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Asylum Report 2026: EU+ gearing up for the next generation of the Common European Asylum System



With asylum applications at their lowest level since 2021, due to political developments in key countries of origin such as Syria and also EU cooperation with partner countries which reduced mobility across migration routes, in the past year EU+ national authorities made it their common mission to prepare for the application of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. With the support of the European Commission and key EU Agencies, they worked to implement border procedures, strengthen case management systems and make changes to reception conditions to address capacity.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published its annual [Asylum Report 2026](#), outlining the policy and operational situation in EU+ countries, and the main changes in the asylum context. It covers the years 2025 and early 2026, a period marked by numerous armed conflicts.

By February 2026, the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine had entered its fifth year, with around 4.5 million people displaced from Ukraine and benefitting from temporary protection in the EU. At the same time, political developments in Syria had a significant impact on asylum management, with EU+ national authorities suspending decision-taking and the number of Syrian applications falling by 72% compared to 2024.

The year 2025 was also crucial in terms of policy development. With an aim to reduce pressure on asylum systems in the EU+, the [first Union-wide list of Safe Countries of Origin](#) became law in February 2026. This list was established to assist EU+ national authorities in assessing applications from countries of origin that do not generally generate protection needs.

The highlights of EUAA's Asylum Report include the following:

- **Lowest number of applications since 2021** – EU+ countries received **822 000 asylum applications in 2025**, 19% fewer than in 2024. Repeated applications saw a rise of 39 % compared to 2024, while the European Court of Justice considered some applicants eligible for international protection on the grounds of gender and nationality alone.
- **Reducing backlogs ahead of the Pact** – EU+ countries focused on reducing the number of pending cases and allocating capacity for the practical implementation of the new rules. Around 874 000 first instance decisions were issued, with **a sharp increase in rejections for nationals** of countries with a low recognition rate (<20%), the latter representing 56% of decisions taken. As a result of the reduced number of applications and increased pace of decision-taking, **pending cases** at first instance **decreased by a significant 13%**. However, an increasing number of appeals meant that the overall caseload remained high, with several EU+ countries investing in appeal capacity.
- **Tightening the reception conditions for asylum applicants** – EU+ countries worked to transpose [updated reception rules](#), including by adjusting reception conditions and addressing gaps in capacity, particularly for applicants in the border procedure. In parallel, countries faced with secondary movements undertook initiatives aimed at tightening reception conditions, in line with the upcoming rules, **particularly to applicants notified of a transfer decision** to another EU country.
- **Transitioning from the Dublin Regulation** – As part of the transition to the new Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, Dublin units put **concerted effort into clearing their backlogs** to avoid as much as possible the parallel application of new and old rules. In 2025, around 120 000 decisions were taken on Dublin requests, and 18 000 transfers were implemented.
- **Tightening rules on family reunification** – Several EU+ countries updated their family reunification rules, including to protect children's rights. Others continued to limit arrivals through family reunification to ease pressure on asylum and reception systems, **as well as national and municipal social systems**. However, with civil society repeatedly warning of the potential negative impact of stricter rules, some EU+ countries focused on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

In parallel to these different operational developments, EU+ countries invested significantly **in ensuring that the new Eurodac system becomes operational on time**. Several countries invested in the **establishment of multipurpose centres** where screening, the asylum border procedure and the return border procedure can take place at the same location, with some even piloting those processes in 2025. The EUAA supported Member States in these different efforts by **developing guidance and tools** on the new procedures, **updating existing guides and training practitioners** from national administrations on the provisions of the Pact, including by providing direct operational support in 12 EU countries.

The highlights of the report and its broader context are presented in a [virtual launch event](#).

The Agency's public guides and practical tools, developed to support national authorities in implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum can be found [here](#).

For more information, you can refer to:

- Asylum Report 2026: ([HTML](#)), ([PDF](#))
- Executive Summary in 31 languages: ([HTML](#)), ([PDF](#))
- EU+ country overviews; ([HTML](#))
- Latest Asylum Trends: Annual Analysis 2025; ([HTML](#)); ([PDF](#))
- National Asylum Developments 2026; ([HTML](#)); ([PDF](#))

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