



## Latest Asylum Trends - Mid-Year review

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### Overview

#### scatter visualization

- 1.** In the first half of 2024, the EU+ received more than half a million applications for asylum (513,000). This is stable compared to the same period in the previous year, which was the most since the 2015–2016 refugee crisis.
- 2.** Syrians continued to lodge by far the most applications in the first half of 2024, 14% of the total and up by 7% compared to the same period in 2023.
- 3.** Despite receiving 20% fewer applications than during the first half of 2023, Germany maintained its position as the foremost destination for asylum seekers in the EU+, receiving a quarter of all applications lodged in the EU+.
- 4.** At the end of June 2024, there were 925,000 cases awaiting a first instance decision, down slightly from the end of May which was a record level not seen since the refugee crisis of 2015–2016.
- 5.** At the end of June 2024, there were about 4.5 million beneficiaries of temporary protection in the EU+ who fled Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion. Notably, Czechia hosted the most beneficiaries per capita, followed by Lithuania and Poland.

### Applications

## [Main citizenships](#)

chart visualization

Since 2020, EU+ countries (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) have been receiving increased numbers of asylum applications. In 2023, [1.1 million applications](#) were lodged in the EU+, marking an 18% increase from the previous year, and the most for seven years. During the first half of 2024, some 513,000 applications were lodged in the EU+ which is more or less stable compared to the first half of 2023, when the highest January – June level was recorded since the refugee crisis. Usually, more applications are lodged in the second half of the year, and so it is estimated that the EU+ will again receive well over a million applications for asylum by the end of 2024.

Further to international protection, in June 2024 around 4.5 million persons displaced from the Russian invasion of [Ukraine](#) were benefiting from [temporary protection](#), significantly adding to the overall number of individuals in the EU+ with protection needs. For more details on forced displacement from Ukraine, read the latest [Voices in Europe](#), a joint report which highlights prevailing themes based on the personal testimonies of over 1,500 respondents.

These concurrent trends – the surge in asylum applications and the number of displaced persons from Ukraine – are exerting immense strain on the EU+ asylum and reception systems. National authorities are being pushed to their limits as they strive to accommodate and safeguard those in need.

During the first half of 2024, [Syrians](#), consistently at the forefront of asylum applications in the EU+, lodged 71,000 applications. This represents 14% of all applications lodged, and a slight increase of 7% compared to the same period in 2023. For more information, read the latest EUAA reports on [Syria](#), its [Security situation](#) and [Country Guidance](#) which focusses on the key elements of qualification for international protection.

[Afghans](#) continued to be the second largest nationality group despite lodging fewer applications compared with the first halves of 2022 and 2023. Read an [EUAA Country Focus](#) report on the general security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, plus [Country Guidance](#) which focusses on the key elements of qualification for international protection.

In the autumn of 2023, [Turkish](#) nationals suddenly sought international protection in the EU+ in [unprecedented numbers](#) such that for a short time they ranked second among all citizenships applying for asylum. However, this Germany-centred surge was short-lived with far fewer Turks seeking protection in subsequent months. In the first half of 2024, Turks lodged 28,000 applications, still the second highest level for this time of year but ranked fifth among all citizenships.

Many of these citizenships were also detected **illegally crossing the EU external border**, but in July Frontex [announced](#) that in the first half of 2024, detections of illegal border-crossing fell by a third compared to 2023 (click here for [Data Tables](#)). It is usually the case that applications for asylum far exceed detections at the border, but many similarities remain. For example, Syrians lodged the most applications for asylum and were also among the most detected citizenships at the external border, especially along the Central and Eastern mediterranean routes as well as the Western Balkans and at the Eastern land border. Similarly, Afghans, despite lodging slightly fewer applications for asylum were still among the most detected nationalities on the Western Balkan route, the Eastern Mediterranean route and the Eastern Land border.

During the first half of 2024 there has been a **surge of boat arrivals** in the [Canary Islands](#) leading to increased levels of [deaths and shipwrecks](#). For this period, [Frontex](#) reported the most detections of illegal border-crossings on the Western African route since records began, up by 174% compared to the same period in 2023. According to these data, Malian and Senegalese nationals were the most commonly detected, leading to a commensurate increase in the number of asylum applications: during the first half of 2024, [Maliens](#) lodged a non-trivial 9,600 applications for asylum in the EU+ which is a clear record and up three-fold compared to the same period in 2023, while [Senegalese](#) lodged 7,500 applications also up three-fold over the same period. Naturally the increased asylum caseload took place in Spain, but both these nationalities continued to also lodge applications in Italy and France.

