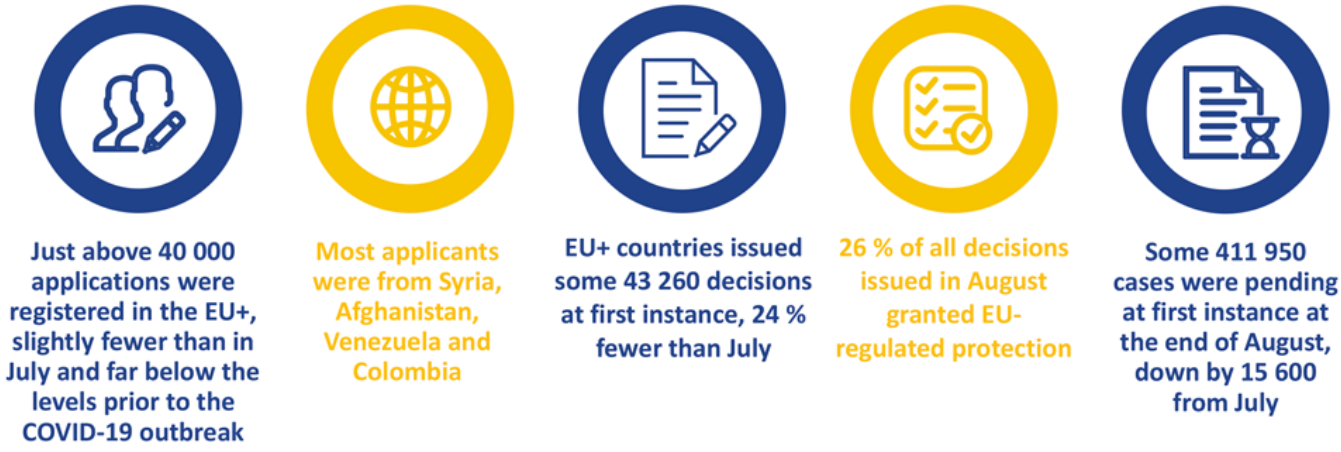
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Asylum applications remain 31% lower than in 2019



Despite a gradual increase in asylum applications since the initial easing of travel restrictions, August saw just over 40 000 registered, almost 40% fewer than in January.

Figures released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) show that the impact of COVID-19 restrictive measures remains evident across the EU+ . Data show that asylum applications in August were down slightly from July (almost 43 000 applications), and significantly below pre-COVID levels. In January 2020, 65 692 applications were registered.

Since the beginning of 2020, 295 075 applications for international protection have been lodged in the EU+, a **31% decrease compared to the same period in 2019**. This indicates that reduced mobility and pandemic emergency measures are still affecting the number of applications being lodged with national asylum authorities.

In August, **Syrians** (5 394; 13% of total) and **Afghans** (3 800; 10% of total) continued to lodge the most applications for international protection, followed by **Venezuelans** (3 600; 9% of total) and **Colombians** (3 300; 7% of total), but EASO analyses suggest that these applicants are not newly arrived to the EU+. **Colombians** and **Peruvians** were the only prominent citizenships lodging more applications so far this year. Other citizenships are universally lodging fewer applications due to the pandemic.

In August, **26% of applications received a positive decision**, while in July only 23% received international protection. Overall, the recognition rate between January and August 2020 stands at 31%.

Despite the challenges, and because of new working arrangements in place, EU+ asylum authorities have been able to issue more first-instance decisions (over 43 200 in August) than there were applications lodged, which means that even in these difficult times, the **backlog is being reduced**.

The current public health situation makes it extremely difficult to make accurate forecasts about the EU+ asylum situation in the coming months. Nevertheless, the recent return of restrictive measures in some EU+ countries and the intra-EU travel restrictions in place are likely to also limit mobility for those in need of

protection. Asylum applications are thus expected to remain at lower levels than in recent times.

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

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