Asylum in the EU Member States
612 700 first-time asylum seekers registered in 2019, up by 12% compared with 2018
Syrians, Afghans and Venezuelans: the top citizenships

In 2019, 612 700 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU), up by 12% compared with 2018 (549 000), but around half of the number recorded in the peak year 2015 when 1 216 900 first-time asylum applicants were registered.

Syrian (74 400 first-time applicants) and Afghan (52 500) continued to be the main citizenship of people seeking international protection in the EU Member States in 2019, followed by Venezuelan (44 800), which moved up from fifth place in 2018 to third in 2019, together accounting for 28% of all first-time applicants.

These data on asylum applicants in the EU are issued by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. They are complemented with an article and an infographic available on the Eurostat website.
Almost 1 in 4 applied for asylum in Germany
With 142 400 first-time applicants registered in 2019, Germany accounted for 23% of all first-time applicants in the EU Member States. It was closely followed by France (119 900, or 20%) and Spain (115 200, or 19%), ahead of Greece (74 900, or 12%) and Italy (35 000, or 6%).

Among EU Member States with more than 5 000 first-time asylum seekers in 2019, the number of first time applicants rose most compared with the previous year in Spain (+118%, or 62 400 more first-time asylum seekers in 2019 than in 2018) and Cyprus (+67%, or 5 100 more), ahead of Sweden (+28%, or 5 000 more), Belgium (+27%, or 5 000 more), Greece (+15%, or 9 900 more), the Netherlands (+10%, or 2 000 more) and France (+8%, or 8 500 more).

In contrast, the largest relative decreases were recorded in Italy (-34%, or 18 400 fewer), Germany (-12%, or 19 400 fewer) and Austria (-7%, or 800 fewer).

Syrian, Afghan and Venezuelan – main citizenships of asylum seekers
Syrian (12% of the total number of first-time applicants) was the main citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States in 2019, a position it has held each year since 2013. Of the 74 400 Syrian who applied for asylum for the first-time in the EU in 2019, more than half were registered in Germany (39 300, or 53%). Syrian was the main citizenship of asylum seekers in seven EU Member States.

With 52 500 first-time applicants (or 9% of the EU total) in 2019, Afghan was the second main citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States. Almost half of Afghans (45%) applied in Greece (23 700). Afghan was the main citizenship of asylum seekers in five EU Member States.

Venezuelan (7% of the total number of first-time applicants) was the third main citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States in 2019. Of the 44 800 Venezuelan seeking asylum protection for the first-time in the EU in 2019, the vast majority (90%) applied in Spain (40 300). Venezuelan was the main citizenship of asylum seekers only in Spain.

While the number of applicants from Syria decreased compared to 2018 (-7%, or 5 700), the number of Afghans and Venezuelans increased by 35% (13 600) and 102% (22 600) respectively.
Highest number of first-time applicants relative to the population in Cyprus, lowest in Slovakia

The highest number of registered first-time applicants in 2019 relative to the population of each Member State was recorded in Cyprus (14 495 first-time applicants per million population), ahead of Malta (8 108), Greece (6 985) and Luxembourg (3 585).

In contrast, the lowest numbers were recorded in Slovakia (39 applicants per million population), Hungary (48), Poland (73), Estonia (76) and Latvia (93).

In 2019, in the EU as a whole, there were 1 371 first-time asylum applicants per million population.

Around 840 000 asylum applications pending at the end of 2019

Pending applications for international protection are applications that have been made at any time and are still under consideration by the national authorities at the end of the reference period. In other words, they refer to the number of asylum seekers waiting for a decision at the end of the year. This statistic is also intended to measure how the national authorities are facing the workload implied by the arrival of asylum applicants in the Member States.

At the end of 2019, 842 500 applications for international protection in the EU Member States were still under consideration by the national authorities. At the end of 2018, this figure was slightly higher (851 000).

Germany had the largest share of applications pending in the EU at the end of 2019 (326 800, or 39% of the EU total), ahead of Spain (133 000, or 16%), Greece (105 400, or 13%), France (74 400, or 9%) and Italy (47 000, or 6%).