Everyone has the right to seek asylum irrespective of how they arrived in the receiving country. Indeed, many asylum seekers are not irregular migrants at all, instead **arriving legally as regular travellers even on flights from their home countries**. In the first half of 2024, around a quarter of all asylum applications were lodged by citizenships that benefit from [visa-free travel agreements](#) to the Schengen area, such as the one put in place for British nationals post Brexit. Most notable were [Venezuelans](#) and [Colombians](#), and to a lesser extent, Peruvians who continued to lodge many applications for asylum. The vast majority of these Latin American applications were lodged in Spain, accounting for 90% of Venezuelan and 80% of Colombian applications in the first half of 2024, plus nearly all were first-time applications, which often means that the applicants are newly arrived in the EU+. Unlike Venezuelans and Colombians, more Peruvians are now applying in Italy (53%) than in Spain (43%, see [?chart](#)), to such an extent that in during the first half of 2024 Peruvians were in fact the number two citizenship lodging applications in Italy. In response to challenges linked to visa-free travel, particularly the high numbers of unfounded asylum applications, the Commission adopted a [proposal](#) in October 2023 to strengthen the visa suspension mechanism.

[Repeated applications](#), those lodged after a final decision has been taken on a previous application, accounted for 9% of all applications during the first half of 2024. This level continues to be reasonably stable, but there is much variation among citizenships. Some groups of applicants such as visa-free Latin Americans (Venezuelans, Colombians and Peruvians) have low levels of repeated applications (generally 1-2%), which often means that the applicants are newly arrived in the receiving country. At the other end of the scale, other citizenships such as Nigerians exhibit rather high levels of **repeated applications** (23% in the first half of 2024) and so these applicants must have been present in the receiving country already for some time. In fact, this percentage is even higher in individual receiving countries such as Italy, where [repeated Nigerian applications](#) were more common than first-time applications. Read the latest Country Focus for an overview of the [situation in Nigeria](#) focusing on security issues and selected profiles relevant for international protection.

Since March 2022, **persons displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine** have been eligible for temporary protection in the EU+. By the end of June 2024, approximately 4.5 million people were benefiting from this protection, which was recently extended to [March 2026](#). The majority have settled in Germany (1.3 million) and Poland (1 million), with notably [few in France](#) (62,000). Despite their eligibility for temporary protection, throughout the first half of 2024 more [Ukrainians](#) have been applying for international protection in the EU+, such that by the end of June some 12,000 applications had been lodged, which is not far away from the total for all of 2023 (14,000). Surprisingly, this trend has mostly been taking place in France, where during the first half of 2024 half of all Ukrainian applications were lodged, followed by Poland with a fifth of all Ukrainian applications (see [chart](#)). Some Ukrainians might be lodging asylum applications following expired residents permits. Despite the notable increase in Ukrainian asylum applications, overall temporary protection remains a more attractive option.

## [Trends](#)

scatter visualization

To eliminate month-to-month fluctuations, this section offers a comprehensive overview of the asylum application trends of the top 20 nationalities in the first half of 2024 (yellow) in comparison to the first half of 2023 (blue). [Syrians](#) and [Afghans](#) lodged the most applications for asylum during both these time periods. However, Syrian applications increased slightly (+7%), whereas Afghans applications declined by 18%.

Most of these main citizenships exhibited an upward change in their application numbers, which is to some extent a statistical artefact because nationalities with declining trends are more likely to fall out of the top 20, while those with increasing trends tend to rise into the ranking. Nevertheless, it is notable that [Maliens](#) and [Senegalese](#) both lodged three times as many applications during the first half of 2024, and [Ukrainians](#) lodged applications which increased by 74%.

Decreased applications were almost as common, at least among these top citizenships. For instance, Georgian applications halved compared to the first half of 2023 and Pakistanis lodged applications that fell by nearly a third, and Ivorians by a quarter.

## [Per receiving country](#)

hierarchy visualization

In the first half of 2024, Germany remained the top destination for asylum seekers in the EU+, receiving 124,000 applications or 24% of the total. Spain followed with 88,000 applications (17% of the total), while Italy was at a near-record high of 85,000 applications (17%). Despite Germany's historical lead receiving the most asylum applications, it has experienced a decline in recent months, whereas the opposite has been occurring in Italy where record numbers of applications were lodged in March 2024.

