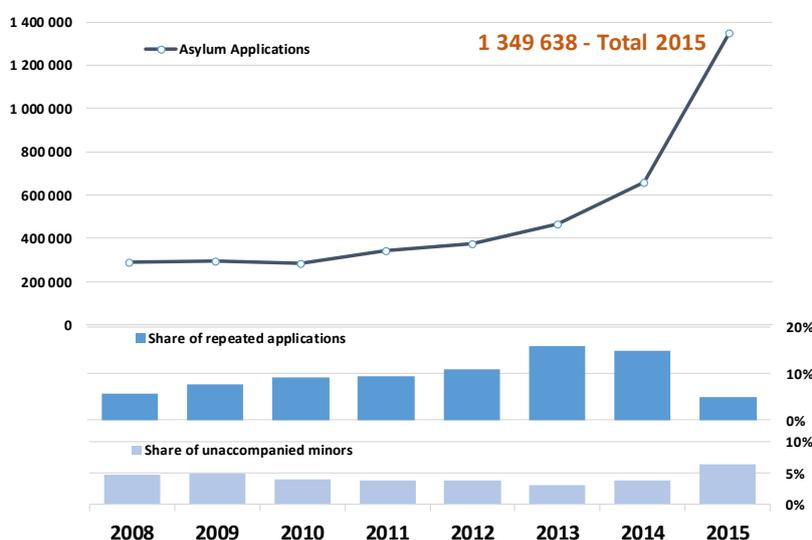


## Latest asylum trends – 2015 overview

### 1. Number of applications for international protection in the EU+<sup>1</sup>

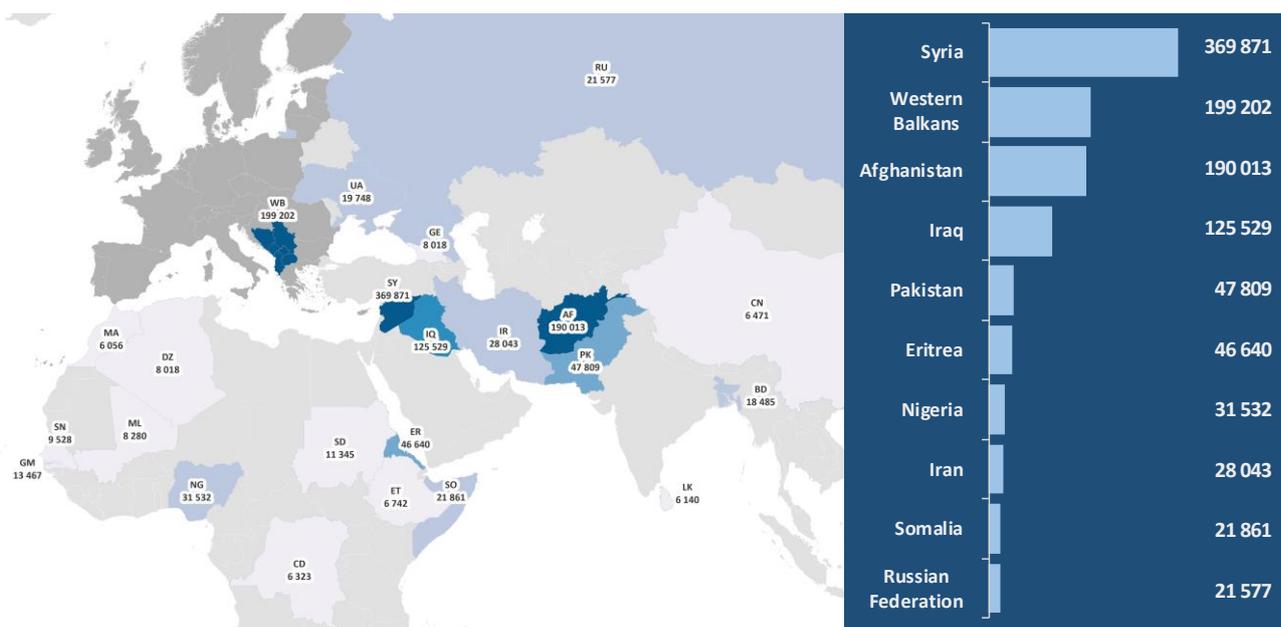
In 2015, EU+ countries recorded 1 349 638 asylum applications.<sup>2</sup> This is more than twice the level recorded in 2014 and the highest annual number of asylum applications in the EU+ since EU-wide data collection started in 2008. Several factors have influenced this record number of applications, however the dominant dynamic was the deterioration of the security environment in some of the main countries of origin.

