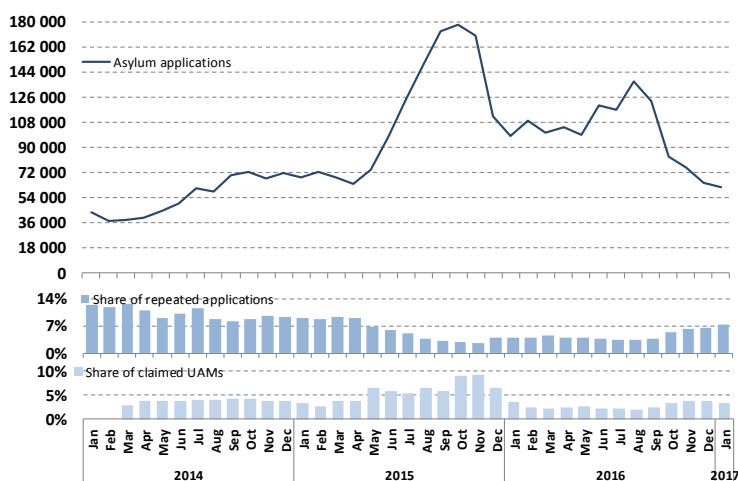


Latest asylum trends – January 2017

Number of applications for international protection in the EU+¹



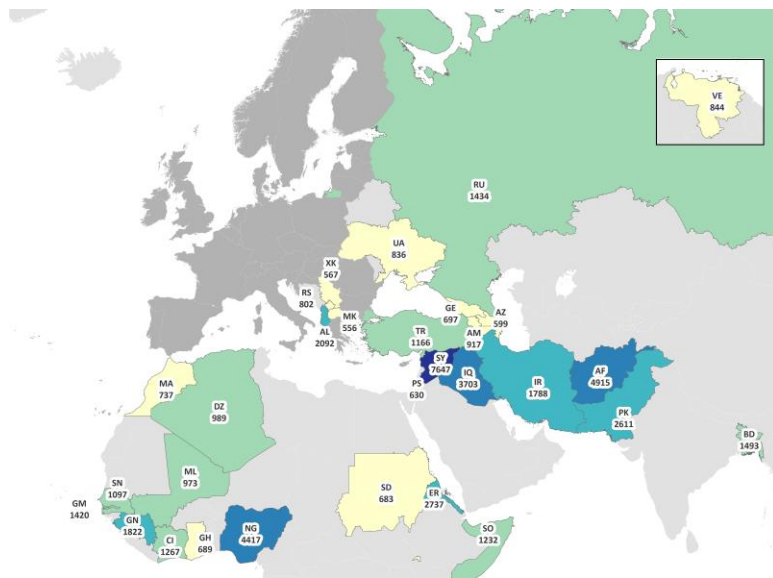
In January 2017, EU+ countries recorded **61 697 applications for international protection**.² This marked the fifth consecutive monthly decrease in numbers of applications lodged in the EU+. It was the lowest monthly total since May 2015, and 38 % lower than January 2016 and 12 % lower than January 2015.

93 % of all applications were first-time applications (there was no previous application lodged in the same EU+ country), which was slightly lower compared to the previous months. **3 % of all applicants claimed to be unaccompanied minors (UAMs)**³ when lodging an application. 20 % of all UAM applicants were

Afghan citizens, 10 % Eritrean and 8 % Gambian.

Main countries of origin of applicants

As in December, Syria and Afghanistan remained the top two countries of origin in January 2017. Nigeria replaced Iraq as the third-ranked country of origin. Syria has been the main citizenship of applicants since April 2015.



EU+ countries recorded 7 647 Syrian applications, 21 % less than in the previous month (9 739). The number of Afghan applicants also decreased, from 5 341 to 4 915. Compared to the previous month, Nigerian citizens lodged 5 % more applications (4 417). These top-three citizenships together accounted for 28 % of all applications lodged in the EU+. Iraq ranked fourth with 3 703 applicants while the top 10 list of applicant citizenships for January was completed by Eritrea (2 737), Pakistan (2 611), Albania (2 092), Guinea (1 822), Iran (1 788), and Bangladesh (1 493). The highest increase in number of applicants among the top 10 citizenship groups compared to December 2016 was

reported for Eritrean nationals (+ 17 %). The highest drop, after Syrian applicants, was observed for applicants from Iraq and Eritrea (17 % and 21 %, respectively).

¹The EU+ is composed of EU28 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 claimed UAMs 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.

²Information on asylum applications were available for 28 EU+ countries. Weekly estimates were used for Cyprus and Malta.

