

CIES Football Observatory  
Monthly Report 100 / May 2025

# FOOTBALL EXPATRIATES 2020-2025





# INTRODUCTION

















































The 100th Monthly Report of the CIES Football Observatory analyses the origins and destinations of expatriate footballers, i.e. those who did not grow up in the association of the club of employment, for the period between 2020 and 2025. For each of the six years investigated, the sample is made up of players present on 1 May in the first team squad of clubs in 135 leagues around the world.

The concept of expatriates defines footballers playing outside the association where they grew up, which they left for reasons directly linked to football. The only exception is players who grew up in an association other than that of the club of employment, but the latter participates in a league of the association where the player grew up. For example, English players at Welsh clubs playing in English leagues, etc.

# EXPATRIATES WORLDWIDE

The analysis of the distinct number of expatriates recorded between 2020 and 2025 by national origin shows that no country has exported as many players as Brazil. More than 3,000 footballers who grew up in Brazil played in the 135 leagues studied during this period (3,020). France (2,293 players) and Argentina (2,171) round out the podium of the biggest exporting nations.

Number of expatriates between 2020 and 2025, by origin

1		Brazil	3,020	<div></div>	26		Austria	372	<div></div>
2		France	2,293	<div></div>	27		Paraguay	363	<div></div>
3		Argentina	2,171	<div></div>	28		Switzerland	351	<div></div>
4		England	1,510	<div></div>	29		Ireland	340	<div></div>
5		Spain	1,106	<div></div>	30		Norway	332	<div></div>
6		Germany	1,095	<div></div>	31		Cameroon	327	<div></div>
7		Colombia	1,077	<div></div>	32		Slovakia	321	<div></div>
8		Nigeria	926	<div></div>	33		Greece	319	<div></div>
9		Serbia	915	<div></div>	34		Australia	289	<div></div>
10		Croatia	855	<div></div>	35		Mexico	283	<div></div>
11		Netherlands	812	<div></div>	36		Scotland	270	<div></div>
12		Portugal	783	<div></div>	37		Czech Republic	259	<div></div>
13		Uruguay	750	<div></div>	38		Poland	259	<div></div>
14		Ghana	677	<div></div>	39		Slovenia	254	<div></div>
15		Belgium	625	<div></div>	40		Venezuela	249	<div></div>
16		Sweden	550	<div></div>	41		South Korea	238	<div></div>
17		Ukraine	530	<div></div>	42		Ecuador	217	<div></div>
18		Senegal	511	<div></div>	43		Canada	207	<div></div>
19		Denmark	498	<div></div>	44		Mali	202	<div></div>
20		Ivory Coast	484	<div></div>	45		Romania	197	<div></div>
21		Russia	456	<div></div>	46		Montenegro	196	<div></div>
22		USA	450	<div></div>	47		Georgia	193	<div></div>
23		Japan	422	<div></div>	48		Hungary	186	<div></div>
24		Italy	413	<div></div>	49		North Macedonia	182	<div></div>
25		Bosnia/Herzeg.	383	<div></div>	50		Finland	159	<div></div>



# EXPATRIATES IN EUROPE

When it comes to European leagues, France is the biggest exporting nation. No fewer than 2,080 players who grew up in France played in the 83 leagues of the UEFA member associations studied between 2020 and 2025. With 2,009 expatriates, Brazilians were almost as numerous, while the third greatest exporting country, England, is much further behind (1,323 players).



















































Number of expatriates in Europe between 2020 and 2025, by origin

1		France	2,080		26		Slovakia	313	
2		Brazil	2,009		27		Greece	308	
3		England	1,323				Norway	308	
4		Germany	996		29		Japan	276	
5		Serbia	839		30		Colombia	264	
		Spain	839		31		Czech Republic	252	
7		Croatia	827		32		Poland	245	
8		Nigeria	774		33		Slovenia	244	
9		Netherlands	739		34		Cameroon	242	
10		Portugal	710		35		Scotland	241	
11		Argentina	696		36		Australia	196	
12		Belgium	603		37		Uruguay	190	
13		Ghana	522		38		Romania	185	
14		Ukraine	510		39		North Macedonia	180	
15		Sweden	492		40		Georgia	177	
16		Denmark	470		41		Montenegro	176	
17		Russia	435		42		Hungary	175	
18		Senegal	413		43		Mali	155	
19		Ivory Coast	382		44		Finland	151	
20		Italy	373		45		Belarus	141	
21		Bosnia/Herzeg.	370		46		Canada	133	
22		Austria	362		47		Gambia	129	
23		USA	328		48		Iceland	124	
24		Ireland	326		49		Bulgaria	119	
25		Switzerland	320		50		Israel	117	

# EXPATRIATES IN THE AMERICAS

Of the 28 leagues investigated in the Americas, Argentinians are by far the most represented among expatriates with no fewer than 1,580 distinct footballers over the six years analysed. This is almost twice as many as the second largest exporting country, Colombia (859 players). Uruguay is in third place with 613 expatriates, an impressive figure with respect to the country's small size.

Number of expatriates in the Americas between 2020 and 2025, by origin

1		Argentina	1,580	<div></div>	.		Netherlands	30	I
2		Colombia	859	<div></div>	27		Cameroon	29	I
3		Uruguay	613	<div></div>	.		Denmark	29	I
4		Paraguay	344	<div></div>	.		Sweden	29	I
5		Brazil	339	<div></div>	30		El Salvador	27	I
6		Mexico	203	<div></div>	31		Bolivia	26	I
7		Venezuela	184	<div></div>	32		Japan	25	I
8		Ecuador	176	<div></div>	33		Norway	23	I
9		Panama	140	<div></div>	34		Australia	21	I
10		Spain	125	<div></div>	.		Scotland	21	I
11		Chile	116	<div></div>	.		Trinidad and Tobago	21	I
12		England	111	<div></div>	37		Switzerland	20	I
13		USA	98	<div></div>	38		Senegal	19	I
14		France	91	<div></div>	39		New Zealand	18	I
15		Canada	79	<div></div>	.		Serbia	18	I
16		Costa Rica	78	<div></div>	41		Ivory Coast	17	I
.		Honduras	78	<div></div>	42		Poland	16	I
18		Germany	60	<div></div>	43		Belgium	15	I
19		Ghana	59	<div></div>	.		Dominican Republic	15	I
20		Peru	48	<div></div>	.		Haiti	15	I
21		Nigeria	44	<div></div>	46		Ireland	13	I
22		Jamaica	43	<div></div>	.		South Africa	13	I
23		Portugal	37	<div></div>	48		Guatemala	12	I
24		Cuba	36	<div></div>	49		Croatia	10	I
25		Italy	30	<div></div>	.		Finland	10	I

# EXPATRIATES IN ASIA

Brazil is clearly the most represented origin among football expatriates in the 20 Asian leagues surveyed: 1,027 distinct players between 2020 and 2025. The number of players from the other main exporting nations is much lower. They exceed 200 in only two other cases: Spain (243 expatriates) and France (201). Japan and South Korea top the list for Asian nations.

Number of expatriates in Asia between 2020 and 2025, by origin

1		Brazil	1,027		26		Georgia	33	
2		Spain	243		27		Bosnia/Herzeg.	32	
3		France	201		.		Egypt	32	
4		Japan	153		.		Tunisia	32	
5		South Korea	141		30		Algeria	30	
6		Serbia	137		.		Switzerland	30	
7		England	130		32		Iran	29	
8		Nigeria	123		.		Mali	29	
9		Ghana	120		.		Uruguay	29	
10		Netherlands	110		35		Russia	28	
11		Portugal	106		36		New Zealand	26	
12		Australia	102		37		Ukraine	25	
13		Argentina	98		38		Italy	23	
14		Germany	82		39		Romania	22	
15		Croatia	71		40		Norway	21	
16		Senegal	66		.		Syria	21	
17		Colombia	61		42		Iraq	20	
18		Sweden	58		.		Singapore	20	
19		Cameroon	55		44		Austria	19	
20		Ivory Coast	52		.		Denmark	19	
.		Morocco	52		.		Jordan	19	
22		Uzbekistan	43		.		Oman	19	
23		USA	35		48		Greece	18	
24		Belgium	34		.		Scotland	18	
.		Montenegro	34		.		Tajikistan	18	

# BRAZILIAN EXPATRIATES

The number of Brazilian players abroad fell slightly between 2020 and 2022, before rising to reach a new record on 1 May 2025: 1,418 expatriates. While Portugal remains the main destination for Brazilian expatriates, between 2020 and 2025, the number of Brazilians in Portugal fell significantly: from 238 to 182 (-23%). Over the entire period, no fewer than 643 Brazilians played in Portugal, far more than in the second main destination: Japan (199).

