226)	104 (197)	91 (101)	82 (69)	58 (79)	72	38	41	35	-14.6%
Belgium ^{xiv}	265	219	144	136	121	133	134	99	80	84	32	-61.9%
Ireland ^{xv}	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	11	18	+63.6%
Australia ^{xvi}	149	129	114	83	82	69	65	57	37	42	16	-61.9%
New Zealand ^{xvii}	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19	16	16	+/-0%
Monaco ^{xviii}	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
TOTAL	19'312	16'053	13'103	11'966	10'752	8'998	8'031	6'316	3'683	3'884	3'323	-14%

There is an evident persistent decrease in ICA over the past 10 years, from 19'312 in 2012 to 3'323 in 2022, an 82.8% decrease. Stepping back a little further and looking at the ICA figures over the past 20 years, the decrease is even more striking, with a staggering 92.6% drop in ICAs from the 2004 peak of 45'482 to 3'323 in 2022. ²

As shown in the above table, individual receiving States level figures reflect this significant decrease over the last decade. For 2022, fluctuations can still be observed. For instance, Australia and Belgium had the most significant decrease in ICAs at 61%, whereas Germany and Ireland who had the most decrease in 2021 have a notable increase in 2022 (26% and 63%) and are not far from their pre-COVID numbers.

With this constant decrease, the landscape of States of origin for ICA has clearly changed over the past 20 years: from top States of origins, China and Russia are now conducting a significantly reduced number of ICAs. ³ However, from a receiving States perspective, USA, Italy, Canada, France and Spain conducted 84.8% of ICAs in 2022, thus remaining the top 5 receiving States for the past 10 years.

A slowdown in collaborations

The overall decrease in ICA figures is in 2022 also reflected in a decrease of collaborations between receiving States and States of origin. Indeed, children were reported to have been adopted from 98 States of origin, a 23.8% decrease from the 126 States of origin reported in 2021. While ISS/IRC assisted a trend of proliferation and diversification in the number of States of origin since [2019](#), the 2022 figures show that less collaborations were pursued.

² See ISS/IRC Statistics over time (available on request); see also, [HCCH Global Statistics 2004-2021](#) showing the decline in ICAs over almost two decades.

³ See further [HCCH Global Statistics 2004-2021](#).

Table No. 2 below shows the top 30 States of origin in 2022 that conducted at least 20 ICAs each.

Country of origin ^{xix}	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Colombia ^{xx}	901	562	355	359	314	542	559	597	387	492	429
India ^{xxi}	362	298	242	233	323	518	456	503	263	432	399
Thailand	251	272	207	172	250	218	215	208	117	267	242
South Korea	797	206	494	406	362	396	303	254	266	227	196
Vietnam ^{xxii}	216	293	285	287	248	356	215	220	108	106	191
Haiti	262	460	551	236	324	398	325	257	209	103	141
Hungary	145	104	77	84	88	233	235	238	158	145	140
Bulgaria ^{xxiii}	350	421	323	262	324	289	201	270	169	205	139
Philippines ^{xxiv}	374	525	405	354	313	304	206	214	112	156	129
Taiwan	291	188	147	172	150	157	109	149	124	97	119
South Africa ^{xxv}	81	147	176	172	103	130	112	113	53	127	85
United States of America ^{xxvi}	178	167	155	160	147	89	140	76	89	94	79
Madagascar ^{xxvii}	46	40	57	77	62	54	40	40	31	30	75
Nigeria	238	225	175	163	139	206	185	140	96	132	54
Jamaica ^{xxviii}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	52	37	36	48
Liberia ^{xxix}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	22	30	51	29	27	43
Cameroon ^{xxx}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	14	11	14	42
Ukraine	713	674	560	339	339	270	280	366	277	310	42
Russia	2,442	1,703	381	210	151	319	260	221	44	49	39
Brazil	337	246	31	32	29	127	38	66	55	35	37
Burundi ^{xxxi}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	40	59	53	36	33	35
Peru ^{xxxii}	122	92	97	79	91	71	56	67	32	31	35
Morocco ^{xxxiii}	102	32	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	35	27	32	34
Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) ^{xxxiv}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	28	ND	41	36	57	33
Burkina Faso ^{xxxv}	87	74	99	56	61	59	37	59	45	37	33
Pakistan ^{xxxvi}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	26	28	8	24
Ghana ^{xxxvii}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	14	3	12	21
Hong Kong ^{xxxviii}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	14	17	12	21
Mexico ^{xxxix}	10	10	19	10	19	6	20	40	23	27	20
Sierra Leone ^{xl}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	34	13	22	20

