



## Cyprus

### National developments in 2024



A Deputy Ministry for Migration and International Protection was established in June 2024 so that competences related to migration and asylum are under a single institution.<sup>1</sup>

The upgrade of the Pournara First Reception Centre continued throughout 2024. It is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2025.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the year, discussions centred around the external dimension of migration, for example by providing support to neighbouring third countries, such as Lebanon, which host large numbers of migrants to enhance their infrastructure for the reception of migrants. During a ministerial meeting with seven other Member States, the possibility of reassessing certain areas of Syria as safe was discussed.<sup>3</sup> In parallel, there was an increased number of arrivals by sea in the first half of 2024.<sup>4</sup> As a result, in April 2024 the Ministry of the Interior announced that the examination of cases by Syrian applicants was suspended.<sup>5</sup>

Several clarifications were announced about the decree which changed the right to access the labour market for asylum seekers from 1 month to 9 months. Possible sanctions and more stringent labour inspections were also explained.<sup>6</sup>

For months, several migrants remained stranded in the buffer zone along the Green Line.<sup>7</sup> The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights raised concerns about their precarious living conditions and allegations of unnecessary use of force by law enforcement agents. The commissioner reminded that Cyprus' obligations under international refugee and human rights law also apply in the buffer zone and called on the authorities to ensure effective access to the asylum procedure and adequate reception conditions.<sup>8</sup> All migrants were eventually admitted to the areas under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The ECtHR ruled for the first time against Cyprus on *refoulement* and the expulsion of foreigners in *M.A. and Z.R.* (No 39090/20).<sup>9</sup> National courts continued to rule on the need to identify and consider vulnerabilities throughout the asylum procedure.<sup>10</sup>

A legislative proposal on the procedure for granting legal aid for appeals before the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC) was adopted and entered into force in December 2024.<sup>11</sup> Legal aid to beneficiaries of international protection and illegally-staying, third-country nationals will only be granted if the appeal is filed within the deadlines. In addition, legal aid representatives will now be appointed based on a directory of the Cyprus Bar Association.<sup>12</sup>

To prepare for the implementation of the Pact on Asylum and Migration, a bottom-up approach was established whereby small groups work on different building blocks of the National Implementation Plan. Coordination of the work of the groups is carried out at a central level by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Deputy Minister for Migration and International Protection.

**More input from civil society:**

- [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)
- [European Network on Statelessness](#)

# Cyprus

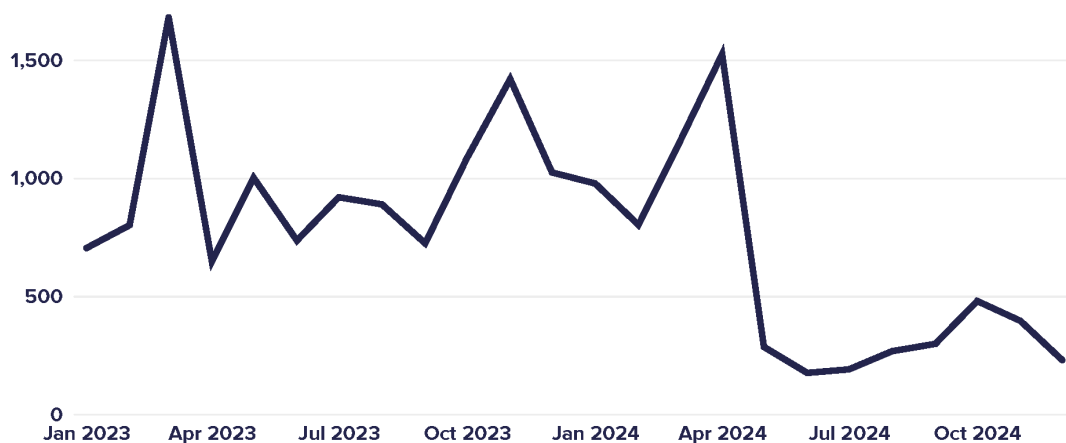
## Key indicators for 2024



Rank by number of asylum applications <b>14</b>	Rank per capita (applications per 1M inhabitants) <b>1</b>	Share of applications in EU+ <b>0.7%</b>	Recognition rate <b>29%</b>
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Indicator	2024	2023	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	6,763	11,617 ↓	-42%	Syria (62%), Afghanistan (6%), Iran (5%)
Pending cases (Dec '24)	20,652	26,599 ↓	-22%	Syria (67%), Congo (DR) (9%), Afghanistan (6%)
First instance decisions	13,242	16,588 ↓	-20%	Syria (20%), Cameroon (15%), Congo (DR) (14%)
Refugee status	1,317	755 ↑	74%	Palestine (17%), Afghanistan (14%), Somalia (11%)
Subsidiary protection	2,467	2,308 ↑	7%	Syria (71%), Somalia (15%), Cameroon (6%)
Negative	9,458	13,525 ↓	-30%	Congo (DR) (19%), Cameroon (18%), Nigeria (15%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2023-2024



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2025](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





## Sources

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<sup>1</sup> Ο περί Ίδρυσης Υφυπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Διεθνούς Προστασίας και Συναφών Θεμάτων Νόμος του 2024 (23(I)/2024 [Law on the Establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Immigration and International Protection and Related Matters (Law 23(I)/2024), June 17, 2024. Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών, & Asylum Service | Υπηρεσία Ασύλου. (2024, February 29). [Δήλωση Υπουργού Εσωτερικών κ. Κωνσταντίνου Ιωάννου για την ψήφιση του νομοσχεδίου για τη σύσταση του Υφυπουργείου Μετανάστευσης](#) [Statement of the Minister of the Interior Mr. Konstantinou Ioannou for the passing of the bill for the establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Immigration].

