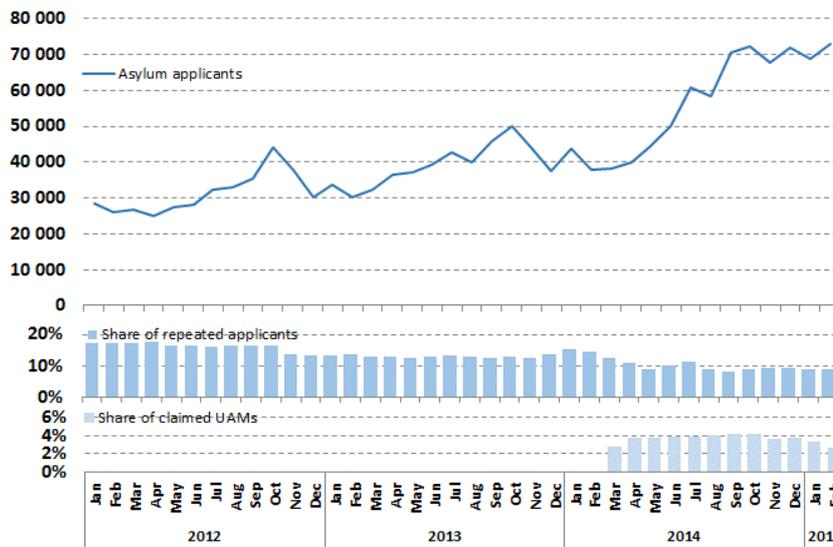


## Latest asylum trends and main countries of origin (February 2015)

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

In February 2015, the total number of applicants recorded by EU+ countries rose 6 % compared to the first month of 2015 and reached a new highest level (72 973) since European data collection started in 2008. As shown in the trend chart below, the rise in February 2015 was in contrast with same seasonal period in the last three years, when the number of asylum applicants dropped in February compared to January. The strong rise in the number of Kosovar applicants reported by both Hungary and Germany was a main factor contributing to the continued high numbers of applicants recorded in the EU+ in recent months.



Since August last year, the monthly share of repeated applicants reported by EU+ countries has remained stable and represented less than 10 % of total applicants.

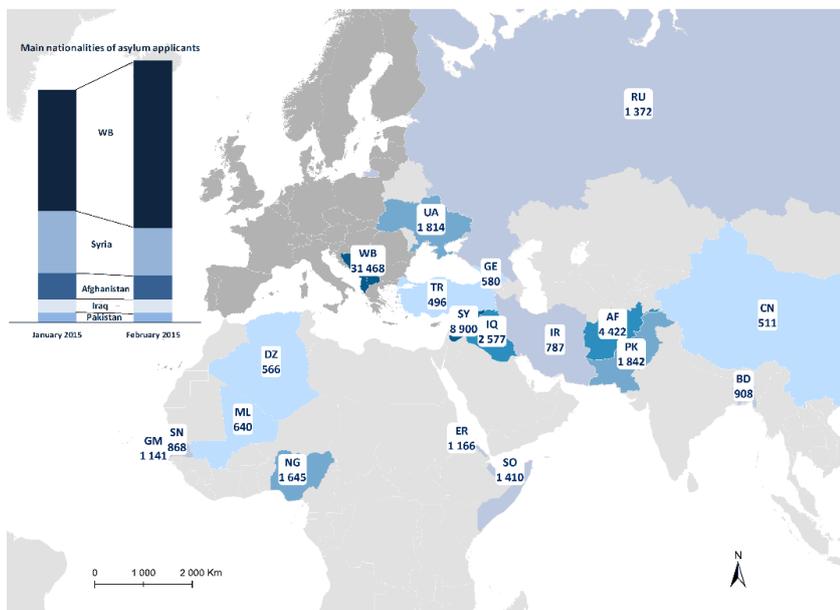
The number of those claiming to be unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at the moment of lodging an asylum application was around 2 000 in February, a decrease of 13 % compared to January 2015. As a result, the share of UAMs fell to less than 3 % in February, the lowest share since March 2014 when collection of this indicator began.

Afghan nationals continued to be the main group of claimed UAM applicants and accounted for 30 % of the monthly total of UAM applicants in February 2015. Syrians and Somali ranked second and third in the top three main nationalities of claimed UAMs.

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

The map shows the main nationalities of asylum applicants recorded by EU+ countries in February 2015. Citizens of all six Western Balkan countries (considered together) were by far the most numerous and accounted for 43 % of the monthly total. Within this group, Kosovars represented the highest share, 76 % of the WB total recorded in February 2015, with close to 24 000 applicants.

