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4.1.3 Socio-economic indicators to analyse the situation of asylum



The new Pact on Migration and Asylum reinforced the importance of solidarity and sharing responsibility acrossEU+ countries to better manage CEAS. An analysis of the situation would be incomplete without considering the interplay between asylum and socio-economic indicators in EU+ countries. It provides a perspective on the pressure placed on national asylum and reception systems. While one country may receive fewer applications than another overall, its capacity to absorb more applicants may not be comparable. This approach gives a more proportional interpretation of the situation of asylum in EU+ countries.

Figure 4.5 presents three indicators which rank the number of applications for international protection relative to the area of a country, its population size and its national GDP. These three relative measures provide a perspective on the capacity of a country to absorb applications. Countries shaded in green received a lower relative volume of applications than the EU+ baseline for each indicator, whereas those shaded in red received a higher relative volume than the EU+ baseline.

In 2020, Cyprus, Malta, Greece and Luxembourg received the most applications relative to their population size (in descending order, middle circle in *Figure 4.5*). This pattern was also seen in 2019, even though the number of applications lodged in each of these countries declined. In Cyprus, about 840 applications were lodged for every
100,000 inhabitants. The EU+ total was approximately 105 applications per 100,000 citizens, which decreased by almost one-third compared to 2019 (similar to the decrease in the overall number of applications lodged). In total,
18 of the 31 EU+ countries were below the EU+ level. The countries which received the least asylum applications per capita were Hungary, Estonia and Slovakia (1, 4 and 5 applications per 100,000 citizens respectively).

Relative to the territorial size of countries, most applications continued to be lodged in Malta (close to 8 per km^2). At quite some distance, other countries with relatively high ratios of applications per territorial area included Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (inner circle in Figure 4.5). On average, 0.1 applications were lodged per square kilometre in EU+ countries.

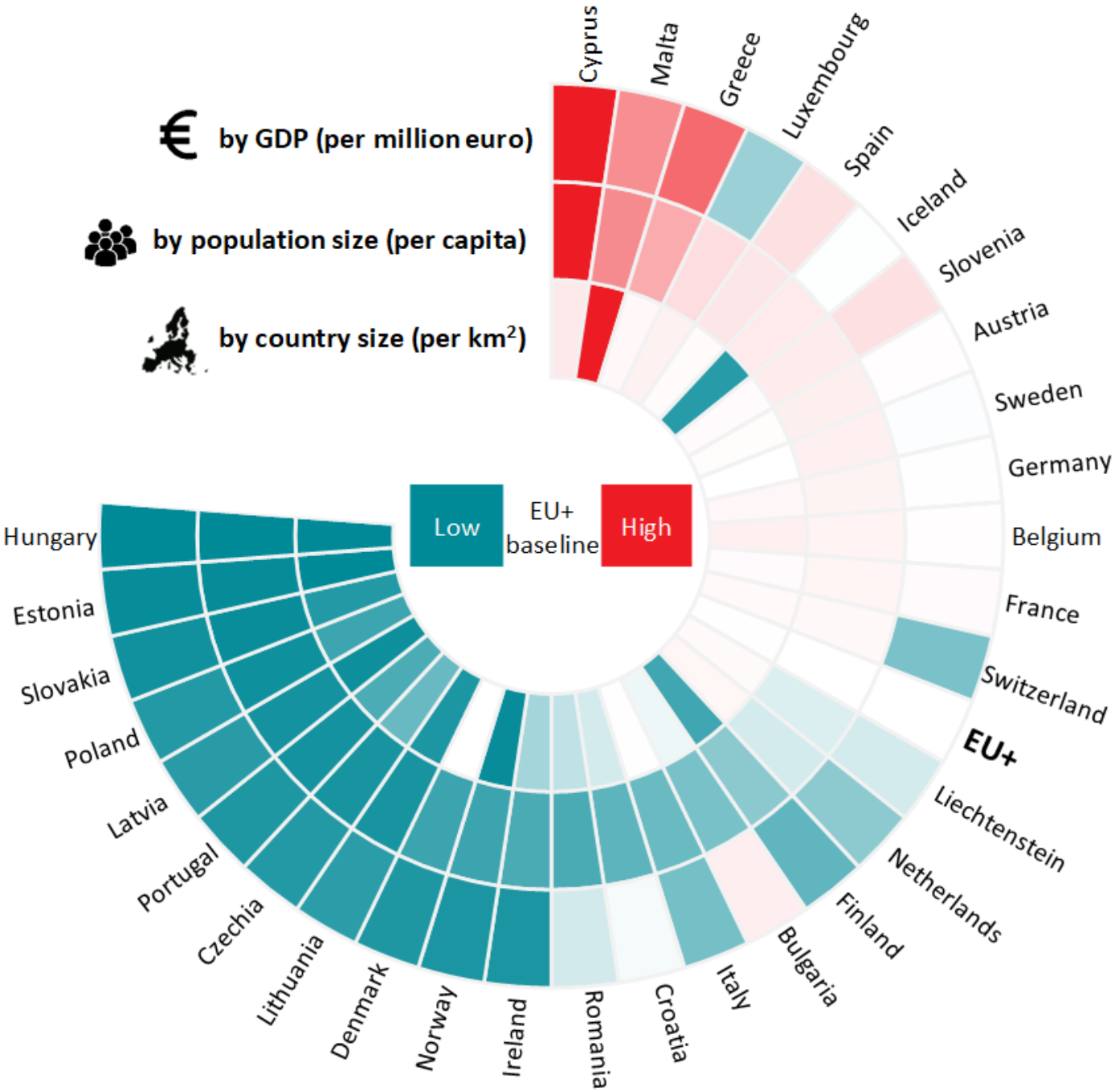
In economic terms, the most common indicator to measure wealth is GDP. Again, Cyprus, Greece

and Malta received the most applications relative to their GDP, while Hungary, Estonia and Slovakia were at the other end of the spectrum (in descending order, outer circle in *Figure 4.5*. Hence, the relative pressure of the volume of asylum applications lodged in 2020 was the highest in Cyprus, Greece and Malta according to the ratio per capita and GDP. Cyprus and Malta were also most affected in territorial terms. These similarities are not coincidental, given the geographical position of these three countries on entry routes for asylum-related migration through the Mediterranean Sea. In contrast, several countries in Central Europe and Baltic countries (such as Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia) scored low on applications relative to territory, population and GDP.

A similar analysis of relative pressure can also be made by looking at the stock of pending cases at the end of the year, which provides an insight into the continuing pressure on national asylum and reception systems as well as investment therein at the outset of 2021. At the end of 2020, Malta had the most pending applications per square kilometre, followed at some distance by Cyprus. Cyprus, Malta and Greece had the most applications awaiting a decision per inhabitant, as well as in terms of GDP. Hence, the results are very similar to those derived based on the number of applications lodged in 2020.

In relative terms, asylum and reception systems were under the greatest pressure in Cyprus, Greece and Malta

Figure 4.5 **Applications for international protection in 2020 relative to country size (2018), population (2020) and GDP (2020)**



Notes: Countries are sorted by the number of applications received relative to population size (clockwise from highest to lowest). The shades indicate the relative number of applications received compared to the EU+ baseline (midpoint) for each of the three indicators. GDP data for Liechtenstein refers to 2018.
Source: Eurostat for asylum applications [migr_asyappctza] as of 18 March 2021, population [demo_pjan] as of 23 March 2021 and GDP [nama_10_gdp] as of 23 March 2021 and the World Bank [AG.SRF.TOTL.K2] as of 17 February 2021.

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