## Evolution

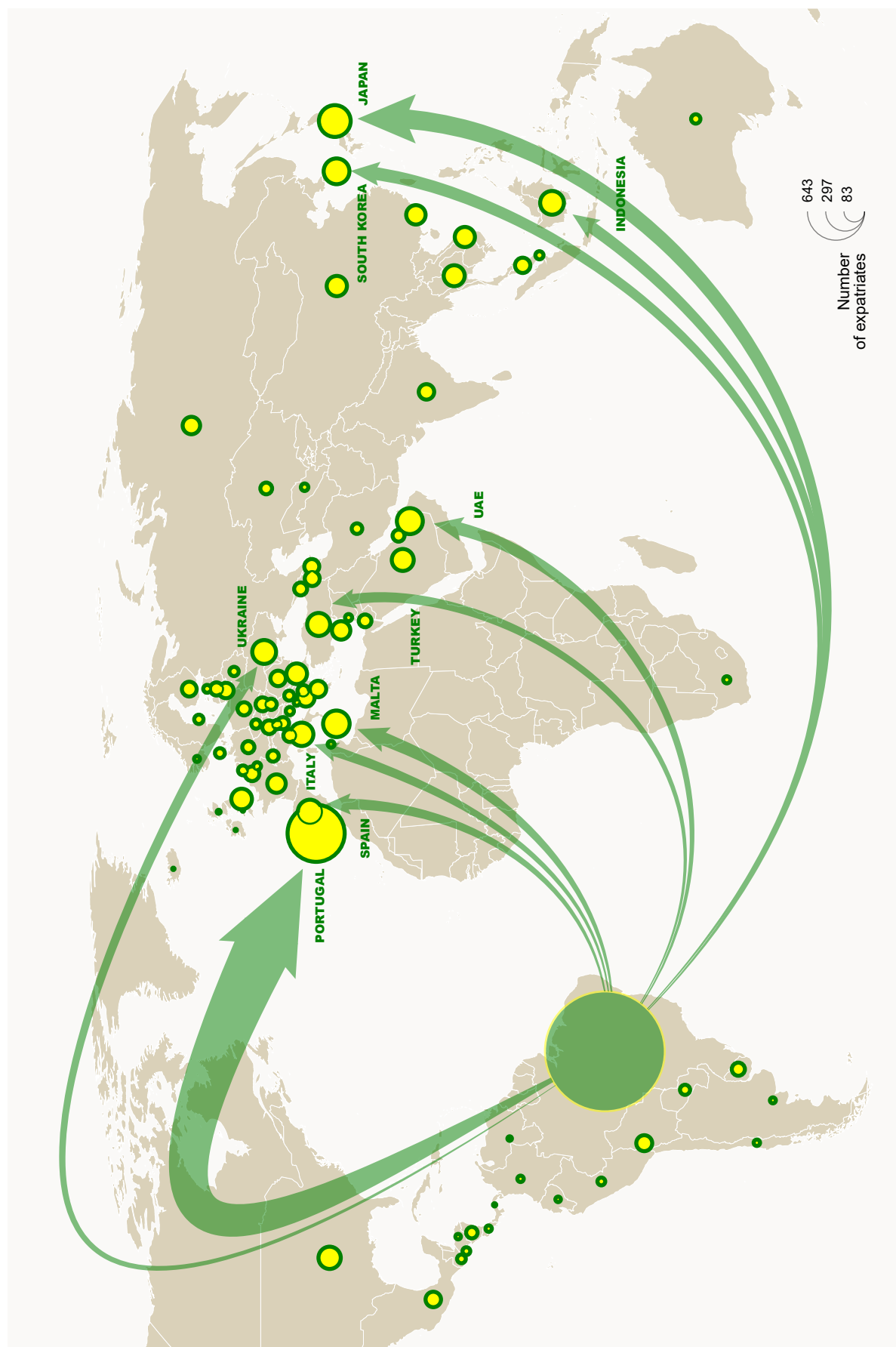
2020	1,252	<div></div>
2021	1,244	<div></div>
2022	1,222	<div></div>
2023	1,294	<div></div>
2024	1,345	<div></div>
2025	1,418	<div></div>

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Portugal	643 <div></div>	238 <div></div>	182 <div></div>	-56 <div></div>
2	Japan	199 <div></div>	63 <div></div>	88 <div></div>	+25 <div></div>
3	Malta	139 <div></div>	40 <div></div>	37 <div></div>	-3 <div></div>
4	United Arab Emirates	133 <div></div>	42 <div></div>	54 <div></div>	+12 <div></div>
5	South Korea	131 <div></div>	22 <div></div>	67 <div></div>	+45 <div></div>
6	Spain	114 <div></div>	48 <div></div>	29 <div></div>	-19 <div></div>
7	Ukraine	112 <div></div>	30 <div></div>	43 <div></div>	+13 <div></div>
8	Indonesia	111 <div></div>	25 <div></div>	57 <div></div>	+32 <div></div>
9	Italy	108 <div></div>	64 <div></div>	31 <div></div>	-33 <div></div>
10	Turkey	104 <div></div>	38 <div></div>	32 <div></div>	-6 <div></div>
11	USA	98 <div></div>	26 <div></div>	37 <div></div>	+11 <div></div>
12	Saudi Arabia	95 <div></div>	29 <div></div>	28 <div></div>	-1 <div></div>
13	Thailand	87 <div></div>	27 <div></div>	35 <div></div>	+8 <div></div>
14	England	84 <div></div>	24 <div></div>	41 <div></div>	+17 <div></div>
.	Bulgaria	84 <div></div>	25 <div></div>	25 <div></div>	= <div></div>
16	China PR	81 <div></div>	30 <div></div>	31 <div></div>	+1 <div></div>
17	Vietnam	80 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	33 <div></div>	+17 <div></div>
18	Hong Kong	74 <div></div>	31 <div></div>	38 <div></div>	+7 <div></div>
19	Cyprus	67 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	21 <div></div>	+5 <div></div>
.	France	67 <div></div>	28 <div></div>	18 <div></div>	-10 <div></div>



Destinations of Brazilian players (2020-2025)





# FRENCH EXPATRIATES

French players are increasingly sought after by foreign clubs. The number of footballers who grew up in France active abroad in the leagues studied has risen steadily between 2020 and 2025. A new record of 1,189 French expatriates was reached on 1 May this year (+372 compared to 2020, +46%). In terms of main destinations, the top three are Luxembourg, Belgium and Italy.

