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Reduced mobility of asylum seekers continues to limit the number of asylum applications, but unaccompanied minors lodged more applications in October



Partial lockdowns, travel bans, and other preventive health measures continue to reduce the mobility of asylum seekers in general and the extent to which they are able to reach the EU+ and lodge asylum applications.

Analysis released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) shows that t**he number of applications for international protection lodged in the EU+ remained stable but still at two thirds of pre-COVID-19 levels**. National asylum authorities have adapted their practices and made an effort to ensure the lodging of applications can proceed as smoothly as possible,[1] but fewer illegal border-crossings[2] and fewer opportunities for legal entry to the EU+ continue to curb the number of applications being lodged.

In October 2020, just 43 200 applications were lodged in the EU+[3] compared to more than 60 000 applications lodged per month before the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications have been stable for the last few months, but this was underscored by different trends across nationalities. For example, **Afghans and Pakistanis continued to lodge more applications** for the sixth successive month, but Colombians, and Venezuelans sought asylum less often than in each of the past four months.

There was a noteworthy rise in the number of (self-claimed) unaccompanied minor (UAM) applicants. UAMs lodged almost 2 000 applications, representing an increase for the second month in a row and reaching the highest value in a year. UAMs accounted for 5 % of all applications in the EU+ in October, a proportion slightly higher than in the previous months. **Close to half of the UAMs were Afghans**. The number of Afghan UAMs has been rising during the past six months.

EU+ countries issued over 41 300 decisions at first instance, fewer than in each of the past three months. As a result, **for the first time since February 2020 applications outnumbered decisions. At the end of October some 419 600 cases were pending at first instance in EU+ countries.**

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, COVID-19 emergency measures in asylum and reception systems, Issue 3, 7 December 2020.
[2] Frontex, Situation at EU external borders – Arrivals down in Western and Eastern Mediterranean, 17 November 2020.
[3] October data were available for all 29 EU+ countries. Data for the United Kingdom are excluded from all statistical comparisons.

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