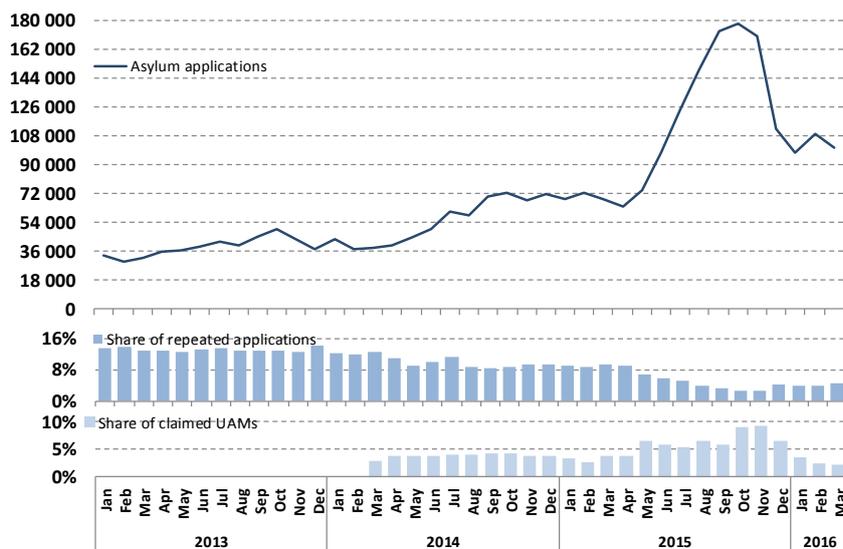


Latest asylum trends

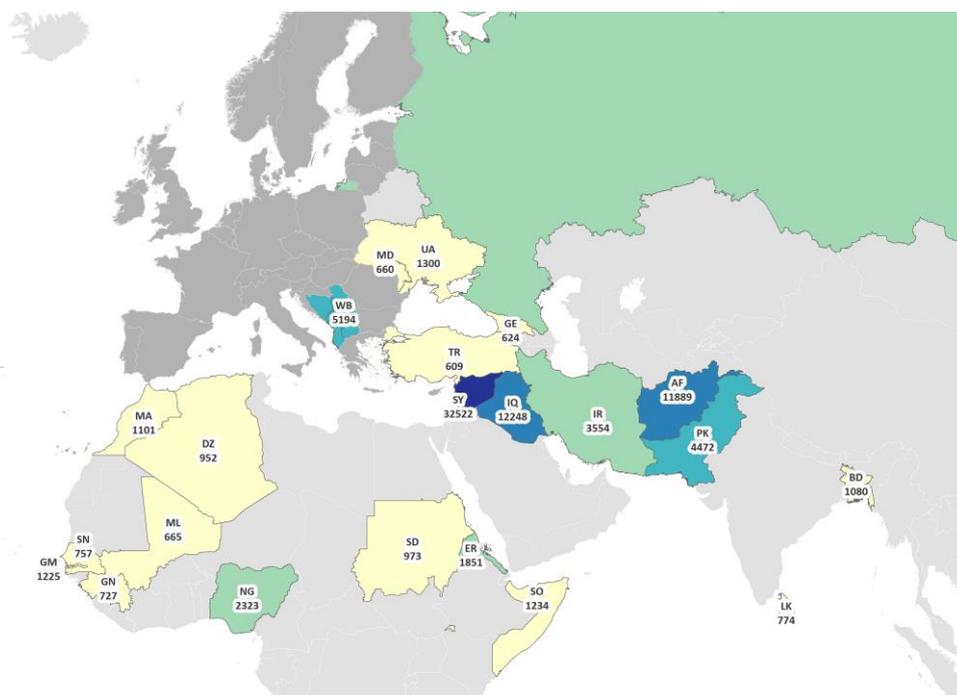
1. Number of applications for international protection in the EU+ in March 2016¹

EU+ countries recorded 100 700 applications for international protection during March 2016.² This total number represented a decrease of 8 % compared to February, but was on a par with the level of January. Compared to March 2015, the total number of asylum applications was still 46 % higher.



The number of applicants who claimed to be **unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at the moment of lodging an application further declined to 2 172**. As a share of the total population of applicants, UAM represented only 2.1 %, the lowest share since monthly data are collected. Most UAM were Afghan citizens (27 %), but their share has also decreased. The second and third most represented citizenships for UAM were the Gambia and Nigeria, whereas these previously were Syria and Iraq.

2. Main countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ in March 2016



Syria remained the main citizenship for the eleventh consecutive month, with 32 522 applications. **Iraqi and Afghan nationals were the second and third most represented citizenships**, with each around 12 000 applicants. These top three citizenships together accounted for 56 % of all applications in the EU+. As a group, **applicants from Western Balkan (WB) countries remained in fourth position**. After a small surge in February 2016, applications by WB nationals again decreased by 12 % to a total of 5 194.