The top 5 States of origin in 2022 were Colombia (429), India (399), Thailand (242), South Korea (196) and Vietnam (191) representing 43.8% of all ICAs concluded globally. Asian States i.e. India, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, and Taiwan dominated the top 10 States of origins with Colombia, Haiti⁴, Hungary and Bulgaria completing the top 10 list. Like in 2021, most ICAs took place from Asia, followed by Americas, Europe, Africa and lastly Oceania.

New States of origin in the top 30 list include Cameroon, Pakistan and Hong Kong. States that have on the other hand dropped off the top 30 in 2022 include Bolivia with 11 ICAs from 40 in 2021, Dominican Republic (18 from 33), Latvia (12 from 28), and Romania (17 from 29). It is interesting to note that for the first time in the last five years, Romania – a historically significant State of origin - does not appear in the top 30 Stats of origins.

Generally, whilst some States of origin maintained stable adoption figures in 2022, others had slight increases or slight decreases. Ukraine⁵ stood out as an outlier with the most decrease (86.4%) from 310 ICAs in 2021 to 42 in 2022 due to the disruption caused by the Russian invasion. It is also surprising that States like Haiti had an increase in ICAs from 103 in 2021 to 149 in 2022, given the situation in the country (see below).⁶ Some States of origin have more than doubled their numbers in 2022, i.e. Madagascar, Cameroon, Pakistan, Ghana and Hong Kong. It is worrying that

⁴ In 2023 ISS called for firm and coordinated actions to suspend all intercountry adoptions from Haiti given the deteriorating security situation in the country.

⁵ ISS Factsheet Ukraine Crisis and International Standards (March 2022), [US State Department](#). See the developments regularly published within the ISS/CIR Newsletter.

⁶ See UN [CRC Committee's Call for Action](#), [UNICEF, Save the Children](#).

Pakistan was amongst the top 30, despite not having an adoption system⁷ and together with Cameroon⁸ are non-contracting States to the 1993 Hague Adoption Convention. For both States, the legal and practical situation remain complex in terms of applied procedures and existing heterogeneous practices.

Overall continued yet stagnant standard setting in some contexts and areas

The 1993 Hague Convention - As of November 2022, there were [105 contracting States](#) to the 1993 Hague Convention with Botswana the latest country who ratified the Convention in 2022 with entry into force on 1st of March 2023.

Ten of the top 30 States of origins in 2022 are still non-contracting States to the 1993 Hague Convention, namely Cameroon, Jamaica, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Taiwan, and Ukraine. However, 80.2% (2'662) of ICAs conducted in the top 30 States of origins were from contracting States, a data that is consistent with the previous years, i.e. 81% in 2021, 80% in 2020 and 87% in 2019.

Role of adoption accredited bodies (AABs) – In 2022, the role of one of the historical players in ICAs was being rethought and delimited in various national contexts, such as in France and in Germany (see Newsletters n° 261 of July-August 2022 and n°268 September-October 2023). While the recourse to AABs is increasingly made compulsory in certain contexts with the prohibition of private and/or independent adoptions as well as the observed tendency towards public adoption systems, 2022 saw an increased monitoring of the AABs activities, coupled with a significant diminution of their numbers. Yet, according to available 2022 data for certain countries, the majority of ICAs continues to be undertaken through the mediation of AABs (e.g. 70% for France and 57% for Switzerland). This raises numerous questions shared by ISS/IRC on various occasions (e.g. 2015 ISS/IRC comparative study on the financing of AABs; Newsletter n.199 de February 2016) that need to be addressed in ongoing processes in terms of future collaborations, continuity of expertise, public funds for professional AAB's services, etc.

