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Updated EUAA Country Guidance on Afghanistan confirms continuing international protection needs



The EUAA has published the seventh update to its Country Guidance on Afghanistan, providing policymakers and practitioners in EU+ countries with a common analysis of the international protection needs of Afghan applicants. Endorsed by the EUAA Management Board, the 'Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2026)' is the first guidance document issued under the new Qualification Regulation which became applicable on 12 June 2026.

The updated EUAA Country Guidance on Afghanistan addresses the situation of Afghan nationals, **the largest nationality** among asylum applicants in the EU+ in 2025 and underlines the continued importance of common guidance to foster further convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection.

The updated guidance, based on the common EU legal framework and on latest Country of Origin Information (COI) report, was endorsed by the EUAA Management Board, representing the EU Member States, during its meeting on 16-17 June 2026. It provides a legal assessment of several profiles of applicants, selected based on their prominence in asylum caseloads across EU+ countries.

The **situation of women and girls remains a key protection concern**. The current assessment, according to which Afghan women and girls are generally at risk of persecution, is consistent with previous guidance and is further supported by recent case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

Individuals perceived as criticising the Taliban, including **protesters, activists, human rights defenders** and **lawyers, journalists and media workers** also have a well-founded fear of persecution. Other groups facing heightened risks include humanitarian workers whose activities may be viewed as non-neutral or contrary to cultural or religious norms, and individuals considered to have committed blasphemy or apostasy.

For the purposes of assessing the need for subsidiary protection, the updated guidance also analyses the situation of applicants who may be affected by indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict. Given the heightened hostilities with Pakistan, the assessment concludes that **indiscriminate violence takes place**, although not at a high level, in several Eastern and South-eastern provinces bordering Pakistan, as well as in Kabul.

The protection needs of Afghan applicants are further compounded by the general lack of protection in the country, as the **Taliban** *de facto government*, currently the sole entity exercising effective control throughout Afghanistan, **remains the main actor of persecution and serious harm**. The updated Country Guidance also retains the conclusion that an Internal Protection Alternative (IPA) would generally not be available within Afghanistan given this unavailability of protection as well as the dire humanitarian situation in the country.

Asylum situation of Afghan nationals in the EU+

In 2025, **Afghan nationals lodged around 117 000 applications** for international protection in the EU+, which is a one third increase compared to 2024 (88 000). However, this figure is stable compared to 2023 and is lower than in 2022. Importantly, first-time Afghan applications decreased by a tenth between 2024 and 2025, whereas repeated applications rose significantly from 12 000 in 2024 to 49 000 in 2025. These repeated applications are understood to be by Afghan women already present in the EU+. The main receiving countries of Afghan applications were **Germany (63 000), Greece (15 000)** and **France (15 000)**.

During the year, around 135,000 decisions were issued at first instance, resulting in an overall **EU+ recognition rate of 68 %**. The recognition rate stemming from decisions on repeated applications only was higher, at 81 %, suggesting adherence to evolving European jurisprudence on Afghan applications. At the end of 2025, there were just under **44 000 cases still pending a decision** at first instance.

Background

The country guidance documents provide country-specific, common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria of international protection needs established in the EU asylum acquis. In accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the guidance notes and common analysis when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence for deciding on individual applications.

Download EUAA Country Guidance on Afghanistan.

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

- Press Office: press@euaa.europa.eu
- Andrew McKinlay, Press Officer: andrew.mckinlay@euaa.europa.eu
- Anis Cassar, Spokesperson: anis.cassar@euaa.europa.eu
- Mira Banerjee, Spokesperson: mira.banerjee@euaa.europa.eu

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