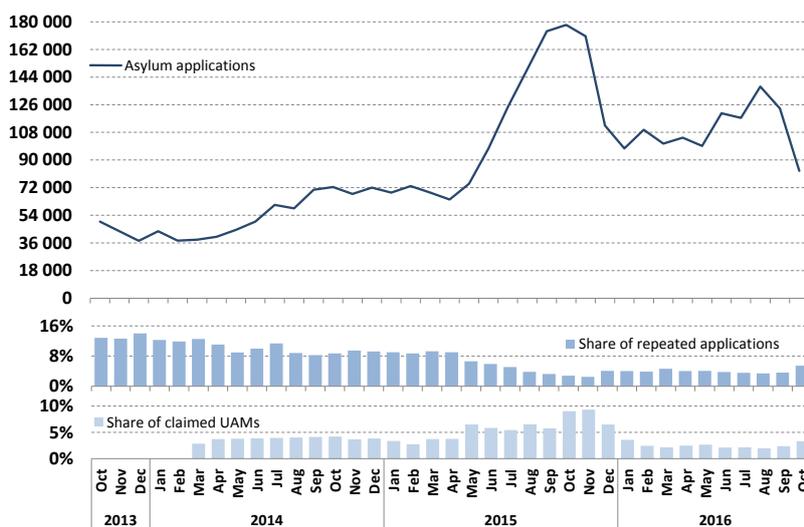


Latest asylum trends – October 2016

Number of applications for international protection in the EU+¹

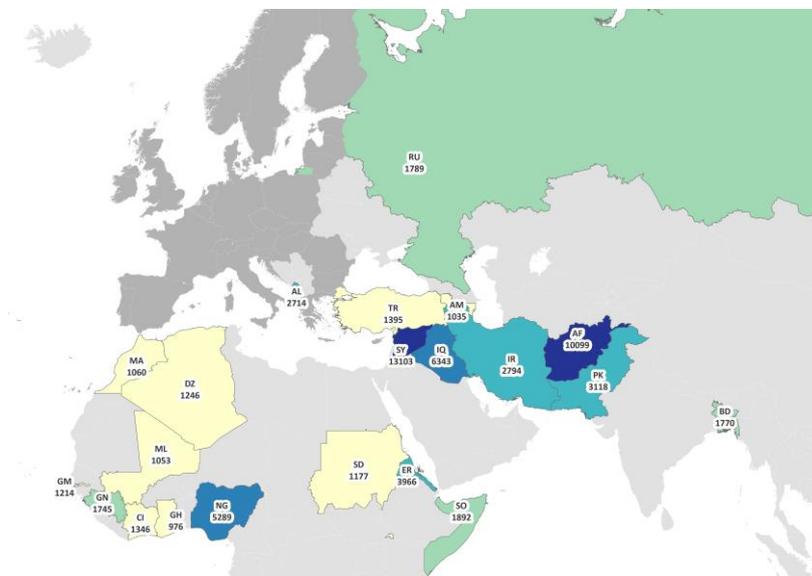
In October 2016, EU+ countries recorded 82 914 applications for international protection, one-third lower than in September when more than 123 400 applications were lodged.² This was the lowest monthly total since May 2015. In



October 2015, the influx of asylum applicants was at its highest point and reached almost 180 000 applications. **Since the beginning of 2016, 1 093 729 applications have been recorded in the EU+.** This is a higher number than in the same period of 2015 when 1 071 971 applications were lodged.

The share of repeated applications (having previously lodged an application in the same EU+ country) rose from 4 % in September to 5 % in October. **3 % of all applicants claimed to be unaccompanied minors (UAMs)³** when lodging an application. 26 % of all UAM applicants were Afghan citizens and 10 % Eritrean.

Main countries of origin of applicants



The top-three citizenships of applicants remained the same as in previous months: Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Syria has been the main citizenship of applicants since April 2015. In October 2016, EU+ countries recorded 13 103 Syrian applications, less than half than the previous month (28 781). Afghan and Iraqi applicants also decreased, to about 10 099 and 6 343, respectively, again less than half the level recorded in September 2016. These top-three citizenships together accounted for 36 % of all applications lodged in the EU+, while in September this was about 50 %. Nigerian (5 289) and Eritrean (3 966) nationals ranked in fourth and

fifth position while the top 10 of citizenships was completed by Pakistan (3 118), Iran (2 794), Albania (2 714), Somalia (1 892) and Russia (1 789). All these citizenships decreased compared to September, with the sharpest decreases for the top three citizenships, returning to the levels recorded before the start of the increased influx from these countries in the spring of 2015.

¹The 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 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.

²Asylum applications were available for 28 EU+ countries. No data were available for Malta and Romania.

