

PR 05/2017

5 July 2017

Press Release: EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU and latest asylum figures

Today the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) released its yearly reference report: The Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2016. The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of asylum in the EU+ (EU Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) by examining requests for international protection to the EU, analysing application and decision data, asylum trends, including key challenges and responses during the year, major institutional and legal developments and providing an overview of the practical functioning of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

**

In 2016, almost 1.3 million applications for international protection were made in the EU+. This was a 7 % decrease compared to 2015 when close to 1.4 million applications were lodged. However, the significant increase in asylum applications over the past two years led to a growth in decisions issued at first instance: in 2016, EU+ countries issued close to 1.15 million first-instance decisions, an increase of 84 % compared to 2015. Also decisions issued in second instance rose in 2016 compared to 2015, by 21%. The overall recognition rate stood at 61% for first instance decisions and increased compared to previous year.

The highest numbers of asylum applicants recorded were citizens of Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Nigeria. The main receiving countries were Germany, Italy, France, Greece and Austria. There were 7 % more applicants awaiting a final decision on their application compared to 2015 which continued to put pressure on the asylum and reception systems of the EU+ countries.

The crisis in Syria continued to be a key factor in the number of applications for international protection in the EU+. Syria was the top citizenship of applicants reported with its citizens accounting for 26 % of all applications in the EU+.

In 2016, more than 65 000 unaccompanied minors (UAMs) applied for international protection in the EU+, 37 % less than the previous year. Afghan nationals lodged 37 % of all UAM applications in the EU+.

Latest figures for the first months of 2017 show a further decrease in the number of lodged applications for international protection compared to the monthly numbers reported during 2016, 2015 and second half of 2014. But the numbers in first months of 2017 were still higher compared to first half of 2014. Syria remained the main country of origin of applicants recorded in the EU+ between January and May 2017. However in that period Syrian nationals represented only 13 % of all applicants in the EU +, a significant change compared to previous year when, on average, one in four applications was lodged by Syrian nationals. In first four months of 2017, together with Syria, three other countries of origin – Afghanistan, Nigeria and Iraq – represented about one-third of all applicants in the EU+. Afghan nationals still accounted for the largest share among claimed unaccompanied minors. At the end of May there were more than 595 000 cases awaiting decision at first instance, of which 59 % were pending for longer than six months.

Any further information on EASO may be obtained by emailing Mr. Jean-Pierre Schembri at: jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu (follow us live on twitter [@EASO](https://twitter.com/EASO)).

