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Almost one quarter fewer Syrian asylum seekers, year-over-year, in August 2024



Since reaching a 7-year peak in last October, there has been a sustained decrease in the number of asylum applications received in EU+ countries. In August 2024 applications stabilised at 78 000, with those from Syrians also decreasing by almost a quarter year-over-year. In contrast, the number of decisions pending at first instance reached an almost 8-year high, however.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has released updated analysis showing that EU+ asylum authorities **continue to receive fewer applications for asylum** compared to the long-term peak of last autumn, stabilising recently with **78 000 applications** received in August 2024. Syrians (14 000) represented nearly a fifth of all applications lodged in the EU+. Though this number is a slight 8 % increase compared to July, it is **down by a significant margin** compared to August 2023 (- 23 %).

While the Agency has observed a continuous downward trend in asylum applications received in EU+ countries month-to-month in 2024, the number of applications pending a decision at first instance has continued to rise. At the end of August 2024, some **959 000 cases** were awaiting a first instance decision, up by nearly a third compared to a year previously (31 %), and is **the most in nearly eight years**.

chart visualization

Key receiving EU+ countries and nationalities applying

In August 2024, **Germany (20 000)** remained the top destination for asylum seekers in the EU+, receiving 26 % of all applications. The next three EU+ countries each received similar numbers of applications: **France (12 000)**, **Spain (11 000)**, and **Italy (10 000)**.

The main receiving countries differ in the origins of applicants. In **Germany**, half of all applications were lodged by Syrians (6 800) and Afghans (3 000); in **France**, the top three nationalities were Afghans (1 100), Congolese – DR (1 000) and Haitians (900); in **Spain**, 60 % were lodged by Venezuelans (4 200) and Colombians (2 200); and in **Italy** a third of all applications were lodged by Bangladeshis (2 000) and Peruvians (1 100).

hierarchy visualization

From January to August 2024, Frontex reported that detections of illegal border-crossings on the Western African route more than doubled, compared to the same period in 2023. According to these data, Malians were the most commonly detected, leading to a commensurate increase in the number of asylum applications. Though applications by **Malians (1 000)** in the EU+ in August 2024 had increased by 52%, compared to a year earlier; **they were down significantly** compared to the peak of April 2024.

In August, **Venezuelans (4 800)** and **Colombians (3 000)** continued to seek international protection in the EU+ in large numbers; in Spain in particular. These Latin American nationalities benefit from visa-free access to the Schengen area, which means that they can arrive legally on flights from their home countries. In fact, around 20 % of applications by all nationalities in August were lodged by nationalities with visa-free access to the Schengen area.

Persistent pressure on national administrations

Comparisons between the number of applications received in different EU+ countries is not always the most representative measure of pressure on national administrations, as they have different sized asylum and reception systems.

With a population size of around 10.4 million, **Greece (7 000)** received **1 application for every 1 500 inhabitants**. Though Germany, with its larger population of 84 million, received many more applications for asylum, the per capita rate was lower at **1 application per 4 200 inhabitants**. In the cases of **Cyprus (270)** and **Belgium (3 000)**, while receiving very different numbers of applications per se, the two countries received very similar numbers per capita, around **1 application for every 3 500 inhabitants**, each.

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