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Decreasing numbers of asylum applications received in EU+ countries between the winter months of December and February



The EUAA's latest analyses show that while EU+ asylum authorities continue to receive high numbers of applications overall, these have been on a downward trend since December 2023, in line with expectations for the winter period.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has released analysis showing a decline in asylum applications during the winter of 2023-24. In February 2024, an estimated **85 000 applications** were received across 29 EU+ countries. This marks a moderate, but notable, decrease given that the number of applications received between August and November 2023 exceeded 100 000 monthly. December saw approximately 86 000 applications, while just over 95 000 were lodged in January. It should be noted, however, that winter months include fewer working days in which asylum offices are open and can process applications.

In February 2024, **Syrians (11 000)** remained the largest group of nationals applying for international protection in the EU+. While this monthly figure is up by 17 % year-over-year, it is also a significant decrease compared to the peak of October 2023. **Afghans (8 500)** remained the second largest nationality group, though this too represents a 9% decrease year-over-year. In the same way, **Turks (5 000)** also lodged fewer applications in February 2024, but nevertheless made up the third-largest group.

Persistent strain on some national asylum systems

In February 2024, **Germany (21 000)** received the most applications and, in fact, remained the leading destination for asylum seekers in the EU+. Based on available data, **Italy (14 000)** overtook **France (12 000)** and Spain in receiving the 2nd most applications ; the latter two tend to receive around 15 % of all applications, each. Applications data for Spain and Portugal were estimated. Taken together, these four countries continued to receive more than two-thirds of all applications lodged in the EU+.

As is often the case, the number of applications is not the most representative measure of pressure on national administrations, as these vary in size from State to State. In February 2024, **Cyprus (800)** continued to receive the most application per capita; i.e., 1 application for every 1 149 inhabitants. In contrast, Germany received 1 application for every 4 000 inhabitants. Italy and its neighbouring **Slovenia (540)**, while receiving very different numbers per se, received very similar numbers of applications *per capita*.

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