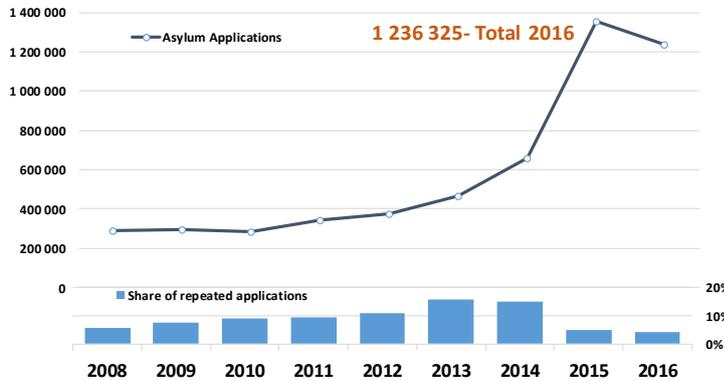


## Latest asylum trends – 2016 overview

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

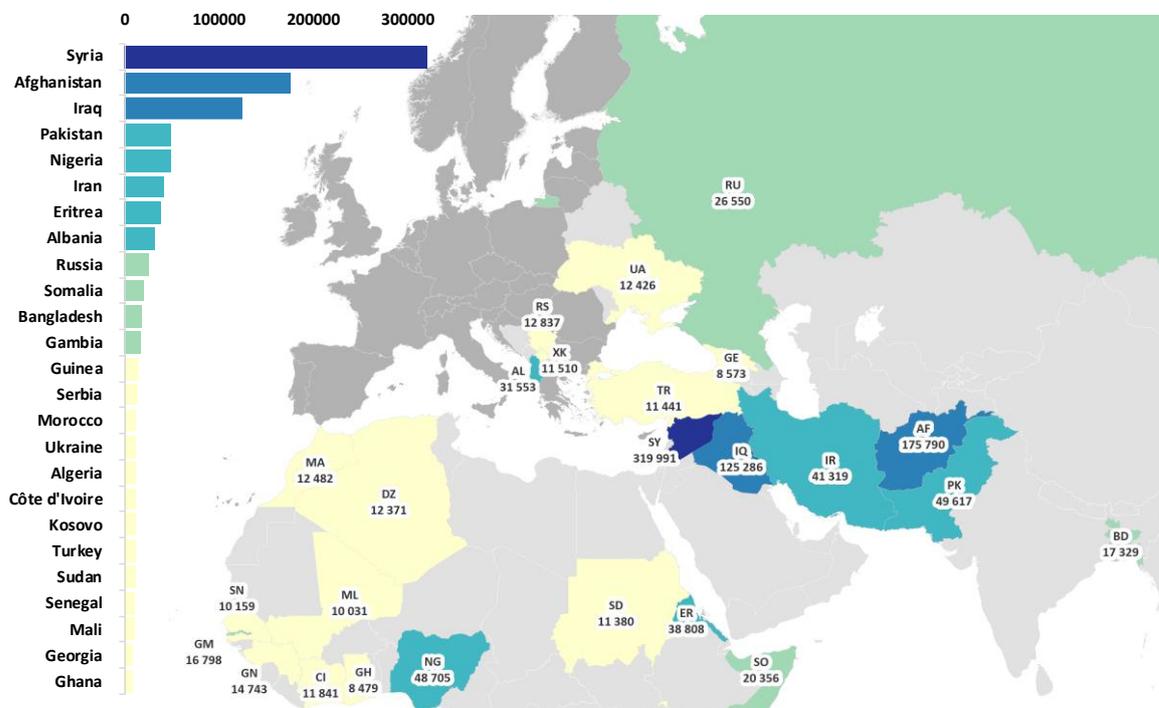


In 2016, EU+ countries recorded 1 236 325 asylum applications.<sup>2</sup> This is a 9 % decrease compared to 2015 when an unprecedented number of close to 1.4 million applications were lodged in the EU+. Similarly to 2015, 4 % of all applications involved **repeated applicants**.<sup>3</sup>

Despite a lower level in applications registered in the EU+ in 2016 compared to 2015, it remained largely above the levels reported in previous years. In the first half of 2016, the

monthly volume of applications lodged in the EU+ remained stable at about 100 000 applications. Over the summer, the number of applications lodged in the EU+ increased, reaching 137 779 in August before decreasing to 64 762 applications in December. These high levels reflected to some extent the processing by EU+ countries of a backlog of persons who had arrived previously and had been awaiting the formal lodging of their application. Following the implementation of several measures to reduce the migratory flow to the EU (e.g. tighter border controls and the EU-Turkey statement), the number of persons who arrived irregularly at the EU borders dropped considerable compared to 2015 and the 364 000 detections at the two main sea routes<sup>4</sup> formed only part of those who applied for international protection in 2016.

### Main countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ in 2016



<sup>1</sup> The EU+ is composed of EU-28 Member States plus Norway and Switzerland. The share of repeated applicants is the proportion of repeated applicants in the total number of applicants for international protection.

