

Asylum in the EU: Facts and Figures

Asylum is a form of international protection given by a state on its territory to someone who is threatened by persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion in their country of origin or residence. In the EU, this consists of refugee status as defined in the [UN Geneva Refugee Convention](#), and subsidiary protection for persons who do not qualify as refugees but in respect of whom substantial grounds exist that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in the [Qualification Directive](#).

The Lisbon Treaty introduced a legal basis for a common asylum policy that would make it possible to eliminate differences in the treatment of asylum-seekers across the EU. The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) was completed in 2013 and comprises five key acts. Notably, the [Qualification Directive](#) clarifies the grounds on which international protection is granted to asylum-seekers in EU Member States. Furthermore, the [Dublin III Regulation](#) establishes the criteria for determining which Member State is responsible for examining an application for international protection, and provides for the transfer of asylum-seekers to the Member State responsible under the Dublin rules.

This briefing provides an overview of the number of third-country nationals seeking asylum in EU Member States, their success in asylum procedures, and requests for transfers between Member States, as a consequence of the Dublin Regulation. For further information on asylum in the EU, please see our briefing '[EU legal framework on asylum and irregular immigration](#)'.

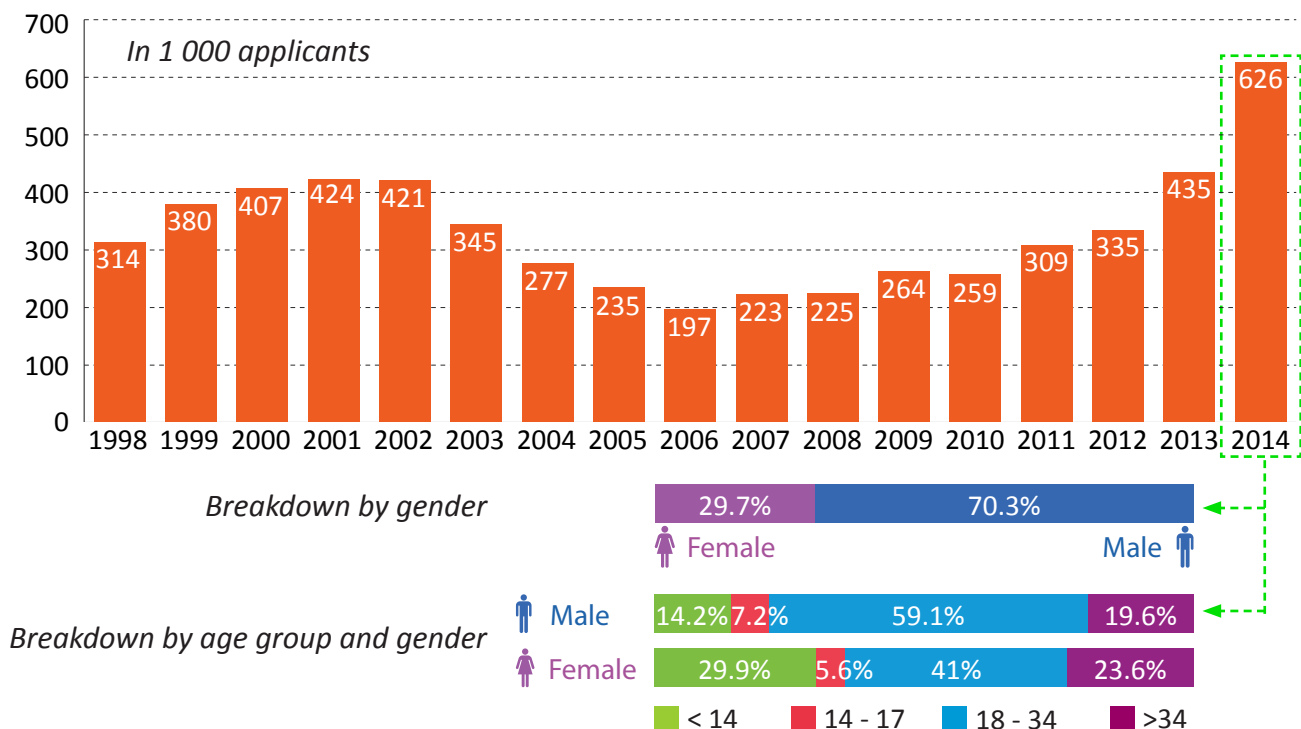
Asylum applicants in the EU28

Due to the geopolitical situation in the EU's neighbouring countries, the surge of asylum-seekers to the EU has increased steadily since 2008. The following bar chart shows the number of asylum applicants in the European Union. 'Applicants' refers to anyone applying for asylum or similar protection – as defined in the Qualification Directive – or included in an application as a family member.