Other differences between the main receiving countries include the nature of the caseloads. For example, there is a remarkable lack of overlap between the citizenships who tend to apply in these three main receiving countries: in Germany more than half of all applications were lodged by Syrians, Afghans and Turks; in Spain nearly two thirds were lodged by Venezuelans and Colombians; while in Italy nearly 40% of all applications were lodged by Bangladeshis, Peruvians and Egyptians. Click here for [data tables](#).

Adding to localised patterns, certain citizenships tend to lodge most of their applications in a single EU+ country. In the first half of 2024, these included Venezuelans who lodged 90% of the applications and Colombians who lodged 80% of their applications in Spain; and Bangladeshis and Tunisians who lodged most of their applications in Italy.

Uniquely among EU+ countries, Hungary received just 13 applications for asylum in the first half of 2024. Controversially, third-country nationals seeking protection in Hungary can only apply after submitting a declaration of intent at a Hungarian embassy in a non-EU country. In December 2020, the [European Court of Justice](#) held that Hungary failed to comply with the rules of EU law on procedures for granting international protection and returning illegally staying third-country nationals. In June 2024, the court [re-confirmed](#) that the Hungarian practice continues to infringe on EU law.

## Per capita

chart visualization

Evaluating which EU+ countries tend to receive the most applications for asylum is important but to some extent a simple like-for-like comparison is not appropriate because the EU+ countries vary wildly in terms of the size and capacity of their asylum and reception systems. As a rough measure of their overall capacity and a more nuanced estimation of the pressure exerted on national authorities, this analysis takes into account the number of asylum applications lodged per million inhabitants ([Eurostat population data](#)).

During the first half 2024, Cyprus, with a small population size of around 921,000, received 4,900 asylum applications. This amounts to a rate of 5,300 applications per million population, or 1 application for every 190 inhabitants. In contrast, Germany reported many more applications for asylum (circa 124,000); however, given its larger population of 84 million, the German rate is lower at 1,500 applications per million inhabitants, or 1 application per 680 inhabitants. Italy received far fewer applications than Germany (85,000), but because of its smaller population size, Italy was in fact under similar pressure as Germany with a per capita rate of 1,400 applications per million population or 1 application per 690 inhabitants.

Taking the whole EU+ into consideration: its population of 463 million and 513,000 asylum applications received during the first half of 2024, converts to 1,100 applications per million population or about 1 application for every 900 persons.

Uniquely among EU+ countries, Hungary received just 13 applications for asylum during the first half of 2024 despite a population size of 9.6 million persons (10 times that of Cyprus), probably because since 2020, applicants are required to submit a declaration of intent at a Hungarian embassy in a non-EU country before they can enter the country and apply for international protection. Read more in the [EUAA Asylum Report 2021](#).

Recognition Rates

### **First instance**

## Main citizenships

chart visualization

During the first half of 2024, the recognition rate, which reflects the percentage of asylum applications that receive decisions granting refugee status and subsidiary protection, was around 46% which is the highest level since 2016. It is worth noting that recognition rates for most of the main citizenships differ wildly from each other but tend to remain relatively steady over time. For example, during the first half of 2024, Bangladeshis continued to have a recognition rate of around 6% which has remained steady for many years. The situation has been similar for Pakistanis at round 11% and many others.

Some nationalities however have been granted protection at rates which have evolved over time, not only in the percentage of decisions that grant protection but also the types of protection that are put in place. These include:

- **Ukrainians** – the recognition rate jumped from 12% in 2021, to 86% in 2022 and 91% in 2023 with most decisions granting subsidiary protection. During the first half of 2024 [applications increased](#) while the recognition rate fell to 77%.
- **Turks** – the recognition has been in steady decline over the last four years from 54% in 2019 to just 18% in the first half of 2024.
- **Syrians** – notwithstanding 2021 (when Germany granted many negative decisions on repeated applications) the recognition rate has been above 80% or even above 90% for many years. However, since 2020 onwards there has been a trend favouring decisions granting subsidiary protection over refugee status, with refugee status falling from more than 50% of all decisions in 2020 to just 26% in the first half of 2024.