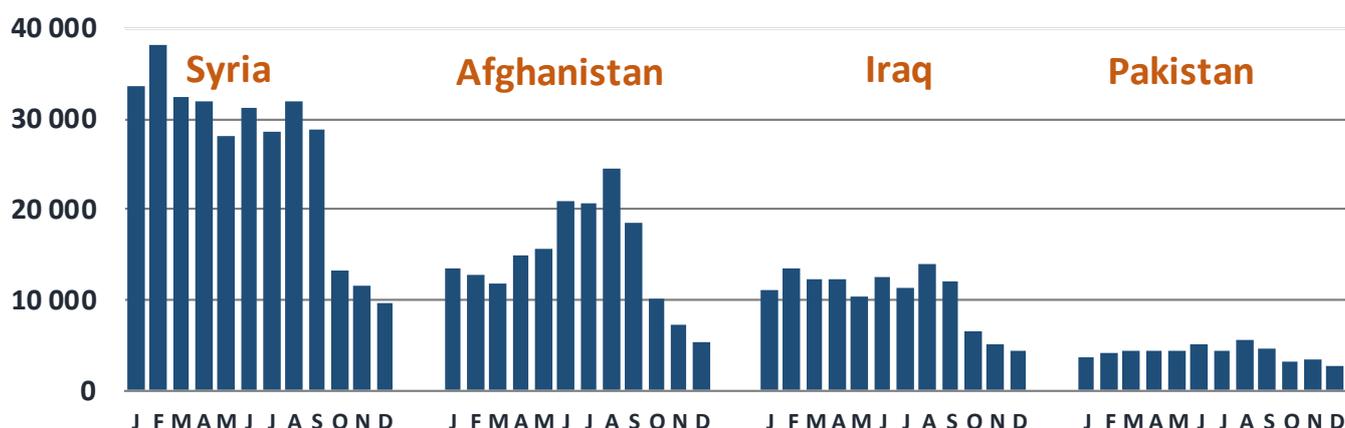
<sup>2</sup> This number is based on monthly EPS data provided by 30 EU+ countries for January-December 2016, no data were submitted by Romania in September and by Malta in November.

<sup>3</sup> Repeated applicant is defined as an asylum applicant who has lodged (or been included in) a further application for international protection after a final decision has been taken on a previous application in the (same) reporting country.

<sup>4</sup> Frontex, [Fewer migrants at EU borders in 2016](#), 6 January 2016, accessed 2 February 2017.

The map above displays the main countries of origin of asylum applicants in EU+ countries in 2016. **Syria was the top citizenship** of applicants reported and Syrians accounted for 26 % of all applications in the EU+. **Afghanistan** ranked second (14 % of the EU+ total), followed by **Iraq** (10 %). A wide gap separated these three main countries origin from the remaining top 10 citizenships of applicants in 2016 which consisted of citizens from **Pakistan, Nigeria, Iran, Eritrea, Albania, Russia, Somalia** and **Bangladesh**. Altogether the top 10 countries of origin accounted for 72 % of all applications.

### Evolution of the flow for main citizenships of applications in 2016



**Syria** – In 2016, EU+ countries registered 319 991 applications lodged by Syrian citizens, 14 % fewer than in 2015. The highest level of applications was observed in February 2016 with more than 38 000 Syrian applicants in EU+ countries.

**Afghanistan** – 175 790 Afghan nationals applied for international protection in EU+ countries in 2016. Compared to 2015 this represented a drop of 8 %. The increasing number of applications observed in the first half of the year reversed after August when Afghans lodged 24 420 applications.

**Iraq** – The number of applications by Iraqi citizens reached 125 286 in 2016, a level on a par with that of 2015. Similar to Afghans, the influx of Iraqi applicants reached its highest level in August with 14 018 applications, before decreasing in the last four months of the year. Germany was the main receiving country for Iraqi, Syrian and Afghan applicants.

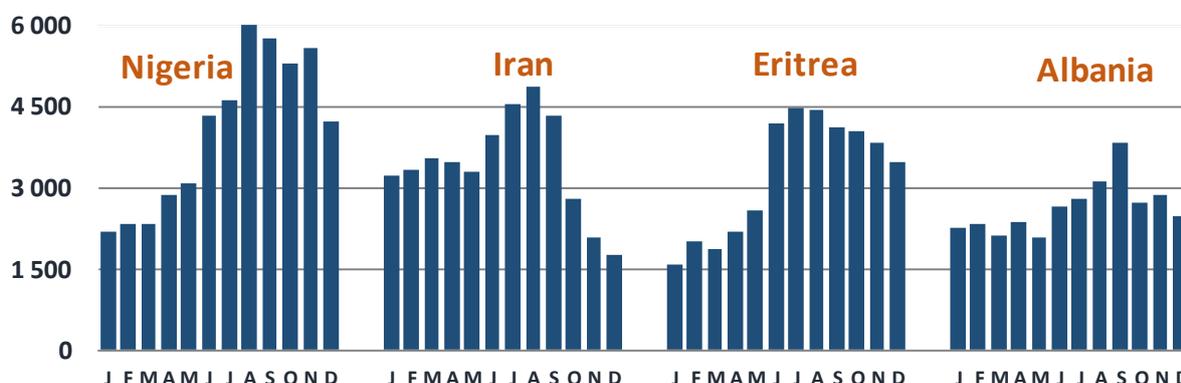
**Pakistan** – In 2016, 49 617 Pakistani nationals applied for international protection in EU+ countries, a slight increase of 4 % compared to 2015. For Pakistani applicants, similar to other citizenships, most applications were lodged in August (5 575), after which lower numbers were recorded. An equal share of Pakistani nationals lodged their application in Germany and in Italy, the two main receiving countries.