Intrafamily ICAs – Intrafamily ICAs take place towards most receiving States, and sometimes widely from countries that are non-contracting States. However, ISS/IRC wishes to point out that still too few States disaggregate their statistics by indicating whether ICAs occur within or outside a family. Even if represented in ICA data - given that its definition and requirements may vary widely (see [ISS' publication](#) on this topic), these type of adoptions need to be further scrutinised. Indeed, applicable adoption procedures, which in some cases are subject to certain flexibilities - hence less safeguards - still need to ensure that an intrafamily ICA is in the child's best interests. Thus, the involvement of competent authorities in decision-making processes is still required.

Domestic adoption still under-reported

Although some countries provide figures on domestic adoptions such as [Colombia](#) (566 in 2022) or [Bulgaria](#) (372 in 2022), showing the prevalence of the latter over ICA, too few of them still do so in official reports or forms. This lack of data sharing concerns not only States of origin, but also the receiving States. This may as well be explained by a difference in competencies within a country as to whether domestic or intercountry adoption is concerned. Still, the unavailability of this crucial information makes it complicated to determine whether the principle of double subsidiarity is effectively implemented in a given context.

Profile of children in 2022 ICAs

In most States⁹, children adopted internationally are between the age of one and four years old with France having adopted a majority of children younger than 2 years old. In Italy, the median age of adopted children in 2022 was of 6,8 years, a constant feature since a few years. Children adopted to Canada and New-Zealand were aged at least 10 years.

Further, in [Colombia](#), [France](#) (56%), [Italy](#) (55,4%), [Portugal](#) (100% as a State of origin and 20% as a receiving state), children with disabilities were mainly adopted internationally.

⁷ See [ISS 2020 kafalah study](#) pages 190 and following for a detailed analysis of practices in Pakistan.

⁸ The legal situation is still very complex in Cameroun and as per ISS/IRC latest information, the Civil Code reform efforts (aimed at providing a harmonised legal system throughout the country) have not progressed much in recent years. Despite efforts to gain a clearer understanding of the applicable laws and the practices surrounding adoption in Cameroun, the following main findings remain worrisome: the dual system (Civil and Common law regions) which leads to different levels of safeguards depending on the child's region of residence; the lack of clarity on applicable laws, and the difficulty to access all applicable laws; the heterogeneity of adoption practices which are not only dependent on the region but also of the knowledge and understanding of the individual judge in charge (see ISS/IRC Country situation, December 2021).

⁹ See [HCCCH 2022 Country Profiles](#) for e.g. Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo.

In addition to characteristics such as age, gender, and health conditions, it is also noteworthy that the number of States to provide details on the children's backgrounds (adopted from institutions, family of origin, foster care or guardianship) increased in 2022.

Increase in focus and data on search for origins (SFO)

It is promising to note that both States of origin and receiving States have started to provide information on SFO as per [HCCH Country Profiles](#) completed in 2022 and in 2023.¹⁰ However, most States have provided very basic information with only a handful providing more detailed information e.g. Hong Kong. In this optic, the Special Commission held in 2022 led to a consensus on the creation of new information sheets dedicated to the search for origins (see para. 40 of the [Conclusions and Recommendations](#)). Further, since early 2022, the ISS/IRC has been developing specific SFO Factsheets related to SFO procedures in both States of origin and receiving States, with the aim of providing as much guidance as possible to the authorities involved in these increasingly common processes. Therefore, for further country-specific statistical data, ISS/IRC invites its beneficiaries to consult the SFO factsheets on the reserved chapter that cover almost 30 countries as of January 2024.