The top ten citizenship groups in March 2016 also included

¹ 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.

² Data were available for all 30 EU+ countries.

Pakistan, Iran, unknown citizenship, Nigeria, Russia and Eritrea. The citizenships remained the same ones as for February 2016, but numbers decreased for most nationalities of the top 10, excluding for Iran, Pakistan and Russia.

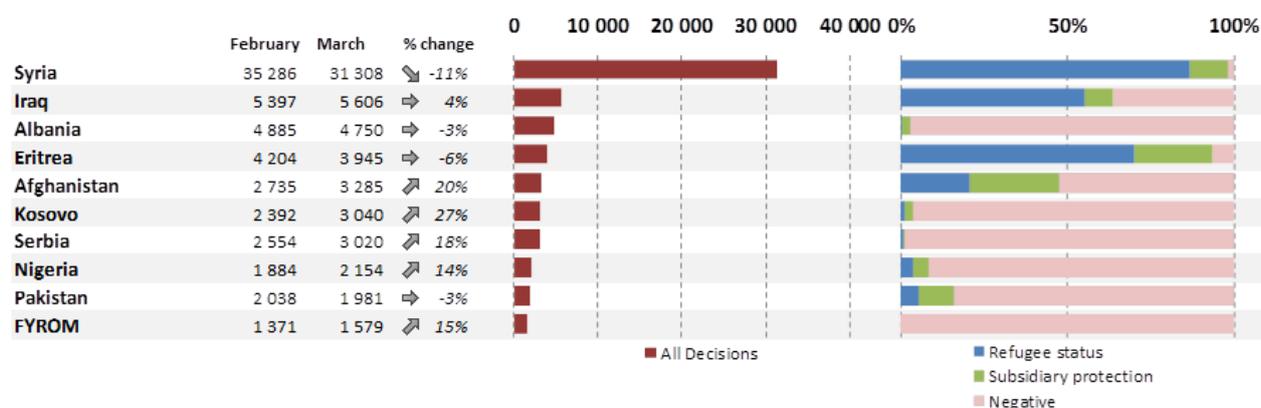
Syria – Syrian citizens lodged 35 522 applications in EU+ countries in March. About one in three applications in the EU+ was lodged by a Syrian national. Compared to February, 15 % less Syrian nationals applied, while compared to March 2015 the level of applications tripled. 18 EU+ countries recorded Syrian nationals in their top three citizenships.

Iraq – After an increase in February, the number of Iraqi applicants again decreased by 9 % to 12 248 in March. Despite the decrease, the level remained close to four times higher than in the same month in 2015. 15 EU+ countries reported Iraqi applicants in their top three citizenships.

Afghanistan – Applications lodged by Afghan nationals decreased for the fourth consecutive month to 11 889. There were 7 % less Afghan applicants than in February, but still 2.5 times more than one year before. The number of Afghan claimed UAM also continued to drop with only 595 applications in March, a fraction of the high total of over 11 000 Afghan UAM reported in November 2015. 13 EU+ countries reported Afghan applicants in their top three citizenships.

Western Balkan nationals (WB) – The number of Western Balkan nationals applying for international protection in the EU+ dropped to 5 194, a 12 % decrease since February. The total number of WB applicants was the lowest recorded since May 2014. The decreases were noted for all WB nationalities except for Montenegrin applicants. Within the group of WB applicants, Albanian nationals accounted for the largest share (41 % of all WB applicants), followed by Serbian and Kosovar applicants (each about 20 %).

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



For the first time since August 2015, the **number of first instance decisions issued in the EU+ decreased slightly to 84 998 decisions**. The decrease was very small and only consisted of 271 less decisions. The number of decisions remained at twice the level recorded in most months of the first half of 2015. The **share of positive decisions was 55 % of the total decisions in first instance in the EU+**, five percentage points lower than in February 2016.

A total of 31 308 decisions were issued to **Syrian** applicants, a 11 % decrease compared to February 2016. Nevertheless, Syrian nationals still represented the largest citizenship to whom first instance decisions were issued: almost one out of two decisions issued in the EU+ involved a Syrian applicant. 98 % of decisions for Syrian nationals resulted in the granting of some form of international protection: 86.6 % resulted in refugee status, 11.7 % in subsidiary protection.

5 606 decisions were taken on **Iraqi** cases, continuing the increase set in in February but on a more moderate level (4 %). With a recognition rate of 64 %, two percentage points lower than in February, Iraqi nationals remained below the eligibility threshold of 75 % for relocation for the third month running. The number of decisions issued on **Albanian** cases (4 750) fell by 3 %, most of which continued to be negative with just 3 % resulting in a positive outcome.

For the other citizenships in the top ten, the number of first-instance decisions issued in March increased compared to February for the other WB nationals (Kosovo, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) as well as for Afghan and Nigerian nationals. For Eritrean and Pakistani applicants, fewer decisions were taken.