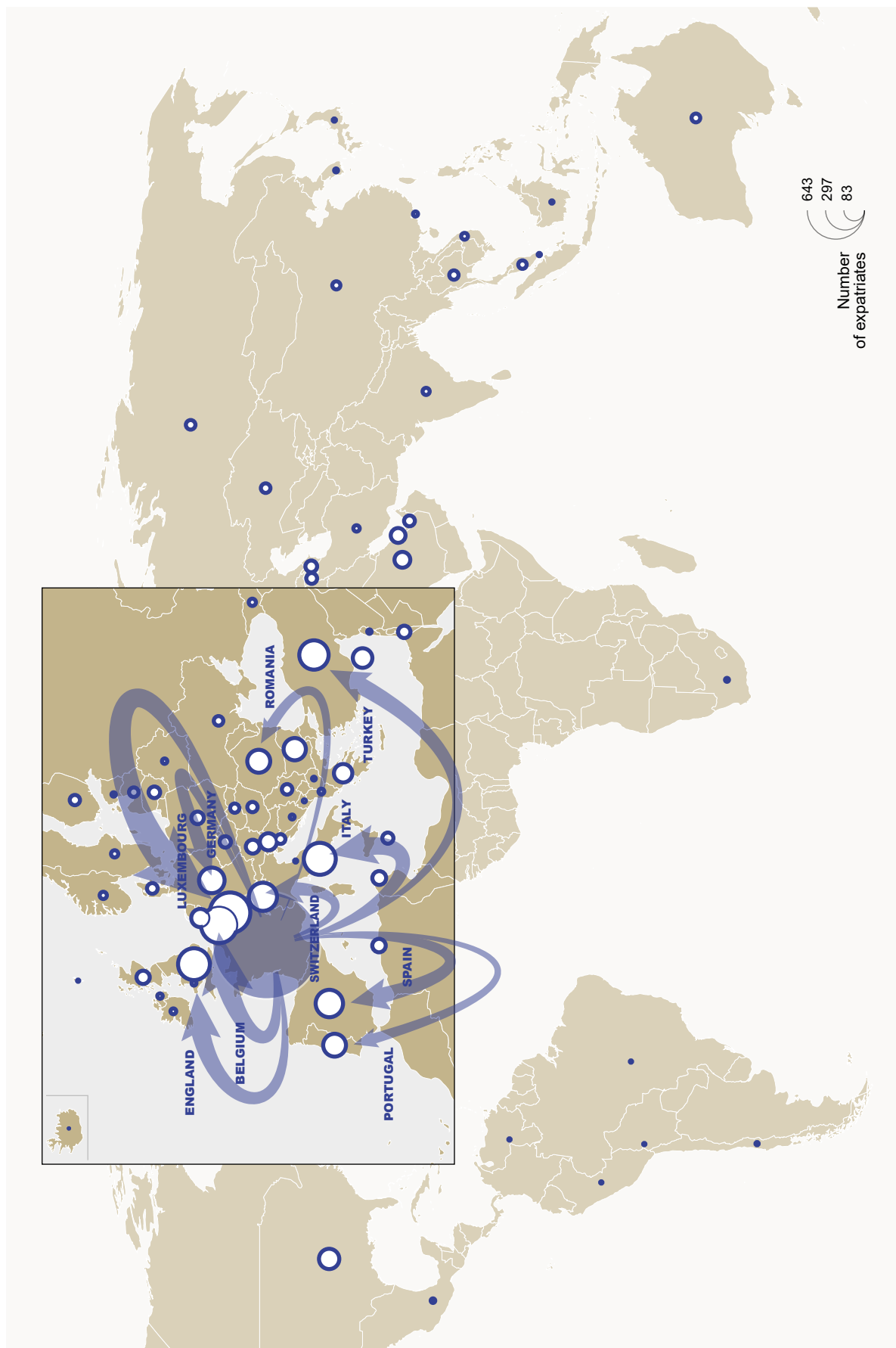
## Evolution

2020	817	<div></div>
2021	941	<div></div>
2022	982	<div></div>
2023	1'034	<div></div>
2024	1'086	<div></div>
2025	1'189	<div></div>

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Luxembourg	344 <div></div>	78 <div></div>	139 <div></div>	+61 <div></div>
2	Belgium	276 <div></div>	70 <div></div>	84 <div></div>	+14 <div></div>
3	Italy	214 <div></div>	62 <div></div>	93 <div></div>	+31 <div></div>
4	England	212 <div></div>	91 <div></div>	62 <div></div>	-29 <div></div>
5	Turkey	180 <div></div>	59 <div></div>	63 <div></div>	+4 <div></div>
6	Switzerland	166 <div></div>	33 <div></div>	71 <div></div>	+38 <div></div>
7	Spain	157 <div></div>	54 <div></div>	65 <div></div>	+11 <div></div>
8	Germany	137 <div></div>	42 <div></div>	63 <div></div>	+21 <div></div>
9	Romania	110 <div></div>	29 <div></div>	37 <div></div>	+8 <div></div>
10	Portugal	109 <div></div>	24 <div></div>	41 <div></div>	+17 <div></div>
11	Bulgaria	104 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	35 <div></div>	+21 <div></div>
12	USA	81 <div></div>	25 <div></div>	37 <div></div>	+12 <div></div>
13	Cyprus	80 <div></div>	15 <div></div>	26 <div></div>	+11 <div></div>
14	Greece	71 <div></div>	18 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	-2 <div></div>
15	Netherlands	69 <div></div>	13 <div></div>	27 <div></div>	+14 <div></div>
16	Slovenia	61 <div></div>	4 <div></div>	19 <div></div>	+15 <div></div>
17	Saudi Arabia	49 <div></div>	10 <div></div>	26 <div></div>	+16 <div></div>
18	Qatar	43 <div></div>	17 <div></div>	19 <div></div>	+2 <div></div>
19	Austria	40 <div></div>	4 <div></div>	20 <div></div>	+16 <div></div>
-	Tunisia	40 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	+4 <div></div>

Destinations of French players (2020-2025)





# ARGENTINIAN EXPATRIATES

Like the French, more and more Argentini-  
ans are joining foreign clubs. Their numbers  
have also increased every single year from  
2020 to 2024 and then remained at a very  
high level: 989 expatriates (+216 players,  
+28%). The three main foreign destinations  
for Argentini-  
ans are in the Americas, with Chile in first  
place and a sharp increase in Peru. Spain is  
the country of choice outside the Americas.

### Evolution

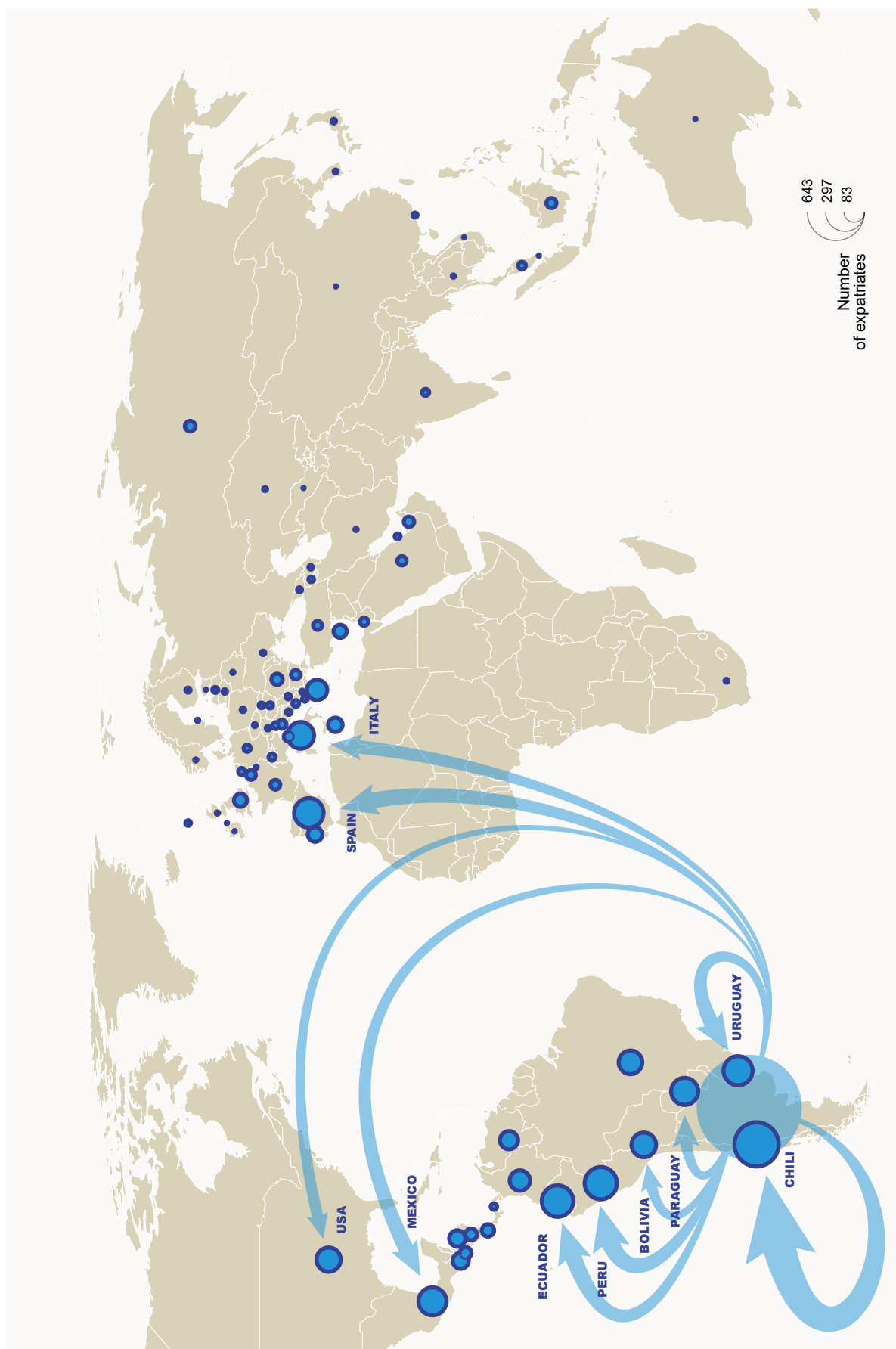
2020	773	<div></div>
2021	764	<div></div>
2022	814	<div></div>
2023	908	<div></div>
2024	992	<div></div>
2025	989	<div></div>

### Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Chile	384 <div></div>	111 <div></div>	120 <div></div>	+9 <div></div>
2	Peru	205 <div></div>	34 <div></div>	98 <div></div>	+64 <div></div>
3	Ecuador	195 <div></div>	51 <div></div>	48 <div></div>	-3 <div></div>
4	Spain	171 <div></div>	59 <div></div>	42 <div></div>	-17 <div></div>
5	Uruguay	166 <div></div>	22 <div></div>	72 <div></div>	+50 <div></div>
6	Mexico	154 <div></div>	67 <div></div>	39 <div></div>	-28 <div></div>
7	Paraguay	144 <div></div>	30 <div></div>	50 <div></div>	+20 <div></div>
8	Italy	140 <div></div>	53 <div></div>	56 <div></div>	+3 <div></div>
9	Bolivia	119 <div></div>	31 <div></div>	38 <div></div>	+7 <div></div>
10	USA	116 <div></div>	29 <div></div>	51 <div></div>	+22 <div></div>
11	Brazil	110 <div></div>	23 <div></div>	61 <div></div>	+38 <div></div>
12	Colombia	82 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	20 <div></div>	+4 <div></div>
.	Greece	82 <div></div>	23 <div></div>	24 <div></div>	+1 <div></div>
14	Venezuela	65 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	23 <div></div>	+11 <div></div>
15	Honduras	52 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	10 <div></div>	-4 <div></div>
16	Guatemala	51 <div></div>	8 <div></div>	19 <div></div>	+11 <div></div>
17	Portugal	42 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	= <div></div>
18	Malta	41 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	11 <div></div>	-5 <div></div>
19	England	34 <div></div>	18 <div></div>	13 <div></div>	-5 <div></div>
.	Cyprus	34 <div></div>	7 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	+5 <div></div>



Destinations of Argentinian players (2020-2025)





# ENGLISH EXPATRIATES

With a strong presence especially in Wales and Scotland, the number of English players abroad increased considerably between 2020 and 2025: from 442 to 586 (+144 footballers, +33%). The main destination outside the British associations and Ireland is the United States. No fewer than 107 English expatriates played for American clubs over the six years studied.

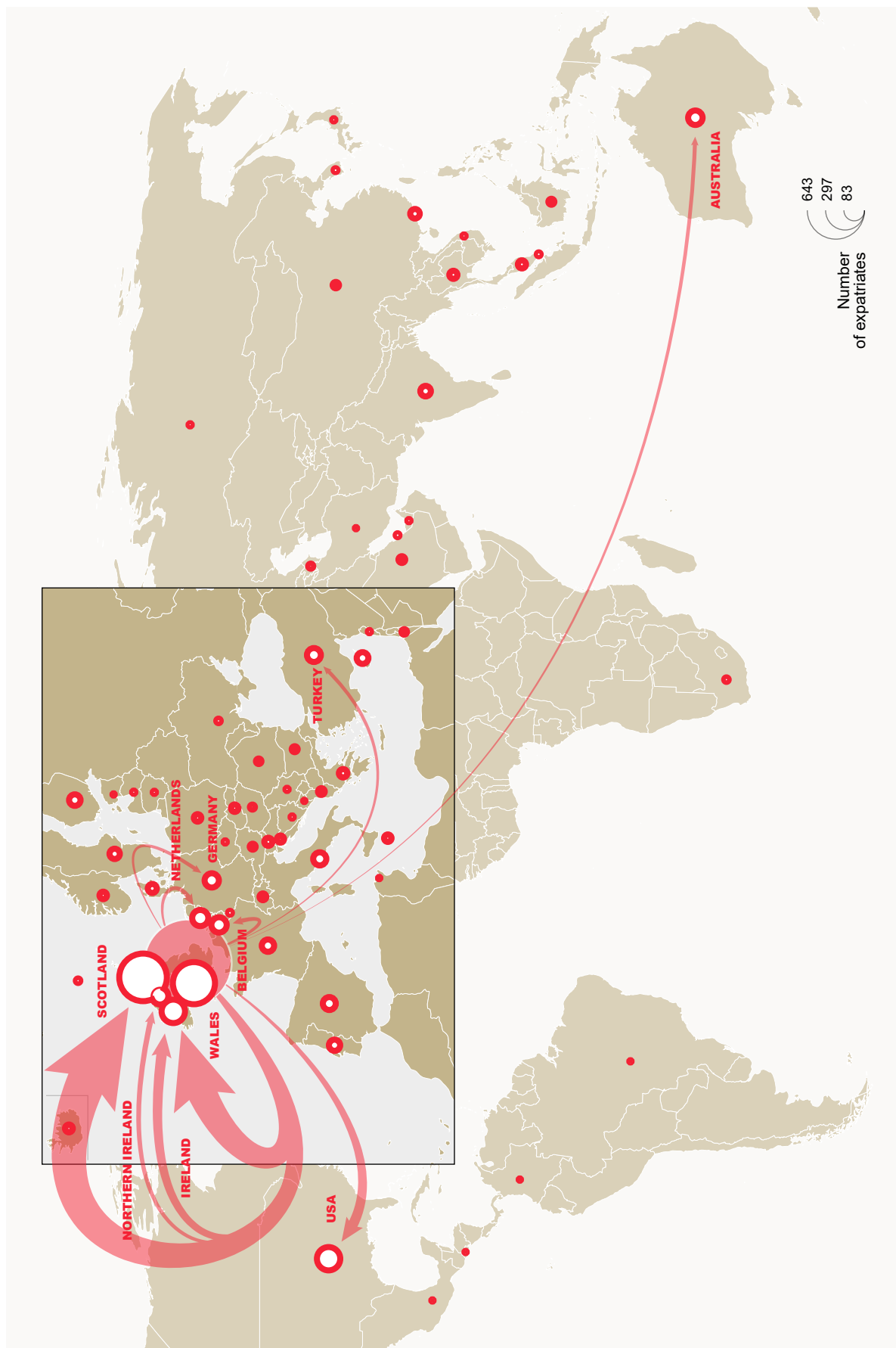
## Evolution

2020	442	<div></div>
2021	482	<div></div>
2022	526	<div></div>
2023	543	<div></div>
2024	580	<div></div>
2025	586	<div></div>

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Scotland	445 <div></div>	117 <div></div>	129 <div></div>	+12 <div></div>
2	Wales	349 <div></div>	91 <div></div>	108 <div></div>	+17 <div></div>
3	Ireland	108 <div></div>	20 <div></div>	40 <div></div>	+20 <div></div>
4	USA	107 <div></div>	29 <div></div>	48 <div></div>	+19 <div></div>
5	Northern Ireland	55 <div></div>	8 <div></div>	25 <div></div>	+17 <div></div>
6	Netherlands	51 <div></div>	26 <div></div>	6 <div></div>	-20 <div></div>
7	Belgium	46 <div></div>	6 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	+8 <div></div>
8	Australia	41 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	-2 <div></div>
9	Germany	40 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	16 <div></div>	+2 <div></div>
10	Turkey	38 <div></div>	5 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	+7 <div></div>
11	Italy	34 <div></div>	6 <div></div>	20 <div></div>	+14 <div></div>
12	Spain	33 <div></div>	10 <div></div>	10 <div></div>	= <div></div>
13	France	30 <div></div>	2 <div></div>	14 <div></div>	+12 <div></div>
14	Cyprus	27 <div></div>	7 <div></div>	7 <div></div>	= <div></div>
15	Finland	26 <div></div>	4 <div></div>	8 <div></div>	+4 <div></div>
16	Portugal	25 <div></div>	7 <div></div>	12 <div></div>	+5 <div></div>
17	India	22 <div></div>	6 <div></div>	4 <div></div>	-2 <div></div>
18	Sweden	21 <div></div>	11 <div></div>	5 <div></div>	-6 <div></div>
19	Hong Kong	18 <div></div>	2 <div></div>	5 <div></div>	+3 <div></div>
20	Denmark	16 <div></div>	3 <div></div>	2 <div></div>	-1 <div></div>

Destinations of English players (2020-2025)





# SPANISH EXPATRIATES

In 2025, 514 players who grew up in Spain were active in foreign leagues. This is a record figure, 22% higher than that measured in 2020. Four associations stand out as the main destinations for Spanish expatriates: England, Italy, Poland and Portugal. The biggest increase was recorded for Portugal: +36 Spaniards between 2020 and 2025.