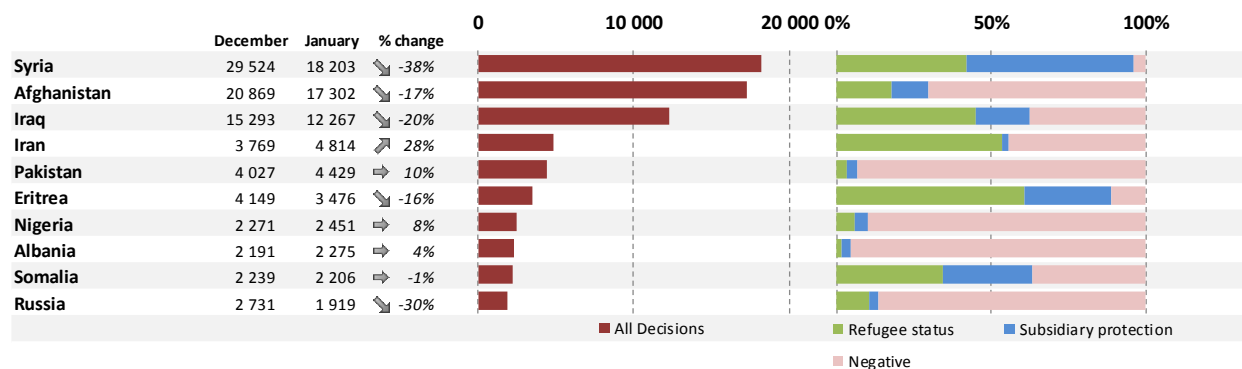
³Several EU+ countries have difficulties reporting on claimed UAMs in the framework of the EPS, these figures should therefore be considered as underestimations of the actual proportion of claimed UAMs.

Syria – In January 2017, Syria remained the main country of origin of applicants for international protection in the EU+ with 7 647 applications, constituting only 13 % of the total of applications in the EU+. Syrian nationals have been the main citizenship of origin since April 2015, and monthly applications in January 2017 were at their lowest since that date. Nevertheless, Syrian applicants remained relatively widespread throughout the EU+ with 13 out of 26 EU+ reporting countries counting Syrian nationals among their top-three citizenships of applicants.

Afghanistan – For the 10th consecutive month Afghanistan was ranked second among citizenships with most applicants. However, the numbers fell for the fifth consecutive month, with a drop of 8 % to 4 915 applications in January. This was the lowest since May 2015. Afghanistan remained the main citizenship of claimed UAMs (20 % of EU+). 12 countries out of 26 EU+ reporting countries had Afghan applicants in their national top-three citizenships.

Nigeria – In January 2017, the number of Nigerian applicants increased by 5 % to 4 417. In January 2016 the number of Nigerian applicants was half the current level. Only one EU+ country counted Nigerian applicants among the top-three citizenships.

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



In January 2017, EU+ countries issued 93 434 first-instance decisions⁴, about 19 % fewer than in December 2016 when the highest level since the start of EPS monthly data collection in 2014 was recorded. It was still 21 % more than the same period in the previous year, demonstrating the increased decision-making capacity implemented in a number of EU+ countries. **The EU+ recognition rate dropped to 46 %** in January, 10 percentage points lower than in the previous month, mainly due to a 38 % decrease in the number of decisions issued to Syrian applicants, which are mostly positive. More positive decisions granted refugee status (59 %) than subsidiary protection (41 % of all positive decisions). 20 % of all decisions were issued to **Syrian** applicants (18 203 decisions). For the third consecutive month the recognition rate for Syrian applicants remained at 96 %, with a majority of positive decisions leading to subsidiary protection (66 %) rather than refugee status (44 %). 19 % of all decisions, or 17 302, were issued to **Afghan** applicants, which was a 17 % decrease. The recognition rate for Afghan nationals was 30 %, the same level as in the previous month. Of the total positive decisions issued to Afghan nationals, 60 % resulted in refugee status and 40 % in subsidiary protection, with an increasing proportion for refugee status throughout the past year. The number of decisions on **Iraqi** applications decreased by 20 % to 12 267, with a 62 % recognition rate. Most Iraqi applicants were issued refugee status (72 % of all positive decisions). Of the 10 citizenships with the most first-instance decisions issued, Eritreans showed the second-highest recognition rate (89 %). The lowest recognition rates were observed for Albanian (4 %) and Pakistani (7 %) applicants.

Cases awaiting a first-instance decision

January was the fourth consecutive month with decreasing numbers of cases awaiting a first-instance decision. Compared to the previous month, it decreased by 6 % to 823 397.⁴ This slight decrease in pending cases is explained by the continued high number of first-instance decisions issued, combined with a lower number of applications lodged. 59 % of all cases were pending for longer than six months. The applicants awaiting a first-instance decision for longer than six months mainly came from Afghanistan (27 % of total), Iraq (12 %) and Syria (10 %).

⁴ Data on these indicators were not yet available for Cyprus, Ireland and Malta.