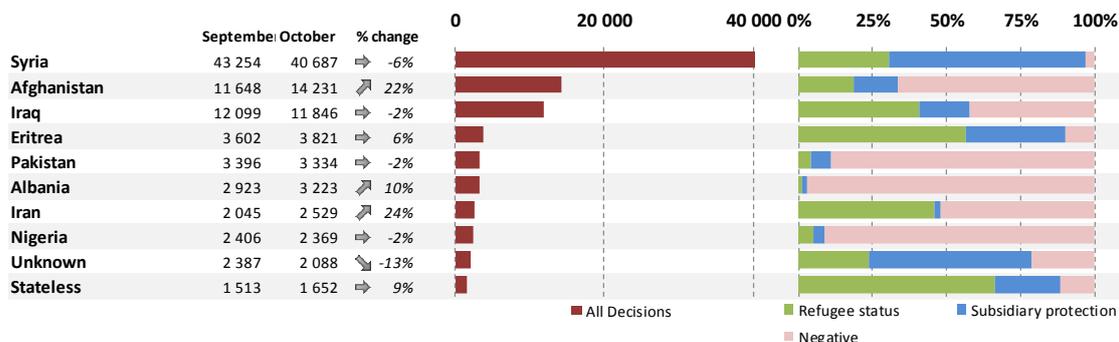
³Several EU+ countries have difficulties reporting on claimed UAMs in the framework of the EPS, these figures should therefore be considered as underestimations of the actual proportion of claimed UAMs.

Syria – In October 2016, Syria remained the main country of origin of applicants for international protection in the EU+ with 13 103 applications. This was less than half the number of Syrian applications recorded in September and the lowest number of Syrian applications since April 2015. The share of Syrian applicants in the total of applicants also became smaller, down from 24 % in September to 16 % in October. In October 2015, when the asylum influx was at its height, just over 60 000 Syrians applied for international protection in the EU+. Syrian applications remained widespread throughout the EU+ with 20 EU+ countries counting Syrian nationals among their top-three citizenships of applicants.

Afghanistan – Afghanistan was in second place of the citizenships with most applications for the seventh consecutive month. The numbers fell two months in a row, with a drop of 45 % to 10 099 applications in September. This was the lowest number since May 2015. Afghanistan remained the main citizenship of claimed UAMs (26 %). 14 EU+ countries reported Afghan applicants in their national top-three citizenships.

Iraq – In October 2016, the number of Iraqi applicants decreased by half to 6 343 – the lowest level for Iraqi applications since June 2015. Compared to October 2015, about 20 000 fewer Iraqi applications were recorded in October 2016. Only 10 EU+ countries counted Iraqi applicants among the top-three citizenships.

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



In October 2016, EU+ countries issued 108 567 first-instance decisions⁴, about 1 000 fewer than in September 2016 when the highest level since the start of EPS monthly data collection in 2014 was recorded. Compared to October 2015 when 66 023 decisions were issued, the number of decisions almost doubled, demonstrating the increased decision-making capacity implemented in a number of EU+ countries. **The EU+ recognition rate reached 58 %** in October, two percentage points lower than the previous month. More positive decisions granted subsidiary protection (56 % of all positive decisions) than refugee status (44 %). The large majority of decisions were issued to **Syrian** applicants, with 40 687 decisions, 6 % fewer than the previous month. The recognition rate for Syrian applicants decreased by one percentage point but remained high at 97 %. The share of subsidiary protection issued to Syrian applicants did not continue to increase for the first time since December 2015 but was still larger than the share of refugee status granted (68.5 % of positive decisions granted subsidiary protection vs. 31.5 % refugee status). The number of decisions issued to **Afghan** applicants increased by 22 % to 14 231. The recognition rate for Afghan nationals was 34 %, four percentage points higher than in September. Of these positive decisions, 56 % resulted in refugee status and 44 % in subsidiary protection, with an increasing proportion for refugee status throughout the past year. The number of decisions on **Iraqi** applications decreased by 2 % to 11 846, with a 62 % recognition rate. Most Iraqi applicants were issued refugee status (70 % of all positive decisions). Of the remaining 10 citizenships with the most first-instance decisions issued, Eritrea showed the second-highest recognition rate (90 %), followed by stateless applicants (89 %) and applicants of unknown citizenship (79 %). The lowest recognition rates were for Albanian (3 %) and Nigerian (9 %) applicants.

Cases awaiting a first-instance decision

For the first time in 2016, the number of cases awaiting a first-instance decision decreased by 4 % to 1 011 645.⁴ Nevertheless this was the fourth consecutive month such cases exceeded the 1 million threshold. The slight decrease in pending cases followed the continued high level of first-instance decisions issued, combined with a lower new influx. 53 % of all cases were pending for longer than six months.

⁴ Data on these indicators were not yet available for two EU+ countries.