## Evolution

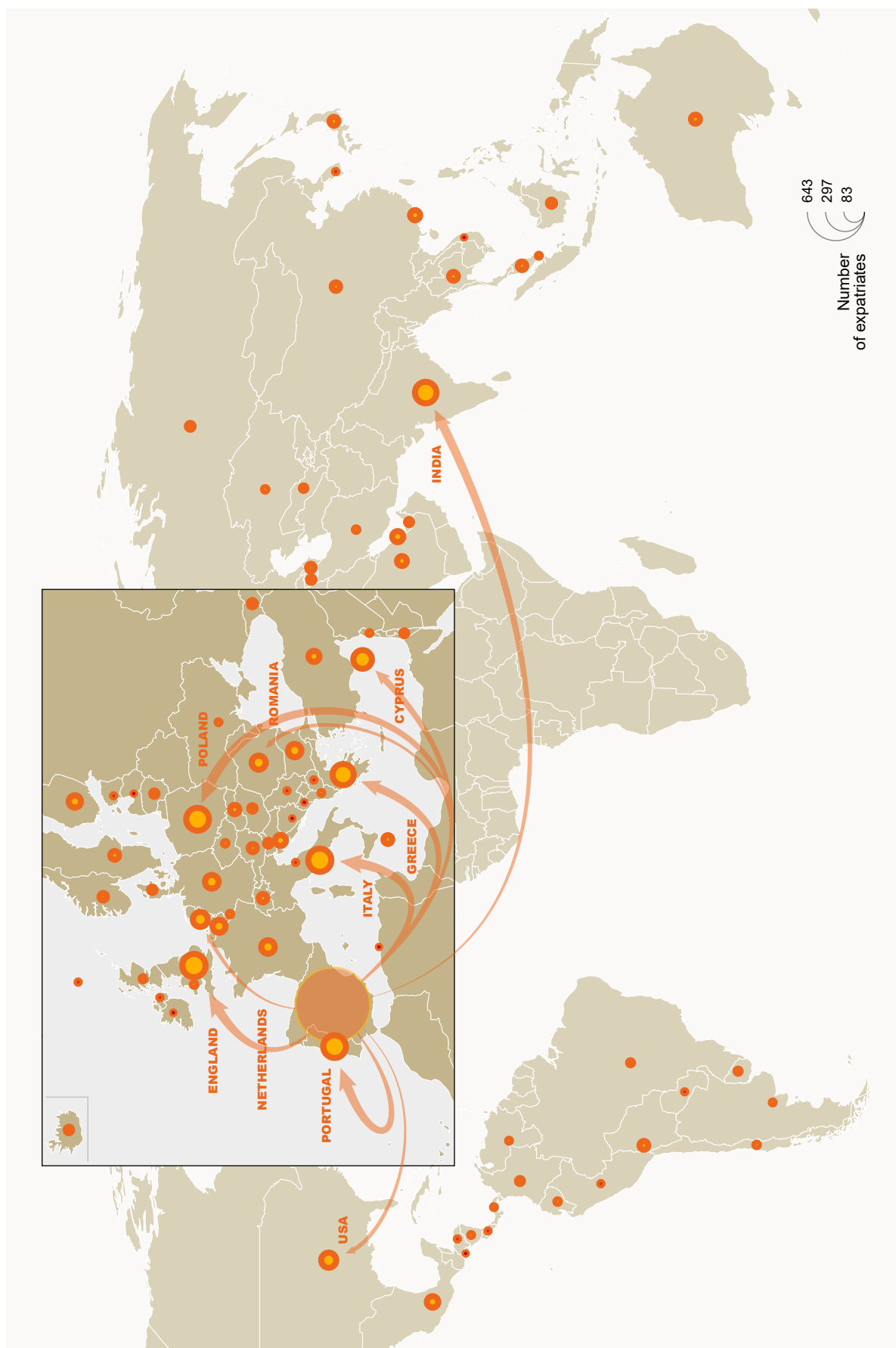
2020	422	<div></div>
2021	424	<div></div>
2022	405	<div></div>
2023	460	<div></div>
2024	455	<div></div>
2025	514	<div></div>

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	England	106 ■	44 ■	34 ■	-10 ◀
2	Italy	105 ■	34 ■	45 ■	+11 ▶▶
3	Poland	102 ■	30 ■	37 ■	+7 ▶
4	Portugal	101 ■	14 ■	50 ■	+36 ▶▶▶
5	India	91 ■	40 ■	29 ■	-11 ◀◀
6	Greece	88 ■	29 ■	33 ■	+4 ▶
7	Cyprus	68 ■	26 ■	18 ■	-8 ◀
8	USA	45 ■	10 ■	15 ■	+5 ▶
9	Netherlands	44 ■	12 ■	12 ■	=
10	Romania	39 ■	8 ■	16 ■	+8 ▶
11	Germany	37 ■	15 ■	9 ■	-6 ◀
12	France	36 ■	13 ■	10 ■	-3 ◀
13	Bulgaria	35 ■	2 ■	18 ■	+16 ▶▶
14	Belgium	33 ■	7 ■	8 ■	+1 ▶
15	Finland	30 ■	10 ■	4 ■	-6 ◀
16	Mexico	26 ■	6 ■	12 ■	+6 ▶
17	Croatia	24 ■	7 ■	5 ■	-2 ◀
.	Qatar	24 ■	6 ■	15 ■	+9 ▶
.	Turkey	24 ■	3 ■	7 ■	+4 ▶
20	Hong Kong	20 ■	5 ■	6 ■	+1 ▶



Destinations of Spanish players (2020-2025)





# GERMAN EXPATRIATES

As with most of the other main exporting countries, the number of players from Germany abroad reached a new record in 2025: 475 (+21% with respect to 2020). Turkey is the main destination for German expatriates, reflecting the return migration of many players of Turkish origin who grew up in Germany. Nevertheless, a decrease was observed since 2020. However, an increase was recorded towards the second main destination: Austria.