The number of Syrian applicants decreased for the fifth consecutive month, while the number of applicants



<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. It is important to emphasise that this term 'unaccompanied minor' here refers to applicants claiming to be minors and for whom an age assessment has not necessarily been carried out before provision of the data.

from Afghanistan also fell by 11 %. Following two months of decrease, **the number of Ukrainian applicants rose by 23 % compared to January** with applications lodged in almost all EU+ countries.

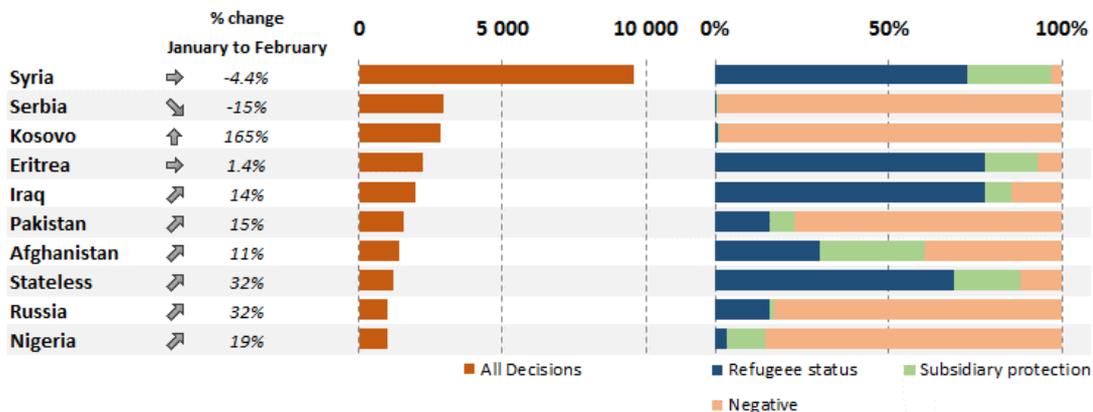
**Syria** – in February 2015, EU+ countries registered **8 900 Syrian applicants, a decrease of 23 % compared to January 2015**, but 42 % more than the total for February 2014. While Germany, Sweden and Austria continued as the main destination countries for Syrian applicants, the Syrian influx remained spread throughout Europe with 19 EU+ countries reporting Syria in their national top three main countries of origin.

**Western Balkan nationals (WB)** – A total of **31 468 WB nationals lodged an application for asylum in the EU+** in February 2015. This is a rise of 38 % compared to the first month of 2015 and for a large part due to the strong rise in the number of Kosovar<sup>2</sup> applicants in Hungary and Germany. Given the high number of implicit withdrawals reported by Hungary in the last three months, it could be that an important share of the Kosovars reported by Germany might have previously lodged an asylum application in Hungary, which was subsequently abandoned. The number of Serbian applicants fell for the third consecutive month, but the influx of Serbians remains much higher than at the beginning of 2014.

**Afghanistan** – After the high level registered in December 2014, the number of Afghan applicants has fallen in the first months of 2015. In February, applicants decreased 11 % compared to January 2015, but the level was still 94 % higher than in February 2014.

**Iraq** – In February 2015, the number of Iraqi applicants (2 577) remained at the same average level recorded over the last six months – around 2 500 applicants per month. Over this six month period, the number of repeated applicants decreased, while first-time applicants increased. Of all Iraqis registered in the EU+ countries in February 2015, 89 % were first-time applicants.

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



Although in February 2015 the number of decisions went down by 4 % compared to January, Syrians continued as the largest group of applicants in terms of decisions issued. 73 % of all decisions issued on Syrian cases granted refugee status and 24 % granted subsidiary protection, amounting to a 97 % recognition rate<sup>3</sup>. This is the highest recognition rate for any single country of origin.

In February 2015, 93 % of all decisions issued to Eritreans resulted in a positive outcome. After Syria, Eritrea is the nationality of applicants with the highest recognition rate.

Following the strong increase in arrivals of Kosovar applicants, in several EU+ countries the number of decisions on Kosovar applications increased, in some cases via fast-track procedures. At EU+ level, decisions on Kosovar applications more than doubled compared to January 2015 (+ 165 %). In February, 99 % of all first instance decisions issued to Kosovars were negative.

<sup>2</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>3</sup> Recognition rate refers to the proportion of positive decisions granting EU-regulated international protection in overall first instance decisions, including only refugee status and subsidiary protection status, but excluding authorisations to stay for humanitarian reasons under national law concerning international protection.