The unprecedented increase in the number of applications for international protection in the EU+ occurred primarily in the second half of the year, when the number of monthly applications exceeded 100 000 and reached a record 176 430 applications in the month of October alone. Following six months of consecutive growth, November and December saw a decrease in the monthly totals, but levels remained much higher than in previous years.



The share of **repeated applicants** decreased throughout 2015, and for the whole year represented only 5 % of the total. In contrast, the share of applicants who claimed to be **unaccompanied minors (UAMs)** at the moment of lodging an application increased to 6 % of all applications. 85 482 UAMs applied for asylum in the EU+ in 2015, more than three times higher than in 2014. The majority of UAMs were nationals of Afghanistan (54 %), followed by Syrians (13 %), Eritreans (7 %), Iraqis (5 %) and Somalis (4 %).

### 2. Main countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ in 2015

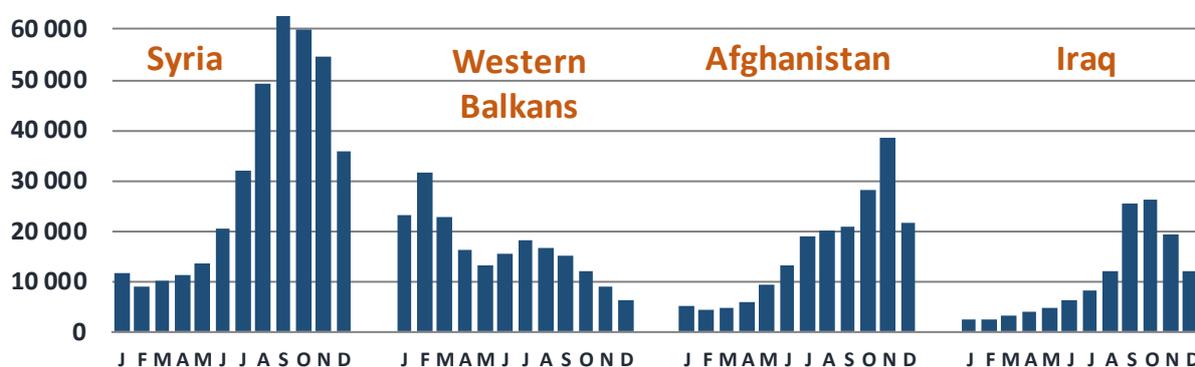


<sup>1</sup> The EU+ is composed of EU-28 plus Norway and Switzerland. The share of repeated applicants is the proportion of repeated applicants in the total number of applicants for international protection. The share of UAM (unaccompanied minors) represents the proportion of asylum applicants claiming to be below the age of 18 years in the total number of applicants rather than those assessed to be such after an age assessment has been carried out.

<sup>2</sup> This number is based on monthly EPS data provided by 30 EU+ countries for January-August, 29 countries for September, 28 countries for October-November and by 27 countries for December.

The map displays the main countries of origin of asylum applicants in EU+ countries in 2015. **Syria was the top citizenship** of applicants reported and Syrians accounted for 27 % of all applications in the EU+. The **Western Balkan countries** considered together (15 %) were the second ranked citizenship group followed by **Afghanistan** (14 %) and **Iraq** (9 %). Applications from citizens of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq rose sharply in the second half of 2015. The top ten citizenships of applicants in 2015 was further made up of citizens of **Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran, Somalia and the Russian Federation**.