Until 2007, data was collected on the basis of a gentlemen's agreement. Since 2008, Member States have provided this data in accordance with the [Regulation on statistics on migration and international protection](#).

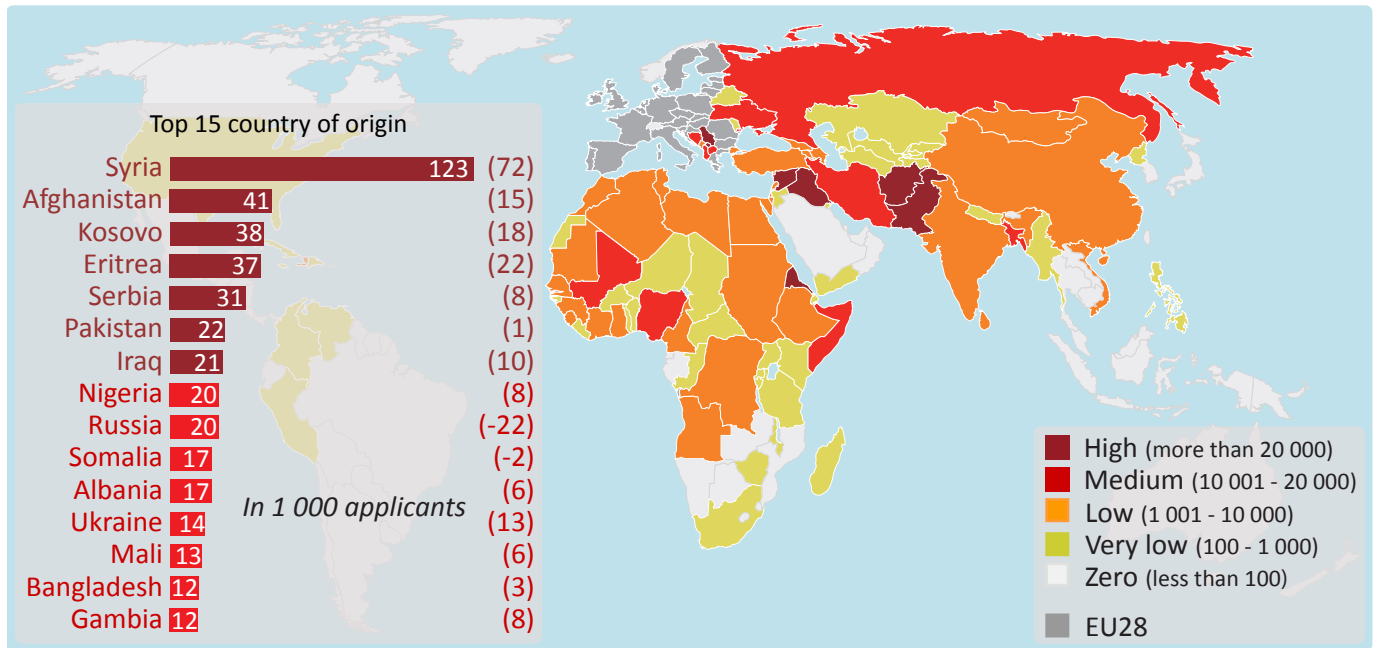
For the year 2014, the breakdown is presented by gender and age group within gender.

The substantial increase in asylum applicants in 2014 is due to a higher influx from Syria, Ukraine, Kosovo, Eritrea and Iraq.