Though reporting is not yet comprehensive, it should be acknowledged that several States enhanced their efforts giving more attention to SFOs in 2022. Some of the latter do provide detailed information on SFO requests in their respective contexts in their official annual statistical reports. This is for example the case of Ireland but also Australia. For example, in [Ireland](#), as of October 2022, it is reported that more than 1,200 people applied for birth information in the first week after the new 2022 law (see Newsletter n°263 of November-December 2022). As of August 2022, the Authority reported that almost 900 adopted persons and biological parents have registered contact preferences, and between October and December 2022 the Authority received 2'570 applications for the release of information. In [Australia](#), 1'496 applications were lodged to access either identifying or non-identifying information. Most (82% or 1,232) were for identifying information applications, and of these, 915 (75%) were lodged by adoptees. Further, France has indicated to the ISS/IRC having received 157 requests in 2022, and Romania 280 (half of them concerning domestically adopted persons). In Chile, the total number of requests relating to the SFO received by *Servicio Mejor Niñez* was 256, with 234 submissions from Chilean nationals and 22 from foreigners.

The positive change in this field is surely the result of the growing and continued advocacy on the importance of SFO in 2022 that included joint advocacy by adoptee-led organisations e.g. the Swiss organisation 'Back to the Roots' received [public financial support](#) for a pilot programme on SFO in Sri Lanka which initiated in 2022 also articles on p. 22 and 24). In the Netherlands [INEA](#) Centre of Excellence became operational in 2023 base (see d on decisions taken in 2021-22 to promote and support SFO processes, learning and good practice. The Family Law and Parental Support Authority ([MFoF](#)) was commissioned by the Swedish government to provide and promote individual support to ICAs in SFO during 2020-23 and produced a guide to help adoptees in SFO processes. ISS/IRC notes positively that existence of well-established laws/regulations and work protocols on SFO processes appear to become determining factors for States on whether to collaborate with a given country.

Despite these encouraging developments, there is a current need for further professional capacity building in this field aimed at improving SFO practices globally, and ISS based on its expertise and experience stands ready to accompany such initiatives (see also Call for collaborations at p.4).

2022 key trends in short

- Continued global decrease of ICAs with fluctuations during COVID-19 years
- Changes in top 30 States of origin while major receiving States remain the same
- Decrease in ICA numbers reflected in pursue of fewer collaborations
- Overall continued standard setting yet persistence of important ICA numbers from non-contracting States
- Perseverance of grey areas (e.g. 'adoptions' from Sharia law countries; standards applied to intrafamily ICAs)
- Lack of data on domestic adoption, *quid* implementation of the principle of subsidiarity?
- Increased details on children's characteristics and backgrounds

¹⁰ See [HCCH 2022 Country Profiles](#) for the following States of origins i.e. Brazil, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guatemala, Hongkong, Latvia, Mexico, Philippines, Senegal, Thailand, Togo and Vietnam. Also see receiving States i.e. Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA.

- Increased focus and availability of data on search for origins

ISS/IRC Reflections on the 2022 ICA numbers

On reflection, what trends if any, are evident from these 2022 ICA figures?

Beyond the COVID-years

ISS/IRC predictions were accurate in 2021 that the yearly ICA increase in 2021 was likely to do with the completion of ICAs that had been on hold at the peak of the COVID pandemic in 2020 and part of 2021. The decrease in ICAs in 2022 should not be surprising given the world gradually started recovering from the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic at differing pace in 2022. Some States had COVID restrictions that lasted for much longer into 2022 past the global peak of the pandemic e.g. China's [zero Covid](#) policy/lockdowns. The US State Department reports [China's](#) continued suspension of ICAs processing in 2022 left hundreds of adoptions remaining in hiatus. Also, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy and social situation of children continued to unravel in 2022 and beyond negatively impacting children's wellbeing and child protection systems across the world.

Growing insecurity and military conflict

The multiplication of conflicts and the resulting insecurity across the world also had a direct impact on ICAs in 2022, many of these events taking place in "traditional" States of origin. Indeed, given the increased insecurity and general deterioration in the situation in 2022 and 2023, [ISS called for a suspension of ICAs](#) in July 2023. This initiative had been preceded by suspensions of adoptions from Haiti by various receiving States¹¹, who were concerned the situation constitutes major risk factors for the security of their nationals as well with respect of certain key safeguards in adoption procedures, the legality of which, in accordance with the requirements of the 1993 Hague Convention can no longer be guaranteed.

