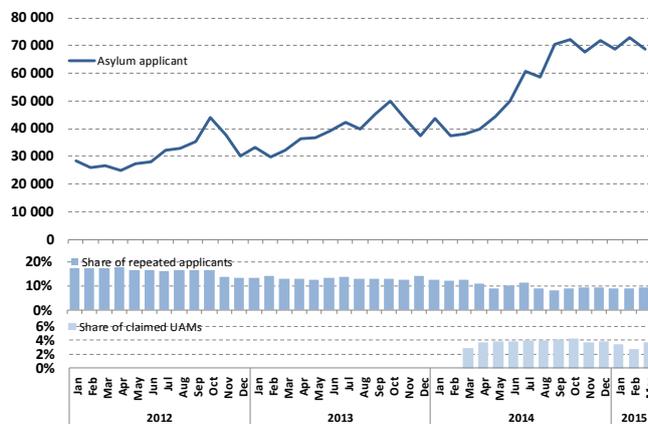


Latest asylum trends and main countries of origin (March 2015)

1. Number of applicants for international protection in the EU+¹

In March 2015, the total number of applicants recorded by EU+ countries declined by 6 % compared to February, falling to a level close to that of January 2015 (68 592 applicants). This drop diverged from the last two years, when the rise from February to March marked the start of an increasing trend in the number of asylum applicants. As shown in the chart below, the levels have fluctuated around 70 000 total asylum applicants per month over the last 7 months, in contrast with the seasonal declines of roughly 20 % over the winter period in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The current levels are around 75 % higher than at the beginning of 2014.



The monthly share of repeated applicants reported by EU+ countries has remained stable since August 2014, and represented less than 10 % of total applicants.

The number of claimed unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at the moment of lodging an asylum application rose to 2 500 in March, a 28 % increase compared to February. The share of UAMs, which had fallen in February, rose again in March to just below 4 %. Afghan nationals continued to be the main group of claimed UAM applicants and accounted for 33 % of the monthly total of UAM applicants. Somali and Syrians ranked second and third in the top three

main nationalities of claimed UAMs.

2. Main countries of origin of applicants in EU+ countries in March 2015

The map shows the main nationalities of asylum applicants recorded by EU+ countries in March 2015. As in February, citizens of the six Western Balkan countries (considered together) were by far the most numerous and accounted for 33 % of the monthly total. Compared to February, the total for this group decreased by 27 % in March, with the number of Kosovar applicants falling by 44 %.



Kosovars still represented the highest share of applicants, with 58 %.

After five consecutive months of decline, the number of Syrian applicants rose by 13 % (exceeding once again 10 000 applicants), while the number of applicants from Afghanistan also rose by 5 %. Following six months of relative stability, the number of Iraqi applicants grew by 23 % compared to February and reached the highest monthly level since the beginning of data collection in 2008.

Syria – in March 2015, EU+ countries registered 10 025 Syrian applicants, an increase of 13 % compared to February and 64 % more than the total registered in March 2014. While Germany remained the main destination country for Syrian applicants, the number of applicants in Hungary doubled in March compared to February, making

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. 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.

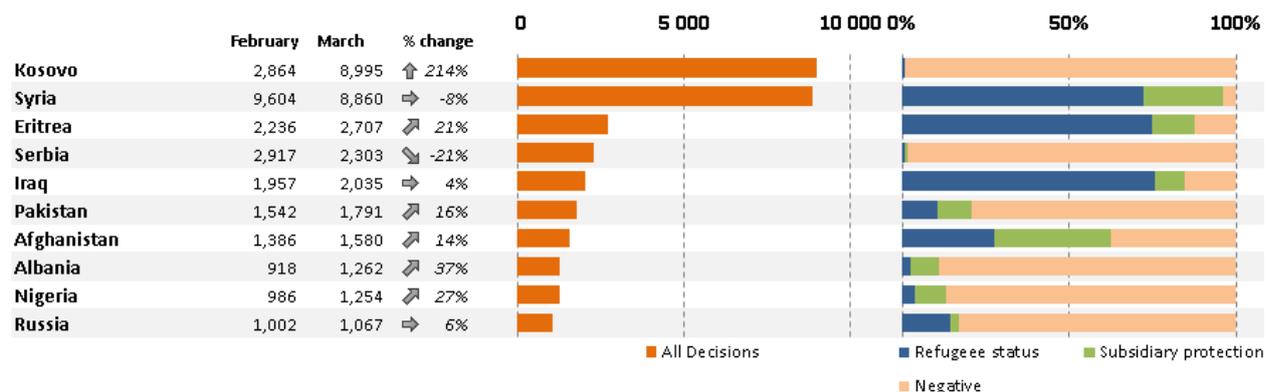
Hungary the second ranked country for Syrian applicants in the EU+. With regard to the distribution of applicants, a total of 16 EU+ countries reported Syria in their national top three main countries of origin in March, three countries less than in February.

Western Balkan nationals (WB) – A total of 22 929 WB nationals lodged an application for asylum in the EU+ in March 2015. This represents a contraction of 27 % compared to February due largely to the 97 % decrease in the number of Kosovar² applicants in Hungary compared to last month. Applicants from Kosovo remain the largest citizenship within the WB group (58 %) and mainly applied in Germany. Apart from Serbian nationals, registrations of applicants from all other WB countries increased compared to February, with Albanian applicants rising most (+54 %).

Afghanistan – After falling for two months, the number of Afghan applicants increased in March and totalled 4 638. Hungary remained the main destination country followed by Germany and Austria. Compared to March 2014, the total number of applicants from Afghanistan more than doubled.

Iraq – In March 2015, the number of Iraqi applicants (3 177) rose by 23 % compared to February after six months of fluctuation around 2 500 applicants per month. The number of repeated applicants has remained stable over the last four months, while the number of first-time applicants has increased. Of all Iraqis registered in the EU+ countries in March 2015, 90 % were first-time applicants.

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



In response to the high number of Kosovar applicants over recent months, the number of decisions on Kosovar applications continued to increase in several EU+ countries, in some countries through the use of fast-track procedures. At EU+ level, decisions on Kosovar applications in March more than tripled compared to February (+ 214 %) and Kosovars became the largest group of applicants for which decisions were issued. In March, 99 % of all first instance decisions issued to Kosovars were negative.

While in March the number of decisions issued to Syrian applicants went down by 8% compared to February, the monthly average for the first three months of 2015 was 60 % higher than the monthly average for 2014, reflecting a high number of decisions on Syrian cases in many EU+ countries. For the EU+ as a whole, 72 % of all decisions issued on Syrian cases granted refugee status and 24 % granted subsidiary protection, resulting in a 96 % recognition rate³. This is the highest recognition rate for any single country of origin.

In March 2015, 85 % of all decisions issued to Iraqis resulted in a positive outcome, compared to 59 % in March 2014. Among the main citizenships of applicants in the EU+, the annual growth in recognition rate was the highest for Iraqi applicants.

² 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.

³ 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.