<sup>2</sup> Asylum Service | Υπηρεσία Ασύλου. (2024, June 28). [Πρώτη επίσκεψη του Υφυπουργού Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου στο ΚΕΠΥ Πουρνάρα](#) [First visit of the Deputy Minister on Migration and Asylum to the Reception Centre in Pournara].

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών. (2024, May 17). [Η Κύπρος φιλοξένησε την Υπουργική Σύνοδο για το μεταναστευτικό με τη συμμετοχή επτά κρατών μελών](#) [Cyprus hosted the Ministerial Meeting on Migration with the participation of seven Member States], Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών. (2024, May 17). [Υπουργική Σύνοδος για την εξωτερική διάσταση μεταναστευτικού: Το ζήτημα της Συρίας](#) [Ministerial Conference on the external dimension of immigration: The issue of Syria].

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών. (2024, April 3). [Διευκρίνιση Υπουργείου Εσωτερικών για δικαίωμα εργασίας αιτητών ασύλου](#) [Clarification of the Ministry of the Interior on the right to work for asylum seekers].

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών. (2024, April 13). [Ανακοίνωση για την εφαρμογή νέας πολιτικής σε σχέση με τη διαχείριση των Σύρων αιτητών ασύλου](#) [Announcement on the implementation of a new policy regarding the management of Syrian asylum seekers].

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of the Interior | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών. (2024, April 3). [Διευκρίνιση Υπουργείου Εσωτερικών για δικαίωμα εργασίας αιτητών ασύλου](#) [Clarification of the Ministry of the Interior on the right to work for asylum seekers].

<sup>7</sup> Deputy Ministry of Immigration and International Protection | Υφυπουργείο Μετανάστευσης, και Διεθνούς Προστασίας. (2024, August 2). [Ανακοίνωση του Υφυπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Διεθνούς Προστασίας για νέα άφιξη παράτυπων μεταναστών στη Νεκρή Ζώνη μέσω κατεχομένων](#) [Announcement of the Deputy Ministry of Immigration and International Protection on the new arrival of irregular immigrants in the Buffer Zone through the occupied territories of Cyprus].

<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024, October 31). [Cyprus: Commissioner O'Flaherty expresses concern about the situation of migrant and asylum-seeking people stranded in the buffer zone and allegations of summary returns at sea.](#)

<sup>9</sup> European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). *M.A. and Z.R. v Cyprus*, No 39090/20, 10 October 2024. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database.

<sup>10</sup> Cyprus, International Protection Administrative Court [Διοικητικό Δικαστήριο Διεθνούς Προστασίας], *Applicant v Republic of Cyprus through the Asylum Service (Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία και/ή μέσω Υπηρεσίας Ασύλου)*, No 6696/2021, 10 June 2024. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database. Cyprus,

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<sup>11</sup> Ο Περί Νομικής Αρωγής (Τροποποιητικός) (Αρ. 2) Αριθμός 170(I) του 2024 Νόμος που τροποποιεί τους περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμους του 2002 έως 2024 [The Legal Aid (Amendment) (No 2). Number 170(I) of 2024 Act Amending the Laws on Legal Aid of 2002 to 2024], 31 December 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Ο Περί Νομικής Αρωγής (Τροποποιητικός) (Αρ. 2) Αριθμός 170(I) του 2024 Νόμος που τροποποιεί τους περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμους του 2002 έως 2024 [The Legal Aid (Amendment) (No 2). Number 170(I) of 2024 Act Amending the Laws on Legal Aid of 2002 to 2024], 31 December 2024.

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<sup>11</sup> Ο Περί Νομικής Αρωγής (Τροποποιητικός) (Αρ. 2) Αριθμός 170(I) του 2024 Νόμος που τροποποιεί τους περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμους του 2002 έως 2024 [The Legal Aid (Amendment) (No 2). Number 170(I) of 2024 Act Amending the Laws on Legal Aid of 2002 to 2024], 31 December 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Ο Περί Νομικής Αρωγής (Τροποποιητικός) (Αρ. 2) Αριθμός 170(I) του 2024 Νόμος που τροποποιεί τους περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμους του 2002 έως 2024 [The Legal Aid (Amendment) (No 2). Number 170(I) of 2024 Act Amending the Laws on Legal Aid of 2002 to 2024], 31 December 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Ο Περί Νομικής Αρωγής (Τροποποιητικός) (Αρ. 2) Αριθμός 170(I) του 2024 Νόμος που τροποποιεί τους περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμους του 2002 έως 2024 [The Legal Aid (Amendment) (No 2). Number 170(I) of 2024 Act Amending the Laws on Legal Aid of 2002 to 2024], 31 December 2024.