[Russia's invasion](#) of Ukraine in February 2022 disrupted ICAs of children from Ukraine, a top State of origin (3rd globally and the 1st in Europe in 2021, 18 in 2022). With the full-scale war ongoing, already [in March 2022](#) and subsequently [in June 2022](#), ISS had called for a suspension of ICAs from Ukraine and a coordinated approach among States based on applicable standards as well as the [official position](#) of the Ukrainian government. Combined with suspensions from receiving States, the result is a significant decrease in reported ICAs from Ukraine in 2022. While decisions on suspensions/moratoria as well as follow up actions have in the past not always been coordinated among States, Ukraine is a first example with coordinated efforts by receiving States and other stakeholders to stop ICAs during a conflict. To date, however, there is no clear picture on the ICAs that were considered pending at the outbreak of the war. Further, other adoption-related questions remain unanswered, especially regarding the reported mass transfer to Russia and adoption of Ukrainian children by Russian adoptive parents since the war started (see also [joint statement](#) on the forcible transfer, deportation and adoption of children from Ukraine by Russia),¹² as well as the reports of Ukrainian children displaced to different countries in Europe who have/are being adopted back to Ukraine.

Indeed, almost two years into the conflict, where shall be considered the habitual residence of concerned children? Who are the children concerned? How are these adoptions across countries being done and under what circumstances, procedures, and safeguards such as best interests' assessment and determination as well as family tracing? How many have been conducted? ISS/IRC is deploying efforts to further explore these situations, and clarify the legal procedures applied and cross-checked with some on-the-ground information provided by other child rights organisations. For now, it seems that these adoptions are occurring off-record or based on unilateral decision-making processes, that remain currently unclear or invisible and require further exploration. **ISS/IRC is planning to organise a webinar in February 2024 (dates to be announced soon) to share its findings with interested parties.**

¹¹ USA has followed since the publication of ISS' call for suspension.

¹² <https://www.weareukraine.info/there-is-confirmed-information-about-386-ukrainian-children-adopted-in-russia/>
<https://www.coe.int/nb/web/commissioner/-/urgent-action-needed-to-reunite-ukrainian-children-transferred-to-russia-and-russian-occupied-territories-with-their-families>
<https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/humanitarian-research-lab-yale-school-public-health-russias-systematic-program-re-education-adoption-ukraines-children-enruuk>
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/25/fresh-details-russias-forcible-transfer-ukrainian-children>

The impact of global economic crisis

The [UN World Economic Situation and Prospects \(January 2023\)](#) summarised that a series of severe and mutually reinforcing shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and resulting food and energy crises, surging inflation, debt tightening, as well as the climate emergency battered the world economy in 2022. Did these events influence ICA numbers in 2022 and beyond when both States of origin and receiving States were and are still experiencing significant socio-economic and political challenges at State and household level?

Firstly, the exact impact on the situation of children in need of adoption will possibly be visible only in a few years. There is however an apparent risk that the increased economic and social vulnerability of children in poor States may push children into child protection and alternative care system due to poverty at a time when government resources are pressured. How will we then ensure that poverty is not the underlying reason for a child to be subsequently adopted? This will certainly require further actions to effectively implement gatekeeping mechanisms as well as family reintegration processes.

Secondly, would global economic pressures and a decrease in welfare in receiving States as governments tighten public spending, impact support services for adopted children and families (often with special needs requiring specialised support) in receiving States? Also, would different States see a decrease in prospective adopters both for domestic and intercountry adoption? Have they already done so in 2022? For example in a survey by [Adoption UK](#) in December 2022 on the impact of cost of living on adoption, 9 out of 10 prospective adopters in the UK said cost of living increases were a significant factor in the decisions they were making about becoming an adoptive parent e.g. the number of siblings they could consider parenting and the amount of adoption leave they could take. 89% of existing adopters were worried that access to therapy could be affected by cost increases. 82% said they were concerned that competition for resources could mean support for their child in school will be scarcer.