Read: [EUAA Country Guidance on Syria](#), [Syria – Country Focus](#) and the following EUAA COI reports [Security situation](#), [Targeting of individuals](#), [Socio-economic situation in Damascus city](#) and [Major human rights, security, and humanitarian developments](#).

- **Afghans** – the recognition rate has been more or less increasing from 32% in 2017 to 65% in the first half of 2024, briefly peaking at 66% in 2021 following the Taliban takeover. In recent years, there has also been a steady trend of granting more refugee status, which constituted less than 20% of all decisions going back as far as 2016, compared to 57% of all decisions issued during the first half of 2024.

Read: [EUAA Country Guidance on Afghanistan](#), [Afghanistan – Country Focus](#) and the following EUAA COI reports from 2022 [Targeting of Individuals](#), [Security Situation](#), [Key socio-economic indicators](#) and [Major legislative, security-related, and humanitarian developments](#).

## Context

It should be noted that some applicants, especially those from [Venezuela](#) and to a lesser extent from [Afghanistan](#), tend to be granted national (rather than international) [forms of protection](#) which are unregulated at the EU level and are therefore considered as negative asylum decisions in these statistics. Also, these recognition rates are based on first instance decisions issued by asylum authorities and do not account for cases decided by judiciary and other authorities at [second or higher instance](#) i.e. appeal and review. Read more in the EUAA [Factsheet no 19](#) on recognition rates.

## [Across the EU+](#)

scatter visualization

The aim of EUAA's work is to foster a harmonised implementation of the Common European Asylum System across the EU so as to reach a situation where an application for international protection would receive the same decision, no matter where it was lodged. Recognition rates, the percentage of asylum applications that receive decisions granting refugee status or subsidiary protection, are sometimes cited as an indicator of the level of such harmonisation between EU+ countries.

It is important to recognise that several objective factors may lead to variations in recognition rates. The complexity of an asylum application and its examination cannot be reduced to a single measure such as the nationality of the applicant. Differences in the underlying profile of the applicant, national jurisprudence and national policies, and the application of certain legal concepts also come into play and can result in different recognition rates (Read: [EUAA Pilot Convergence Analysis 2023](#)). Irrespective of underlying causes, this figure illustrates recognition rates across the EU+ for various citizenships. In each column, individual circles of the same colour represent different issuing countries, with the size of each circle reflecting the number of decisions issued, and their placement on the vertical (y) axis indicating the corresponding recognition rate – namely, the percentage of decisions that granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

During the first half of 2024, the EU+ recognition rate for [Afghans](#) stood at 65% but as the chart shows, there was much variation between receiving countries (leftmost column of black circles). Some 40% of all decisions on Afghan cases were issued by Germany (the biggest circle, labelled) where the recognition rate stood at 46%. However, it is important to note that Germany also issued many decisions to Afghans granting a national form of protection (46% of all first instance decisions, considered as negative in Figure 8 and in the interactive chart) which would push the overall 'inclusive' protection rate to 92%. France also issued many decisions to Afghans with a recognition rate of 67%, while Greece issued 98% positive decisions to Afghans, compared to Belgium with 38%. This variation can be seen in a [more detailed chart on convergence](#). Read the [EUAA Country Guidance on Afghanistan](#) for an in-depth analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, focusing on the key elements of qualification for international protection, and also [EUAA Country Focus on Afghanistan](#) for information on the general security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

In contrast, the recognition rate for [Syrians](#) (92%) exhibited much tighter consistency among receiving countries. Among the countries issuing the most decisions to Syrians, Germany had a January – June 2024 recognition rate of 93%, Austria 96%, the Netherlands 94% and Greece 83%. However, it is important to note that, while the EU+ recognition rate for Syrian cases might be fairly consistent between decision-making countries, this metric does not differentiate between refugee status and subsidiary protection. Closer inspection reveals much variation in first instance practices for Syrian applicants which can be seen in a [more detailed chart on convergence](#): ratios between refugee status and subsidiary protection varied from 1:9 in Germany (heavily in favour of subsidiary protection) compared to 7:3 in Austria (in favour of refugee protection) and even 10:0 in Greece (heavily in favour of refugee status). In any case, the similar EU+ recognition rates at least suggest a more consistent assessment of general protection needs among Syrians across these EU+ countries. Read the [EUAA Country Guidance Syria](#) for in-depth analysis of the situation in Syria, focussing on the key elements of qualification for international protection.