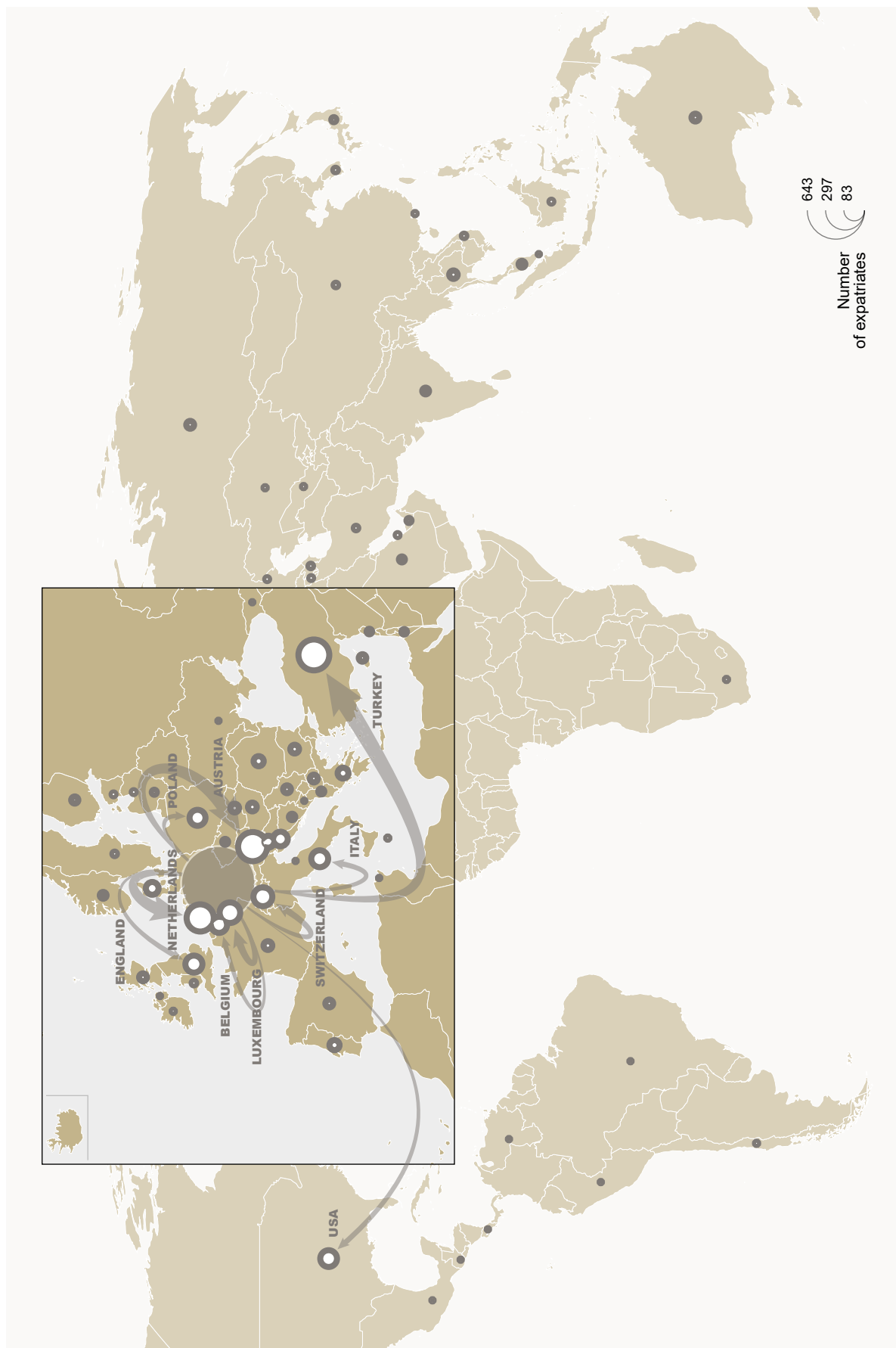
## Evolution

2020	393	
2021	440	
2022	437	
2023	441	
2024	468	
2025	475	

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Turkey	187 ■	89 ■	69 ■	-20 ◀◀
2	Austria	167 ■	29 ▮	52 ▮	+23 ▶▶▶
3	Netherlands	145 ■	38 ▮	38 ▮	=
4	Luxembourg	83 ■	30 ▮	26 ▮	-4 ◀
5	Switzerland	70 ▮	13 ▮	27 ▮	+14 ▶▶
6	England	57 ▮	31 ▮	17 ▮	-14 ◀◀
7	Italy	56 ▮	17 ▮	27 ▮	+10 ▶
8	USA	55 ▮	16 ▮	28 ▮	+12 ▶▶
9	Belgium	51 ▮	10 ▮	19 ▮	+9 ▶
10	Poland	50 ▮	13 ▮	23 ▮	+10 ▶
11	Croatia	42 ▮	4 ▮	15 ▮	+11 ▶▶
12	Denmark	32 ▮	9 ▮	11 ▮	+2 ▶
13	Slovenia	28 ▮	3 ▮	9 ▮	+6 ▶
14	Greece	23 ▮	2 ▮	4 ▮	+2 ▶
15	Portugal	20 ▮	2 ▮	8 ▮	+6 ▶
.	Romania	20 ▮	3 ▮	7 ▮	+4 ▶
17	Bulgaria	15 ▮	3 ▮	6 ▮	+3 ▶
.	France	15 ▮	4 ▮	5 ▮	+1 ▶
.	Hungary	15 ▮	3 ▮	4 ▮	+1 ▶
.	Slovakia	15 ▮	2 ▮	1 ▮	-1 ◀

Destinations of German players (2020-2025)





# COLOMBIAN EXPATRIATES

More and more Colombian footballers are playing abroad. On May 1st 2025, there were 470 Colombians in the foreign leagues surveyed, an increase of 120 players since 2020 (+34%). The number of Colombian expatriates exceeds 100 in three countries: Peru, Mexico and Panama. Outside the Americas, the main destinations are Portugal (45 distinct players between 2020 and 2025) and Spain (37).

## Evolution

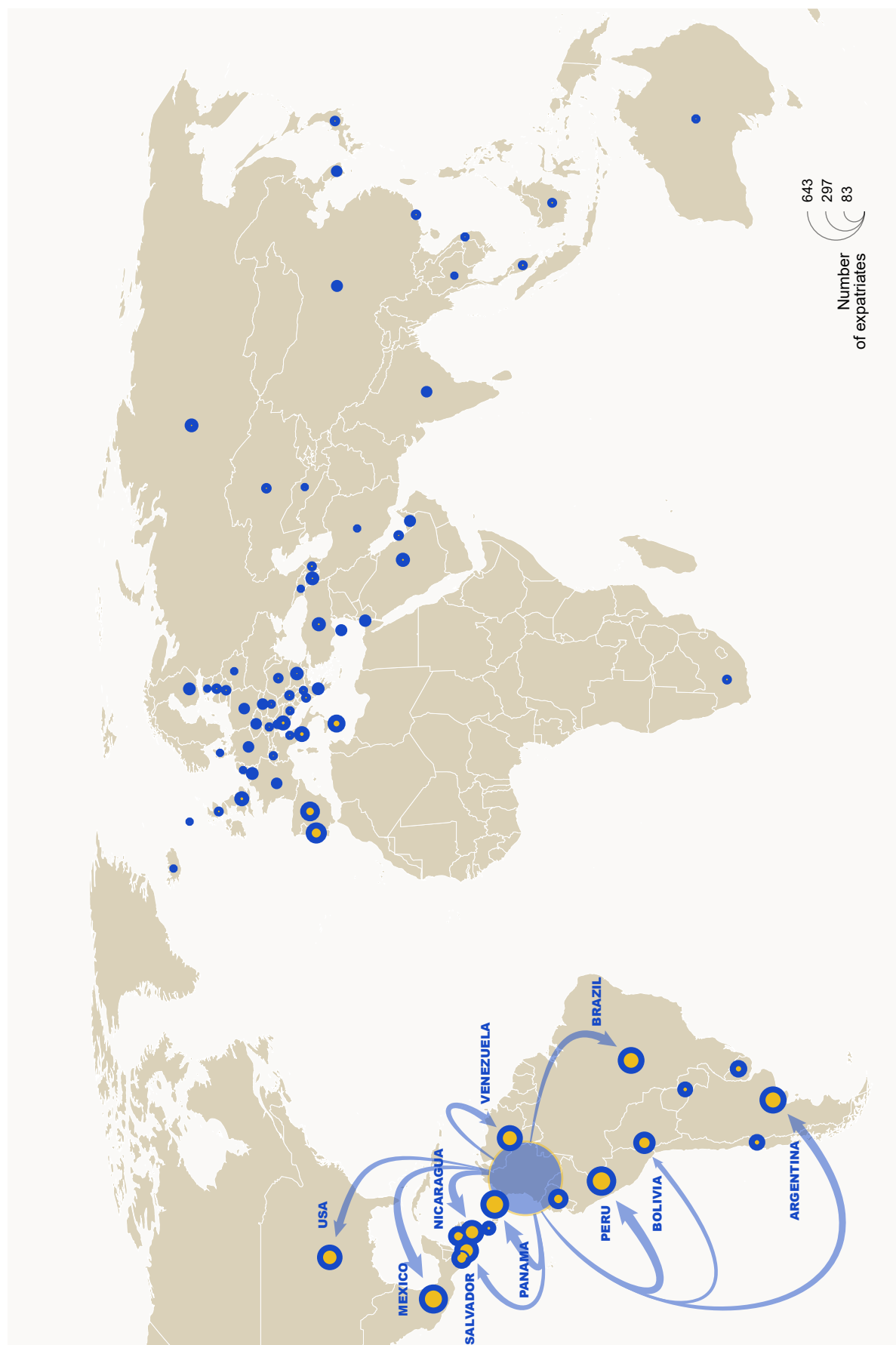
2020	350	■
2021	369	■
2022	425	■
2023	451	■
2024	438	■
2025	470	■

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Peru	109 ■	21	36	+15 >>
2	Mexico	105 ■	41	37	-4 <
3	Panama	102 ■	18	31	+13 >>
4	Argentina	88 ■	27	23	-4 <
5	Brazil	85 ■	16	32	+16 >>
6	Venezuela	79 ■	8	22	+14 >>
7	USA	75 ■	17	35	+18 >>
8	El Salvador	70 ■	21	14	-7 <
9	Nicaragua	67 ■	24	21	-3 <
10	Bolivia	53 ■	8	19	+11 >>
11	Portugal	45 ■	12	10	-2 <
12	Guatemala	42 ■	8	9	+1 >
13	Ecuador	41 ■	15	6	-9 <
.	Honduras	41 ■	10	15	+5 >
15	Spain	37 ■	18	12	-6 <
16	Malta	28 ■	11	8	-3 <
17	Uruguay	26 ■	2	12	+10 >
18	Chile	22 ■	7	5	-2 <
19	Italy	19 ■	10	9	-1 <
.	Paraguay	19 ■	8	1	-7 <



Destinations of Colombian players (2020-2025)























# NIGERIAN EXPATRIATES

Clubs in the leagues analysed are employing more and more Nigerian players. The number of Nigerians has risen from 319 in 2020 to a new record high of 500 in 2025 (+57%). The main destination is the Czech Republic, where 65 Nigerian expatriates played between 2020 and 2025. In five other associations, the number of Nigerians over the six years studied exceeded 50: Turkey, Israel, Portugal, Slovakia and Armenia.