Continued strengthening of integrated child protection systems

Despite the already visible or expected impact of the global economic crisis on existing child protection systems, ISS/IRC saw in 2022 continued efforts on consolidating child protection and alternative care systems around the world, which surely is contributing to the global ICA decline.

Indeed, there is growing global attention¹³, technical assistance and advocacy regarding [care](#) reform in typical States of origins. There ongoing efforts concern notably law reforms, deinstitutionalisation processes transitioning from institutional care to family-based care (e.g. ISS project in Chile launched in 2022; see also article on p. 26), focus on family reintegration processes (see [ISS guide for Haiti](#)), recognition of kinship care, both at national and cross-border levels (see [ISS international principles and recommended practice](#)), increased recourse to foster care and/or other family-based care options (e.g. article on kafala in Egypt, see Newsletter n°264 of January – February 2023), focus on particularly vulnerable profiles of children, such as unaccompanied and separated children (ISS/IRC 2022 Annual Report) as well as domestic adoptions (see also ISS/IRC capacity building project in Honduras -ISS/IRC 2022 Annual Report).

Ongoing investigations of past illicit adoption practices, ICA system reforms and review of collaborations

As in 2020 and 2021, more receiving States conducted or started to conduct investigations, reforms, suspensions, review of collaborations e.g. Switzerland, Netherlands (suspension of ICAs whilst investigation was conducted and reviewed and limited collaborations in 2022), France (See Newsletter n°268 of September – October 2023), Flemish government (review of collaborations – see section Briefs and Brief of Newsletter n°267 of July-August 2023) or Latvia (suspending ICAs towards the USA – see [US](#) Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption, July 2023). Uncovering past practices has also become a reality in States of origin, such as [South Korea](#), where an academic study was commissioned on the human rights situation of intercountry adoptees. These processes have certainly induced recent changes in collaborations with fewer AABs and States of origins, which can thus explain the observed decline in number of States of origin globally, as mentioned above. Some States of origin in turn have also started to review their collaborations with receiving States based on criteria such as PAPs increased openness to adopt older children, sibling groups as well as children with severe health conditions, the quality of post-adoption services, the legal certainty and speediness of adoption proceedings.

¹³ [Better Care Network](#) on kinship care, Transforming Children's Care Collaborative, [Regional](#) learning platform on care reform in Eastern and Southern Africa, [Changemakers for Children](#).

Of note in 2022 was also the continued political and public/social sentiments about ICA in some receiving States as well as States of origins, in light of historic and systematic illicit adoption practices that are uncovered, as well as the increased international attention to these matters (see [Joint UN Statement in 2022](#)).

In sum, the 2022 ICA figures reflect certain trends observed in previous two years of COVID-19, proactive reviews of adoption practices and collaborations by States and the continued decline in ICA over the decade. Military conflicts and growing insecurity were significant factors in 2022 but also an example of good, coordinated actions by different stakeholders to safeguard children by calling for no ICAs in times of conflicts such as in Ukraine. The growing impetus on global care reform advocacy and implementation projects in 2022 focused on improving child protection and alternative care systems in states of origin is also to be celebrated. With the war in Ukraine ongoing into 2023 and new conflicts at the horizon, continuing active care reform and more anticipated ICA investigations and reviews of ICA collaborations in 2023 and the years to come, the landscape of ICA will surely continue to evolve significantly in the coming years. Going forward, close attention should also be paid to reporting on domestic adoption as well as intrafamily ICA, and to what is being done in both States of origin and receiving States regarding SFO.

ISS/IRC reflections in short

- ICA numbers still impacted by the COVID-19 measures and consequences
- Military conflicts and growing insecurity as other determining factors
- Continued consolidation efforts of child protection and alternative care systems
- ICA landscape and needs likely to be further impacted by the economic crisis as well as ongoing reform and review processes

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ⁱ Where a source is not specifically indicated, statistics reported to the [Hague Conference on Private International Law \(HCCH\)](#) have been used.

ⁱⁱ These [statistics](#) are based on the fiscal year as applied in the US.