Pending Cases

chart visualization

While an application is awaiting a first instance decision, it is part of the caseload of applications under examination by the asylum authorities, or so-called first instance pending cases. The number of pending cases serves as a key indicator that reflects the workload faced by national authorities and the strain on national asylum systems, including reception systems. As of the end of June 2024, some 925,000 cases were awaiting a first instance decision which is up by 35% compared to a year previously in June 2023 and is at least double that within the period between 2018-2021.

In general, citizenships lodging the most applications tend to have the most cases awaiting decisions at first instance, that is with asylum authorities rather than in appeal or review. For example, at the end of June 2024, Syrians, Colombians and Venezuelans had the most pending cases (101,000, 91,000 and 76,000, respectively). This situation was particularly pronounced for these three citizenships with the Syrian caseload increasing by 16% compared to June 2023, somewhat overshadowed by the Colombian and Venezuelan caseloads which increased by much higher margins (+66% and +101%, respectively), almost exclusively in Spain. The number of pending cases for Turks (72,000) also increased (+49%), mostly in Germany, but the number of Afghan cases awaiting a first instance decision fell by 11% to 62,000.

Also significant were increases in the number of Bangladeshi cases awaiting a first instance decision (+69%), as well as Peruvian (+95%), Guinean (+101%) and Malian cases (+236%).

## Context

EU+ asylum authorities are under pressure to increase their decision making and do so often with the [operational support](#) of the EUAA. Despite these efforts, decision making has not kept pace with the number of applications being lodged. As a consequence, we estimate that the total number of cases awaiting a decision at the end of May 2024 (most recent data, includes those in [appeal or review](#)) increased to around 1.2 million (Eurostat – missing data estimated). Within this total, we conclude that three quarters (77% or 929,000) of cases were pending at first instance, while the remaining quarter (23% or 282,000) were awaiting decisions at second or higher instances.

## Research

The Survey of Asylum-related Migrants (SAM) is a multi-country project designed to collect testimonies directly from people seeking international protection across the EU+. The project uses online, self-administered surveys that can be completed on smartphones and offers the possibility to survey large numbers of migrants at the same time. The objective of SAM is to collect data on push and pull factors, travel histories, or and migrants' future aspirations. Understanding these drivers both facilitates general preparedness to deal with a high number of arrivals but also to better inform decision makers about the needs and expectations of migrants.

On 11 April 2022, the EUAA launched the [Survey of Arriving Migrants for Displaced People from Ukraine](#) (SAM-UKR), with the support of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The questionnaire was updated in February 2023 to include additional topics. Demographics of the responses since that date and by 30 June 2024 are shown below but for more detailed information read the latest EUAA [Employment and Education factsheet](#) and see the EUAA publications portal for a [Voices Report](#) that was drafted in collaboration with OECD and Gradus Research based in Ukraine.

**The [survey](#) is ongoing and accessible in Ukrainian, Russian and English.**

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## Demographic breakdown of SAM-UKR survey respondents by 30 June 2024

## Data Tables

### Definitions

**Asylum applications** include all persons who have lodged or have been included in an application for international protection as a family member in the reporting country during the reporting month.

**EU+ refers** to the 27 European Union Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland.

**First instance decisions** include all persons covered by decisions issued on granting EU-regulated international protection status (refugee or subsidiary protection) following a first time or repeated application for international protection in the first instance determination process.

**Stock of pending cases** includes all cases for which an asylum application has been lodged and are under consideration by the national authority responsible for the first instance determination of the application for international protection (until the first instance decision has been issued) at the end of the reference period (i.e. last day of the reference month). It refers to the “stock” of applications for which decisions at first instance are still pending.

**The EU+ recognition rate** includes EU-regulated forms of protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) and excludes national protection forms (humanitarian reasons). It is calculated by dividing the number of positive first instance decisions (granting refugee status or subsidiary protection) by the total number of decisions issued

### [Country code glossary](#)

This page is produced by EUAA’s Situational Awareness Unit (SAU) based on monthly data exchanged under the Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS). The data shared with the EUAA by EU+ countries are provisional and unvalidated and, therefore, may differ from validated data submitted to Eurostat at a later stage under Regulation (EU) 2020/851. Trends analysed here focus on the top 20 citizenships applying for asylum in the focal month.

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