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Introduction

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As the go-to source of information on international protection in Europe, the annual EUAA Asylum Report provides a comprehensive overview of key developments in asylum in Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (EU+ countries). All aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) are covered by summarising changes to legislation, policy and practices at the European and national levels. The report presents selected case law which has shaped the interpretation of European and national laws, as well as key statistical indicators for the 2023 reference year, which highlight emerging trends and the effectiveness of asylum systems.

As asylum applications climbed to over 1.1 million in 2023, in addition to about 4 million displaced Ukrainians receiving temporary protection, EU+ countries were faced with saturated reception systems and rising backlogs of decisions on first instance applications. This report details the steps taken by national authorities to manage the situation, in addition to implementing further improvements such as procedural safeguards for vulnerable applicants.

To set the scene, **Section 1** presents an overview of forced displacement globally and addresses the international community's response to large refugee movements. The section addresses key topics which were discussed at the global level, including climate-induced displacement and developments concerning stateless populations.

Section 2 zooms in on the context in the European Union, presenting the latest legislative and policy developments in the evolution of CEAS. It starts with a description of the instruments included in the Pact on Migration and Asylum to better manage asylum in Europe. It provides a brief update on the extension of temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine. The section also presents an overview of the common migration routes to Europe. Cases addressed by the Court of Justice of the EU are also summarised to clarify the interpretation of law in often complex situations.

Section 3 analyses developments at the national level at each stage of the asylum procedure, including access to the asylum procedure and to information, legal assistance, interpretation services, procedures at first and second instances, special procedures, the Dublin procedure, reception conditions, detention during the asylum procedure, country of origin information, the content of protection and resettlement. The key indicators which are presented help to identify

and monitor trends in receiving countries, as well as with the main nationalities of applicants.

The situation of children and applicants with special needs are described in **Section 4**. The section combines quantitative, qualitative and legal information to provide an overview of the situation for minors, women, victims of violence and human trafficking, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) asylum applicants. The section focuses in particular on unaccompanied minors, reviewing changes to legal representation, age assessments and reception conditions.

The support provided by the EUAA to countries during 2023 is outlined in **Section 5**. It details the Agency's work, including cooperation with third countries, and operational and technical assistance which was provided over the course of the year. It also presents an evaluation of these activities, when applicable.

To include diverse perspectives, observations by civil society organisations and other stakeholders are presented throughout the report by topic. In 2023, concerns often centred around access to the asylum procedure, reception conditions and applicants with special needs.

The report serves as a main reference for developments in international protection in EU+ countries. It collates a wide range of sources to provide accurate information to policymakers, national asylum authorities, researchers and practitioners.

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