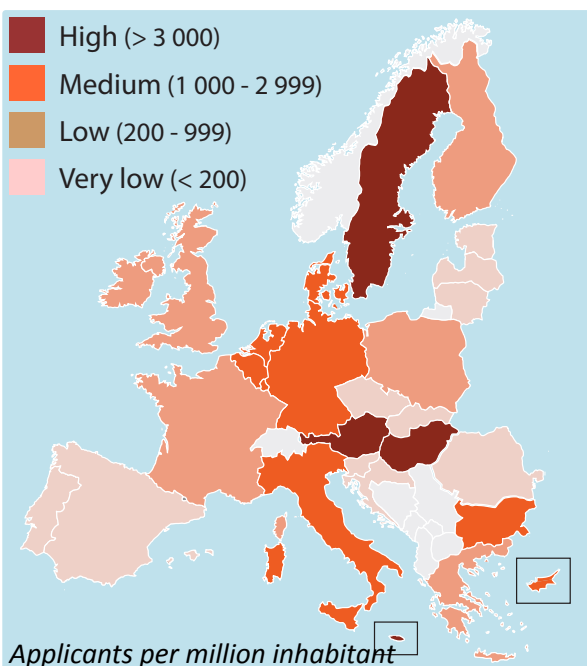
Asylum applicants in the EU28: Countries of origin (2014)

The map shows the countries of origin of asylum applicants in the EU28 for 2014. Countries of origin have been divided into five categories. There are seven countries in the ‘high’ category. These account for a total of 313 000 requests, representing 50% of all applications. The bar chart shows the top 15 countries of origin. The value in parenthesis represents changes with respect to 2013; positive value shows an increase, negative a decrease (e.g. there was an increase of 72 000 applicants from Syria in 2014).

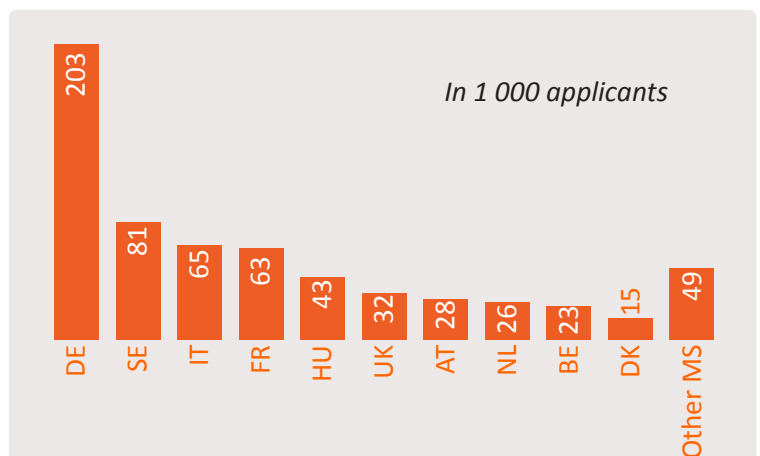


Asylum applicants in EU28: Countries of arrival (2014)

Some EU Member States face very large numbers of asylum applications in absolute figures, and others in proportion to their population. The map shows the relative value of the number of applicants per million inhabitants in the ‘country of arrival’ (the EU Member State in which asylum has been requested). The EU average is 1 235 applicants per million inhabitants.



The bar chart shows the top 10 Member States receiving asylum applications in absolute terms. Germany has the highest value since it received one third of all applications submitted in the EU in 2014. Fifty percent of the requests received by Germany were from Syrian (41 100), Serbian (27 145), Eritrean (13 255), Afghan (9 675) and Iraqi (9 495) nationals.



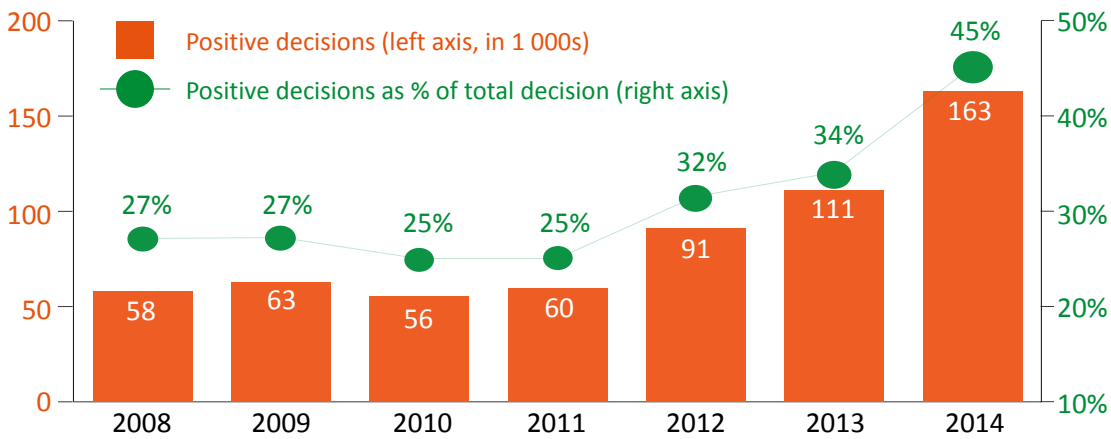
First instance decisions on asylum in the EU28

As stated by [Eurostat](#), first instance decisions refer to decisions taken by administrative or judicial bodies in Member States on refugee status, subsidiary protection as well as authorisations to stay for humanitarian reasons. First instance decisions also include decisions granted to persons who are subject to the Dublin Regulation.

