News Published: 14 May 2019

Nationals of countries with visa-free access lodge over a quarter of asylum applications in EU+



Applications for international protection from Latin American countries continue to increase.

In March 2019, applications for international protection in the EU+ were significantly higher than a year ago, at **58 778** (+20 % compared to March 2018). This increase is partly due to the highest recorded number of applications by nationals **exempt from visa requirements to enter the Schengen area**, which constituted more than 28 % of all applications lodged in March.

Within this group, nationals of Venezuela (2nd), Colombia (5th), Albania (9th) and Georgia (10th) were among the top ten countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ in the reporting period.

Latin-American countries of origin continue to be a focus due to their steady rise in terms of applications lodged. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) recently reported that applications from this region had reached a record.

With 4 304 applications lodged in March, **Venezuela** was the second main country of origin for a second consecutive month, following Syria (5 336 applications). The number of Venezuelan applications in March translates into a record number for the country after the one already set in February (3 995). Over the past six

months, some 43 % of Venezuelan applicants received international protection in the first-instance, even though for many others the decisions remain pending.

Colombian nationals also lodged an unprecedented high number of applications for international protection in the EU+. In March, Colombian applications totalled more than 2 551, a 32 % increase compared to February, and the third consecutive month with increasing applications. The recognition rate for Colombian nationals remained much lower compared to Venezuelans, at 11 % over the past six months, even though the number of first-instance decisions issued was very low.

In addition to Venezuelans and Colombians, there were also increases in applications by other Latin-American nationalities, such as Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Hondurans and Peruvians, although at a lower scale.

You can find out more about EU+ asylum data for March here.

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

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