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EU asylum figures 2018: Applications return to 2014 levels, decreasing by 10% over previous year

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published its 2018 asylum trends overview. Data shows a lower recognition rate of applications (34% compared to 40% in 2017) and pending cases at less than half of the peak recorded in autumn 2016. While overall applications continued to fall in 2018, citizens from Iran, Turkey, and several visa-liberalised countries lodged more applications than in 2017.

For a third consecutive year, 2018 saw a decrease in applications for international protection in the EU+ following the migration crisis of 2015. The **634,700 applications lodged** were 10% fewer than in 2017, and similar to the level of 2014. The decrease registered in 2018 follows a significant 44% decline in applications in 2017 over the previous year.

Syria remained the top country of origin for applicants, but with 25% fewer applications than in the previous year. More than one-in-ten of all applicants was a Syrian national, compared to 2015-2016, when Syrians made up more than one-in-four applicants. Afghanistan and Iraq completed the top three countries of origin in 2018.

Despite the overall decrease in applications, several citizenships lodged more applications than in the previous year. Georgian, Turkish and Venezuelan applicants increased for the second year in a row. Large increases also took place in 2018 for applicants from Colombia, Palestine, and Iran. In 2018, close to one fifth of all applications were lodged by nationals from countries exempt from visa requirements to enter the Schengen Area, including Venezuelans, Colombians, Georgians. This was a much higher share than in previous years.

EU+ countries jointly issued 593,500 first-instance decisions, 40% fewer than in 2017, but still considerably more than during the pre-crisis period. One-in-three decisions made in 2018 was positive, granting either refugee status or subsidiary protection. This compares to a recognition rate of 40% in 2017. Nationals of Syria, Yemen and Eritrea had the highest recognition rates, whereas the lowest shares of positive decisions were for Georgians and Gambians.

The number of applications lodged and awaiting a decision in first-instance continued to decline, but only modestly. Only some 26,500 fewer cases were pending at the end of 2018 than at the end of 2017. The stock of pending cases reached 448,300 at the end of 2018, compared to autumn 2016 when it exceeded the one-million mark.

More information can be found at the following links:

- **EU+ asylum trends - 2018 overview**
- **Key findings**
- **Interactive visualisation**

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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