### 3. Evolution of the flow for main citizenships of applications in 2015

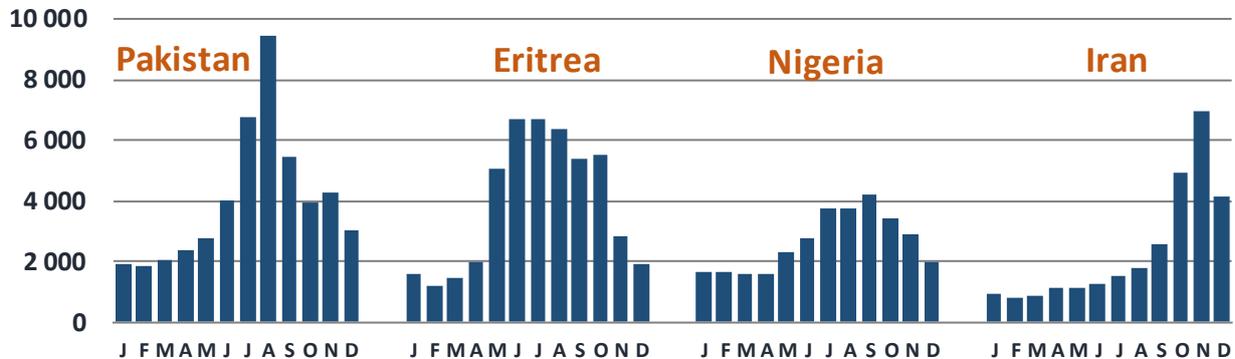


**Syria** – In 2015, EU+ countries registered 369 871 applications lodged by Syrian citizens, a three-fold increase compared to 2014. The influx of Syrian asylum applicants increased significantly from May and reached its highest level in September with almost 63 000 applicants in EU+ countries in that month alone. Syrians increasingly applied for asylum in Germany (over 40 % of the EU+ total). Hungary and Sweden were also main destination countries, together comprising over 30 % of all applications by Syrian nationals. In Hungary, however, almost all of those applying for asylum subsequently absconded and applied again in other EU countries. Since legislative changes in October, the monthly number of Syrian applicants dropped to near zero, whereas in Sweden it remained high until November before falling sharply in December. The Syrian influx was spread widely throughout Europe with 20 EU+ countries reporting Syria in their national top three countries of origin.

**Western Balkan nationals (WB)** – Considered as a group, the number of applications from nationals of all six WB countries represented 15 % of all applications in the EU+ in 2015, totalling 199 202. Applications by citizens of Kosovo and Albania each accounted for 6 % of the total (respectively 72 855 and 68 193 applications). The number of WB applicants peaked in February with 31 502 applications, 23 728 of which were by citizens of Kosovo. Various measures led to the decrease of the number of Kosovar applicants over the course of the year, but in contrast, applications by Albanian nationals rose. Measures were implemented by destination countries (mainly Germany) such as adding WB countries to the national list of safe countries of origin and prioritising decision-making on these nationalities as well as speeding up return procedures. Applications by WB nationals were predominantly lodged in Germany (over 70 % of the EU+ total).

**Afghanistan** – 190 013 Afghans applied for international protection in EU+ countries in 2015. This is more than four times the number registered in 2014. As with Syrians, the influx increased over the course of the year, culminating in November with 38 434 applications in that month. Afghan nationals applied for asylum mainly in Hungary, Sweden, Germany and Austria, and together these four countries received over 70 % of all applications by Afghans in 2015.

**Iraq** – The number of applications by Iraqi citizens reached 125 529 in 2015. Compared to 2014, this was a five-fold increase. The main countries of destination of Iraqi applicants were Germany, Sweden, Finland and Austria, together registering two thirds of all Iraqi applicants in the EU+. The influx of Iraqi applicants varied significantly throughout the year. In January, 2 522 Iraqis lodged their application, but by September and October the number had increased ten-fold to about 26 000 applications in each of these months.