Among EU Member States with more than 5 000 pending applications at the end of 2019, the number of pending applications rose most compared with the previous year in Cyprus (+85%, or 8 600 more pending applications in 2019 than in 2018), Spain (+69%, or 54 300 more), and Belgium (+49%, or 9 500 more).

The largest relative decreases were recorded in Italy (-54%, or 56 000 fewer), Austria (-29%, or 10 900 fewer) and Sweden (-27%, or 10 100 fewer).
Geographical information
The European Union (EU27) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden.

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Information on dissemination of European statistics from 1 February 2020 is published on the Eurostat website.

Methods and definitions
Data on asylum are provided to Eurostat by the Ministries of Interior, Justice or immigration agencies of the Member States according to the provisions of Article 4 of the Regulation (EC) 862/2007 of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection. In addition, all Member States provide data on first-time asylum applicants on a voluntary basis.

The EU total is calculated as an aggregation of Member States data. Member State data refer to the number of persons applying for asylum for the first-time in that Member State. Persons may however apply for international protection in more than one Member State in a given reference year. Consequently, the EU total may be overestimated due to such multiple applicants.

'Application for international protection' means an application for international protection as defined in the Art. 2(h) of Directive 2011/95/EU, i.e. including requests for refugee status or for subsidiary protection status, irrespective of whether the application was lodged on arrival at the border, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether the person entered the territory legally (e.g. as a tourist) or illegally.

'First-time asylum applicant/seeker' means a person having submitted an application for international protection or having been included in such application as a family member, for the first-time. Applications submitted by persons who are subsequently found to be a subject of a Dublin procedure are included in the statistics on first-time asylum applicants if such persons are also a subject of first asylum application. A person can be recorded as first-time applicant only if he or she had never applied for international protection in the reporting country in the past, irrespective of the fact that he or she is found to have applied in another Member State of the European Union.

This news release refers to the number of 'First-time asylum applicants'. The indicator 'First-time asylum applicants' excludes repeat applicants i.e. persons applying for asylum more than once in one country and therefore more accurately presents the number of persons applying for international protection in the EU Member States. The use of this indicator is now possible as all Member States are able to provide it to Eurostat.

A person being the subject of a 'pending application' means a person who is the subject of an application for international protection under consideration by the responsible national authority at the end of the reference period. It includes the number of persons with pending applications at all instances of the administrative and/or judicial procedure (see Art 4.1(b) of the Regulation).

For more information
Eurostat database on asylum and managed migration
Eurostat metadata on asylum applications statistics
Eurostat Statistics Explained article on asylum quarterly data
Eurostat Statistics Explained article on asylum annual data
Eurostat interactive infographic on asylum applicants in 2019
European Statistics Code of Practice

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@EU_Eurostat EurostatStatistics ec.europa.eu/eurostat
### First-time asylum applicants in the EU Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of first-time applicants</th>
<th>Share in EU total (%)</th>
<th>Number of first-time applicants per million population**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Change (in %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU27*</td>
<td>548 955</td>
<td>612 685</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>587 350</td>
<td>656 920</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>18 130</td>
<td>23 105</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>2 465</td>
<td>2 075</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>1 350</td>
<td>1 570</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3 465</td>
<td>2 605</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>161 885</td>
<td>142 450</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3 655</td>
<td>4 740</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>64 975</td>
<td>74 910</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>52 730</td>
<td>115 175</td>
<td>118%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>111 415</td>
<td>119 915</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>675</td>
<td>1 265</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>385</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2 225</td>
<td>2 200</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Malta</td>
<td>2 035</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>20 465</td>
<td>22 485</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3 615</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-7%</td>
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Number of first-time applicants is rounded to the nearest 5. Calculations are based on exact data.  
* EU27 represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.  
** Refers to the resident population on 1 January 2019.  
- Not applicable  
Source dataset: [migr_asyappctza](ec.europa.eu/eurostat)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>First citizenship</th>
<th>Second citizenship</th>
<th>Main citizenships of first-time asylum applicants</th>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU27</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Eritrea</td>
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* EU27 represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.
** A stateless person is someone who is not recognized as a citizen of any state.
*** Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99
Source dataset: migr_asyappctza