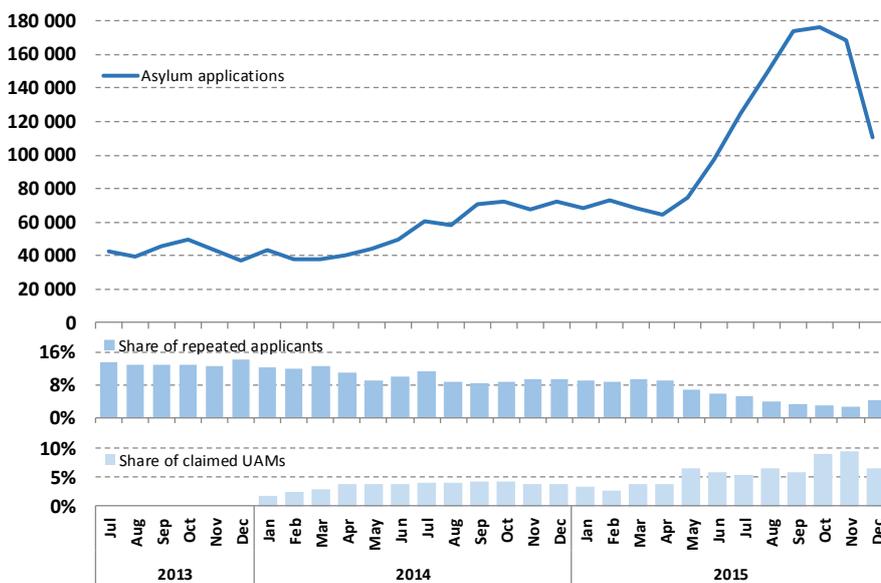


## Latest asylum trends

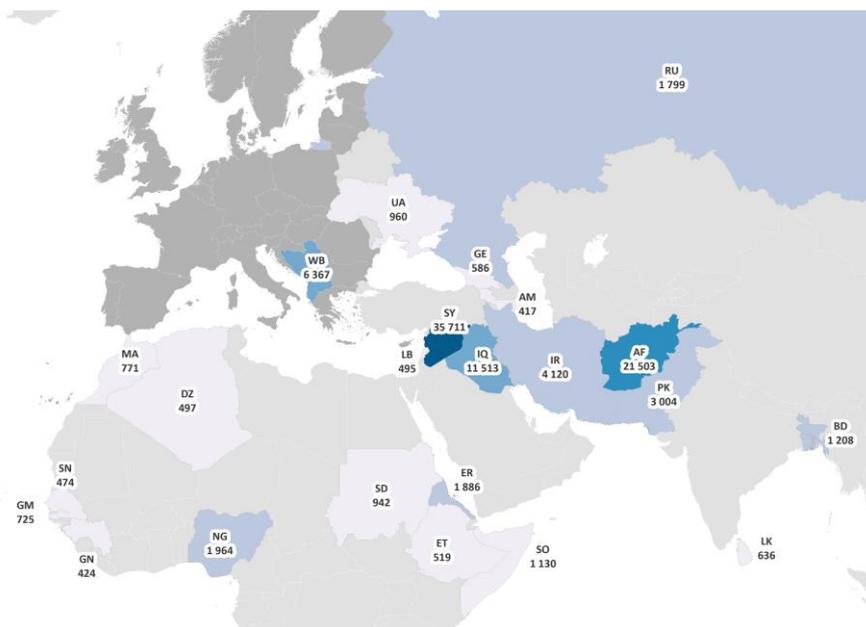
### 1. Number of applications for international protection in the EU+ in December 2015<sup>1</sup>

In December 2015, EU+ countries registered 110 378 asylum applications<sup>2</sup>. This was a 35 % decrease compared to November, when applications were slightly below October's record high level, and the lowest monthly total in the second half of 2015. Despite the drop, the influx of asylum applicants in the EU+ remained at very high levels and more than 50% higher than in December 2014. A total of 1 349 638 applications for international protection were received in EU+ countries in 2015.



The share of **repeated applicants** rose again to 4 % after declining for several months. The number of applicants who claimed to be unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at the moment of lodging an application fell from 9 % of the total in November to 7 % in December. **The number of UAMs halved to 7 189 applicants.** The share of UAMs from Afghanistan remained highest with 67 %, despite the decrease from 11 656 to 4 894 applications. Syrian and Iraqi UAM applicants also decreased compared to the previous month, but remained in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place respectively with 7 % and 4 % of all UAM applications.

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



The number of asylum applicants from all of the top ten citizenships decreased by between 10 % and 55 % in December. Syria remained, **for the eighth consecutive month, the top citizenship** with 35 711 applications registered in the EU+. **Afghanistan remained in second place** (21 503) and Iraq in third (11 513). The number of **applications from WB nationals decreased further** but – as a group – WB remained in fourth position. The remaining top ten citizenships of applicants was made up of applicants from Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Eritrea and Bangladesh.