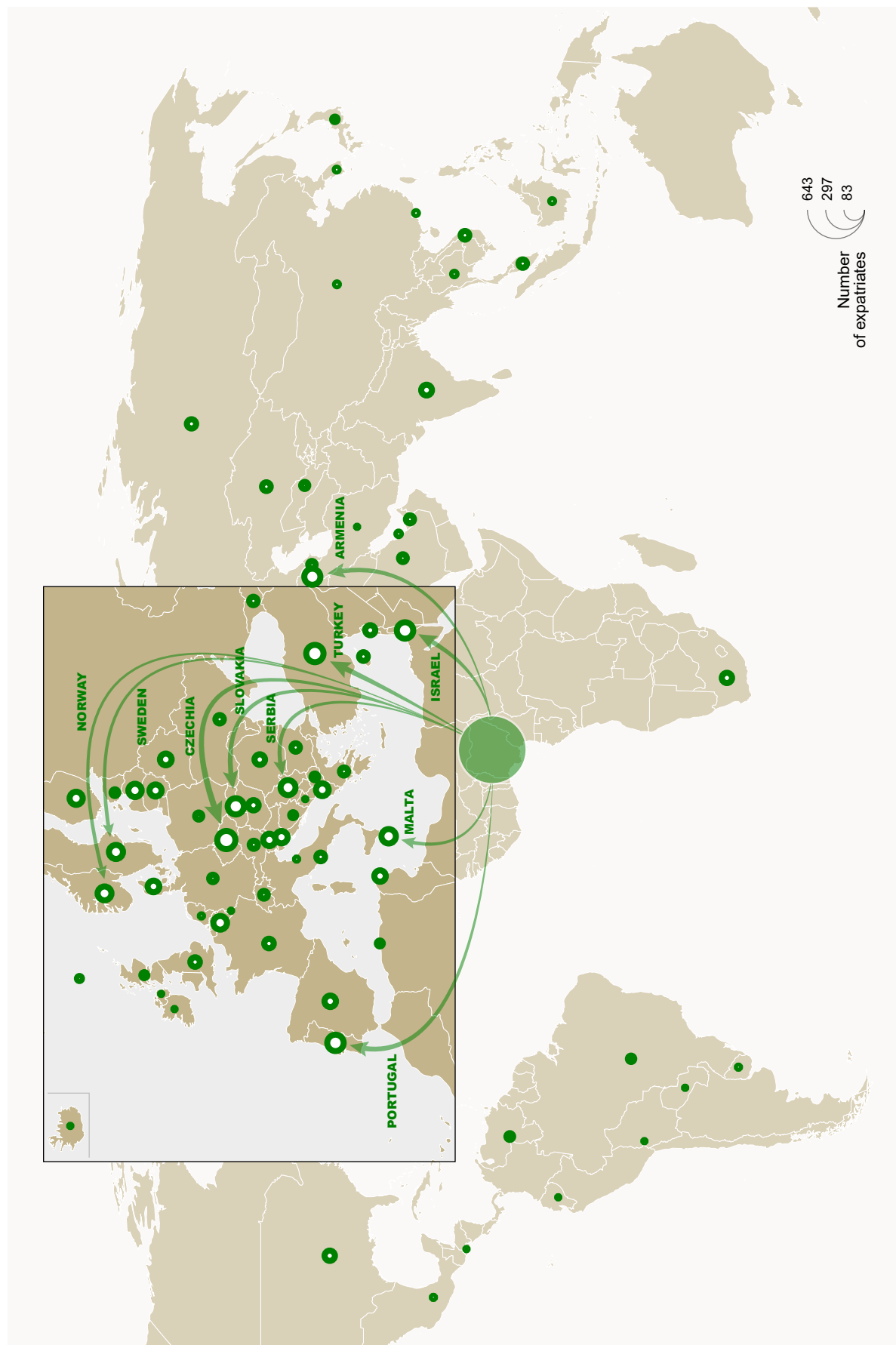
## Evolution

2020	319	■
2021	352	■
2022	339	■
2023	387	■
2024	427	■
2025	500	■

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	 Czech Republic	65 ■	5 I	39 ■	+34 >>>>
2	 Turkey	59 ■	17 I	20 I	+3 >
3	 Israel	53 ■	10 I	20 I	+10 >
.	 Portugal	53 ■	13 I	17 I	+4 >
5	 Slovakia	52 ■	14 I	21 I	+7 >
6	 Armenia	51 ■	9 I	22 I	+13 >>
7	 Serbia	44 ■	7 I	24 I	+17 >>
8	 Malta	41 ■	4 I	13 I	+9 >
9	 Sweden	39 ■	17 I	10 I	-7 <
10	 Norway	38 ■	19 I	12 I	-7 <
11	 Belgium	37 ■	12 I	11 I	-1 <
12	 Latvia	35 ■	18 I	9 I	-9 <
13	 Finland	34 ■	10 I	10 I	=
14	 Albania	32 ■	4 I	11 I	+7 >
15	 Croatia	30 ■	10 I	11 I	+1 >
.	 Slovenia	30 ■	7 I	10 I	+3 >
17	 Lithuania	29 ■	2 I	10 I	+8 >
18	 Belarus	27 ■	6 I	4 I	-2 <
.	 Denmark	27 ■	7 I	5 I	-2 <
20	 Spain	26 ■	11 I	11 I	=

Destinations of Nigerian players (2020-2025)









































































































# SERBIAN EXPATRIATES

Serbia is the only association among the ten nations exporting the most players whose number of expatriates has decreased between 2020 and 2025 (-52 players, -12%). A decline was recorded for the majority of Serbian footballers' main destinations, including the leading one: Bosnia-Herzegovina. Montenegro and Hungary complete the podium of the top three destinations for Serbian expatriates.

