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EU+ asylum applications continued to decline in the first half of 2026



In the first half of 2026, EU+ countries received 332 000 applications for international protection, 17% fewer than during the same period in 2025. This is the lowest number recorded in the first half of a year since 2021.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published the [2026 Mid-Year Review of the Latest Asylum Trends](#). In the first half of the year, EU+ countries received around **332 000 asylum applications**, which represents a 17 % decrease compared to the same period last year. This latest decrease is part of an ongoing trend since late 2024. It reflects both a different mix of nationalities applying, **given the fragile but ongoing political transition in Syria**, but also the EU's efforts in cooperating with countries of origin and transit. Importantly, the escalation of hostilities in the Middle East **has not translated into an increase** in asylum applications in the EU+.

Afghan (39 000) applications decreased by 7 % year on year, following a surge in late 2025 that was largely driven by repeated applications from Afghan women already present in the EU+. **Venezuelan (33 000)** applications decreased by almost one third compared to a year earlier, with 93 % lodged in Spain. **Bangladeshis (20 000)** remained among the top nationalities, with applications increasing with 13 % since last year.

chart visualization

France received the most applications (**69 000**) in the EU+ in the first half of 2026, accounting for one fifth of all applications, closely followed by **Italy (66 000)**, **Spain (55 000)** and **Germany (55 000)**. Together, these four countries received around three quarters of all asylum applications, a slight recession from the four-fifths share in previous reporting periods. **Greece (23 000)** received the most applications per capita, around 1 application for every 400 or so residents.

Fewer than one third of decisions granted protection at first instance

In the first half of 2026, the EU+ recognition rate stood at 31 %, which means that fewer than a third of all decisions at first instance resulted in the granting of international protection. EU+ countries continued to grant refugee status more often than subsidiary protection. The Asylum Procedure Regulation which began to apply on 12 June 2026 introduced the mandatory border and [accelerated examination](#) procedures. As a result, recognition rates have become particularly relevant under the new legal framework.

Under the new rules, when relevant conditions are met, Member States must apply the border procedure and the accelerated examination procedure to applicants from countries for which the EU average recognition rate at first instance was less than 20% [in the preceding year](#). In addition, applicants from countries designated as safe countries of origin may be examined under the border procedure and must be examined in the accelerated examination procedure, when relevant conditions are present.

In the first half of 2026, nearly 56 % of applications were from citizenships meeting one or more of these criteria, and they included several of the largest applicant groups such as **Bangladeshis (20 000)**, **Egyptians (12 000)**, **Venezuelans (33 000)** and **Turks (12 000)**. The first instance recognition rate on applications from these citizenships stood at less than 5 %, except for Turks (18 %).

chart visualization

Pending cases decline, but older cases remain

At the end of June 2026, around 770 000 cases were pending at first instance in the EU+, 8% fewer than a year earlier. The Agency estimates that, when all administrative and judicial instances are combined, there were around 1.18 million pending cases in the EU+.

At first instance, Venezuelans had the largest pending caseload, around **129 000**, followed by **Syrians (76 000)**, **Colombians (64 000)**, **Peruvians (38 000)** and **Bangladeshis (36 000)**. Pending cases increased particularly sharply for **Venezuelans (+14%)**, while Colombian and Peruvian caseloads decreased or remained broadly stable. The decline was concentrated among newer cases, while cases pending for more than six months remained broadly stable. As a result, older cases accounted for 73% of the total caseload, up from 68% a year earlier.

With the entry into application of the Pact on 12 June 2026, the data included in the EUAA's Mid-Year Review 2026 **represents the final dataset** under the EU's previous asylum rules¹ and usefully capture the state of play before the new asylum rules became applicable.

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The reference period also includes international protection data between 12 and 30 June, when the new asylum rules were applicable.