News Published: 23 May 2024

Moderate decline in asylum applications in the EU, but not for all Member States



In a trend that began in December 2023, EU+ countries continue to receive steadily decreasing numbers of asylum applications, though this is in line with winter expectations. However, the EUAA's latest analyses show that the number of pending applications has now reached a 7-year high, just as lawmakers have approved a reform of the EU's migration management framework.

The winter months of 2023-2024 have seen an overall decline in asylum applications, most notably in March, when EU+ countries **received 83 000 asylum applications. This compares to a recent peak of 123 000 in October 2023**. However, a decrease in applications is often characteristic of the winter months.

In March 2024, **Syrians (11 200)** lodged significantly fewer applications compared to the seven-year peak of October 2023 (24 000). However, the figure remains a 12 % increase compared to March 2023. **Afghans (7 500)** remained the second largest nationality group, despite lodging 21 % fewer applications compared to a year previously. A surge in applications by Turkish nationals in autumn of 2023 appears to have been temporary in nature, as **Turks (3 800)** have consistently lodged fewer applications in subsequent months, including in March.

While some overall decreases in key nationalities have been recorded at the EU+ level, this has not been the case for all countries. Indeed, **Cyprus** and **Spain** continue to receive increased applications; in the case of the former, from Syrians who represented almost the entirety of new cases that month; as well as from Malian and Senegalese nationals following a surge in arrivals to the latter, notably in the Canary Islands.

Some changing trends in the first quarter

In March, **Germany (18 000)** continued to be the foremost destination for asylum seekers in the EU+, receiving around 22 % of all applications. In a change from last year, in the first months of 2024 Germany is no longer receiving more applications than the next two EU+ countries combined. This is likely due to the rising number of applications in **Italy (16 000)** which, in March, was the highest number on record[1] and represented 19% of all applications in the EU+ that month.

Following the well-documented increase of boat arrivals in the Canary Islands, Spain received a commensurate and significant increase in asylum applications in March 2024. Specifically, it received significantly more applications from **Malians** and **Senegalese** nationals, compared to a year earlier. Overall, in the EU+, these two nationalities saw applications increase by 260 % and 125 %, respectively, in March. In addition, **Venezuelans (5 500)** and **Colombians (4 700)** as well as, to a lesser extent **Peruvians (2 200)**, continued to submit significant numbers of applications in the EU+ in March, also largely in Spain.

Decisions pending at first instance reach a 7-year high

In March 2024, the number of **decisions pending at first instance reached a 7-year high**, standing at around 913 000. In general, citizenships lodging the most applications also tend to have the most cases awaiting decisions. Indeed, Syrians (112 000), Colombians (84 000) and Turks (83 000) had the largest share of cases pending at first instance. The situation is particularly pronounced for Colombians and Turks, and for whom the numbers **have more than doubled** since the beginning of 2023.

Visit the Latest Asylum Trends page.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Union Agency for Asylum's Press Office at the following email addresses:

- Press Office: press@euaa.europa.eu
- Andrew McKinlay, Press Officer: andrew.mckinlay@euaa.europa.eu
- Anis Cassar, Spokesperson: anis.cassar@euaa.europa.eu

[1]

Since the EUAA began collecting data under the Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS).

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu