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EU+ asylum applications down by one fifth in 2025, amid shifting geopolitical dynamics



EU+ countries received 19 % fewer asylum applications in 2025, following a decrease of 11 % in 2024. The decrease in 2025 was largely driven by fewer applications by Syrians, Bangladeshis and Turks. Despite the overall decline, applications by Afghan nationals increased, primarily reflecting claims lodged by women already present in the EU+, while Venezuelan applications also rose amid heightened tensions at home.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published its annual overview of the Latest Asylum Trends in 2025. The report shows that EU+ countries received **around 822 000 asylum applications during the year**[1], which is a **one-fifth decrease compared to 2024** (- 19 %). In addition to the detailed analysis of asylum trends concerning specific nationalities and receiving EU+ countries, the Agency also examines how **geo-political considerations and changes to jurisprudence** have impacted protection needs expressed in EU+ countries. In particular, the report highlights that the decrease in asylum applications was less about changes in countries of origin and more about **shifts in migration pathways**.

Commenting on the report, the EUAA's Executive Director, **Nina GREGORI** said:

"Driven by a combination of factors, asylum applications have decreased by almost a third since the high of 2023. The Member States should use the important breathing room that this decrease provides, to focus on the implementation of the Pact, while also adapting to international changes that could quickly disrupt recent decreases in applications. The European Asylum Agency will continue to stand with them, every step of the way and provide the support they need."

Nina Gregori, EUAA's Executive Director

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Impact of changes in regions of origin

The largest contribution to the overall decline came from **Syrians (42 000)** who lodged **72 % fewer applications** compared to 2024 as a consequence of the fall of the regime of Bashar Al-Assad. Meanwhile, authorities in most EU+ countries paused the processing of Syrian applications, taking time to assess the new situation in Syria. The decrease in Syrian applications **mostly took place in Germany**, where Syrians lodged 69 % fewer applications compared to 2024, though still representing a majority of applications lodged there.

Afghans (117 000) were the citizenship with the most applications in 2025, with the number **increasing by one third** (+ 33 %) in the EU+. However, this figure is considered stable compared to 2023 and is lower than in 2022. Nevertheless, the significant year-over-year increase is largely attributed to a judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in October 2024, which confirmed that Taliban-imposed restrictions on women amount to persecution. As a result, Afghan applications began to rise in 2025, peaking first in Austria and then in Germany.

In this context, around **41 % of Afghan applications were *repeated applications*** and therefore did not reflect new arrivals to the EU+. Importantly, while the share of asylum decisions granting refugee status to Afghans in the EU+ rose in 2025, **this is not reflective** of a more permissive policy shift. Rather, it shows adherence to European jurisprudence.

With applications increasing by nearly a quarter (+ 23 %), **Venezuelans (91 000)** lodged both the highest number of applications on record and were the 2nd most populous citizenship applying in 2025. The vast majority **applied in Spain (94 %)**. This year-to-year increase was greater than the increase observed between 2023 and 2024. It is owed to a confluence of factors including restrictive immigration policies adopted by the US Administration and tightened visa requirements imposed on Venezuelans in neighbouring Latin American countries. In the EU+, Venezuelans currently **benefit from visa-free access to the Schengen area** as well as a long-standing Spanish practice to grant national forms of protection to Venezuelan applicants who do not meet the criteria for international protection.

Bangladeshis (37 000) and **Turks (33 000)** were the remaining two citizenships in the top five applying for asylum in the EU+. However, in both cases, the numbers of applications **decreased by 15 % and 40 %**,

respectively, year-over-year.

A highly localised but Common European Asylum System

As has been the case for several years, an increasing majority of asylum applications are being lodged in just a few EU+ countries. In 2025, while **Germany (163 000**) still received the highest number of applications in the EU+, the figure was **down by one third** (- 31 %) compared to 2024. The number of applications in **France (152 000)** was stable. **Spain (143 000)** received 15 % fewer applications. **Italy (134 000)** and **Greece (62 000)** recorded similar patterns, with 16 % declines in both countries. Taken together, these five countries received 80 % of all applications in the EU+.

Some citizenships applying for asylum **are highly concentrated in a single receiving EU+ country**. Afghans, Syrians and Turks prioritised **Germany**; Congolese, Guineans and Haitians apply mostly in **France** ; Venezuelans and Malians in **Spain** and, finally Bangladeshis, Egyptians and Peruvians in **Italy**.

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Potential impact of EU migration reforms

In late February 2026, the Council adopted the first EU-wide list of Safe Countries of Origin. Presented as a concrete step in the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, applications by the citizenships of the seven countries included in the list e.g., Bangladesh (37 000), Colombia (22 000), Egypt (25 000), India (9 700), Kosovo (3 700)2, Morocco (21 000) and Tunisia (9 000) together accounted for **16 % of all applications lodged in 2025**.3 The EU+ recognition rates for these different citizenships stood at between 2 % and 6 %, each.

A critical aspect of the Pact, and the amended Asylum Procedure Regulation therein, is the accelerated border procedure. One criterion used to inform whether the examination of an application should be accelerated, is whether the recognition rate for that citizenship stood at less than 20 %, based on the latest annual EU data.4 In 2025, **around half of all applications** in the EU+ were lodged by nationals of countries that fell below this threshold.

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Read the Latest Asylum Trends 2025: Annual Analysis.

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

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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.

2

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

3

Regulation (EU) 2026/464 notes that third countries granted the status of candidate States for accession are also designated as Safe Countries of Origin at Union level.

4

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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