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Fewer Afghan applicants but new high of unaccompanied minors



After the peak of asylum applications by Afghans in September 2021, EU+ countries received substantially fewer Afghan applications in October 2021. This resulted in the first decline of total asylum applications in six months. In contrast, Syrians applied the most since 2016 and applications by unaccompanied minors were the highest since 2015.

Analysis released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) shows that **about 65 400 applications for international protection were lodged in the EU+ in October 2021**, down by 8 % from September. While this was the first decline after five months of continuously rising applications, it might not signal a trend reversal because it primarily reflected the change in applications by Afghans. Total applications in October were still the second highest since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe and roughly on par with the immediate pre-pandemic levels.



Applications by Afghans receded

Applications by Afghans declined by a third to about 11 300 in October, after the peak in September that was partly driven by evacuations from Kabul. Despite the substantial decrease, in both first-time and repeated applications, **Afghans remained the largest group of applicants in the EU+. They were followed by Syrians (10 600) who applied the most since 2016** (+ 17 % from September). Almost all Syrian applicants in October applied for the first time.

The third largest group of applicants was **Iraqis (3 100), whose applications were partly linked to the irregular migration route via Belarus**. Albeit at lower levels, applications by Venezuelans (2 500) and Colombians (1 800) increased considerably, continuing an upward trend. Egyptians (900), Yemenis (600) and Belarusians (500) lodged the most applications on record.

Highest number of applications by unaccompanied minors since 2015

In contrast with the overall decline in applications compared to the previous month, self-claimed **unaccompanied minors lodged the most applications since 2015, some 3 300 in October 2021**. The increase by 11 % from September was mainly driven by unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan. They accounted for almost half (1 600) of all unaccompanied minors applying in October, followed by unaccompanied minors from Syria (700), Somalia (200), Bangladesh, Pakistan and Iraq (around 100 each). Unaccompanied minors jointly accounted for 5 % of all applications in the EU+ in October.

Nine in 10 Afghan applicants were granted international protection

Asylum authorities in EU+ countries issued about 46 100 first instance decisions in October 2021, the most in six months. However, **applications continued to outnumber first instance decisions** (by around 19 000 in October). Pending cases at first instance continued to rise, to about 414 600 at the end of October. Almost half of these cases had been pending for less than six months.

The EU+ recognition rate was 38 % in October, receding by three percentage points from a peak in September. Of the positive decisions, unusually many (about seven in 10) granted refugee status, while the remainder granted subsidiary protection. Afghans had the highest recognition rate on record (91 %) and mostly received refugee status. Recognition rates were also comparatively high for Syrians (89 %), Eritreans (86 %) and Palestinians (76 %).

For more information and an interactive data visualisation, please visit the Latest Asylum Trends page.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

Notes

[1] EASO EPS data are preliminary and might differ from validated official statistics submitted to Eurostat at a later stage. Eurostat data are used in the annual EASO Asylum Report. The total EPS numbers include approximations for two EU+ countries and may change after data updates.

[2] That is, since the beginning of the EPS data exchange in 2014.

[3] This refers to the recognition rate for EU-regulated types of protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) at first instance.

[4] The highest monthly recognition rate for Afghans since the beginning of the EPS data exchange in 2014.

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