<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> At the time of writing this note, data were available for 27 of the 30 EU+ countries.

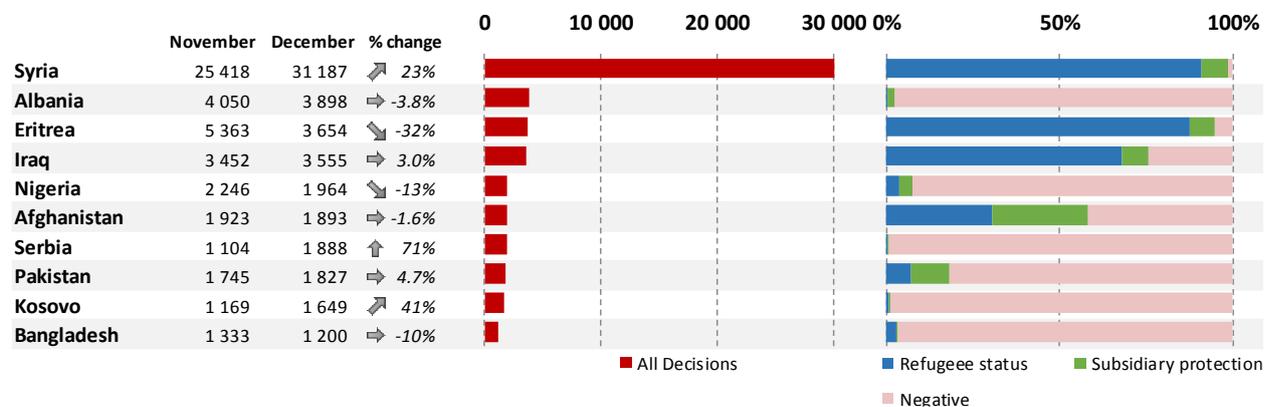
**Syria** – In December 2015, EU+ countries registered 35 711 applications lodged by Syrian citizens, a decrease of 35 % compared to November 2015, but still close to three times the level recorded in December 2014. The number of Syrian applicants decreased for the third month in a row following seven consecutive months of increase from February to September 2015. Germany remained the main receiving country with over 70 % of all Syrian applicants, followed by Sweden, Austria and Belgium. The largest relative drop in applications took place in Norway (-89%). Only four EU+ countries noted (minor) increases in the numbers of Syrian applicants. Twenty EU+ countries had Syrian applicants in their top three citizenships of applicants.

**Afghanistan** – After nine months of consecutive growth and a record high in November, the number of applications lodged by Afghan nationals dropped for the first time in December (21 503) falling to about half the number of November, but still more than three times higher than in December 2014. The decrease in registrations was principally observed in Sweden where Afghan applicants lodged 5 290 asylum claims, compared to 14 652 in November.

**Iraq** – The number of applications by Iraqi citizens (11 513) decreased by 41 % in December, continuing the decrease reported in November. Still, the number of Iraqi applicants remained much higher than the levels recorded during 2014 and the first half of 2015. Germany, Sweden and Austria together accounted for two thirds of all applications lodged by Iraqi applicants.

**Western Balkan nationals (WB)** – The number of applications from WB nationals dropped further by 30 % to 6 367 applications, the lowest number registered since June 2014, following measures implemented by destination countries (mainly Germany). Germany continues to receive the majority of applications by WB nationals, but the number of WB applicants fell by about half and Germany’s share of the EU+ total decreased from 72 % to 62 %. In contrast, France’s share grew to 16 %.

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



In December 2015, EU+ countries issued 72 576 decisions at first instance, an 8 % increase compared to November and 79 % higher than the level recorded in December 2014. It is the highest monthly number of decisions in 2015, but also for any month since the EU-wide EPS monthly data collection started in March 2014. **In the EU+ as a whole, the share of positive decisions was 61 % of total decisions in first instance**, one percentage point higher than in November, reflecting a higher number of positive decisions issued on cases of Syrian applicants.

Syrian nationals continued as the citizenship receiving the largest share of decisions at first instance. In December, **EU+ countries issued 29 861 decisions on Syrian applications, 23 % more than in November**, and 43 % of the EU+ total. Of those decisions, 99 % resulted in a positive outcome; 91 % granted refugee status and 8 % granted subsidiary protection. The number of **decisions issued in the EU+ on Albanian cases (3 898) remained stable in December after the significant decrease registered in November**. Almost all (98 %) of first instance decisions issued to Albanian applicants were negative. The number of **decisions on Eritrean cases decreased to 3 654 after two months exceeding 5 000 decisions**. At EU+ level, 95 % of these decisions were positive, with a higher share of subsidiary protection compared to November.

For the other nationalities belonging to the top ten, the number of decisions in first instance issued in December increased compared to the previous month for Somali, Serbian and Kosovar applicants, were stable for Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani applicants, whereas they decreased for Nigerian nationals.