**Nigeria** – The number of applications lodged by Nigerian nationals reached 48 705 in 2016. Of the top eight citizenships, Nigerian applicants recorded the highest year-to-year increase (+ 54 %). Nigerian applications increased significantly in the first eight months of the year, with the highest level in August, while, in contrast to other citizenships, remaining at higher monthly levels in the last quarter than in the beginning of the year. Italy was the main receiving country for Nigerian applicants, in line with high number of arrivals via the Central Mediterranean route.

**Iran** – In 2016 Iranian nationals lodged 41 319 applications, an increase by 47 % compared to 2015. This increase mostly occurred during the summer months, with a peak recorded in August but lower numbers at the end of the year than in the beginning. Most applications were lodged in Germany, followed by the United Kingdom.

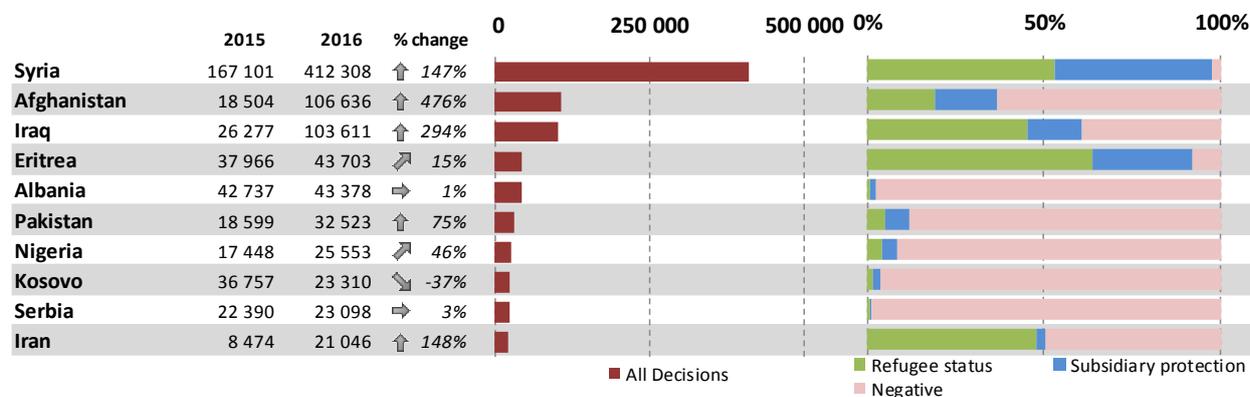
**Eritrea** – In 2016 Eritrean nationals lodged 38 808 applications, 17 % fewer than in 2015. The seasonal pattern in the number of applications lodged by Eritreans was very similar to 2014 and 2015, with lower numbers in the winter months (lower than 2 000) and increasing to an average of 4 000 in the summer months. The highest number of applicants was recorded in July with 4 478 applicants. About 80 % of Eritrean applicants were recorded in Germany, Italy and Switzerland.

**Albania** – Of the main citizenships of origin, Albanian applicants decreased most dramatically (by half) compared to 2015, while still accounting for 31 553 applications in 2016. Germany and France were the main receiving countries.



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

In 2016, EU+ countries issued 1 130 110 decisions at first instance, 87 % more than in 2015. This is the highest number of first instance decisions registered in EU+ since 2008.<sup>5</sup> In the EU+ as a whole, the share of positive decisions was 57 % of total decisions in first instance, 15 percentage points higher than in 2015, reflecting a higher number of decisions issued on cases with high recognition rates, mostly Syrian (98 % positive decisions) and Eritrean nationals (92 % positive decisions).



Syrian applicants received the most decisions at first instance (36 %). In 2016, EU+ countries issued 412 308 decisions on Syrian cases, more than twice the number of 2015. Of those decisions, 98 % resulted in a positive outcome; 54 % were granted refugee status and 46 % subsidiary protection. In second place, the number of decisions issued in the EU+ on Afghanistan cases reached 106 636, almost six times more than in 2015. Only 37 % of all first-instance decisions issued to Afghan applicants were positive. The number of decisions issued to citizens of Iraq quadrupled with a positive outcome in 61 % of the cases. The number of decisions on Eritrean cases rose by 15 % with an EU+ recognition rate of 92 %. For Albanian and Serbian nationals, the number of decisions issued remained stable with low recognition rates of 3 % and 1 %, respectively.

For the other citizenships in the top 10 at EU+ level, compared to 2015 the number of decisions increased most for Iranian applicants (+148 %) and for Pakistani applicants (+75 %). For applicants from Kosovo, the number of decisions decreased by 37 %.

<sup>5</sup> When Eurostat started to collect information on asylum decisions.