Press Release Published: 8 September 2025

Asylum applications down by 23% in the first half of 2025



Europe’s asylum landscape underwent a series of significant shifts in the first half of 2025. By the end of June, EU+ countries received 399 000 asylum applications, a 23 % decrease year-over-year. A two-thirds drop in Syrian applications meant that Germany was no longer the main receiving EU+ country, with both France and Spain receiving more applications. A majority of applications continued to be lodged by citizenships with low recognition rates in the EU+.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published its Mid-Year Review of the Latest Asylum Trends, paired with detailed analysis of the main citizenships seeking asylum and the key European countries receiving their applications. By the end of June 2025, **EU+ countries received 399 000 asylum applications**, a 23 % decrease compared to the first half of 2024.1 This shift was driven by far fewer **Syrians (25 000)** applying, for whom the number of applications **dropped by two thirds** (- 66 %). However, **Venezuelans (49 000**) applied in significant numbers, up by almost a third (+ 31 %) year-over-year.

chart visualization

Changing trends belay a complex asylum landscape

Following the fall of the Assad regime in Syria last December, and after a decade during which Syrians were consistently the main citizenship seeking protection in the EU+, **Venezuelans became the largest nationality group** in the first half of 2025. This shift had a significant impact on the main receiving EU+ countries of asylum applications. By the end of June, **France (78 000)** and **Spain (77 000)** both received more applications than Germany **(70 000)**. They were followed by **Italy (64 000)** and **Greece (27 000)**. Greece received the most applications *per capita*: 1 application for every 380 residents. Importantly, while the number of applications in France was stable, year-over-year, applications in Germany (- 43 %), Italy (- 25 %) and Spain (- 13 %) all **fell** compared to the first half of 2024.

Third country nationals tend to favour specific EU+ countries when seeking international protection. **Venezuelans tend to apply in Spain** due to a shared language, an existing diaspora and a tendency by the Spanish authorities to grant them a national form of protection. Indeed, Venezuelans lodged almost all of their applications in Spain (93 %). Compounding this reality, Venezuelan applications in Spain also **rose by almost a third** (+ 29 %), compared to the first half of 2024. Typically, around a quarter of asylum applications in the EU+ are lodged by citizenships with visa-free access to the Schengen area. Venezuelans and Colombians represent the majority of such applicants. The European Parliament is expected to vote on a stronger and more flexible visa suspension mechanism next month.

In addition to Venezuelans, other citizenships displayed increased trends. **Ukrainians (16 000)** have continued to lodge increasing numbers of asylum applications, also up by 29 %. **France** accounted for nearly half of all Ukrainian applications, whereas **Poland** accounted for almost one third. However, these figures were dwarfed by the 4.3 million Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of June 2025.

Afghans (42 000) were the second largest applicant group in the first half of 2025. Despite representing a tenth of all applications, the semi-annual figure **has been on a downward trend** since 2023. Following Syrians, **Bangladeshis (17 000)** and **Turks (17 000)** also lodged fewer applications, recording decreases of 26 % and 41 %, respectively, year-over-year.

hierarchy visualization

Lowest EU+ recognition rate on record

The EU+ recognition rate for the first half of the year stood at 25 %, which is the **lowest overall semi-annual or annual recognition rate on record**. This was driven by a sharp drop in protection decisions issued to Syrians for whom most EU+ countries have kept the processing of applications on hold. Importantly, this figure does **not reflect a stricter interpretation of protection needs** but is owed to procedural factors. For example, when Syrians withdraw their applications, some national authorities record this, statistically, as a negative decision.

For some citizenships, EU+ recognition rates have remained stable over time, including for Bangladeshis (4 %), Pakistanis (10 %) and Nigerians (10 %). However, other nationalities **have seen significant shifts**. The EU+ recognition rate for Malians was up from 41 % (in 2021) to 79 % and, in the case of Haitians, up from 10 % (in 2020) to 86 % during the first half of 2025. Applications from **Malians (9 000)** were stable (- 6 %); whereas Haitians (7 200) lodged 27 % more applications in the first half of 2025. Around **three quarters of Malians applied in Spain**, whereas **almost all Haitians applied in France** (99 %). In fact,

Haitian applications in France **were up by almost three fifths** (+ 57 %).

During the first half of 2025, around 51 % of applications came from citizenships for whom the recognition rate was low (? 20 %). Many such applications may be subject to an accelerated examination under new rules that become applicable in mid-2026.2 The number of applications pending a decision at first instance **stood at 918 000 at the end of June 2025**.

A series of interactive visualisations can be found on the Latest Asylum Trends page. The underlying data tables, on the main citizenships applying and the receiving EU+ countries are available there as well.

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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. Data on applications pending at first instance in Italy for the month of June 2025 were missing, and an approximation was used.

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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