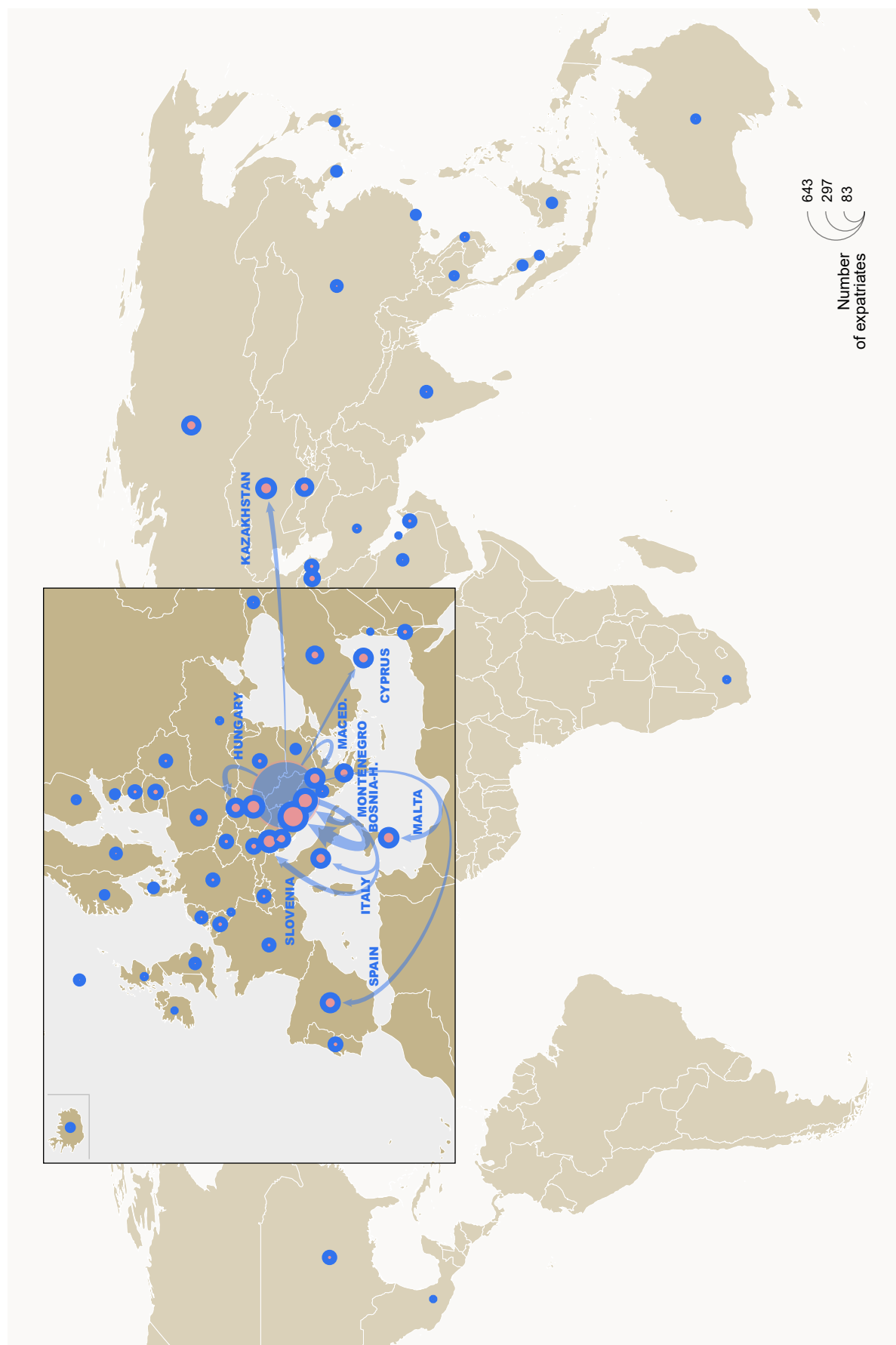
## Evolution

2020	438	■
2021	436	■
2022	379	■
2023	380	■
2024	393	■
2025	386	■

## Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	 Bosnia/Herzeg.	126 	40 	31 	-9 
2	 Montenegro	73 	17 	16 	-1 
3	 Hungary	62 	21 	20 	-1 
4	 Slovenia	61 	19 	13 	-6 
5	 Kazakhstan	50 	19 	10 	-9 
6	 Malta	48 	10 	15 	+5 
7	 North Macedonia	47 	13 	9 	-4 
8	 Spain	45 	18 	15 	-3 
9	 Cyprus	43 	11 	11 	= 
.	 Italy	43 	21 	11 	-10 
11	 Slovakia	41 	13 	10 	-3 
12	 Russia	40 	8 	14 	+6 
13	 Croatia	36 	14 	6 	-8 
.	 Uzbekistan	36 	10 	11 	+1 
15	 Greece	35 	13 	11 	-2 
16	 Turkey	33 	13 	11 	-2 
17	 Poland	28 	19 	5 	-14 
18	 Armenia	26 	7 	5 	-2 
19	 Austria	24 	7 	10 	+3 
20	 Lithuania	22 	3 	13 	+10 

Destinations of Serbian players (2020-2025)





## CROATIAN EXPATRIATES

The number of Croatians abroad increased only slightly between 2020 and 2025 (+21 players, +6%), with a record number of expatriates dating back to 2023. Slovenia is by far the principal foreign destination for Croatian footballers: no fewer than 354 expatriates between 2020 and 2025. Bosnia-Herzegovina is second, with 171 players who grew up in Croatia over the six-year period surveyed, well ahead of Italy (63).

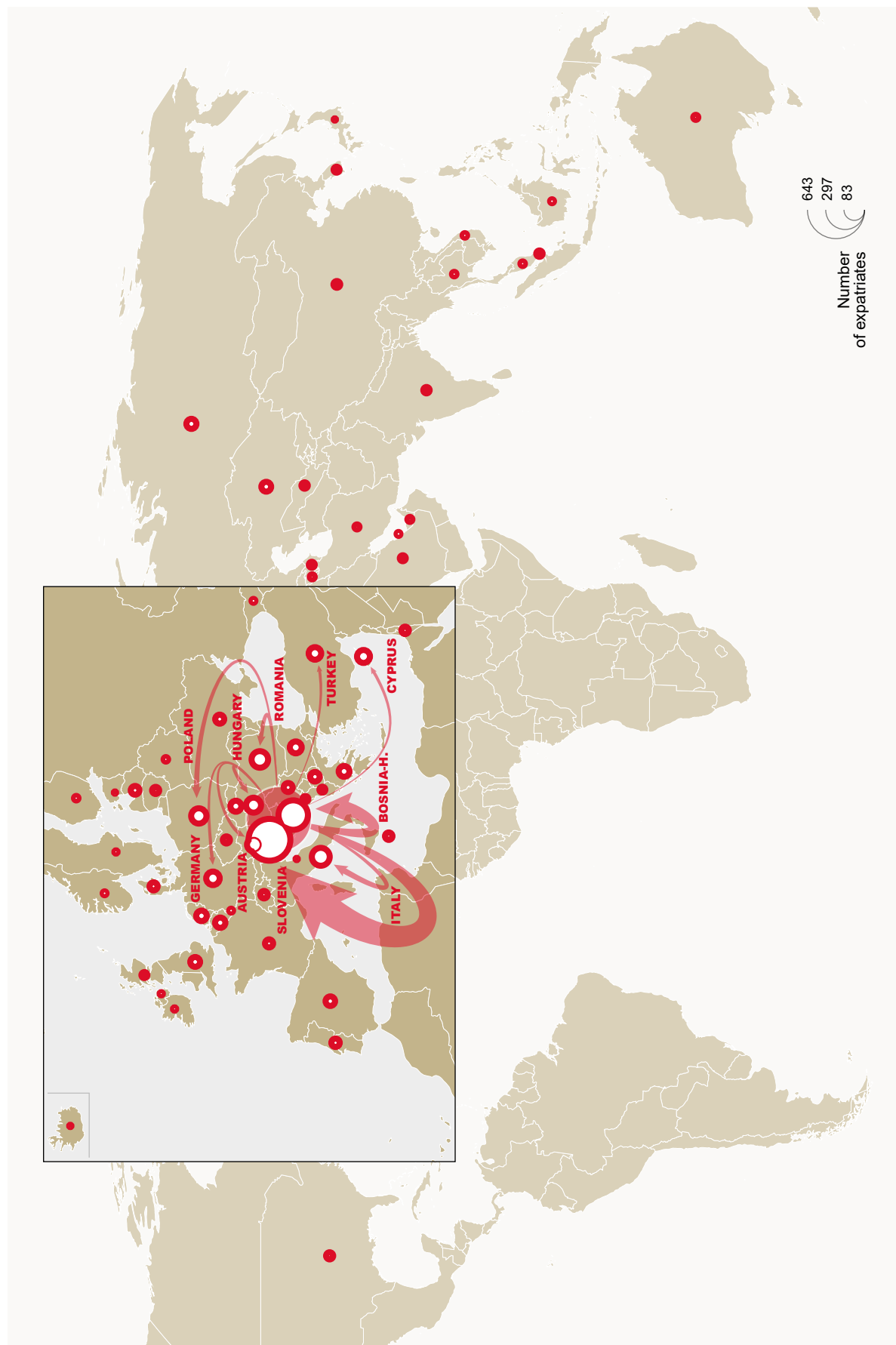
### Evolution

2020	373	■
2021	369	■
2022	399	■
2023	406	■
2024	391	■
2025	394	■

### Top 20 destinations 2020-2025

		Distinct number	2020	2025	Evolution 2020-2025
1	Slovenia	345 ■	100 ■	86 ■	-14 ◀◀
2	Bosnia/Herzeg.	171 ■	30 ■	66 ■	+36 ▶▶▶
3	Italy	63 ■	26 ■	23 ■	-3 ◀
4	Romania	54 ■	9 ■	11 ■	+2 ▶
5	Poland	46 ■	20 ■	14 ■	-6 ◀
6	Hungary	44 ■	12 ■	9 ■	-3 ◀
7	Austria	37 ■	14 ■	8 ■	-6 ◀
8	Germany	36 ■	9 ■	10 ■	+1 ▶
9	Cyprus	33 ■	6 ■	8 ■	+2 ▶
10	Turkey	31 ■	9 ■	10 ■	+1 ▶
11	Bulgaria	28 ■	4 ■	9 ■	+5 ▶
12	Slovakia	24 ■	12 ■	5 ■	-7 ◀
13	Greece	23 ■	4 ■	7 ■	+3 ▶
14	Netherlands	22 ■	5 ■	7 ■	+2 ▶
15	Belgium	21 ■	6 ■	8 ■	+2 ▶
16	Russia	20 ■	6 ■	6 ■	=
17	England	19 ■	6 ■	5 ■	-1 ◀
18	Kazakhstan	19 ■	5 ■	6 ■	+1 ▶
19	Spain	18 ■	9 ■	6 ■	-3 ◀
20	North Macedonia	18 ■	3 ■	6 ■	+3 ▶

Destinations of Croatian players (2020-2025)



Since its creation in 2005, the Football Observatory research group within the CIES (Centre International d'Étude du Sport) has become a reference point in the demographic and economic study of the football players' labour and transfer markets, the analysis of the clubs' and players' performance (technical, tactical, physical), as well as the scientific estimation of transfer values.

The CIES Football Observatory is regularly mandated by key governing bodies (FIFA, UEFA, ECA, SAFF, etc.), many of the most renowned clubs worldwide (Chelsea, Arsenal, Juventus, Atlético de Madrid, Benfica, Olympique Lyonnais, Stade Rennais, Ajax, etc.), as well as player unions, agents, lawyers and sponsors.

The CIES Football Observatory enjoys considerable success and a rapidly growing reputation. More than 33,000 subscribers receive our weekly newsletters. The website ([football-observatory.com](http://football-observatory.com)) records several hundred thousand visits per year and the group is also present on the principle social media, with more than 140,000 followers.

More information: [www.football-observatory.com](http://www.football-observatory.com)