The number of asylum applicants and the number of first instance decisions during the same year differs. This is due to the time elapsed between a request and the decision. This time varies considerably, depending on national asylum procedures and the administrative workload of Member States.

The first graph shows the aggregate of positive decisions for the EU 28 (no data are available for Austria for the year 2014). The bar represents the positive decisions in thousands while the bubbles give the percentage that the positive decisions represent in total decisions. The second graph presents the distribution between positive and negative decisions by Member State for 2014.

Positive first instance decisions on asylum in the EU28

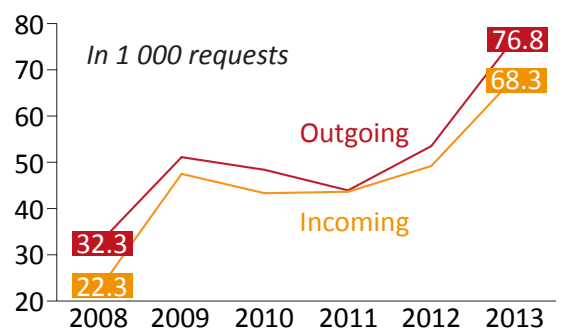


First instance decisions on asylum (2014)

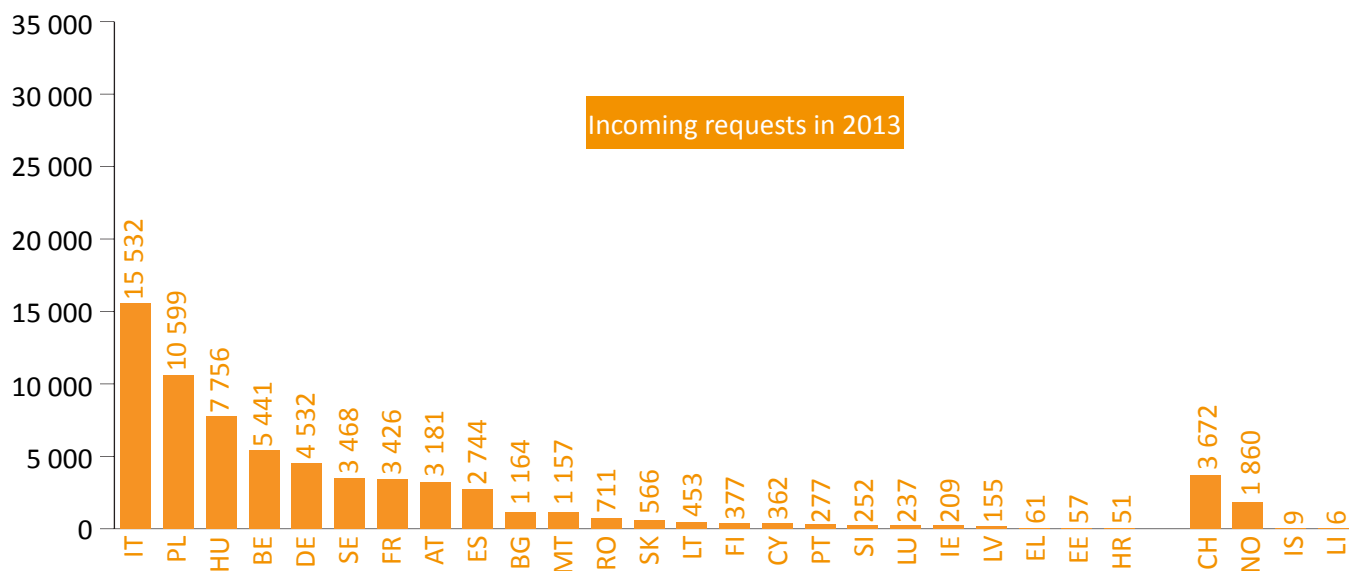
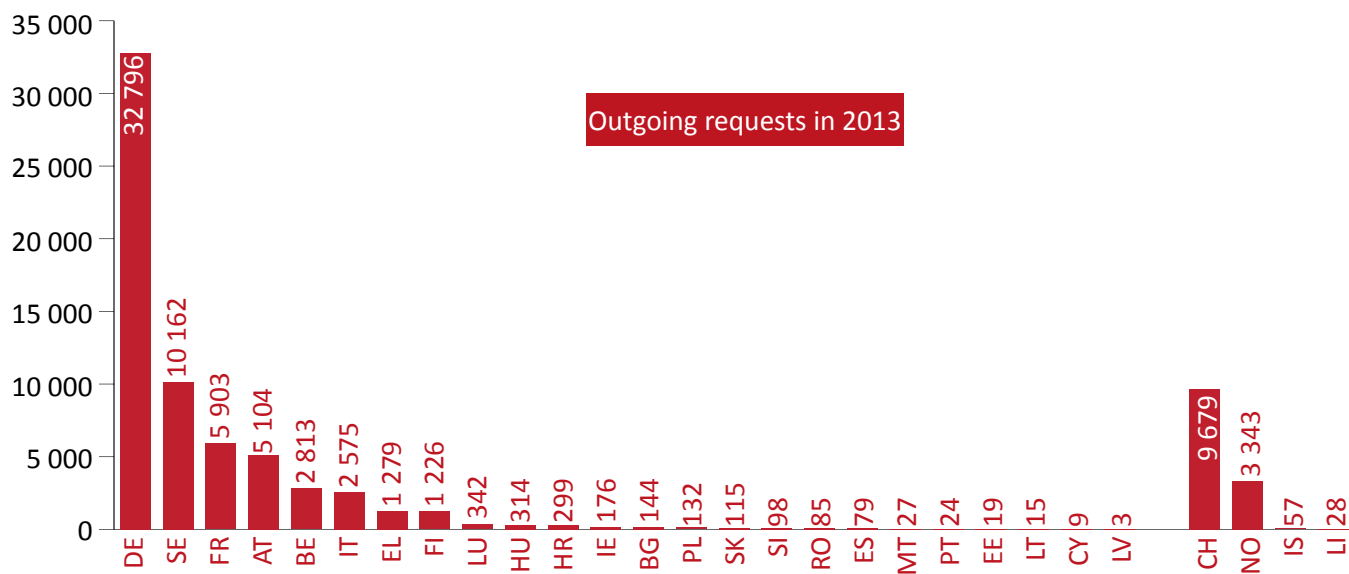


