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No significant rise in Iranian asylum applications in March, as EU+ caseload remained low



EU+ countries received around 59,000 asylum applications in March 2026, broadly in line with the lower levels recorded since December 2025. Despite the ongoing military conflict in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, Iranian nationals lodged only around 800 applications. Iranians thus remain outside the main applicant groups, with no indication of a sustained or large-scale increase. Venezuelans and Afghans were the largest applicant groups, while Syrian applications remained far below previous levels.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has [published its latest analysis](#) of asylum applications and decisions in the EU+. It shows that in March 2026, EU+ countries received around **59,000 applications for international protection**, broadly stable compared with February and below the levels recorded throughout most of 2025.

Iran and Lebanon: no visible surge, but latent displacement risks remain

To date, recent geopolitical developments involving **Iran, Israel and Lebanon** have not translated into a **notable increase in asylum applications** by Iranian or Lebanese nationals at EU+ level.

In March, [Iranian nationals](#) lodged **around 800 applications** in the EU+. This was slightly higher than in February, when around 680 applications were lodged, but remained modest compared with the main applying citizenships. Iran remained outside the top 20 citizenships applying for asylum, and **the latest analysis does not indicate a significant or sustained increase** in Iranian asylum applications. Nevertheless, as the conflict remains unresolved, Iran continues to be **an important latent displacement risk**, not least due to its large population.

Applications by **Lebanese** nationals were lower still with **around 210 applications** lodged in the EU+ in March. The latest data therefore **do not indicate a significant increase** linked directly to developments along Lebanon's southern border or the wider regional escalation. As with Iran, however, the situation remains volatile and will continue to be monitored.

chart visualization

Venezuelans and Afghans remain the largest applicant groups, while Syrian applications remain low

In March, [Venezuelans](#) lodged around 7,000 applications, narrowly ranking as the largest applicant group in the EU+. Most Venezuelan applications were **first-time applications**, and **almost all were lodged in Spain**. Venezuelan nationals can travel visa-free to the Schengen area, but their applications remain overwhelmingly concentrated in Spain.

[Afghans](#) lodged around 6,900 applications, ranking second by a small margin. **Afghan applications continued to decline** from the peak reached in September 2025, but Afghans remained one of the two largest applicant groups in the EU+.

Bangladeshis ranked third, with around 3,300 applications. They were followed by Syrians, Turks, Malians and Haitians, each with around 1,900 applications.

Syrians lodged around 1,900 applications in March, almost unchanged from February and **far below the levels recorded during much of 2024**. For the second consecutive month, Syrian applications remained below 2,000, confirming that the sharp decline following the fall of the Assad regime has consolidated.

The drop in Syrian applications **remains the most important structural change in the EU+ asylum landscape** recently. Over the latest 12-month period, Syrian applications fell by 75%, from around 131,000 to 33,000, compared with the preceding 12 months. This decrease was the main driver of the lower overall EU+ caseload.

Recognition rate remains around 30%

In March, the **EU+ recognition rate stood at 30%** at first instance. This means that 30% of first instance decisions granted either refugee status or subsidiary protection. The recognition rate considers national forms of protection as negative.

Recognition rates varied widely by citizenship. They remained high for **Malians (88%), Haitians (82%), Afghans (72%), Sudanese (68%) and Ukrainians (60%)**. In contrast, recognition rates remained very low for several high-volume citizenships, including **Egyptians (2%)** and Venezuelans, Bangladeshis, Moroccans and Peruvians (each at 3%). **Around 55% of all applications in March** were lodged by citizenships **with recognition rates of 20% or less in 2025**.

chart visualization

For more information and an interactive data visualisation, please visit the [Latest Asylum Trends](#) page.

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