ⁱⁱⁱ Intercountry adoption statistics for the years 2016 to 2022 were provided to ISS/IRC by the Italian Central Authority. The 2022 National Statistics Report produced by the Italian Central Authority is available at the [following link](#).

^{iv} For 2012 and 2015 to 2018, statistics were provided to the ISS/IRC by the Canadian Federal Central Authority. Data for 2013, 2014, 2019 and 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the HCCH. The statistics for 2020-2021 were provided to the ISS/IRC by the Canadian Central Authority.

^v The data for 2021 are those available on the [MAI](#) (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) website as well as on the [French official statistics website](#). Data for 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the [HCCH](#). The 2022 National Statistics Report produced by the French Central Authority is available at the [following link](#).

^{vi} Data until 2021 includes statistics from all Autonomous Communities and has been provided to the ISS/IRC by the Spanish Central Authority. Data for 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the [HCCH](#).

^{vii} For 2017-2019, statistics have been provided by the Swedish Central Authority. Data for the years 2016 and 2020-2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the [HCCH](#).

^{viii} For the period 2014-2019, the ISS/IRC used various sources (*Statistisches Bundesamt*, statistics provided by the country to the HCCH). For 2020-2022, the German Federal Central Authority, *Bundesamt für Justiz*, provided the statistics presented in the table to the ISS/IRC and the HCCH. However, the Federal Central Authority made it clear that these figures only include adoptions that took place in a country that is a Contracting Party to the 1993 Hague Convention and that were mediated by a German accredited adoption body or by a regional Central Authority. Furthermore, these statistics do not include private and independent adoptions.

^{ix} Data for 2022 have been provided to the ISS/IRC by the Dutch Central Authority.

^x The ISS/IRC has chosen to add Finland from the year 2020 onwards in the compilation of its statistics. The data for 2021 was provided by the Finnish Adoption Board. In order not to distort the statistics published in recent years by the ISS/IRC, the statistics for previous years (2012-2019) are not included in the total but are available at the [following link](#). Data for 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the [HCCH](#).

^{xi} Data for 2019 are based on statistics provided by the country to HCCH. Data for 2020-2022 have been provided to ISS/IRC by the Norwegian Central Authority, *Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet*.

^{xii} The data for 2019-2022 has been provided to the ISS/IRC by the Danish Central Authority and is available at the [following link](#).

^{xiii} Several sources were used for the period 2014-2020 (Federal Statistical Office, Swiss Central Adoption Authority, statistics provided by the country to the HCCH). In 2019, the Swiss Federal Central Authority has decided to revise its data compilation and analysis system, so that an intercountry adoption is recorded based on the time of arrival of the child in Switzerland over a certain year. Previously, the data analysis was based on the year in which the adoption decision was issued. Swiss intercountry adoption figures have been adjusted up to 2008 using this new method, which is why the ISS/IRC decided to highlight the differences in the table above. Data based on the old system is provided in brackets. Data for 2021-2022 are those provided by Switzerland to the [HCCH](#).

^{xiv} The ISS/IRC has included Belgium in its collection of statistics since 2014. The data for the years 2014, 2017, 2019 and 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the HCCH. In 2015, the statistics were provided by the Belgian Federal Central Authority. For 2018, the statistics were provided by the [Federal Public Service Justice](#). For 2016, the data was provided by the French and Flemish Community Central Authorities. They related to children who were physically received by their adoptive families, although the adoption was sometimes formally pronounced months or years later. For 2020-2021, the data is based on statistics provided by the Belgian Federal Central Authority.

^{xv} Data for 2021 has been obtained from the HCCH website. The ISS/IRC has chosen to add Ireland from the year 2020 onwards in the compilation of its statistics. In order not to distort the statistics published in recent years by the ISS/IRC, the statistics for previous years (2012-2019) are not included in the total but are available at the [following link](#). Data for 2022 have been provided by the Irish Central Adoption Authority.

^{xvi} The 2020 statistics are based on the fiscal year as applied in Australia which runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. The 2021 statistics are based on the fiscal year from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. The 2022 statistics are based on the fiscal year from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 (see [link](#)).

