News Published: 22 March 2021

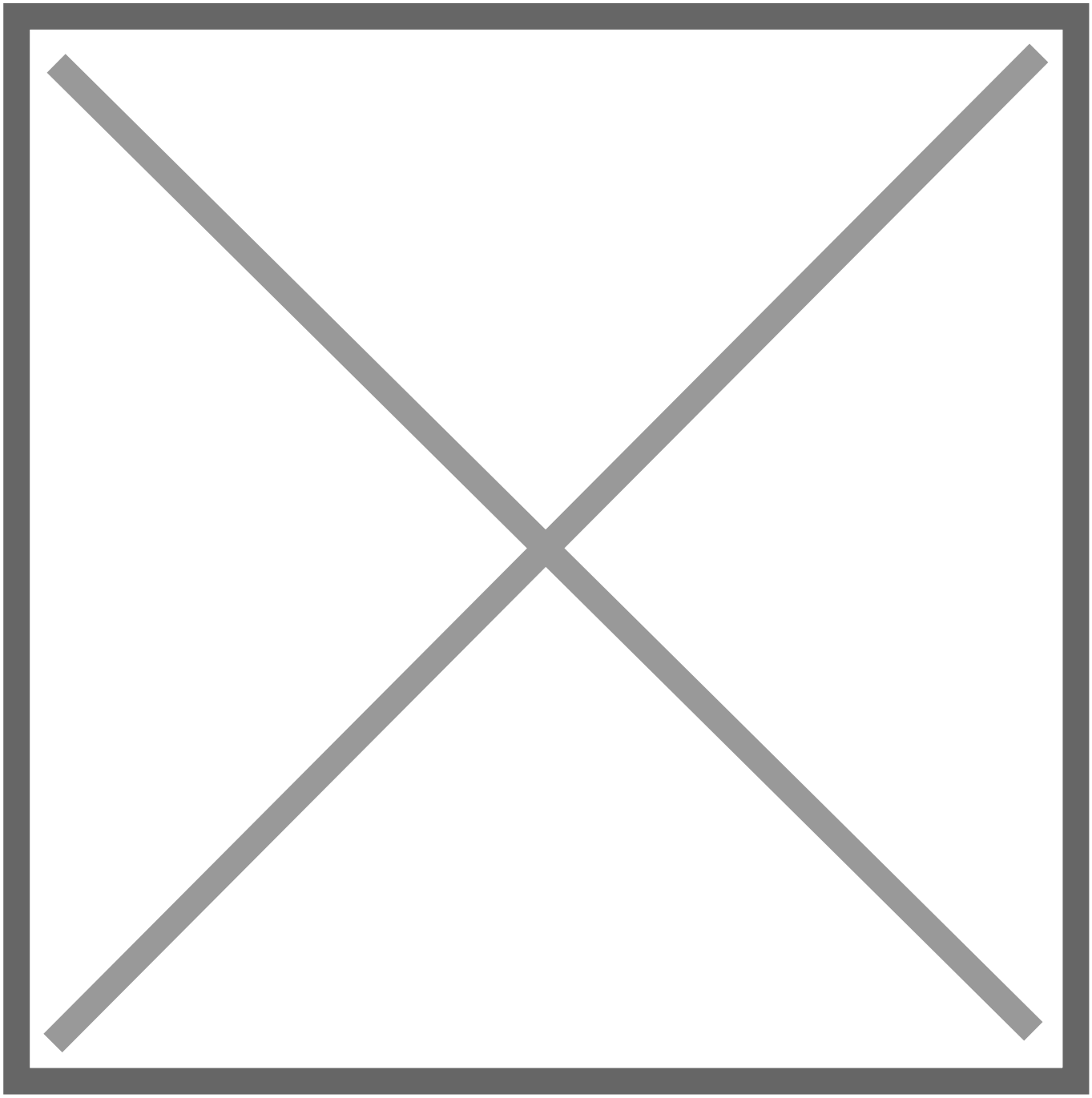
Repeated applications account for one in four asylum applications in the EU+ in January



Of the 40 000 applications for asylum lodged in the EU+ in January 2021, almost one quarter were repeated applications. Iraq and Nigeria replaced Venezuela and Colombia among the top five origin countries of applicants.

Analysis released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on asylum trends in January 2021 shows that **40 000 applications for international protection** were lodged in the EU+, **including close to 10 000 repeated applications.**[1] The share of repeated applications (24 %) was the highest in several years.

This development reflects a shift towards repeated applications over the course of 2020 – when first-time applications declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions – but also a recent **increase in repeated applications by Syrians** (+ 2 000 from December 2020). A repeated application is lodged in the same country after a previous application was closed with a final decision.



The top origin countries have changed

Following the decline of asylum applications by Venezuelans and Colombians in 2020, **the top origin countries in January were Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Nigeria**. Compared to December, applications by Syrians increased by 27 % to 10 400 (including repeated applications), and **Syrians alone accounted for a quarter of all asylum applications** lodged in the EU+. Pakistanis have consistently been the third most frequent nationality since October 2020 but Nigeria joined the top origin countries for the first time since June 2018.

Among other nationalities with more than 200 applications in January, some Sub-Saharan Africans lodged significantly more applications than in December: Guineans (+ 15 %), Malians (+ 17 %) and Senegalese (+ 41 %). Significantly fewer applications than in December were lodged by Bangladeshis (- 19 %), Eritreans (- 18 %), Russians (- 17 %), Moldovans (- 31 %), Tunisians (- 23 %) and Haitians (- 28 %).

Fewer applications were lodged by self-claimed unaccompanied minors (UAMs). In January, they accounted for approximately 3 % of all applications in the EU+, down from 5 % in December 2020. This notably reflected decreasing applications by UAMs from Afghanistan, Syria and Bangladesh.

Fewer decisions than applications

Decisions issued at first instance decreased to 38 700 in January (- 9 %) and fell below the level of applications lodged. Some 409 700 cases were pending at first instance in January, roughly as many as in December. Close to two thirds had been pending for more than six months, compared to 54 % in January 2020.

The recognition rate[2] in the EU+ was 32 % in January 2021. Roughly as in the previous months, close to two thirds of the positive decisions granted refugee status, while the remainder granted subsidiary protection.

For more information and an interactive data visualisation, please visit the Latest Asylum Trends page.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

---

Footnotes

1 - EASO EPS data are preliminary and might differ from validated official statistics submitted to Eurostat at a later stage. Eurostat data are used in the annual EASO Asylum Report.

2 - This refers to the recognition rate for EU-regulated types of protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) at first instance.

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu