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Syrian asylum applications drop significantly, reflecting broader decreasing trend in the EU+



In February 2025, Syrians lodged one of the smallest numbers of monthly applications in over a decade. As a result, having been the main recipient country for Syrian asylum-seekers, Germany was no longer the main destination for asylum seekers in the EU+. France and Spain each received more applications than Germany. In France, Haitians and Ukrainians together represented one fifth of all applicants, while Venezuelans dominated the asylum landscape in Spain.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published the first monthly dataset for 2025, on asylum applications in the EU+. In February, EU+ countries received **around 69 000 asylum applications**, following a decreasing trend that has been ongoing since October 2024.1 The fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria has led to a significant change in the asylum landscape in the EU+. In February, **Syrians lodged the fewest applications in over a decade (5 000)**, with their number decreasing by 70 %, compared to October 2024.

With Syrians, historically, having almost always been the nationality with the most applicants for international protection in the EU+, this change is notable for many reasons, among them the fact that Germany was not the main receiving EU+ country in February 2025. The sharp decrease in Syrian applications has also impacted several of the EUAA's first instance asylum indicators.

Commissioner Bunner

The latest asylum figures show how important stability in other regions is for Europe. This is strongly reflected in the declining trend in asylum applications from Syrian nationals in the EU in the first quarter. With the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum and the new returns regulation, we are bringing our European House in order. Together with Member States, we need to step up our cooperation with partner countries to address migration well beyond our borders.

Magnus Brunner European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration

These figures show a changing asylum landscape in Europe, with several months of fewer applicants seeking protection, and also shifts in their profiles, nationalities and destination countries. At the same time, both the EU Institutions and the Agency are working on making Europe's asylum systems more streamlined and effective, ensuring that protection is provided in a timely manner to those in genuine need.

Nina Gregori Executive Director

Nina Gregori

Changing trends in citizenships and key receiving EU+ countries

For more than a decade, **Germany (12 780)** has almost always been the largest recipient of asylum applications in the EU+. However, in February 2025, that was no longer the case, and the country **received 40% fewer applications** compared to February 2024. **France (13 081)** and **Spain (12 976)** both received more applications than Germany, with figures that were relatively stable in the past 12 months. **Italy (11 405)** also received a significant number of applications, despite a declining trend. Taken together, applications in these four receiving countries represented **almost three quarters of all applications** lodged in the EU+.

In February 2025, **Venezuelans (8 500)** were the largest applicant group. Though Venezuelans have long been among the 5 biggest applicant groups in the EU+, mostly applying in Spain due to a well-established diaspora, the recent increase in applications since October 2024 may be linked to the ongoing economic and political crisis in the country, as well as increasingly restrictive asylum policies in the United States of America.

hierarchy visualization

Recognition rate at the lowest level since COVID-19

Over the past two years, the EU+ recognition rate, which reflects the percentage of asylum applicants that receive decisions granting either refugee status or subsidiary protection, has fluctuated around 40% at first instance. In January and February 2025, the monthly **EU+ recognition rate fell to 25 %**, the lowest level since the first months of COVID-19 in 2020.

A significant contributor to this change was the number of asylum decisions issued to Syrians in January and February 2025, which dropped to around 1 600 in both months. In addition, the EU+ recognition rate for Syrians **stood at just 14 %**, down from around 90 % in previous months. The reasons for these significant changes are two-fold. Firstly, **many EU+ countries have temporarily paused the processing of Syrian asylum claims**, pending greater clarity on the security and political situation in Syria. Secondly, many Syrians **have begun to withdraw their asylum applications.** In some EU+ countries, a withdrawn application results in a negative decision, thus reducing the overall EU+ recognition rate.

More generally, the Agency's data show that there were **around 964 000 asylum applications pending at first instance** at the end of February 2025. Together with **Syrians (113 000)**, **Venezuelans (100 000**) and **Colombians (89 000)** were awaiting the most first instance decisions. In February, some 52 % of applications were lodged by citizenships for whom the EU+ recognition rates stood at 20 % or less, in 2024.[2] Citizenships in this group included **Bangladeshis (4 %)**, **Columbians (5 %)**, **Egyptians (4 %)**, and **Moroccans (4 %)**.

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[1]

The EUAA's EPS data are preliminary and might differ from validated official statistics submitted to Eurostat at a later stage. The total EPS numbers include approximations for two EU+ countries and may change after data updates.

[2]

Regulation (EU) 2024/1348, which becomes applicable on 12 June 2026, requires Member States to accelerate the examination of some cases including inter alia those from low recognition rate countries.

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