^{xvii} The ISS/IRC has chosen to add New Zealand from the year 2020 in the compilation of its statistics. The 2020 statistics are based on the fiscal year as applied in New Zealand which runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. The 2021 statistics are for the fiscal year 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. In order not to distort the statistics published in recent years by the ISS/IRC, statistics for previous years (2012-2019) are not included in the total but are available at the [following link](#). Data for 2022 are based on statistics provided by the country to the [HCCH](#).

^{xviii} The ISS/IRC has chosen to add Monaco from the year 2022 in the compilation of its statistics. Data for 2022 have been provided to the ISS/IRC by the Monegasque Central Adoption Authority.

^{xix} Where a source is not specifically indicated, statistics are based on those of the main receiving States. ISS/IRC has chosen here to propose an overview of States of origin having made at least 20 ICAs during the year 2022. Variations with the statistics provided by States of origin to HCCH may exist and may be related to the different methods of accounting for an intercountry adoption between States of origin and receiving States.

In addition, in recent years, several countries, such as Germany, Australia, Italy, Norway and Switzerland, list certain countries of origin in general categories, such as "several Asian countries" or "other countries". As a result, it was impossible to determine the precise origin of these adopted children. By using the standard HCCH model, this problem seems to have been solved.

^{xx} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 420 intercountry adoptions in 2022, 485 in 202 and 435 in 2020.

^{xxi} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 417 intercountry adoptions in 2020 and 414 in 2021.

^{xxii} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 246 intercountry adoptions in 2020 and 160 in 2021.

^{xxiii} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 178 intercountry adoptions in 2020, 208 in 202 and 146 in 2022.

^{xxiv} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 95 intercountry adoptions in 2020.

^{xxv} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 139 intercountry adoptions in 2021.

^{xxvi} It should be noted that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) mention 42 intercountry adoptions in 2020.

^{xxvii} This country was added in 2018. Data for the years 2012-2017 are based on statistics provided by the country to HCCH. Data for 2018-2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving states.

^{xxviii} This country was added in 2021. Data for the period 2019-2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving states.

^{xxix} This country was added in 2019. Data for 2017-2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving states.

^{xxx} This country was added in 2022. Data for 2019-2022 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving states.

^{xxxi} This country was added in 2019. For 2017 and 2018, this is the sum of data provided by the US Department of State (USA); *France Diplomatie* (France); and the *Commissione per le Adozioni Internazionali* (Italy). Data for 2019 and 2020 are based on statistics from the main host states.

^{xxxii} This country was added in 2019. Data for the years 2012 to 2018 are based on statistics provided by the country to HCCH. Data for 2019 and 2020 are from the main host states. Please note that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) indicate 34 intercountry adoptions in 2020 and 64 intercountry adoptions in 2019.

^{xxxiii} This country was added in 2019. Data for 2019 and 2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving states. Data for 2012-2013 are taken from ISS/IRC kafalah statistics (see: Status report on Morocco, August 2017).

^{xxxiv} This country was added in 2019. Data for 2019 and 2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving states. Statistics for 2017 are based on [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#).

^{xxxv} This country was added in 2018. Statistics for 2012 to 2018 are based on statistics provided by the country to HCCH. Data for 2019 and 2020 are based on statistics from the main receiving States. Note that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) indicate 27 intercountry adoptions in 2021.

^{xxxvi} This country was added in 2022. Data for 2019-2022 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving states.

^{xxxvii} This country was added in 2022. Data for 2019-2022 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving states.

^{xxxviii} This country was added in 2022. Data for 2019-2022 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving states. Note that the [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#) indicate 18 intercountry adoptions in 2022.

^{xxxix} Data for 2012-2018 are based on [statistics provided by the country to the HCCH](#). Data for 2019 and 2020 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving States; please note that the [statistics provided by Mexico to the HCCH for 2019](#) only mention nine intercountry adoptions in 2019.

^{xl} This country was added in 2019. Data for 2019-2021 are based on statistics provided by the main receiving states.