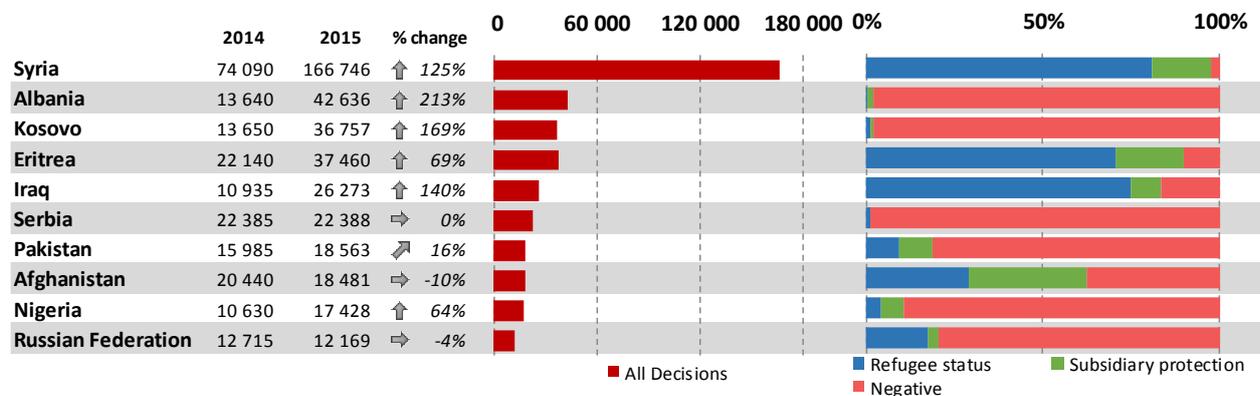
**Pakistan** – In 2015, a total of 47 809 Pakistani nationals applied for international protection in EU+ countries, double the 21 617 applications lodged in 2014. Applications rose since May and reached their highest level in August, when 9 499 Pakistani nationals registered. Hungary saw a major increase in Pakistani applicants compared to 2014 and was the main receiving country with more than 30 % of the EU+ total.

**Eritrea** – The number of Eritrean applicants changed only slightly compared to 2014 with 46 640 applications in 2015 – the vast majority arriving by boat in Italy. The seasonal pattern observed was also similar to 2014, with Eritrean applications lower in the winter months and increasing to a monthly level of 5 000 to 6 000 in the summer months. Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden combined registered over 70 % of all Eritrean applications at EU+ level.

**Nigeria** – The number of applications lodged by Nigerian nationals increased by half compared to 2014 and reached a 2015 total of 31 532. The seasonal pattern in the monthly numbers also show an increase during the summer months, culminating in the highest level in September with 4 203 applications throughout EU+ countries. Italy was the main destination country: more than half of all Nigerian applicants in EU+ countries applied in Italy.

**Iran** – Applications from citizens of Iran increased sharply at the end of 2015, rising from a monthly average of about 1 000 applications up until May to almost 7 000 in November. With a total of 28 043 applications in 2015, Iranian nationals mostly applied for international protection in Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, with about half of all applications in the EU+ lodged in these three countries.

#### 4. Number and type of decisions issued in first instance in EU+ countries



In 2015, EU+ countries issued 603 014 decisions at first instance, 63 % more than in 2014. This is the highest number of first instance decisions registered since the start of Eurostat data collection in 2008. In the EU+ as a whole, the share of positive decisions was 49 % of total decisions in first instance, six percentage points higher than in 2014, reflecting a



higher number of decisions issued on cases with high recognition rates, mostly Syrians, and a significant increase in recognition rate for Iraqi applicants.<sup>3</sup>

Syrian applicants received the most decisions at first instance. In 2015, **EU+ countries issued 166 746 decisions on Syrian applications**, more than double the number of 2014. Of those decisions, 97 % resulted in a positive outcome; 81 % were granted refugee status and 16 % subsidiary protection. In second place, the number of **decisions issued in the EU+ on Albanian cases reached 42 636**, over three times more than in 2014. 98 % of all first instance decisions issued to Albanian applicants were negative. The number of decisions issued to citizens of Kosovo increased (36 757) with a negative outcome in 98 % of the cases. The number of **decisions on Eritrean cases went up by half** with an EU+ recognition rate of 90 %. **For Iraqi nationals, the number of decisions issued doubled** and the recognition rate of 83 % was significantly higher than the 69 % recognition rate of 2014.

For the other citizenships in the top ten at EU+ level, compared to 2014 the number of decisions increased most for **Nigerian** applicants (+64 %) and for **Pakistani** applicants (+16 %). For applicants from **Afghanistan, Iran and the Russian Federation** the number of decisions remained stable.

---

<sup>3</sup> Figures on first instance decisions refer to only decisions on granting EU-regulated international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection). Persons not granted international protection may be granted other types of national protection in some EU+ countries. The recognition rate at first instance is defined here as the ratio between the number of positive first instance decisions issued (i.e. refugee status and subsidiary protection) as a proportion of the number of all first instance decisions issued (positive decisions and rejections) in the reference period under review.