Dublin statistics on the country responsible for the asylum application

The [Dublin III Regulation](#) establishes the criteria for determining which Member State is responsible for examining an application for international protection to avoid the phenomenon of ‘refugees in orbit’ (asylum-seekers for which no Member State takes responsibility) and to prevent multiple asylum applications (asylum shopping). By default (in general when no family reasons or humanitarian grounds are present), the first Member State that the applicant enters is responsible. As a result, a Member State where an asylum-seeker is present and/or has applied for asylum would normally request the Member State responsible for the asylum decision under the Dublin rules to take charge of the asylum-seeker in question. There is growing criticism that the Dublin system is not designed as a burden-sharing system but allocates responsibilities to individual Member States.



The following infographic presents statistics on the ‘Dublin transfer’ requests between Member States. ‘Outgoing requests’ are sent from the Member State, in which the asylum-seeker is present and has applied for asylum, to another Member State considered to be in charge of the asylum decision under the Dublin rules. ‘Incoming requests’ are those that a Member State receives from another Member State asking it to take charge of an asylum-seeker. The line chart shows the trends for outgoing and incoming requests reported by the Member States and EFTA countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). The bar charts show the breakdown by country for both incoming and outgoing requests for 2013. No data are available for the Czech Republic, Denmark, Netherlands and the UK. According to Eurostat data, some 77% of the requests to take back an asylum-seeker are based on the fact that the asylum-seeker concerned applied for asylum first in that other Member State.



Country codes: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (EL), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland (CH), Norway (NO), Iceland (IS) and Liechtenstein (LI).

Data used in this publication are taken from a range of sources. Data on asylum are taken from Eurostat ([migr_asyctz](#), [migr_asyappctza](#), [migr_dubri](#) and [migr_dubro](#)).

Extraction date: data were extracted in March 2015.

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