



Sweden

National developments in 2025



To align with the Pact requirements, in 2025 the SMA enhanced staff expertise through training and skills development; modernised digital tools; expanded capacity in detention facilities; and intensified work in the area of returns. To secure the necessary resources for implementing Pact-related administrative and policy reforms, reduce the backlog of cases, and invest in reception and return-related premises and personnel, the SMA budget for 2026 increased by SEK 0.2 billion, to a total of SEK 5.5 billion.

As a result of the collaboration between the SMA and the National Government Service, which brings major authorities under one roof, services provided by the SMA became more accessible in 2025. A number of SMA service centres closed, as the services are, instead, available at national government service centres, thus expanding SMA presence from 11 to 35 locations. SMA services are also offered by telephone and digital channels, such as its revamped website.¹ A new digital platform was developed for SMA case officers. It contains a monitoring tool which produces statistics on the progress of cases.

To assist in informed assessments of applications, the SMA's centre for country of origin information and analysis, Lifos, was particularly active in 2025. It produced reports on security developments in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Lebanon, Russia, Somalia, Sudan and Syria. For the assessment of safe countries, the agency produced reports on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Kosovo,¹ North Macedonia and Serbia. In addition, fact-finding missions were performed in Iraq (including the Kurdistan region of Iraq) in cooperation with the Danish COI unit, and in Afghanistan and Syria, in cooperation with LandInfo, the Norwegian COI Centre.

An ongoing reform aims to have asylum applicants live in reception centres during the asylum procedure, while people with a return order or a transfer decision should live in a return centre. Thus, the 2024 government initiative continued to reduce apartment housing in favour of accommodation provided by the SMA. According to relevant amendments in the Act on Reception of Asylum Seekers, as of 1 March 2025 applicants are allocated a place in an SMA facility, where they are required to reside to be entitled to daily and special allowances.² However, exceptions to this general rule are possible. According to SMA estimations, the implementation of the reform would require around 8,000 places in reception and return centres.³

Legislative amendments to detention conditions introduced the possibility of using a wider range of security measures, when necessary, such as the possibility to body search visitors in detention centres and room searches of detainees' living areas. The additional security measures aim to make it possible to create a safer environment in the centres and to create possibilities to have a more open environment for the detainees.

An important development in the area of returns was a legislative amendment to the Aliens Act to abolish the possibility of 'track change'. This system previously allowed third-country nationals with a rejected asylum application but who have worked during the asylum procedure in Sweden to apply, under certain circumstances, for a residence permit without having to leave the country. The amendments also introduced new rules for the statute of limitations and re-entry bans, which are now valid for 5 years from the date the person can prove they had actually left Sweden (or an EU country or the Schengen area) and not from the date the decisions became legally binding. This eliminates the incentive of 'waiting out' the expulsion decision or the refusal of entry while still in Sweden, and then reapplying for asylum.⁴ Placing an emphasis on voluntary repatriation, a new government ordinance, in force as of January 2026, has increased the financial incentive for repatriation. An extensive information campaign was in place to raise awareness among those who were eligible.⁵

More input from civil society:

- [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)
- [European Network on Statelessness](#)
- [Queer Youth Sweden | RFSL Ungdon](#)
- [Queerston Media](#)
- [Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights | Riksförbundet för homosexuellas, bisexuellas, transpersoners, queeras och intersexpersoners rättigheter](#)
- [Swedish Network of Refugees Support Group | Flyktinggruppernas Riksråd](#)
- [Swedish Refugee Law Center | Asylrättscentrum](#)
- [University of Gothenburg, Law Department](#)
- [Uppsala University](#)

¹ 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.

Sweden Key indicators for 2025



Rank by number of asylum applications

12

Rank per capita (applications per 1M inhabitants)

17

Share of applications in EU+

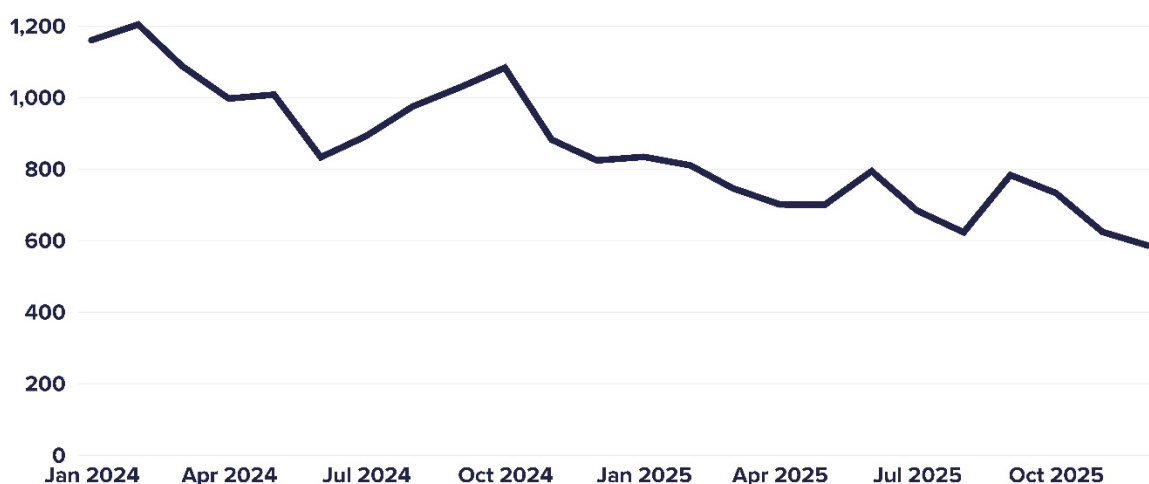
1.0%

Recognition rate

19%

Indicator	2025	2024	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	8,606	11,962 ↓	-28%	Afghanistan (9%), Iran (9%), Syria (8%)
Pending cases (Dec '25)	3,221	4,050 ↓	-20%	Syria (20%), Afghanistan (10%), Iran (10%)
First instance decisions	8,441	12,825 ↓	-34%	Afghanistan (10%), Syria (9%), Iran (8%)
Refugee status	1,217	1,787 ↓	-32%	Afghanistan (20%), Eritrea (15%), Syria (10%)
Subsidiary protection	393	979 ↓	-60%	Palestine (30%), Syria (27%), Sudan (10%)
Negative	6,831	10,059 ↓	-32%	Iran (9%), Afghanistan (8%), Syria (8%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2024-2025



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2026](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





Sources

¹ Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (5 November 2025). [The Swedish Migration Agency can now be found at more locations around the country](#); Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (5 March 2025). [Nu är Migrationsverkets nya webbplats lanserad](#) [The Swedish Migration Agency's new website has now been launched].

² Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (1 September 2025). [Ändrade regler kring asylsökandes boende](#) [Changed rules regarding asylum seekers' accommodation].

³ Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (31 January 2025). [Migrationsverket planerar center för asylsökande i sex kommuner](#) [The Swedish Migration Board is planning centers for asylum seekers in six municipalities].

⁴ Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (13 March 2025). [Spårbyte avskaffas och ändrade regler för preskriptionstid](#) [Track changes abolished and rules for statute of limitations changed].

⁵ Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (31 October 2025). [Återvändningsbidraget höjs den 1 januari 2026](#) [The repatriation grant will be increased on 1 January 2026].